

Negotiating Perceptions and Constructing Identities: Muslim Strategies in St. John's,
Newfoundland

Master's Thesis

Caitlin Downie

Supervisor: Dr. Lori Beaman

Faculty of Arts

Department of Religious Studies

University Of Ottawa

Table of Contents

Abstract	p. 4
Acknowledgements	p. 5
Chapter 1: Introduction	
Introduction.....	p. 6
A Brief History of Muslims in Canada.....	p. 7
The Case of St. John’s, Newfoundland.....	p.11
Outline.....	p.19
Chapter 2: Literature Review	
Introduction.....	p. 21
(Re)Constructing Identities.....	p.21
Factors Influencing Identity Construction.....	p.31
Strategies for Negotiating Perceptions.....	p.35
Summary.....	p.44
Chapter 3: Methodology	
Introduction.....	p.46
Approach.....	p.46
Data Collection Techniques.....	p.48
Who Are St. John’s Muslims?	p.50
Data Analysis.....	p.52
Chapter 4: Negotiating Religious Identities	
Introduction.....	p.54
Perceptions of Islam and Muslims.....	p.54
Strategies in Negotiating Perceptions.....	p.71
Impact on Religious Identities.....	p.103
Summary.....	p.113
Chapter 5: Conclusions	

Conclusions.....p.116

Scope and Limitations.....p.119

Future Research.....p.121

References.....p.124

Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form.....p.132

Abstract

This thesis examines how Muslims in Canada negotiate perceptions in their interactions with non-Muslims and other Muslims. What strategies do Muslims in Canada use to combat these perceptions? How do perceptions of Islam and Muslims impact Muslims' constructions of identities? In order to answer these questions a case study was conducted in St. John's, Newfoundland. Interviews with Muslims living in St. John's explored how they respond to perceptions of Islam and how they negotiate their identities in everyday life. This study found that perceptions of Islam and Muslims played an important role in the construction of Muslims' identities despite the low incidence of Islamophobia. Perceptions of Islam and Muslims often led to an increase in knowledge of Islam, an increase in affiliation with their Muslim identities and increase in religiosity. However, an alternative impact was a distancing from Islam. Participants used numerous strategies to combat negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims including taking up an educator role and becoming representative. Further, many participants separated culture and religion, creating a 'true' Islam and contributing to islamophilia. However, other participants challenged philic and phobic accounts of Islam by voicing their lived practices and presenting multiple and dynamic Islams.

Acknowledgements

I would to thank all those who generously contributed their time and stories to this project and who welcomed me into their community and their homes.

I would also like to convey my continued gratitude to Dr. Beaman, Dr. Selby, and Dr. Beyer for their endless help with this project, for their invaluable input, and for their support throughout my graduate career. Further, I would like to thank the Religion and Diversity Project for their financial contribution to this research project.

Finally, I would like to express my infinite appreciation to my family and friends for their support and understanding throughout this process. Especially to my parents who were always there to listen. And to Ryan for waiting patiently and for his much needed humour when things got tough.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

“What are you gonna do with all that? Are you gonna make a bomb out of it or something?” Dina laughed, shaking her head. She was recounting a story to me while we walked to her class one afternoon in October 2012. We had just come from Friday prayers at the university chapel and I fidgeted self-consciously at my newly veiled hair. I had been in St. John’s, Newfoundland for two weeks and Dina was one of the first Muslim women I’d met there. She was a 21-year-old student who had moved from Africa to attend university in St. John’s. Like many I spoke with during my time in St. John’s, she had few negative experiences with non-Muslims outside seemingly harmless curiosity. Even her above account of a woman asking her about what she was making was brushed off by Dina and seemed to have little impact on her. On the other hand, Dina complained of a lack of knowledge among non-Muslims, which fueled a widespread negative and inaccurate perception of Islam in St. John’s and Canada more generally. As we neared Dina’s class and our discussion came to an end, I became increasingly aware of others staring at us. I fidgeted with my hijab again. Dina, noticing my discomfort laughed, “you get used to it”. I looked at her questioningly, “the staring, you get used to it”.

It is within this context that Muslims in St. John’s live and negotiate their identities. I left Dina with more questions in my mind than when I had first met her. How did she deal with others’ curiosity and perceptions of Islam? How did it influence her religious identity?

This thesis aims to answer these questions through a case study of Muslims living in St. John's Newfoundland. This research centers on their daily lives, practices, and interactions and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Islam and Muslim identities. Thus far research on Muslims in Canada has focused on media (Sharify-Funk, 2009; 2010; Hirji, 2006; Karim, 2009; Canas, 2008)) and law (Brown, 2010; Sharify-Funk, 2010; Korteweg and Selby, 2012; Beaman, 2011) rather than based in fieldwork and the daily lived experiences of individuals. There are, of course, some exceptions (see Zine, 2001; Nagra, 2011). However, these studies, as well as most others in Canada (see McDonough, 1994; Yousif, 2008; McGown, 1999), are conducted in large urban Canadian cities. My research will help rectify this gap in field-based research of Muslims in small cities.

My thesis research examines how perceptions from non-Muslims and Muslims alike impact the religious identity construction of Muslims in St. John's. Further, I examine what strategies Muslims in St. John's employ to combat negative and inaccurate perceptions of their faith. Before attempting to answer these questions I would like to provide the contextual basis in which this study was conducted.

A Brief History of Muslims in Canada

Muslims have a long history in North America although, it is only since the 1960s that the numbers of both immigrants and Canadian born Muslims has increased dramatically. In this section I wish to briefly review the history of Muslims arriving to Canada. Moving towards a historical discussion of Muslim arrival to Canada, scholars (Eliade, 1987; Smith, 1999, Yousif, 2008) have generally categorized Muslim arrival

into several waves. The first wave occurred between 1875 and 1912. Post World War I triggered the second wave of Muslim immigrants while the third wave of Muslim immigrants arrived in 1945-1965 after World War II. Lastly, the fourth wave began in 1967 and continues today.

The First Wave

Between 1875 and 1912 small numbers of Muslim immigrants arrived to Canada almost exclusively from what was then called Greater Syria (what is today Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon). These new arrivals often came for economic reasons and were made up of mostly men who had little to no formal education, were illiterate, and knew little English or French. They came with the hope of economic prosperity and intended to return home to their families wealthy and prosperous. Unfortunately, because of their low level of literacy and a large language barrier, many were unable to reach their dream of economic prosperity and instead became labourers, shopkeepers, and peddlers. Most of the first wave of Muslim immigrants remained in Canada despite their original intent of returning home. Further, due to their general low religious commitment and low cultural ties to their home country, many assimilated to North American culture and society (Eid, 2007).

The Second Wave

After World War I ended, a new wave of Muslim immigrants began to arrive in Canada. This group was mainly made up of relatives of earlier arrivals reuniting with their families aided by new immigration laws in Canada that aimed to bring over families of those already living in Canada. Those arriving in the 1920s-1930s were

similar to the first cohort in having come mostly from Greater Syria and were generally not well educated (Smith, 1999). However, these years saw the beginnings of settled and institutionalized Muslim communities in Canada and in 1938 the first mosque in Canada was built in Edmonton, Alberta.

The Third Wave

Post World War II saw an increase in Muslim immigration to Canada. This increase in immigration was spurred not only by economic reasons like those arriving before them, but also by political upheavals in their home countries (Eliade, 1987). From 1947 to 1965 a more diverse group of Muslim immigrants arrived due to changes in Canadian immigration laws. These new immigration laws allowed arrivals from a wider array of countries and resulted in more Muslim immigration from countries such as Pakistan and India. The third wave of Muslim immigrants also differed from earlier groups in that most were well educated and many came to pursue higher education. Furthermore, many Muslims arriving during this period were familiar with and comfortable with Western attitudes (Smith, 1999). In Smith's words, the third wave of Muslim immigrants were often "quite Westernized in their attitudes" (1999, pg.52).

The Fourth Wave

Finally, the fourth wave of Muslim immigration started after 1967 and continues to present day. This wave was brought on by a shift in immigration policy in Canada in 1967 with the introduction of the point system. This change enabled far more diversity as immigration was opened up to those coming from outside Europe and the United States including immigration from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and South America

(Bouchard, 2007). As a result there has been a great increase in religious and ethnic diversity in Canada in the last four decades (Bouchard, 2007). Along with immigrants arriving from Syria, Lebanon, and India, a greater number of Muslim Arabs immigrated during this period (Kaba, 2002). This cohort differs from earlier arrivals in several ways such as their diverse economic background, their higher education, and attachment to their religious and ethnic identities (Kaba, 2002).

This attachment to religious and ethnic identities may be a result of the Islamic revival in the Arab world and charged ethnic and political atmosphere in their home countries (Smith, 1999; Eid, 2007). Unlike earlier Muslim immigrants who often assimilated, those who arrived after 1967 often did not assimilate, rejected secularism and so-called 'Westernization', and held onto their high religious commitment and cultural ties to their home country (Kaba, 2002).

This group sought to institutionalize their faith and since the 1960s Canada has seen a rapid growth of mosques, Islamic centers, and religious organizations. Currently, mosques dot the Canadian landscape with at least one mosque in every major city. Furthermore, numerous Muslim organizations operate within Canada including: the Muslim Association of Canada (established in 1997), the Muslim Students' Association (established in 1963), the Canadian Islamic Congress (founded in 1994), the Muslim Canadian Congress (established in 2001), the Canadian Council of Muslim women (established in 1982), the Islamic Society of North America- Canada (established in 1982), and the Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations- Canada (established in 2000).

Today, Canada's Muslim population is over 579,000, which is about 2% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2001). Statistics Canada estimates indicate about 35% of religious minorities are Muslims while projections for 2031 indicate this percentage will increase to nearly 50% (Statistics Canada, 2010). The Muslim population is considered the fastest growing religious population by Statistics Canada (2010). The high growth rate of the Muslim population is said to be due to a large number of immigrants arriving from countries with high populations of Muslims as well as due to a high birth rate among first generation Muslims in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2010). Clearly the Muslim population in Canada is growing due to immigration and increase in Canadian-born (second and third generation) Muslims. I would also add that converts to Islam contribute to the growth in Canadian Muslim population despite the lack of statistics on this population. In Canada, the Muslim population is made up of immigrants from around the world, Canadian-born Muslims, converts, those from all economic and educational backgrounds, those belonging to various sects of Islam, and who have differing views of Islam and practice in different ways.

It is clear from the above discussion that Muslims in Canada are an extremely diverse and growing population. However, my study focuses in particular on St. John's where immigration has remained limited and the population remains relatively homogenous. I explore the specific case of St. John's below.

The Case of St. John's, Newfoundland

In the previous section we saw that Canada has become increasingly religiously and ethnically diverse with the arrival of Muslim immigrants since the 19th century.

Muslim immigration has dramatically increased within Canada, however most newcomers have tended to settle in certain areas of Canada, namely large cities. This has led to a greater number of visible minorities and religious minorities in Canada's larger cities compared to small numbers in more rural areas. According to Statistics Canada (2010), "New Canadian immigrants' propensity to settle in metropolitan areas, along with their birth rate, has contributed, in recent decades, to the concentration of ethnocultural diversity in metropolitan areas". Cities such as St. John's, Newfoundland where this research was conducted, remain relatively religiously and ethnically homogenous.

St. John's is a small city of approximately 196,966 people (Statistics Canada, 2011). The city has little ethnic or religious diversity. According to the 2006 Statistics Canada census, only 5% of the population of St. John's is immigrants and only 3% are visible minorities. To put these numbers in perspective, in Ottawa 24% of the population are immigrants and about 21% are visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2006). In Toronto 53% of the population are immigrants and about 47% are visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2006). The following subsections will give a brief description of St. John's, Newfoundland, the history of Muslims in the area, and an overview of Muslim organizations and institutions that exist there.

History of Muslims in St. John's

As we have seen, St. John's remains a relatively homogenous city, however Muslims have resided in the area for some time. Muslims arrived in Newfoundland prior to 1964 although their numbers were limited to a few families who soon moved

on to other areas of Canada. A permanent Muslim presence in Newfoundland was established in 1964 and Dr. Muhammad Irfan is often hailed as the first Muslim to live in the province when he took a teaching position at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN). Before the 1990s, the Muslim population in St. John's was about 15-25 families plus about 100 students (MANAL, n.d.). By 1992 the number of families had risen to about 40 families (MANAL, n.d.). However, the Muslim population was still extremely transient due to economic and other factors. This is evidenced by the loss of 10 families in 1993 alone (MANAL, n.d.).

The Muslim population has increased dramatically in the past 10 years due to economic growth of the province and recruitment of international students by MUN. In 2001 the Muslim population in Newfoundland and Labrador was 625, 445 of who lived in St. John's (Statistics Canada, 2001). It is also interesting to note that about 72% of Muslims living in St. John's are male (Statistics Canada, 2001). This drastic difference in gender among the Muslim population is not seen in larger cities in Canada such as Ottawa and Toronto. The gender disparity in St. John's is likely due to the types of jobs available in the area that are traditionally male dominated and may attract more males. Another important factor to point out is the number of students present in St. John's. MUN is well known (particularly for its business and engineering programs) and students often move from across Canada and from overseas to St. John's for their studies only to leave when their studies are completed. MANAL (n.d.) estimates that students from MUN make up about half of their membership. This may be an important contributor to the transient nature of the Muslim population in St. John's. Despite the lack of data from Statistics Canada to verify the current Muslim population in St. John's,

the number has likely increased in the past decade judging from the overall trend in immigration, growth of Islam, as well as the province's economic growth that has increased the population more generally. I will turn now to a look at the Islamic institutions and organizations that exist in St. John's.

MANAL

As stated previously, immigrants arriving to Canada since the 1960s have sought to organize and institutionalize Islam throughout Canada. While St. John's has experienced this, it has been on a dramatically smaller scale and a more recent development. In 1982 the Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MANAL) was formed by about 25 families in St. John's (MANAL, n.d.). According to MANAL (n.d.), Muslims in St. John's at that time felt that they needed to organize themselves in order to pool resources and more formally fulfill their religious, cultural, and social needs.

In its early years, MANAL held Friday and Sunday prayers at MUN, often in conjunction with the Muslim Students' Association. Since the association had no permanent location, Eid celebrations, Ramadan prayers, and other events were held either at the University, in the homes of local Muslim families, or at a rental facility such as local churches. The lack of a permanent gathering space was felt as extremely limiting and the association soon began plans to establish a mosque where the association could operate and where local Muslims could gather.

Masjid al-Noor

MANAL's plan for a mosque eventually came to fruition and the Masjid al-Noor was completed in October 1992. This mosque remains the one and only mosque in St. John's and indeed in Newfoundland and Labrador. As such the Masjid al-Noor is the center of all Islamic activities and events in St. John's.

I first visited the Masjid al-Noor in late October 2012 while conducting fieldwork for this project. I was picked up along with other students at MUN, which has been an arrangement for several years in an attempt to cater to the large number of Muslim students. After much excitement over my interest in attending Friday prayers despite my non-Muslim identity, I was ushered into the car and we began the 15-minute drive to the mosque. The small parking lot was overflowing with cars and men stood in groups around the entrance chatting. Self-consciously I asked about a separate entrance for women and they shook their heads, stared curiously at me and motioned towards the main entrance. I knew from MANAL's (n.d.) website that the mosque was 8,000 sq. ft. including a social hall in the basement, a second level, six classrooms for Islamic schooling, and a small library.

According to MANAL (n.d.) the prayer hall can accommodate over 150 people however, many Muslims I had spoken with pointed out that, considering the growing number of members, this is hardly enough space for all to fit comfortably. Indeed from what I could see of the first floor prayer space (which was reserved for men) it was filling up fast and men sat shoulder to shoulder on intricately woven prayer rugs. I had heard that MANAL members were hoping to build a new Mosque/Islamic centre in order to accommodate their growing numbers. They hoped to build a centre double the

size of the current mosque with added rooms for classrooms and even a gym. In fact, MANAL had bought land near Sugar Loaf Road in St. John's for this purpose, however, further planning had halted due to the city's rejection of the proposal over zoning issues (CBC News, 2012).

Perhaps due to the difficulties that arose surrounding the construction of a new mosque, MANAL announced a renovation project of the current mosque in June 2012. According to MANAL's (June 17, 2012) website, the project aimed to increase the praying area within the mosque. They had completed some of the changes by the time I arrived in October 2012, including having changed the use of prayer space. The main floor was now reserved for men while the women now had an enclosed area on the second floor. Knowing these changes, I headed upstairs to the women's prayer area. The prayer space was surprisingly spacious with one wall lined with windows overlooking the first floor.

Compared to the crowded space downstairs, only about 15 women and a few young children shared the second floor area the day I visited. Despite the relatively small number of women, MANAL (n.d.) estimates the mosque currently has a membership of over 1000 people (about 600 families and 500 students) and come from extremely diverse cultural backgrounds with different theological perspectives.

This diversity was salient in the ongoing debate concerning the hiring of an imam. Currently, several male members of the mosque share the responsibility of the Friday Sermon and leading prayers. Some members argue that they should hire a formally Islamic-educated, full time imam, while others argue that this is an

unnecessary expense and would lead to a more conservative influence on the community.

Another issue that was a central concern of MANAL members and mosque attendees during my fieldwork was cemetery space. MANAL made an agreement nearly 25 years ago with a local Christian cemetery to use 50 lots for Muslim burials (CBC News, 2013). However, these plots were growing scarce and there was concern over finding an alternative option with more space. Furthermore, it was important to many Muslims in St. John's to have their own cemetery in order to have burials in accordance with Muslim tradition, which hasn't always been possible at the Christian cemetery (CBC News, 2013). In March 2013 it was announced that a Muslim cemetery would be established in St. John's with work starting this spring on the acquired land (CBC News, 2013).

Needless to say the Muslim population in St. John's is undergoing a great deal of change and is still negotiating how to deal with the ever-increasing population as well as appeasing the extremely diverse theological views of their members. Another aspect of this growing community is its student population, which has its own complementary organization called the Muslim Students' Association.

Muslim Students' Association

The Muslim Students' Association (MSA) is an international organization and is present on numerous campuses across Canada. The MSA at Memorial University was established by Dr. Rahman and Dr. Irfan along with several international students in 1976. When Masjid al-Noor was established in 1990, the MSA began a strong

relationship with the mosque. Today the MSA at MUN has about 80-150 active members and have secured a permanent space for daily prayers in the engineering building of MUN.

In addition, the MSA recently acquired permission to use the campus chapel for Friday prayers and had started holding Friday sermons by the time I arrived in October 2012. I attended Friday prayers at the campus chapel several times while I was in St. John's in October 2012. The space is quite large and is able to comfortably accommodate attendees. Friday prayers at this new location were well attended by male students from MUN although Muslim women seemed to rarely attend. In fact, on two occasions I was the sole female attendee and on those occasions where others attended we numbered under four (compared to about 70 males).

The establishment of a Friday sermon on campus has caused some controversy between the MSA and MANAL. Some MANAL members are worried about the topics being discussed during Friday sermon on campus and the impact this has on the Muslim community's image. For instance Nadir argues, "we can say whatever we want over there [at the mosque] most of the time but here [on campus] we have to be careful and respect the population and uh because when I go and talk there and when I talk outside I am representing the community". For Nadir and many MANAL members, the separation of the community into two Friday Prayer sermons is worrisome. Other MANAL members along with the MSA argue that the additional Friday prayers are needed to accommodate MUN students and to ease the pressure on the mosque to house all

attendees. This has caused some friction between MSA and MANAL despite the fact that the two organizations continue to work together and hold co-organized events.

The MSA is also involved in negotiating with the university for a separate prayer space for women because the current room in the engineering building is quite small and has no separation between men and women. Some women I spoke with said that this means they often wait outside the room until the men are finished praying, which can take some time. Another issue the MSA has come up against is that MUN custodial staff has complained to the MSA concerning the use of washrooms for wudu (washing prior to prayers) and the water often leftover by MSA members. The MSA continues to work towards acquiring a larger space to hold daily prayers and other events. Further, the MSA is constantly working with MUN to change university regulations in order to increase inclusivity of Islamic holidays and the needs of Muslim students.

Outline

From the above discussion it is clear that while St. John's remains relatively ethno-religiously homogenous, the Muslim population is increasing and changes have and continue to be necessary in order to incorporate the more diverse population. Within this context, I explore how Muslims negotiate their religious identities. In the next chapter, I examine diverse understandings of identity and various approaches to the construction of identities. I position myself within this discussion and reveal my outlook on identity and identity construction. I also examine literature on the factors that may influence identity construction including gender and widespread negative

perceptions of Islam and Muslims. Further, I explore literature concerning strategies employed in negotiating these perceptions.

Having situated my research within the literature I then outline my methodological approach. In Chapter three I discuss my data collection techniques and data analysis in detail. Further, I explore who are St. John's Muslims by giving an overview of the diverse backgrounds of the participants.

Following this, I present my results of the conducted research in Chapter 4. In this chapter I attempt to answer my research questions through the collected histories of Muslims in St. John's. I explore participants' experiences with perceptions and expectations of Islam and Muslims. I then examine the various strategies participants employed in negotiating these perceptions and expectations. Further, I consider the impact these strategies have on the religious identities of Muslims in St. John's.

Having presented the results of this research, the final chapter offers my concluding remarks. I also discuss the limitations of this study and generalizability. Finally I make suggestions for future research and the importance of focus on topics such as the culture-religion separation, philic and phobic accounts, and the concept of 'Islams'.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In the previous chapter I outlined this research as focusing on how Muslims in St. John's negotiate their religious identities in daily life. In this Chapter I examine research on the notion of identity with a particular focus on religious identities. I outline the literature on how identities are created and negotiated. Secondly, I discuss factors that may influence identity negotiation such as gender and negative perceptions. Thirdly, I discuss the literature concerning strategies used to combat these negative perceptions and the impact this has on religious identities. These strategies include separating culture and religion, islamophilia, ethnicization of religious identities, and creating a cultural or symbolic identity.

(Re)Constructing Identities

In order to understand how Muslims in St. John's negotiate their religious identities, it is important to discuss how scholars have understood the concept of identity and its construction. Identity as a concept has been constantly debated amongst scholars and remains a contested term. In this section I examine various scholarly understandings of identity and identity construction. Further, I situate myself in this literature by taking a more unstructured relational approach to identity, seeing it as both socially ascribed and individually chosen. This view of identity informs my research in that I understand participants as being constantly involved in constructing, maintaining, and reconstructing their identities.

Erikson defines identity in general terms as a “distinctive character...; personality, individuality” (Yousif, 2008, pg.26) and as a sharing of character with others (Erikson, 1980). More specifically, early theorists defined identity in terms of an innate self with an essence (Kellner, 1995). This early definition views identity as stable, constant, and given.

Bayart (2005) rightly criticizes this view of identity, arguing that such a definition is potentially oppressive because it implies some identities are authentic in opposition to others that are viewed as different. Further, he points out, this leaves little room for change, development, and multiple or hyphenated identities (Bayart, 2005). Similarly, Lutz and Abu-Lughod argue that such an essentialist view of identity falsely fixes boundaries (Baumann, 1996).

Modern and postmodern theorists have largely rejected the essentialist view of identity that Bayart criticizes and instead a more constructivist notion of identity has developed. The constructivist notion views identity as constantly being formed, ever changing, chosen, and reflexive. Tweed (2006) views identity as involving movement, relation, and position and incorporates themes of crossing and dwelling. This view implies a moving and dynamic identity construction. While the constructivist notion of identity is an improvement of the essentialist view, we must be cautious not to ignore the pressures and constraints that individuals may face in forming identities. Eid (2007) warns us that an actor-centered perspective cannot be embraced uncritically. He argues that the anti-essentialist approach draws from the idea that individuals are autonomous agents instead of predetermined social beings and urges scholars to work

in between these two extreme positions. In other words, for Eid (2007), individuals are agents in their identity formation but are not completely free of social scripts that may limit agency.

Identity as Dynamic

As discussed above, scholars have largely abandoned the notion of identity as stable, constant, and given and many have instead turned to a view of identity as dynamic, multiple, situational, and self-reflexive. Ali (2011) explains identity not as static but as constantly constructed and contested. However, for Ali (2011), this dynamism is subtle (almost unnoticeably so). Further, according to Kellner (1995), “identity is a game that one plays, that one can easily shift from one identity to another” (pg.153). While Kellner’s argument that identity can change with fashion may hold some truth, I am skeptical of the extent to which some identities (or aspects of identities) can change significantly. I would argue that some identities are not simply chosen but may be assigned with little room for movement. This is important as certain identities may be assigned to Muslims by both non-Muslims and by other Muslims. I do not wish to give the impression that individuals have no agency when it comes to identity formation, quite the opposite, but I do want to point out the socio-cultural forces that may significantly limit an individual’s choice of identities. Eid (2007) captures this notion when he says,

...although the construction of a social self requires a degree of personal latitude, the ‘negotiability’ of identity is necessarily constrained by the pre-given symbolic universes produced by the social groups in which individuals have been

socialized throughout their life. In other words, here is a finite set of meanings, roles, and discourses that people can activate for the purpose of identity formation. Various predetermined forms of sociality, based, for example, on ethnicity, gender, class, age, etc., all play a part in restricting the range of identity choices (pg.22).

Multiple Identities

In addition to this dynamic view of identity, scholars have also turned to a notion of identity as multiple. Hall's (1996) 'new ethnicities' emphasizes that people can form hybrid, emergent, or mixed identities. Eid (2007) argues that scholars use the terms 'hybrid', 'creolized', and 'hyphenated' in an attempt to counter the essentialized notion of identity. However, Afshar, Aitken, and Franks (2006) criticize the notion of hybrid identities, arguing that it creates boundaries and ignores relationships and mixing across these boundaries. These scholars suggest using the term 'integrated plural identity' instead (Afshar et al., 2006).

The notion of 'integrated plural identity' that Afshar et al. (2006) suggest, emphasizes the idea that individuals have multiple identities. Many scholars including Baumann (1996) point out that most people see themselves as part of several communities and therefore have multiple, shifting, and overlapping identities. According to Rahnema (2006), immigrants often have at least a triple identity: religious identity, original national identity, and a new national identity. In addition to this, Rahnema acknowledges that individuals will also have other identities such as class, gender, age, generation, etc. For some scholars such as Moghissi, Rahnema & Goodman

(2009), these identities are conflictual and one identity may dominate the others. Like Eid (2007), I view this focus on conflict as extremely problematic. Continuing with Rahnema's example of identity formation among immigrants, I disagree with the idea that immigrants necessarily experience conflict between their multiple identities. This view of conflict is problematic in its implication of the existence of two homogenous and bound cultures. Furthermore, as Ali (2011) points out, individuals quickly learn how to reconcile and manage any conflicts that do arise between various identities. Finally, as Afshar et al (2006) point out, "...multiple identities are not disempowering; they may have a situational aspect. It is essential to recognize the multiple identities that Muslims hold and that these may in fact be empowering rather than in conflict.

Identities as Situational

For Afshar et al (2006) and many other scholars, different aspects of an individual's identity may be mobilized in different situations. Eid (2007) explains that scholars such as Nagel and Okamura developed a situational approach to identity whereby identities vary "depending on which culturally shared items are mobilized by individuals in their quest for self-definition" (pg.22). As such, Eid (2007) promotes viewing identity as a tool kit "from which they [individuals] can draw to create and recreate identities on a day-to-day basis..." (pg.22). Similarly, Bayart (2005) argues that identities depend on specific circumstances in specific historical moments. Baumann continues along these lines, claiming that the aspect of identity that is emphasized depends on "the perceived context, the strategies of everyday life, and the classificatory choices deemed appropriate between the various parties" (1996, pg.115). The

emphasis that these scholars place on context is extremely important in understanding how Muslims' multiple identities co-exist, overlap, and change depending on the situation.

Identity as Performative and Process

Some scholars such as Hall, Kellner, Bayart, and Butler see identity as a performance. Indeed Butler has done much work in this area including her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990). For Butler, identity is “performative in the sense that it constitutes an effect of the very subject it appears to express” (1990, pg.24). In this way, action does not present a pre-existing identity but rather creates it (Butler, 1990). Bayart (2005) also argues that identity is in continual mutation and is constantly being performed. Similarly Kellner (1995) argues that, not only is identity constructed, it is also continuously constructed around looks, image, and consumption and is then performed or projected to others. In other words, our experiences and interactions with others may impact our sense of self and/or our presentation of self.

Other scholars (Goodman, 2006; Ali, 2011; Moghissi et al, 2009) explain the process of identity as a dual process of being made and of making oneself. Moghissi et al (2009) explain this process as both a passive and active formation of the self. This is similar to Bakhtin's idea of the authoring self where, “The self occupies the interface between intimate discourses, inner speaking, and bodily practices formed in the past and the discourses and practices to which people are exposed, willing or not, in the present” (Ali, 2011, pg.359-360).

Taking a slightly different approach, Peek suggests three stages of religious identity formation: ascribed, chosen, and declared (Moghissi et al., 2009). While Peek's three stages do include what we may consider an internal (chosen) and external (ascribed) dimension, she adds another dimension: declared. This last dimension indicates a more public identity that may be political and/or responsive to a crisis (Moghissi et al., 2009). This is important in considering how the identities of Muslims in St. John's are impacted by perceptions of Islam and Muslims as well as by everyday interactions with non-Muslims and other Muslims.

Religious Identities as Community Making

Interactions with others are also seen as important in religious identity construction in terms of community making. Hall (1996) recalls that some of the earliest theorists of identity such as Freud, thought identity to be intimately tied with other individuals. Similarly, Robins (1996) urges us to think about identities in terms of relationships while Bayart (2005) reminds us that identity production is relational. Further, Ammerman (1987) emphasizes that for her participants, religious identity is firmly rooted in a community of individuals who share ideas. For Ali (2011), identity is formed by a collective self-image, which is created through shared memories, common experiences, and future aspirations. According to Kellner (1995), identity is social but unlike those scholars previously mentioned, Kellner argues that identity involves mutual recognition. In other words, others need to recognize our identity. Although recognition undoubtedly may strengthen identities, I do not agree with the idea that one's identity doesn't exist unless others recognize it. However, I do wish to emphasize

that the social aspect of identity is important. Like Yousif (2008), I would argue that identity (and religious identity specifically) is often strengthened with ties to others within the same group/community (I explore this further in Chapter 4).

While often this social or group aspect of identity is local, for many Muslims (and other groups as well) there is also a global community. For Muslims this global community is called the Umma. The Umma, is an unbounded community of believers and, in the words of Benedict Anderson (2006), an 'imagined community'. Many scholars studying religious identity have taken up Anderson's (2006) notion of 'imagined community' because it describes the sense of cohesion between those who share a religious identity. However, Bayart (2005) criticizes the notion of community because, according to him, identity is so dynamic, multiple, and overlapping that the idea of a community is too stable. While the notion of 'imagined community' may imply a stable entity, I argue that it is useful in explaining the sense of belonging to a group that many feel go hand in hand with their religious identity. Furthermore, the concept of 'imagined community' helps remind us that Muslims construct their identities in relation to those with whom they share ideas and values. As Robins nicely summarizes, "The point of this whole discussion has been to argue that we must think of cultural identities in the context of cultural relationships. What would an identity mean in isolation? Isn't it only through others that we become aware of who we are and what we stand for?" (1996, pg.79). It is to these 'others' Robins speaks of that I now turn.

Religious Identities as Boundary Making

Above I discussed how some scholars (Bayart, Robins, Ali, and Ammerman) view religious identity as community making however, for others (Boyarin, Duderijia, and Tweed) religious identity is about boundary making. Tweed (2006) approaches religious identity as involving both boundary marking and mixture, while Baumann (1996) offers a dynamic understanding of identity that involves the fixing and dissolution of boundaries. Similarly, Alba (2005) argues that boundary change involves not only boundary crossing (where an individual moves from one group to another without altering the boundary) but also blurring and shifting. For Eid (2007), identities have both internal and external components and he argues that self-definitions or internal boundaries,

...should be analyzed in relation to the process of outside labeling and representations (external boundaries) whereby the majority group characterizes and perceives members of the categorized group. Internal boundaries emerge through the shared memory and history that provide the ethnic group with the symbolic material it needs for the construction of the collective self ('us')...External boundaries are formed in relation to the system of categories through which the majority group constructs and organize the ethnic group's cultural otherness (pg.23).

Duderijia (2008) also argues that the notion of difference is an important contributor to identity construction. Speaking of his research with Muslims in Canada, Yousif (2008) points out that awareness of difference impacts the construction of

identity and may result in either a firmer identity or of dissolution of boundaries and thus identity.

Goodman (2006) points out that this identity construction born out of difference often involves an exercise of power. The importance of power within identity formation is also taken up by Rutherford (1990) who argues that, "it is within their polarities of white/black, masculine/feminine, hetero/homosexual, where one term is always dominant and the other subordinate, that our identities are formed. Difference in this context is always perceived as the effect of the other" (pg.10). In this way difference, power, and the 'other' all play an important role in the creation of self-identity. This may be an important consideration in this research in terms of majority and minority power relations.

Many scholars put emphasis on the 'other' as the most important factor in identity formation. According to Hall (1996), identity can only be formed in relation to what one is not, in other words in relation to the 'other'. For Akpinar (2006) too identity is always constructed in relation to an 'other' and Boyarin (2006) argues that the creation of the self is inherently linked to the creation of the 'other'. In this way, religious identities are formed by separating out the 'other'.

However, some scholars such as Bayart (2005) criticize this view because it implies authenticity of one culture that is radically different from another and ignores the possibility of intercultural exchange. While I agree with Bayart that we must be careful in using the categories of 'self' and 'other' as if they are stable entities with no

room for mixing, I believe that self-identity is indeed dependent on an idea of an other even if the boundaries between the two are constantly in motion.

Factors Influencing Identity Construction

As evidenced above, religious identity construction involves others. I continue this discussion in terms of factors that influence identity construction. Many scholars (Akpinar, 2006; Afshar et al, 2006; Eid, 2007; Yousif, 2008) have argued that identities are influenced by factors such as power, class, education, gender, and discrimination. Both gender and discrimination are factors that are particularly important to the current study and thus are discussed in detail below.

Religious Identities and Gender

Many scholars (Shachar, 2009; Hegland, 2002; and Afshar et al. 2006) argue that gender is an important factor in religious identity construction. However, few go as far as Okin (1999) and Sunstein (2009) who argue that gender inequality is embedded in religious institutions. Further, according to Okin (1999), female members of such religious groups may internalize these norms and thus these practices may not be “authentically ‘theirs’” (pg.132).

Shachar (2009) argues, and I agree, that Okin’s (1999) assumption that culture and religion are innately tied with gender inequality is misguided. Shachar (2009) also takes issue with Okin’s (1999) implication that religious women do not have agency when it comes to rights. For Shachar, “...women who wish to uphold their religious membership in minority or orthodox communities can be active participants in shaping

their own identities and social roles” (2009, pg.156). Okin’s (1999) claim completely disregards women who challenge traditions from within their religious groups, feminist activists within religious groups, and women who are actively involved in the reinterpretation of religious texts. Furthermore, Okin (1999) offers exit as the solution for those women who are members of religious groups where gender inequality is widespread. This ‘solution’ ignores the fact that many women have a strong commitment to both secular and religious institutions and forces women to choose between the two. Okin’s (1999) suggestion of exit as a valid solution does not account for the value that many religious women put on their religious identities.

Although many scholars disagree with Okin’s (1999) assumption that religion and culture are intimately tied to gender inequality and the controlling of women and their bodies, most would agree that gender plays an important role in religion and culture. Women are often seen as extremely important for the preservation of the religious and/or cultural community. For instance, according to Eid, “women’s role as the repository of the group’s cultural authenticity often results, within Arab and Muslim migrant families, in gendered child-rearing practices that force the second generation, both males and females, to engage traditional gender roles in the negotiation of their ethnic and religious identities” (2007, pg.57).

However, other scholars such as Afshar et al (2006) argue that women help shape, develop, and recreate different cultures and histories. In this way, women “participate as active agents who help change and conceptualize the norms, habits and customs that shape their lives” (Afshar et al, 2006, pg.171). Similarly, Hegland’s (2002)

study with Peshawar Shi'a women underlines the ability of women to juggle several aspects of varying identities. While I agree that women are often held up as the preservers of communities, this also gives them power for change. This is given some attention in Chapter 4 in terms of how Muslim women in St. John's are actively involved in constructing their religious identities. Further, the particular visibility of hijabi women often creates unique points of negotiation and identity formation, to which I pay close attention.

Discrimination & Islamophobia

Another factor influencing identity negotiation is that of discrimination and islamophobia. This is particularly important for my research with Muslims in Canada as evidenced by a recent poll conducted by Canadian Race Relations Foundation. The poll found that 52% of Canadians distrust Muslims and 42% believe discrimination against Muslims is mainly their fault (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2012). Evidently, negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims remain a widespread issue in Canadian society.

Historically, Islam and Muslims have been represented in certain ways, which have constructed a view of Islam as inferior, backwards, and uncivilized. According to Mahmood (2008) there has been a constructed opposition between 'Western civilization' and 'Muslim barbarism'. She contends, "the argument goes something like this: women are the most abject victims of the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism. The solution lies in bringing 'democracy' to the Muslim world, a project that will not only benefit women but will also make them its main protagonists" (Mahmood, 2008,

pg.83). MacMaster & Lewis (1998) argue that since the 1980s the media (including television, newspapers, film, novels, and radio) has been inundated with images of the veil. They further argue that this increase in representations of the veil in the media has gone hand in hand with a rapid increase in fear of Islam and the spread of fundamentalism and terrorism (MacMaster & Lewis, 1998). Scholars such as Khalema and Wannas-Jones (2003) found that participants felt the media created a “distorted perception that Islam or Muslims condone and encourage violence and such misrepresentation leads to unnecessary fear and anxiety among Canadians” (pg.33).

Particularly post 9/11, islamophobia and the study of it has been increasingly prevalent (Allen, 2010). Indeed, it is widely accepted that post 9/11 has seen a surge in discrimination against Muslims and in anti-Muslim attitudes (Zama, 2009; Akter, 2010; Allen, 2010). Furthermore, Islam has increasingly become associated in the media with terrorism (Haddad, 2007). While scholars generally accept islamophobia as a real and problematic phenomenon, it remains a contested term. According to Allen (2010), islamophobia as a term is critiqued for pathologizing the issue as a phobia as well as for implying hostility towards a religion rather than towards individuals. Despite these valid critiques, Allen (2010) argues the term is here to stay and instead we must attempt to define it and clarify the term. For Allen (2010) islamophobia is an ideology, a “series of different modes of operation comprising different and changing strategies through which ideology is perpetuated” (pg.194), and a series of exclusionary practices.

Considering this post 9/11 context of widespread islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment, what impact does this have on Muslims? What strategies do Muslims employ in dealing with negative perceptions of Islam, discrimination, and/or

islamophobia? These questions are discussed in the next section in terms of the literature.

Strategies for Negotiating Perceptions

Considering the factors discussed above, this section will examine the strategies used by Muslims in negotiating perceptions of Islam and Muslims. Scholars such as Fadil (2009), Bracke and Fadil (2012), Parvez (2011), and Jouili (2006) have examined strategies on an individual level. For example, Fadil (2009) explores negotiating in terms of both the non-Muslim majority as well as other Muslims. Other scholars (Modood, 2005; Roy, 2009; Duderijia, 2008 to name a few) focus on popular discourse and events such as 9/11, which they argue are integral to strategies Muslims employ. Below I examine strategies Muslims employ to combat negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims such as reactive religious identity and/or increased religiosity as well as increased education of others and of oneself. I also explore a strategic separation of culture and religion and a related strategy of islamophilia. Both of these strategies result in ignoring or banishing what are seen as negative practices from Islam. Finally I explore ethnicization of religion and cultural identity. These strategies are relatively recent trends within Islam and therefore will be discussed by considering parallels with other religious minorities.

Reactive Identity & Increased Religiosity

Circumstances such as 9/11, other terrorist acts conducted in 'the name of Islam', and the growing unease with the increasing Muslim population in the 'West', have resulted in Muslims being defined and in defining themselves in oppositional

terms (Modood, 2005). According to some scholars (Modood, 2005; Duderijia, 2008), resistance to 'others' and discrimination by 'others' can and often does result in a strengthening of identity. For example, Parvez (2011) found that Muslim women in France often asserted their desire to wear religious garb (such as the niqab) against and in reaction to state interference. Duderijia explains that religion "...acts as an anchor in identity resistance/maintenance/consolidation, especially if the surrounding environment is perceived as discriminatory and/or exclusive in its orientation" (2008, pg.3). Khan (2002) also found that discrimination and anti-Muslim sentiment might result in those re-affirming their Islamic identity regardless of their level of commitment. Similarly, Afshar et al (2006) argue that, post 9/11, ascribed identities were placed on Muslims, which led to increased identification and increased faith.

Proposing a circular model, Rahnema (2006) argues that marginalization leads to increased religiosity and increased religiosity leads to more marginalization. According to Haji et al (2011), a similar phenomenon occurred among Jews who shared an awareness of a history of persecution, which resulted in a sense of distinctiveness and strong identification with Judaism. Moghissi et al (2009) argue that host countries have often homogenized Islam and Muslims, which has encouraged cultural and social exclusion and resulted in increasing commitment to religious identity.

Nagra (2011) proposes a 'reactive identity formation' theory drawing on Portes and Rumbaut's (2006) reactive ethnicity theory. According to Portes and Rumbaut (2006) an increase in discrimination results in an increase in affiliation/strength of ethnic identity. Nagra (2011) argues that this is also true for religious identity, giving

evidence for Muslims strengthening their Muslim identity, reasserting their Islamic faith, and actively participating in the Muslim community. For Nagra (2011) this is an attempt to reclaim Islam by increasing their religiosity. This reclaiming takes many forms including becoming politically active, wearing hijab as resistance, and/or educating oneself and others about Islam (Nagra, 2011). The next subsection explores the latter in terms of a strategy for negotiating perceptions.

Increased Education and Knowledge of Islam

In the post 9/11 context, many non-Muslims became more aware of Islam and attempted to educate themselves about Islam (Nagra, 2011; Halafoff, 2011). Halafoff notes that, post 9/11, Muslim organizations and mosques were inundated with requests for information about Islam. In response, Muslims have become proactive in educating others about Islam, using these initiatives as a platform to differentiate themselves from violent actions of a few and to dispel negative perceptions (Halafoff, 2011). Jouili (2006) notes that da'wa activities have become a central focus in the Islamic revival movement in Europe. She argues that the dissemination of religious knowledge has been taken up by Muslims in recent years in attempting to challenge the dominant narrative surrounding Islam (Jouili, 2006). Furthermore, she points out that gender issues in Islam have been specifically targeted and Muslim women in particular have been quick to respond (Jouili, 2006). According to Jouili (2006), women are actively involved in the debate surrounding Islam, women's rights, and equality by educating others about women's rights laid out in the Qur'an.

These educational initiatives led to an unanticipated consequence, an increase in knowledge of Islam among Muslims (Nagra, 2011; Halafoff, 2011). Nagra (2011) noted that Muslims in Canada became more educated about Islam post 9/11 in order to respond to the many questions they were being asked by non-Muslims. According to Jouili (2006), public discourse concerning Islam “motivated these [Muslim] women to learn more about their religion” (pg.54). Further, Frisina (2010) found that young Muslim Italians took on a role as expert of Islam because they felt the need to justify themselves and to present a positive image of Islam. Roy also argues that “especially in times of political crisis (such as 9/11), ordinary Muslims feel compelled (or are explicitly asked) to explain what it means to be a Muslim...this task falls on the shoulders of every Muslim” (2009, pg.24). However, in educating others about Islam, many Muslims present a certain image of Islam that universalizes Islam and separates culture out (Roy, 2009). This separation of culture and religion is discussed below.

Cultural-Religion Separation

Beaman (2012) argues that there has been a “recent trend toward the cultural transformation of religious symbols” (pg.68). While Beaman’s (2012) discussion focuses on the move from culture to religion as occurring in majority religions, she argues that this can also occur among religious minorities. However, she notes that power relations can play a role in restricting this move for religious minorities. Other scholars (Warner, Martel, and Dugan, 2001; Roy, 2009; Williams and Vashi, 2007) focus on this separation of culture and religion among religious minorities and argue that this separation is a response to discrimination and negative connotations. In this way, a

culture-religion separation is used as a strategy in negotiating perceptions of one's faith.

According to Roy (2009, pg. 28), "A religion that claims to be the 'true' religion is one which at a given moment explicitly posits culture as otherness". Warner et al (2001) terms this Islam's 'Teflon construction'. According to this strategy, "things that are objectionable, or that are seen as restraining, unfair, or unwise, are deemed to be aspects of 'culture' and can be jettisoned without damaging the purity of Islamic truth. Bad things slide off the 'true Islam' as if it were coated with Teflon" (Williams and Vashi, 2007, pg.280). Due to the implied negativity of the term "Teflon construction" (Warner et al, 2001), I will instead refer to this phenomenon as the culture-religion separation.

While a culture-religion separation has occurred throughout history, Roy (2009) argues that, in recent years, this phenomenon has been occurring on a much larger scale (involving governments and media rather than simply religious communities themselves). I would also point out that this may be a particularly new phenomenon for Islam as culture has historically been intimately tied to religion within this tradition. While Roy has made significant contributions to this area of research, his arguments differ significantly from my own. Roy (2009) sees the separation of culture and religion as creating space for fundamentalists to flourish rather than, as I argue, a space for islamophilia to be created.

Islamophilia

The term islamophilia is a relatively new one, emerging among scholars as a response to the events of 9/11 and islamophobia. However, some (Shryock 2010, Trifkovicargue 2003) argue that islamophilia itself has roots much earlier in history and is especially considered to be present in Orientalist thought. Literally meaning 'the love of Islam', islamophilia has been used as an opposite to islamophobia and generally refers to the uncritical admiration for Islam and Muslims. While islamophobia is the irrational hatred of Islam, islamophilia is the irrational love of Islam. Shryock (2010) distinguishes islamophilia as the imagining of Islam as peaceful, all loving, and completely compatible with the 'West'. Furthermore, islamophilia constructs selectively positive images of Islam and Muslims (Shryock, 2010).

While Shryock (2010) discusses Islamophilia as occurring amongst scholars writing against islamophobia, I argue that philic accounts are constructed by others outside of academia as well. These accounts are no less problematic than those constructed by scholars. Philic accounts of Islam are produced because one is compelled to defend Islam and its institutions against all negative images and connotations of Islam. While it is only natural for Muslims to want to present Islam in a positive light, there is a difference between this and ignoring or cutting off any and all negative associations and practices as not Islamic.

According to my argument, islamophilia is a response to criticism of Islam and is often taken up by some Muslims as a way to show 'true' Islam as loving, peaceful, liberal, democratic, and as promoting equality, while condemning the 'other' Islam as fundamentalist, violent, undemocratic, and as oppressive to women. Using Shryock's

(2010) definition of islamophilia I examine whether Muslims in this study construct philic accounts of Islam and if so, how they accomplish this.

Ethnicization of Religious Identity

Another phenomenon many scholars (including Bayart, Baumann, Duderijia, and Eid) have recently pointed out is the ethnicization of religious identity. According to Hammond and Warner, in some immigrant minority religious groups a process of ethnic fusion occurs in which religion becomes a foundation of ethnicity (Duderijia, 2008). According to Duderijia (2008), ethnicity and religion become difficult to separate out from each other. Similarly, Bloul (1996) describes the process of ethnicization of religion as involving linking a specific population with distinct cultural characteristics. In Bloul's (1996) work with Muslims in France, she argues that the dynamics of collective identity are extremely gendered. She emphasizes that for some "Islam has become the main resource and guarantor of a marginalized and ethnicized androcentric collective identity" (Bloul, 1996, pg.243). While Bloul focuses on gender as central to the process of ethnicization, other scholars such as Hegland (2002) and Eid (2007) have instead emphasized the importance discrimination plays in the ethnicization of religion.

In his discussion of Arab immigrants to Canada, Eid (2007) points out that prejudice and discrimination of Arab Muslims have made it difficult for Muslim Arab Canadians to separate their religious and ethnic identities. According to Eid (2007), Muslim youth in Canada often use Islam as an ethnic identity marker. In this way, Islam is not a "fixed set of religious rituals and behavioural rules but rather as a medium for

the assertion of a distinct ethnoreligious identity that can be downplayed or emphasized depending on the context...for them, religious membership is more than merely believing in God and observing rituals; it becomes harnessed to the production of ethnic boundaries” (Eid, 2007, pg.41).

The notion of ethnicization of religion came from Jewish studies when it became clear that the religious basis of Jewish identity was decreasing, while its social, cultural, and ideological bases remained strong (Eid, 2007). Gans (1994) called this phenomenon ‘symbolic religious identity’, which I will discuss more fully in the next subsection.

Cultural/Symbolic Identity

Symbolic religiosity is defined by Gans (1994) as “the consumption of religious symbols apart from regular participation in a religious culture or in religious organizations, for the purpose of expressing feelings of religiosity and religious identification” (pg.577). In other words, for Gans (1994), symbolic religiosity involves the separation of religious affiliation from observance. I disagree with his implication that those with a symbolic religiosity do not observe any of the rites and practices of their religious affiliation. In fact, Eid (2007) has found that many Muslim youth who attend activities at the mosque are not necessarily devout but use the mosque, and those activities that occur within it, as a means of maintaining a strong connection to their ethnic and cultural background.

Haji et al. (2011) also question Gans’ (1994) assumption that cultural Judaism does not involve ritual observance. They argue that many cultural Jews hold the

following as extremely important to their Jewish affiliation: Jewish literature, Yiddish and Hebrew, music, food, art, etc (Haji et al., 2011). Haji et al (2011) also point out that cultural Jews often use Jewish holidays as a means of connecting with family and community rather than the traditional use of expressing religious adherence. Clearly for Haji et al (2011), unlike for Gans (1994), symbolic religiosity may include participation.

In light of Haji et al. (2011) and Eid's (2007) findings, perhaps, instead of a separation of religious identification from observance as Gans (1994) suggested, we should think of symbolic religiosity as religious affiliation with a focus on ethnic and cultural background. This view of symbolic religiosity does not rule out the range of religious beliefs and practices that individuals may hold even if they only identify themselves as symbolically or culturally religious.

Other scholars have also emphasized the importance symbolic religiosity plays. Haji et al (2011) argue that cultural identity is important for many reasons including maintaining cultural values and behaviours and providing a sense of group membership. Similarly,

According to Waters, the main advantage of a symbolic identity is that it provides a sense of belonging to an imagined, and therefore costless, community. Indeed, because no commitments or obligations are required from an imagined community, symbolic ethnicity becomes a convenient identity marker and meaning provider that does not threaten American values such as individuality and flexibility (Eid, 2007, pg.32).

Leman agrees, arguing that symbolic religiosity is used to affirm an original culture, maintain it, and resist the host society's culture (Duderijia, 2008).

Duderijia (2008) also points out that according to Leman, "among second and third generations of Muslim immigrants religion will be increasingly used as a modulator for the development of a meta or supra-ethnic, or what we would refer to as religion-based identity" (pg.7). In fact, Moghissi et al (2009) found that there is a significant number of Muslims who self-identify as culturally Muslim but not necessarily as religiously Muslim. These cultural Muslims, Rahnema (2006) and Moghissi et al. (2009) argue, are often ignored by both religious Muslims and non-Muslims. I would also argue that research on cultural Muslims is relatively lacking compared to that on practicing Muslims and thus I attempt to include cultural Muslims in this study and further to explore their particular identity constructions.

Summary

The above discussion is evidence of the continued debate surrounding the topic of religious identities. While early definitions viewed identity as stable, constant, and given, many scholars now reject this view, arguing for a more fluid notion of identity. These scholars argue that identity is a never-ending process of formation and reformation. Furthermore, this approach views identity as dynamic, multidimensional, and situational. While some scholars argue that identities are often ascribed, others argue that individuals choose their identities. I argue for a less extreme position, one that acknowledges the agency individuals have in their identity formation but that also recognizes that this is limited by socio-cultural forces. As we have seen, factors such as

gender and negative perceptions influence the kinds of identities that are created. I also discussed strategies of combating these negative perceptions. These strategies included the culture-religion separation, islamophilia, ethnicization of religious identities, and creating a cultural/symbolic identity. Using a multifaceted approach to religious identities as dynamic and situational, as both formed from the outside and from within, as influenced by many factors, and as involved in both boundary making as well as community making, I will explore how Muslims in St. John's negotiate perceptions of Islam and Muslims and how these perceptions impact the construction of their religious identities. Further, do Muslims in St. John's use any of the strategies discussed above to combat negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims? Having situated my research questions in the existing literature, the next chapter describes the methodological approach undertaken.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In the previous chapter I situated my questions concerning how perceptions of Islam and Muslims impact the religious identities of Muslims in St. John's in existing literature on religious identities. This chapter outlines my methodological approach to answering these questions and the techniques used for data collection. I also discuss the challenges and limitations of this research and method. Finally, I describe the data analysis process and the characteristics of my data sample.

Approach

In order to consider how Muslims construct their identities in everyday life, I examined lived experiences of individuals in St. John's. This approach provides a way to access information on the ways Muslims in St. John's negotiate their identities in everyday life, how they combat perceptions of Islam, and how they imagine themselves in relation to both Canadians and other Muslims.

I adopted a case study approach of Muslims living in St. John's, which allowed me to closely examine my questions, and for rich and detailed data to emerge. As a single mosque community and a small city with little ethnic or religious diversity (Statistics Canada, 2001; Statistics Canada, 2006), Muslims living in St. John's may have a very different experience from Muslims in other parts of Canada. Current research has often over-represented orthodox Muslims and overlooked smaller Canadian cities (see McDonough, 1994; Yousif, 2008; McGowan, 1999; Nagra 2011). Bectovic (2011)

and Jones (2010) have written on these issues and have called for research on non-organized Muslims and communities in rural and small cities. This study will contribute to rectifying these gaps.

My thesis research was conducted in combination with a larger project led by Dr. Selby (Memorial University) with Dr. Beaman (University of Ottawa) as co-investigator. This larger project is part of Strand 2 of the Religion and Diversity Project on “Religion in the Everyday: Negotiating Islam in St. John’s, NL”. The project began in November 2011 following public talks by Dr. Selby and Dr. Beaman in April 2009 and October 2010 respectively as well as meetings with members of the community and MANAL executives in June 2011. I worked as one of the research assistants on this project and was responsible for transcribing interviews, recruiting participants, and conducting interviews. I was able to carve out my own research questions separate but related to the larger project and to use the data collected for the larger project for my own thesis research. Most of the recruitment and interview work I engaged in for this project was done during a month long stay in the city in October 2012.

All the interviews were semi-structured personal interviews conducted with Muslims living in St. John’s, Newfoundland. These in-depth interviews touched on a number of topics including: religious practices, religious beliefs, changes in religious identity, negative experiences (or lack thereof) due to religious identity, and accounts of negotiating religious identity in various situations (i.e. at work, school, in restaurants, in homes of non-Muslims and/or Muslims). Ethical clearance for this

research was obtained through both the University of Ottawa as well as Memorial University.

In total 49 interviews (with 54 participants) were conducted between April 2012 and December 2012. For my thesis research I used a data set of 30 interviews, 12 of which I conducted myself. The remaining 18 interviews used in this sample were conducted by Dr. Selby and/or Dr. Beaman and transcribed by myself. This method for choosing my sample ensured that I did not simply choose those interviews that best suited my argument as well as being practical in that I was more knowledgeable of the data because I had either done the interview myself or had transcribed it. However this method of choosing my sample (as well as due to the actual design of this research project) meant that the data may not be representative of the entire Muslim population in St. John's, Newfoundland. Nor am I able to know how representative the sample is. Regardless, I am not making claims of representativeness but rather I am interested in the stories of these individuals.

Data Collection Techniques

As mentioned above data was collected through interviews and the interviews I conducted took place during a month long stay in the city in October 2012. During this time I also engaged in participant observation work within the community. Due to the single-mosque nature of St. John's, formal Islamic activities were centralized in one place, making it easier for me as a researcher to locate and recruit active community members. As a university student myself, I was able to easily insert myself into the MSA activities and my presence, albeit a new phenomenon, was readily accepted by MSA

members. Over the course of my stay in St. John's I regularly attended Friday prayers held on MUN campus and visited the mosque. Attending prayers allowed me to get a sense of the active community members and the issues that are important to them. Word of a new female attending Friday prayers at the university chapel spread quickly and this gossip often facilitated my introduction to other Muslims in the city. In addition to Friday prayers I also attended other events in the community such as a BBQ meet-and-greet organized by the MSA and pick-up soccer games. These activities allowed me to collect more information about the experiences of Muslims in St. John's and also aided in the recruitment of participants.

Importantly, recruitment from MSA activities (in comparison to recruitment from Friday prayers) yielded a more diverse sample as some participants attended for cultural or community reasons rather than religious ones. Furthermore, I used a snowball sampling technique to recruit those who may not be involved in Muslim organizations and/or institutions. This was essential in order to ensure I did not over-represent those with high religious commitment and high levels of involvement in Islamic organizations and/or institutions.

As mentioned previously, my data sample was supplemented with interviews from Selby's larger project. Selby recruited participants in a number of different ways from me and this contributed to a more diverse sample of participants. For instance, she was able to recruit many participants from her contacts with MANAL and the mosque who tended to be older than those I recruited. Additionally, Selby recruited several participants through personal contacts, which yielded individuals who were on

the fringes of the community, often less religious, and had little to no involvement with Islamic institutions and/or organizations. The final organization through which she recruited participants was the Association for New Canadians. The Association for New Canadians works with a large sub-Saharan Muslim refugee population. This demographic was important in order to ensure that the project was not solely relying on recruitment through Islamic organizations and/or institutions. Combining the above techniques (participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and secondary use of data) resulted in a diverse and rich data set. The next section explores the characteristics of the data sample, who these participants are, and what their backgrounds are.

Who Are St. John's Muslims?

As previously mentioned, 30 participants were included in my research sample. These individuals varied in age, education, country of origin, time spent living in St. John's, and religious identity. In this section I give a brief overview of the characteristics of my participants.

Participants ranged in age from 20 years old to 71 years old, with an average age of 32. Sixteen males and 14 females were included and eight of these women wore hijab (no males wore any visible religious signs). Of the 30 participants, 26 were university educated (19 at the graduate level). Furthermore, at least 15 of them were currently students. This is not unreasonably high considering at least half of the membership at the mosque is students (MANAL, n.d.). Two participants can be categorized as being 1.5-generation (in other words they immigrated to Canada before

or during their early teenage years) while 26 were 1st generation immigrants. Two participants were born in Canada to Christian families and converted to Islam as adults. In addition, there was one convert who emigrated from a non-Muslim majority country.

In terms of country of origin the participants came from an extremely diverse background. The most common countries of origin (at three participants each) are Pakistan, Jordan, and Iraq. A little over half of the participants are from the Middle East (from countries including; Pakistan, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, Iran, Palestine, and the United Arab Emirates), while about half that number are from Asia (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, and India). A few participants are from Africa (Sierra Leone and Ethiopia) and a few were born in Canada and grew up in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Of those who immigrated, about half are newcomers to St. John's (in other words they moved to St. John's less than five years ago). About eight participants have been in St. John's between five and nine years while only six participants have been in St. John's for over 10 years. Those immigrating to St. John's usually cited education as the primary reason. A significant number also stated job opportunities as the reason for moving to St. John's.

It is also important to add that the participants included in this study varied in the way they practiced Islam, the degree of religiosity, and how they identified themselves religiously. By the latter I mean whether they identified as practicing Muslims or not. Five participants in this sample called themselves non-practicing and/or cultural Muslims.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed by conducting discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is a broad methodology generally involving the close analysis of texts and interactions. Scholars such as Bourdieu, Giddens, and Foucault (to name a few) have been influential in this methodological approach. According to Fairclough, discourse analysis “sees texts and interactions as part of the material processes of social life, or as materialities in which social life is ongoingly produced, reproduced and changed. Social analysis therefore should include analysis of the complex process which go in texts and interactions, and CDA [critical discourse analysis] offers ways of analyzing the latter which connect them to the wider social process” (2001, pg.26-27). In my research, discourse analysis was used in order to examine the particular language used by Muslims in St. John’s to speak about both themselves, their lives, and about others. Furthermore, this approach allowed me to explore how Muslims in St. John’s respond to perceptions of them and how these responses construct a certain identity and particular image of Islam.

The process of data analysis went hand in hand with each step of the research. The research questions and project structure impacted the data collected and vice versa. Interview transcriptions were done manually by listening to each interview and typing the conversation in computer files. I then read the transcriptions several times prior to manually coding them. I coded the interviews several times, first broadly and then more and more specifically. I labeled discourse based on broad coding themes such as religious identity, practices, beliefs, attitudes, interactions with others,

negotiations (with work, school, etc.), and policy recommendations. I then recoded these themes for more specific subthemes. At this point I coded a final time but only for those subthemes that were relevant to my particular questions. This was necessary to keep the scope of my project manageable.

After coding the data, three overarching themes became apparent that were relevant to how Muslims in St. John's construct their religious identities in relation to perceptions of them from both Muslims and non-Muslims. These three themes are as follows: (1) perceptions of Islam and Muslims, (2) strategies in negotiating perceptions, and (3) impact on religious identities. These themes will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Negotiating Religious Identities

Introduction

In previous chapters I outlined my research as focusing on the perceptions of Islam that Muslims in St. John's face, how they negotiate these perceptions, and what impact this may have on their religious identities. I now turn to the results of my research, which I have organized into three sections as follows: (1) perceptions of Islam and Muslims, (2) strategies in negotiating perceptions, and (3) impact on religious identities.

First, the perceptions of Islam and Muslims held by non-Muslims and Muslims according to my participants is explored. I examine the 'harmless' curiosity of non-Muslims, which Muslims in St. John's were often faced with. I also discuss the expectations participants felt from both non-Muslims and Muslims in St. John's.

Second, I consider the strategies that Muslims in St. John's employ in negotiating perceptions and expectations. I explore how Muslims in St. John's use education as a primary strategy against negative perceptions and ignorance. Further, I discuss the role of ambassador and representative with which many participants engage in. A related strategy is that of islamophilia, which involves employing philic accounts of Islam as a strategy to combat phobic accounts and discrimination. Another strategy I examine is conforming to the expectations of other Muslims. This was seen by many participants as a way to ensure their continued acceptance within the Muslim community. The last strategy I discuss is that of challenging expectations and perceptions of Islam and Muslims by revealing personal stories and lived practices.

Finally, considering the perceptions Muslims in St. John's face and the strategies they employ in negotiating these perceptions, I examine the impact on their religious identities. I explore how Muslims in St. John's often increase their knowledge of Islam in order to educate others. An increase in awareness and affiliation with a Muslim identity is also discussed. Further, this increase in Muslim identity is often linked with an increase in religiosity and increase in orthodox practices. The final impact on religious identity I will examine is that of distancing from Islam and a Muslim identity. This distancing was done by either switching between religious and ethnic groups or, more extremely, by shedding a religious identity and instead identifying as a cultural Muslim.

Perceptions and of Islam and Muslims

There has been much attention post 9/11 to negative perceptions of Islam and attitudes towards Muslims both in academia and popular discourse. In this section I examine whether Muslims in St. John's experienced negative perceptions, attitudes, and actions. Further, I explore whether participants felt non-Muslims and other Muslims had certain perceptions and/or expectations of Islam and Muslims.

9/11, Islamophobia, & Perceptions

As mentioned previously, islamophobia (while existing well before 9/11) increased dramatically post 9/11 and entered the vocabulary of everyday Canadian citizens (Allen, 2010). Further, scholars such as Zama (2010) have noted the Muslims often cite 9/11 as having a major impact on their lives due to an increase in hostility directed towards them by non-Muslims. However, in my research with Muslims in St.

John's, 9/11 was rarely mentioned, was hardly ever a focus of discourse, and did not seem to have any significant impact on their lives. In fact, those who mentioned 9/11 argued that non-Muslims were extremely supportive and reached out to Muslims in St. John's. Akter's study with Muslim women in St. John's similarly found that "participants generally do not feel socially ostracized because of their religious choices and that a sense of ecumenism and a greater understanding of Islam were fostered following 9/11 amongst local people and the participants in this study" (2010, pg. 101).

While islamophobia (by which I mean anti-Muslim ideology and actions including hostility, discrimination, harassment, etc.) was not often experienced by many of the participants in this study, many felt that there was a widespread negative perception of Muslims and Islam in St. John's and indeed in Canada. This is not surprising considering the vast literature on the subject of negative perception of Islam and Muslims, which was discussed in Chapter 2. Indeed, for McDonough,

The most serious problem Muslims suffer from in Canada is the negative stereotyping about Islam which is promoted through the Canadian media, and which is pervasive. Muslims may differ among themselves as to how conservative or liberal they might be on issues like the dress of women, or as the nature of their religious practice, but they all suffer greatly from this negative stereotyping. They all seek ways to combat it (1990, pg,6).

I disagree with McDonough regarding the extent that negative stereotyping leads to 'suffering' among Muslims as most participants in this study did not note any great suffering. However, most participants were affected in terms of their responses to negative perceptions and the impact on their religious identity. Thus, I do agree that

negative perceptions remain a significant issue and that Muslims deal with negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims in their daily lives.

There was a sense from participants in this study that non-Muslims in St. John's, and in Canada more generally, perceived Muslims and Islam in a negative way. I first met Rabi when he was travelling between St. John's (where he worked) and the United States (where his family lived). His unique situation allowed him to make some interesting observations. While he insists he is more comfortable in Canada compared to the United States, he argues that in Canada there is still a widespread and accepted negative perception of Muslims. Akeem had similar concerns, which he voiced to me over coffee one morning. He felt that people associate Islam with terrorism, extremism, and gender inequality. Many participants spoke about their frequent experiences with non-Muslim locals staring and/or asking questions about their religious garb, beliefs, and practices. For participants, this was often thought of as mere curiosity and relatively harmless albeit bothersome.

These experiences were particularly felt by veiling women in St. John's, although this was said to be improving in recent years as the Muslim population and number of women who wear hijab increases. When I sat down with Raja for her interview she had just recently started veiling. An otherwise outgoing and confident woman, she was self-conscious about her recent decision. She says,

So now I'm a little more comfortable but it still bothers me at times. It certainly does bother me at times. I'm still not 100% comfortable because I just feel how it's going to be perceived...because of the hijab. I think that its, that people, I

don't know it may not be true but people may take particular stance towards me without hijab and it may be a layer of prejudice that comes between me and other people but it's not stand out, I can't say that it really stands out [prejudice] in my experience (Raja).

Dalal, who is a student at Memorial University, is similarly concerned that people perceive hijabi women in a negative way. I spoke with her one afternoon in the Student Union building at MUN. We had met at a MSA event the previous weekend and, as we were both in the middle of our Masters degrees, we had much in common. I asked her about her feelings towards the hijab and she responded saying she feels she should wear hijab but that she is worried about people's perceptions and how that might impact her academic career.

Because of people's perception just kind of scare me a little bit...But right now I'm kind of afraid like I'm being judged. Like if I wear hijab do I, you know, do I get to go into great universities? If I want to apply for my PhD program would people be willing to accept me if I wear hijab? Would I be publishing as much as other people who don't wear hijab? That kind of thing scares me a bit (Dalal).

The visibility of hijabi participants in particular resulted in many questioning what they were wearing and why. One woman described this as "living in a glass bubble. People do look...So living within this place where people can look at me from the outside" (Amira). By this Amira meant that people often observed her and automatically made assumptions about her while she could not do the same to them due to their lack of visibility.

Other participants experienced more overt islamophobia, though almost none of them emphasized these experiences as important. Instead, many of them downplayed the experience. This downplaying of negative experience may be due to the rarity of such instances and the participants' generally positive experiences with non-Muslims in St. John's. Generally speaking participants felt that people in St. John's were very friendly, although this did not always translate into a positive perception of Muslims and Islam. Thus it bears mentioning the kinds of experiences these individuals had with non-Muslims in St. John's.

I am reminded of Dina's experience with a non-Muslim custodian who worked at MUN. Dina, a student at Memorial University who wears hijab, assured me that she had a mostly positive experience living in residence at MUN. However, on one occasion she went to gather supplies from the residence for a project when a worker in the residence asked her why she needed all of the supplies and if she was building a bomb. As I noted earlier, to Dina this was a rather insignificant experience that she laughed at. Turning the comment into a joke seemed to lessen the blow and thus Dina was able to brush it off as not significant. However, she does cite this instance as an example of some people's perception of Muslims. Other participants had similar stories. Sitting in Tim Horton's with Sheila and her husband, they animatedly spoke of their positive experiences with St. John's locals. Further, Sheila downplayed the one negative experience she could remember. They had been camping and her husband was praying outside the tent when she overheard some rather shocking negative comments from the man over in the next site. Sheila waved this experience off maintaining that the man was simply ignorant.

Unlike Sheila and Dina who did not seem to place a great emphasis on their negative experiences with non-Muslims in St. John's, Nadir spoke at length about his negative experiences and seemed to have a significant impact on his life. Nadir is a PhD student at MUN who arrived in Canada about 20 years ago, nine of which have been spent in St. John's. He recounted his numerous difficulties with the university administration that he felt were not experienced by non-Muslims. Nadir felt that his continuation in the PhD program was being blocked and that his appeal should be dealt with by a third party. However, Nadir was the only participant that seemed to be significantly impacted by negative experiences with non-Muslims. This was perhaps due to the consequences that his experience had for his educational career.

The other participant who spoke at length about her experience with islamophobia was Sabrina. Sabrina, a recent convert to Islam, described an ex-employee who wrote negative letters and threatening messages calling her a terrorist. While clearly upsetting, this experience was ultimately downplayed by Sabrina as an instance of ignorance. She reasons that if she were not Muslim they would find something else to target her with.

For many participants, it was difficult for them to pinpoint the key factor in the hostility of others. They wondered if it was religion, race, or the fact that they were seen as immigrants. These multiple points of discrimination overlap and are intimately entwined. Indeed, scholars such as Cesari (2011), Helbling (2012), and Meer & Modood (2009) have questioned whether islamophobia can be separated from racism and xenophobia. However, according to many participants, religion was often visible

and/or known by perpetrators and thus religion was likely a major factor, although other factors may certainly have contributed.

Having explored the perceptions of Islam held by many non-Muslims in St. John's, what did participants see as the cause of such misunderstanding and/or hostility? Some participants linked negative perceptions and islamophobia to the media. Sheila says, "So for so many years in this province, a lot of people only believe what they see on television, hear on the radio, or read in the newspapers". My conversation with Laila in the study room of the mosque progressed in a similar manner. Bobbing her head impatiently up and down, she contends "I tell them please ask me about my religion...Otherwise you won't know. You will only know from the media. I don't want that". In these cases the media is seen as a source of negative and/or inaccurate information of Islam and Muslims.

However, while some participants pointed to local and national media as the cause, and others to terrorist acts, most simply blamed a lack of education as the primary reason. For instance, while Sheila (see above) argues that people in Newfoundland often take the media's image of Muslims as fact, she points to education as the real issue, "For me I already know that lack of education is the prime thing. Because people here, because of the lack of education and because of the lack of diversity". Certainly St. John's has historically been dominated by a Christian population and, despite increased immigration to the province, remains relatively homogenous (Statistics Canada, 2006). Perhaps due to the lack of education about

Islam and little exposure to Muslims, many participants noted that individuals in St. John's had certain expectations of what and who Muslims are.

Expectations

I now turn to a discussion of the expectations that often come with Muslim identities, whether these are chosen or not. There is often an expectation of orthodoxy (i.e. pray five times a day, do not drink, only eat halal meat, veil, etc) and that all Muslims practice in the same way. Hajoabri (2006) argues that there is often an assumption of Islam as monolithic and that "the dominant society perceives all Muslims alike and reinforces an Islamic identity" (pg.223). For Eid (2007) identities are constructed both in relation to processes of outside labeling and representations, "whereby the majority group characterizes and perceives members of the categorized group" (pg.23) and in relation to processes of internal boundaries where a group establishes a collective self through shared memory and ideas. Muslims in St. John's experienced both of these processes, outside labeling and internal boundaries.

External Expectations

Individuals I spoke with often felt that non-Muslims had certain expectations of what and who Muslims are. Often these expectations were based on extreme difference. According to scholars such as Hall (1996) and Diderijia (2008) this may be because construction of a self-identity (in this case that of the non-Muslim) is largely based on a notion of difference from an 'other'. Rutherford (1990), Boyarin (2006), Akpınar (2006), and Hall (1996) similarly argue that religious identities are formed by separation of self from other. This separation and identity based on difference often

leads to homogenization of the 'other'. Moghissi et al. (2009) point out that host countries tend to homogenize Islam and Muslims and Bissoondath (1994) and Bannerji (2000) note that multiculturalism policies like those in Canada have promoted certain kinds of identities: a monolithic one based on tradition and culture. Furthermore, according to Khan, "the multicultural paradigm assumes pre-given, static, and undifferentiated notions of community" (2002, pg.313).

Many Muslims I spoke with perceived this homogenizing and static definition of Islam by non-Muslims. Interviewees noted that non-Muslims had an expectation of orthodoxy. Akeem had experienced this first hand upon arriving in St. John's. As I sat across from him he shook his head incredulously, recounting how, when he first came to Memorial for his Master's degree, his supervisor had assumed he was Muslim and further that he would need a prayer space.

I learned there, after coming here that my supervisor, he thought, like he he knew that I was coming from the Middle East he, so he just assumed that I'm a Muslim. And then he went around like where I work ... he was just telling people that "oh I have a Muslim student coming" and he suggested like, I don't know if he did actually or if he said in front of people, that he's going to suggest to the administration to provide a prayer room for me. And then people start being mad and then saying like "why?" and he's like cuz "we know he's a Muslim and they need a room to pray". And people are saying like "we're Catholic or we're Christians, no one asked us if we wanted a room. This is discriminating against

us". And there was a big controversy about it. So when I came here... I said "oh oh I'm not, I'm not Muslim" (Akeem).

Amira, a self-proclaimed non-practicing Muslim in her 30s, experienced similar expectations of orthodoxy.

The way they assume it is the hardest part. They assume it by making judgments. That's how I know they've assumed I'm Muslim. I, when they voiced the judgment. For example, "oh you drink!" You know. So somebody says to me "oh you drink" is insinuating the fact that I'm Muslim, how could I be drinking right now. So that means they've already assumed I'm Muslim and now I'm not following the rules of Islam. So that sucks (Amira).

During my interview with Maira, a highly practicing Muslim and graduate student, she brought up an article that was recently published in the university newspaper in which a student wrote in asking about how Muslim women can wear both hijab and skinny jeans and wasn't this a contradiction? Maira was appalled by the insinuation that this was a contradiction and she spoke at length about this article,

And then it's like that "oh" I just say "oh my God". I don't know how to say but actually I feel that they don't understand it. Yah they don't understand. Because in [her home country] we can still wear the hijab but you have to make sure that what you wear is not uh over, I mean it's not too exposed...it's not necessary to wear the abaya...I was so shocked. Are they talking about me (laughs)?

For her there is no contradiction between wearing hijab and wearing skinny jeans and the suggestion that there is, was extremely troubling. There was an expectation that Muslims who wear hijab should not be wearing skinny jeans and the idea that 'modern' clothing is not compatible with Islam. Maira felt this suggestion was absurd yet she was also worried that this was what non-Muslims were thinking of her.

Other participants had more direct experiences with others' expectations of Islam and Muslims. Akbar, a practicing Muslim who immigrated to St. John's more than 15 years ago, noted interactions with non-Muslims in which their expectations of Muslims became clear. He recounts, "I came across this question to my coworkers like, "hey [Akbar], you are praying, why they are not?" I was like, "It's their faith. That's how they believe, you know? You've been taught to go Sunday church, do you go?" They're like "no". I was like "Same"" (Akbar). His coworkers clearly had a rather orthodox idea of Islamic practice. They expected all Muslims to pray five times a day and when some of their Muslim coworkers did not live up to this expectation they were confused.

It is clear from these examples that non-Muslims in St. John's often had expectations of orthodoxy when it came to Muslims. However, many Muslims I spoke with also experienced expectations from other Muslims.

Internal Expectations

While participants often experienced expectations from non-Muslims, for many the more troubling expectations came from within the Muslim community in St. John's. Ahmed (2011) notes those involved in defining Islam and determining the boundaries of beliefs and practices tend to be relatively orthodox in their practice. According to

her, this may lead to some Muslims feeling an expectation of orthodoxy from other Muslims (Ahmed, 2011). Indeed many Muslims in St. John's experienced these expectations from other Muslims.

This phenomenon is most clearly illustrated by Alina. As a 40-something professional, Alina was still struggling with her religious commitment. She says, "it's only, the more, when I got to inquire about my own religious identity by myself and through encounters with well educated Muslim people either in Turkey or in Canada that I came to realize that I wasn't Muslim enough" (Alina). Siddra similarly felt like she was an outsider around some Muslims. Sitting across from her in her new home (she had just recently gotten married) she spoke of her family,

I feel like I'm, like I don't belong there because, you know, it's just everybody looks so different- they cover their hair... I just don't feel that, you know, I am like them anymore just because, yeah. Cause all of my cousins growing up they cover their hair, so I think, sometimes I feel like I am the outsider (Siddra).

For both Siddra and Alina, other Muslims' practices and expectations weighed heavily on their self-identity as Muslim. Further, Siddra feels she has to negotiate her identity as a Muslim at the mosque because she feels she has to wear hijab whenever she goes there, even though she does not want to. "I will wear scarf and- as much as I want to just go there without scarf but I guess that's negotiating" (Siddra). Unlike the other women I spoke to, Siddra seemed to feel some pressure from her husband to be more practicing. This may simply be because of the rather significant gap in their level of

religiosity that did not appear to be the case for other couples interviewed. Siddra, who calls herself liberal, explains,

And now that my husband and, you know, he's a bit conservative as well and he, you know, he does not impose like you have to wear it but it's, you know, like it's a little here and there, like sometimes he said something that makes you "ah man I feel bad now". Like you know? So things like that so, yeah.

Akeem, a cultural Muslim and international student from the Middle East, experiences expectations of orthodoxy on a more practical, everyday level. He recounted one example to me one afternoon in between his busy school schedule,

I went to a pizza place and the guy was from the Middle East. And I said "can I have, can I have a vegetarian pizza". And he gave me a pizza with chicken. And I said "no, I want a vegetarian pizza". And he said "it's not pork". He just assumed that I'm Muslim so I [am] ordering vegetarian because I don't want to eat [non-halal] meat. And I said "no, I'm actually vegetarian". It's it's so yah it gets a bit annoying (Akeem).

Akeem experienced these kinds of expectations from other Muslims from the moment he arrived in St. John's. He said that when he first arrived the international students' office assumed he was Muslim and told him about a welcoming event happening that night. When he went it turned out to be for Muslim students. When attendees went to pray he politely refused, as he doesn't practice. This led to uncomfortable questions and a chilly response from a couple of the students who expected him to pray.

Habib also feels many Muslims in St. John's don't understand him. With his jet-black skin and an affinity for beer, he certainly does not fit the typical Muslim stereotype. He contends, "...in terms of understanding me as a person it's not there and sometimes I think they wonder "how come this guy's Muslim? He looks very unlike [us] and he looks like a hip hop [artist], like one of those guys on television"" (Habib). Habib clearly feels that other Muslims have certain expectations of who Muslims are and can be and that this does not seem to include him.

Both Faizah and Ramzi talk about this expectation in terms of new immigrants to St. John's. Faizah is a cultural Muslim who has lived in St. John's for about 10 years. Now a Master's student, I met her at the university pub to discuss her experience living in St. John's. She points out, "Despite the fact that they're [new immigrants] strangers, we still feel that pressure from them to have to behave in a certain way" (Faizah). Ramzi, a 1.5-generation immigrant, finds a difference between the way he practices and those who have recently arrived. An otherwise confident young adult, he worries that newcomers judge the way he practices and thinks he's practicing wrongly.

Other interviewees shared this sense that other Muslims in St. John's judged them as not practicing Islam correctly. For example, as mentioned earlier, Raja started wearing hijab later in life after a tragic loss in her family. She is still somewhat uncomfortable with wearing hijab and feels that other Muslims may judge the way she wears it,

My hijab is not like the perfect hijab. I think people who wear hijab think I'm kind of not doing it the right way. I just cover my head you know, sometimes a

little bit is showing and so I'm not quite, I don't do it quite the same way as people who wear the hijab do. So I think it's a little bit more relaxed. So not many people would call it hijab but I do cover my head (Raja).

Clearly Raja feels that there is a certain expectation when it comes to veiling practices and worries that the way she veils does not live up to that expectation.

As mentioned previously, Dalal also struggles with the idea of wearing hijab. In my interview with her she was concerned about how other Muslims view her because she does not veil. She says some people in the Muslim community,

...look down on me because...I'm not wearing hijab but that doesn't mean that I don't pray, I don't fast, and all that stuff...But um I feel like people kind of look down on me not wearing hijab. But like that kind of thing is pretty much, like right now I don't really care as much because I know where I stand. Um but it's just you know, it's kind of like, you, I feel a bit embarrassed like going to Muslim gathering and not wearing hijab sometimes (Dalal).

Further, Dalal said she felt that wearing hijab is expected in the Muslim community in St. John's and that she is judged for not following these expectations.

There was one time we had another girl who's looking for a place to live and I happened to have a room, an empty room. And then well I was offering to that person who is in charge of this girl. And then she had to ask another friend of mine who's wearing hijab, asking her "well is [Dalal] okay in terms of religion? Like does she, is she a practicing Muslim sort of thing. Because I don't want this

new girl you know to get influenced, like to get influence of how she behaves in Canada” sort of thing. Like you know, might be a Westernized behaviour, I don’t know (Dalal).

In this account, by not following the expectation of veiling, one’s religiosity and commitment to Islam is questioned by other Muslims.

Counter-Discourses

Despite the above accounts of expectations coming from other Muslims, a few participants felt that there was little pressure in St. John’s especially compared to their home countries. Laila, a long time resident of St. John’s who emigrated from South Asia, does not wear hijab and, in fact, frowns upon it. When asked if she felt pressure from the community to wear hijab she responds, “No. No. Well like two thirds people are there, they talk like that, you know”(Laila). While she does not experience these expectations herself, she acknowledges that some Muslims in St. John’s do hold expectations of Muslims’ practices. According to Ahmed, a newcomer from the Middle East, there is much less pressure to practice in an orthodox manner in St. John’s compared to his home country. As a Sunni Muslim, Ahmed told me he had experienced much discrimination and pressure in his home country. He says, “Actually I am so excited to be here because in [his home country] there is a lot of pressure...on all people...” (Ahmed). He practices less since arriving in Canada and felt he only practiced because others around him did. Now that he is in Canada and many of his friends are not religious, he does not practice anymore. Perhaps Ahmed’s lack of connection with other practicing Muslims accounts for the absence of expectations of orthodoxy.

Similarly, Dabir, another newcomer from the Middle East, felt pressure in Muslim-majority countries to practice in an orthodox manner. He recounted an instance when other Muslims approached him and commented on the fact that he and his girlfriend were standing too close together. On another occasion someone commented on why he was eating lunch during Ramadan. He said he often felt like he had to hide his lack of religiosity around other Muslims when he was in Muslim-majority countries. Although Dabir does not feel like he needs to hide his religious identity in Canada, he still voiced that there were expectations of religiosity put on him by some Muslims in St. John's. For example, I met Dabir at an MSA event in mid October 2012. As we chatted it became clear that he was unaware that the event was an Islamic one. Other attendees assumed he was Muslim and that he would pray with them.

Therefore, while not all interviewees experienced expectations and/or pressure from other Muslims to practice in an orthodox manner, they often acknowledged that some expectations did exist. Further, as the above discussion shows, many Muslims in St. John's did experience expectations of orthodoxy from both non-Muslims and other Muslims. Additionally, we saw in this section that while most Muslims in St. John's do not face overt islamophobia, the majority came up against negative perceptions, judgments, questions, and curiosity. The following section will explore how Muslims in St. John's dealt with these perceptions and expectations.

Strategies in Negotiating Perceptions

In the previous section I explored the perceptions and expectations that Muslims in St. John's face. While islamophobia did not play a large role, negative

perceptions of Islam, 'harmless' curiosity, and expectations of orthodoxy were significant experiences for Muslims in St. John's. How do Muslims negotiate perceptions of their faith? What strategies do Muslims in St. John's employ? I illustrate these strategies below, beginning with the primary strategy employed by Muslims in St. John's of education. I also discuss becoming an ambassador or representative as a related strategy. I then turn to a discussion of accommodating other Muslims in order to ensure continued inclusion within the boundaries of the Muslim category. Another boundary making strategy is discussed, which I call the culture-religion separation and the creation of a 'true' Islam. This is also closely related to the strategy of islamophilia, which I also examine. Lastly, I explore a more nuanced strategy of voicing lived practices.

Education of Others

The vast majority of participants (90%) cited the strategy of education in countering negative perceptions of Muslims and Islam. This phenomenon has been paid little attention in scholarly literature. However, some such as Marcotte (2010), Frisina (2010), and Halafoff (2011) touch on the subject if only tangentially. Marcotte (2010) noted that many Muslims in her study with women in Canada were pro-active in providing information about Islam in an attempt to dispel misconceptions. Similarly Frisina (2010) points out that some European Muslims have tended to cultivate a role as an expert on Islam and are involved in the education of the general public. Frisina (2010) calls this a promotion tactic because these educating Muslims promote Islam as peace. For her part, Halafoff (2011) discusses this phenomenon of education in a wider context of a rise in multi-faith engagement in the U.S., the U.K., and Australia post 9/11.

She argues that Muslim communities have been active in their response to rising islamophobia by initiating multi-faith discussions and educational activities in order to attempt to dispel the negative stereotypes and attitudes surrounding Islam and Muslims (Halafoff, 2011). Instead, Muslim communities affirm Islam's commitment to nonviolence and peace building (Halafoff, 2011).

Most respondents in this study saw their education strategies as a reaction to negative experiences such as islamophobia, questionings, comments, and/or judgments. Duderijia (2008) and Khan (2002) have noted similar educational strategies, arguing that discrimination can lead to a reactive religious identity. Moghissi et al (2009) also note that discrimination is one of the most important factors that contribute to identity formation. Alina had interesting input into the use of education as a strategy. Alina is a highly educated woman who moved to Canada more than 10 years ago. When I spoke with her she had just recently decided to veil and this had come with new challenges and an increase in her educational role. She argues that there are two instances in which Muslims use education as a strategy: in instances of ignorance where people do not know about Islam and thus explanation is necessary, and secondly in instances of criticism of Islam thus one feels compelled to defend one's beliefs and practices. Clearly for her, education is not simply to educate but also to defend Islam. Considering this, she says you must do your best to explain and educate. When confronted with these negative experiences, Alina often uses explanations in the form of humour and contends, "using the jargon of Canadian multiculturalism sometimes helps to ease the tension". In this way, she uses the power of the language of the majority to undermine hostility directed towards her and towards Islam.

For some the high frequency of questions, comments, and curiosity of non-Muslims led to a feeling of exhaustion and irritation of having to constantly play the role of educator. Amira in particular felt this exhaustion. As a self described spiritual and non-practicing Muslim she felt irritated at the lack of education of many non-Muslims about the diversity of Muslims. She points out, "I find I use it [education] as a teaching, teachable moments. With people who should know better I get annoyed" (Amira). Further, she laments that it is, "...really annoying to have to explain who you are every two minutes". This feeling was shared by Sabrina who had converted to Islam a couple years ago. As a Newfoundlander, Sabrina felt she understood the curiosity of non-Muslims yet the sheer frequency of questions and comments were difficult for her. She says, "'People are always asking question. Always. I know I should probably be a little more open about it...but it is exhausting. It's like I explain it myself a hundred thousand times...I feel like I should just go do an education seminar" (Sabrina).

Despite the fact that some felt overwhelmed by the number of instances of education moments, others saw this as an important role. When I sat down with Faizah, a cultural Muslim who came to Canada about 10 years ago, she voiced her conviction that education was extremely important. As music blared in the pub we sat in, she says, "I do believe that everybody has an education role" (Faizah). In a much different setting Irfan, an international student from the Middle East reveals, "I'm just sometimes trained to tell people that Islam is not that bad a religion as they think, as the media make it...like your five fingers are not similar, so, which means like one bad Muslim, that doesn't mean like all Muslims are bad".

Evidently, role of education is often not only seen as an option but as a responsibility. Frisina (2010) has also noted this in her research with second generation Italian Muslims. She claimed participants felt a responsibility to provide information about Islam to others (Frisina, 2010). Several participants I spoke with also illustrated this sense of responsibility to educate. As a health professional and academic, Raji explained to me that he is lucky that many individuals he works with are quite educated. However, outside of his workplace he takes an active educator role. He argues, "it's my responsibility to educate them or just remind them. Once they know the truth hopefully, you know, they, I mean they change. If they don't change at least you tried".

Alina also reflects on this responsibility,

So it's also the responsibility of the newcomer to take a role, to play a role in bridging the gaps and filling the gaps. If they don't know much then I can educate myself and help to educate, help my counterparts to educate themselves about Islam.

For Alina and Raji this responsibility to educate was put squarely on the Muslim him/herself.

While both Raji and Alina felt this responsibility to educate was an individual one, others such as Rabi saw this as a responsibility of the Muslim communities. As a manager at a major oil company, Rabi noted he rarely had negative experiences at work and yet he is passionate about the need to combat negative perceptions of Islam. He insists,

So ah it's very easy to blame someone other than yourself, some other- someone other than your own community. I feel that we as a Muslim community need to do a whole lot more to explain ourselves, to interact with the broader society. I think we tend to stay closed minded, if I can use that term, as well as closed. Ah and that's one reason why people don't understand or know a lot about us...So I think we need to do more of an outreach (Rabi).

Still for Rabi, like for Alina and Raji, the responsibility is on Muslim communities to take on educator roles, strive to explain their faith, and to reach out to non-Muslims.

Further, even those who are not visibly Muslim like Dalal feel the responsibility to take on an educator role. For her part Dalal says she is able to use her ability to 'pass' to educate others about Islam as a seemingly third party rather than as a Muslim.

Because I'm not wearing hijab people do not know I'm Muslim and sometimes they have, they make comments about you know Muslims and I feel like I have also a responsibility to explain to them what's the real deal here and why you're wrong and you know how you can view it differently...So trying to approach that in a different way where I don't have to, like, you know, especially identify myself before I explain to you...I can just simply explain to you as an individual not as a Muslim" (Dalal).

It is clear from these numerous examples that the responsibility to educate others about Islam is keenly felt by these Muslims. While some scholars (see Jouili, 2006) may argue this educator role is part of da'wa (the proselytizing or preaching of Islam), none of the Muslims I spoke with referenced da'wa. Apparently theological

motivations did not enter into their rationale for educating others. Instead, education is used as a strategy to dispel misconceptions and negative stereotypes in an effective way. In addition to the strategy of education, many participants also took on a role as ambassador or representative in an attempt to combat negative perceptions.

Becoming Representatives

As we saw in the previous section, Muslims in St. John's often face negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims in their everyday lives. In many cases the response of Muslims in St. John's as well as in other parts of Canada (Marcotte, 2010) and in the U.K., U.S., and Australia (Frisina, 2010; Halafoff, 2011) was to educate others about their faith. For Muslims in St. John's, this role as educator often went hand in hand with becoming representative of Islam. This representative role was often self-appointed but was also imposed upon Muslims in St. John's by others. Each is discussed below in turn.

Self-Appointed Representative

Many Muslims I spoke with in St. John's described themselves as representatives, ambassadors, and/or messengers of their religion. These representative roles were often self-appointed and seen as a positive, albeit a difficult, role. Several scholars (Hall, 1996; Kellner, 1995; and Bayart, 2005) have discussed this public aspect of identity. Peek argues for a three-part model of identity; ascribed, chosen, and declared (Moghissi et al, 2009). For Peek, declared identity is a public identity that may be political and/or in response to a crisis (Moghissi et al, 2009). Similarly, becoming representative is discussed by Moran (2007) and Nagra (2011) as

a response to negative perceptions of one's faith. In a study with evangelical Christian students, Moran (2007) shows how these students felt that their daily actions and behaviours reflected on the evangelical community. Considering this, many evangelical Christian students felt the need to become positive representatives of their religion (Moran, 2007). Another study, conducted by Nagra (2011), illustrates how Muslims in Vancouver and Toronto aimed to be a "positive example of a Muslim in interactions with other Canadians" (pg.434). Furthermore, according to Nagra, "Muslim women became ambassadors for their religion" (2011, pg.435).

In my interview with Dina, a young hijabi woman who attends the local university, she demonstrates this idea of representativeness clearly. She says, "I think of myself as an ambassador of the, that, that religion...if you're nasty to people and everything...then when they think of Islam they go, they equate it to that" (Dina). This sentiment was echoed by Nadia as she glided around the kitchen making us lunch. Her hands busy expertly adding dozens of spices to the pan on the stove, she looks at me over her shoulder, "At the end of the day like if you are a good person, definitely people will ultimately look at you as a person and if you are a bad person they might look at you as a religion, because of the religion you are a bad person" (Nadia). In another kitchen, Siddra also voices her concern that her actions reflect upon Islam and she consciously alters her behaviour because of this. For instance, she does not ask for time off during Ramadan because she does not want others to think she is taking advantage or that she is weak or sick due to fasting. In other words, she wants to give a good impression of Muslims and represent Islam well. Similarly, Raji, a PhD student who arrived in St. John's only a few years ago, feels he is a messenger for Islam.

“In a way I feel I am, I am a messenger of my people. Like I represent like people don’t look at me as average person. Like the next people, the next person. It’s, it makes my, it makes it even more tiring cuz I feel if I do something good people will say well he did good or people may not mention it. But if I do something bad people will say “well he’s a Muslim”. You know, that’s, so I feel, yah you feel that pressure...So you’re the messenger, you’re, you represent you[r] people in some ways. If you go to a Muslim doctor and he’s bad you say well these Muslim doctors are bad” (Raji).

Other participants also felt this pressure to positively represent Islam. Sitting across from me in the MSA office at MUN Wafa discusses this burden. As a veiling Muslim woman, Wafa felt particularly visible and the pressure to represent Islam was keenly felt. She notes,

“It was a lot of pressure, of course. Because you, every one Muslim woman you are representing your religion. And to me, you behaviours, and the way you talk and through your communication...It’s hard initially, you felt really like everything [you did] you were under the microscope that whole time, you know” (Wafa).

Despite this pressure, most participants felt it was worth it and some felt they would be rewarded in the afterlife for their efforts. Furthermore, many interviewees felt that by being representatives of Islam they could actively change others’ perceptions of Islam and Muslims and thus the pressure was worth it.

Changing others' perceptions of Islam was a central reason for becoming representatives. Therefore, representativeness involved active image making of Islam and the Muslim community in St. John's. Alina argued this image making was necessary. When I met her on campus she had clearly put much thought into the topic. Rifling through her purse she pulled out a scrap of paper complete with jot notes. Pointing to one note she states confidently, "the way people react will depend on both Muslims and non-Muslims, we need to present ourselves to the community at large in a way that will ease their, like their possible tension...make clear that there is nothing to be worried about" (Alina).

There was also a concern among some participants that the increasing Muslim population in St. John's may negatively impact the image of the Muslim community. Muhammad, who himself had only been in Canada for one year, repeatedly voiced to me his concern that new Muslim arrivals to St. John's "will be not representing, good representative[s] for Islam". Irfan similarly voiced his concern of an increase in the population of Muslims in St. John's because for him, if one Muslim strays into crime or gets involved in negative activities that would reflect on the whole community. Irfan feared that the media and/or the public would focus on the religion of the wrongdoer rather than on the individual themselves. In this way, the image of the Muslim community and the representation of Islam to the wider St. John's community are of central concern.

Imposed Representativeness

Up until this point I have discussed representativeness as chosen by some Muslims in St. John's through their own agency, albeit often in reaction to others' perceptions of Islam and Muslims. However, it is important to acknowledge that attribution of identities by society still plays a role. Eid (2007) draws attention to this when he argues that identity involves both agency and social ascription. In fact, many scholars (Goodman, 2006; Ali, 2011; and Moghissi et al, 2009) argue that identity construction is a dual process of making and being made. In the case of many Muslims I spoke with, non-Muslims and even other Muslims often imposed a Muslim identity on them. Further, this often led to participants feeling as though others saw them as representative of Islam and/or of all Muslims.

For many participants, their religious garb made them especially vulnerable to others imposing representativeness on them. Gender is clearly a factor as hijabi women are often particularly visible as Muslims. Alina emphasized to me repeatedly that her recent choice to veil had come with a profound visibility. She points out, "...after I decided to wear headscarf I am immediately identified as a Muslim" (Alina). As previously mentioned, this was also felt by Dalal who grapples with wearing hijab for this specific reason, "I feel that wearing hijab is a big piece because that's, I mean, if you see, if you look at a person who wears hijab then you, you know, automatically identify them as Muslim". For Dalal this is both the reason she would like to wear hijab and the reason she is afraid to. Following Shachar (2009), it is clear that these women are active agents in shaping their identities and perceptions of their community despite the often socially ascribed nature of their identities. Thus representativeness is a

complicated process of individual agency and social ascription and is by no means simply one or the other.

Several participants felt that their racial visibility as Arab and/or Middle Eastern resulted in assumptions about their Muslim identity. Many scholars including Duderijia (2008) and Hegland (2002) have noted that ethnicity often becomes inseparable from religion due to discrimination. They argue that discrimination leads to an ethnicization of religion (Duderijia, 2008; Hegland, 2002). Similarly Eid (2007) noted that it is difficult for Arab Muslims to separate religion and ethnicity because of prejudice and discrimination. Many participants in this study felt the entangled nature of ethnicity and religion. As we made our way through the crowded student union building Akeem, a cultural Muslim who attends Memorial University, sighs,

They will always associate me with Islam just because I'm from the Middle East...people will always associate you with Islam. Like even if you're not become religious. But just because that, I dunno, they think that because your family or like you grew up as a Muslim that you always will, you'll always be a Muslim.

Amira also experiences this when others assume that she is Muslim despite her non-religious but spiritual self-identity. She even experiences this from other Muslims who assume that she is Muslim and that she will be able to understand and help them. It "becomes problematic when certain people assume that I have knowledge that I don't have. Like asking me questions, "where can you find halal food"? yah, "I don't know, I don't actually, I don't eat halal"" (Amira). For Habib, it is not his skin colour but

his name that results in an imposed Muslim identity. He identifies as a cultural Muslim, wears no religious symbols or clothing, and is not Middle Eastern however; his name is immediately identified by others as Islamic. In this way, he is often able to 'pass' in his everyday life because "most people won't expect to find Muslims there [Africa]". Yet when he introduces himself others often impose a Muslim identity on him, "I've had one or two experiences where I'll meet people and the first thing they say is "are you Muslim?" and that sort of gets to me. Yah it gets to me a little bit because, because I'm not thinking, like that I'm just thinking it's me" (Habib). This imposed Muslim identity is the reason he thinks about changing his name so he isn't immediately identifiable as Muslim.

From the above examples we can see that many interviewees experienced a socially ascribed Muslim identity imposed by non-Muslims and by other Muslims. For many participants this imposed Muslim identity often led to participants feeling as though others saw them as representative of Islam and/or of all Muslims. As I sat at her kitchen table with yet another steaming cup of chai, Iba describes her experience with her daughter's school,

"I mean when she [her daughter] was going to school, she was the only one, Muslim girl, over there. I think I was going to pick her up every day and drop her with my hijab and everybody knew me. And if they had anything to do about Islam or anything they would approach her...I mean a few times they had some topic about Islam and they ask her to bring something, you know?"

In this way, others imposed representativeness on her daughter. For Iba, unlike for other participants I spoke with, this imposed representativeness was not seen as on the whole negative. Tobias however, did not want to take on the burden of being a Muslim representative for the whole Muslim community in St. John's. Yet people within the Muslim community often imposed this representativeness on him. Running his hands through his hair, which had gone grey long ago, he comments,

...some people ask, "are you Muslim?" you know, so I say "I am Muslim" or somebody says, "Oh we are looking for someone to speak to from [the] Muslim community", "oh you're, you're retired so can you, can we talk to you?". And so I get a call from our executor, "oh everybody's working this reporter wants to talk to somebody, you're available". And I can't say no. Even if I didn't want to project my, my claim I am Muslim, I get forced into being Muslim representative. Which I really want to, it's not, I don't want to carry that burden for the community. But somebody tells you nobody else is available, can you talk to them, then suddenly I become the face of the Muslim community (Tobias).

Similarly, Rabi was asked to speak about Islam to a community group. Initially, Rabi admitted unabashedly that he did not necessarily experience imposed representativeness as negative. However, this changed when becoming representative resulted in him having to answer for all Muslims. Absentmindedly tapping his fingers on the table next to him Rabi recalled,

There was one community group that they wanted me to come talk to them about Muslims, so I did. And this one lady asked me this question and said "you

know can you explain why these three women in Pakistan are being mistreated?" [Another man answered for him] He said before you ask him that question why don't you explain to him why there are so many shelters for battered women in the U.S. And I thought wow this is a really good answer because, you know, what he was trying to point out was that these things happen everywhere. And so, you know, I cannot answer where everything that every Muslim does just like you can't answer where everything that every Canadian does (Rabi).

The above discussion shows that many participants experienced others imposing representativeness on them. Further, both non-Muslims and Muslims in St. John's were involved in imposing a Muslim identity on others. Especially vulnerable were females who wear hijab, racially visible Arab and/or Middle Eastern individuals, and those with identifiably Islamic names. Non-practicing and/or cultural Muslims often found this socially ascribed Muslim identity particularly difficult and frustrating. Further, an imposed Muslim identity often led to becoming representative of Islam, whether or not they wanted this. Unfortunately, some participants felt that imposed representativeness resulted in their having to answer for all Muslims.

While representativeness can be imposed and felt as an unwelcome burden, many participants used their roles as representatives to improve non-Muslim perceptions of Islam. However, what happens when perceptions come from within the Muslim community? What strategies do Muslims employ to negotiate perceptions from other Muslims? These questions are explored below.

Accommodating Other Muslims

As I have discussed elsewhere, identities (including religious ones) are dynamic. Scholars such as Tweed (2006), Ali (2011), Kellner (1995), and Baumann (1996) all point to the situational aspect of identities. Muslims in St. John's certainly showed that their religious identities were fluid, dynamic, and often situational. Many interviewees used this situational aspect as a strategy in response to expectations of orthodoxy among Muslims. In other words, Muslims in St. John's often took on more orthodox practices in situations where they came across other Muslims in order to adhere to expectations of orthodoxy.

Habib, a self-described cultural Muslim who often shared a beer after Friday Prayers with his good friend explains this strategy of accommodation,

If I'm going out, let's say if you introduced me to someone who I know is a practicing Muslim and we go out on any given day, in their presence for the first time, I won't drink. I'll go for water or juice just so I don't put them on the spot...because I know what it is. I've been there before. So I'll accommodate...

He says others have done the same to him, "I just say, "I'll have juice" and they have juice and then later on once the party [starts] I realize they're having fun and I can go about and get a glass of wine and they go "oh I didn't know you drink wine, I'll get your next one" and I'm like "oh ok"" (Habib). Even in his own home, Habib keeps alcohol tucked away so as not to be intrusive or obvious to others because, he says, he wants practicing Muslims to feel comfortable in his house.

Even Dalal, a practicing Muslim, revealed to me that she often has to work around other Muslims when it comes to food because she has different opinions about what is halal and what is not. Dalal explains that she tries “to avoid conflict” by buying ‘halal’ chicken and other meats to cook with. Dabir has similar opinions to Dalal as to what is halal but, because he lives with other Muslims who only eat ‘halal’ meat, he spends a lot of time making sure that what he buys is ‘halal’. Ticking off the list on his fingers for emphasis Dabir remarks that when he’s around religious friends, “I can’t say that I eat pork. I can’t say that I drink...And it does make it difficult sometimes”.

Fadil (2009) found a similar phenomenon among non-fasting Belgian Maghreb women. She argues that not fasting in order to not offend other Muslims’ sensibilities is seen as obstructing their freedom and ability to be true to themselves. Some Muslims in St. John’s felt this struggle between not wanting to transgress norms and wanting to be true to one’s beliefs and practices. Bobbing her head to the pub music Faizah recounts, “I invited practicing Muslims but I didn’t drink in front of them. And somebody asked me, “...why would you stop drinking in front of them?”...it just didn’t feel right that I was going to drink in front of them”. She pauses in reflection and then continues, “the question is, why can’t they just accept me? Why do I have to accommodate their situation or beliefs? Why do I have to conform to what they think is appropriate in their religion or to be an Arab?” (Faizah). Evidently, accommodating other Muslims’ expectations of orthodoxy is not a simple endeavor but is sometimes experienced as a struggle between one’s religious identity and wanting to fall within the internal boundaries of ‘the Muslim’.

Muslims and non-Muslims often police these boundaries of 'the Muslim' according to their expectations of other Muslims. Some participants were on the receiving end of policing. For instance, Dina's non-Muslim friends would attempt to control her practices at parties in order to coincide with their expectations of a Muslim. Pulling our sweaters tight against the wind as we made our way across campus Dina recalls going to residence parties at MUN,

Because you just go and then they'd be like "yah no these people are not drinking". Like they would tell you you're like "you cannot drink" or whatever. Even my Christian friends would be like "yah we're not giving you anything" and you know they'd go do their thing and whatever...when they do downtown they'd be like "no that's not your scene. You're, you're not going" and things like that.

Tobias' son also experienced policing at the hands of another Muslim. Tobias was one of the older members of the community and had been in St. John's for quite a long period when I met him in 2012. While Tobias himself identified as a practicing Muslim, his two children were not practicing. Tobias recalls one incident with his son at the local school,

My son uh they had a religious class and he would go to Christian class but there was a girl in his class that was Saudi, no, Egyptian. And she would grab him by the neck and say, "you are not supposed to go to church. Let's go to the library". She was strong; she would grab him and one day she snapped at him in line,

“you’re not supposed to be in this line-up”, and grabbed him by the neck and took him to the library.

In these examples others actively policed the boundaries of the Muslim category according to their expectations of orthodoxy and aimed to include these participants within the boundaries. However, there are many practices that are actively excluded from the category of Muslim and Islam. I explore this more fully in the next subsection.

Culture-Religion Separation & ‘True’ Islam

In negotiating perceptions of Islam, excluding certain practices as cultural and not religious is often used as a strategy. Scholars such Roy (2009), Warner et al (2001), and Williams & Vashi (2007) have argued that negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims often leads to Muslims making a strong distinction between culture and religion. Similarly, Chen (2008) points out there is a desire among American Muslims to create a ‘cultureless’ Islam, which Cesari (2002) and Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000) contend is due to discrimination. Further, according to Voas and Fleischmann (2012), “instead of blaming the religion for troubles in their families, country of origin, not to mention their own upbringing, they attribute all ills to local customs” (pg.538). Warner et al (2001) call this phenomenon Islam’s ‘Teflon construction’ in that aspects individuals see as negative are deemed to be cultural and not part of Islam. Instead I refer to this phenomenon as the culture-religion separation to avoid the negative connotations of the term ‘Teflon construction’. According to Roy (2009) and Warner et al (2001), the culture-religion separation results in the formation of a ‘true’ or ‘pure’

Islam. 'Real' Islam is "free from the defects they see in the parental culture" (Voas and Fleischmann, 2012, pg.538).

A separation of culture and religion seems particularly interesting for Islam, which is often cited as 'a way of life' rather than simply a religion. Indeed, some participants did feel that culture and religion in Islam were quite connected. For example, Alina feels that Islam cannot be separated from its culture and vice versa. Peering at me over her glasses with her scrap paper of notes still in her hand she argues,

The problem is, is Islam by definition and by practice it's, has a rather different understanding of religious expression in the public sphere.... Because there is no strict divide. First of all there is no strict divide between the public and the private spheres...it cannot be detached from its spiritual core. You know, it cannot be just take the form a cultural entertainment and things like that. So it can't be dissolved as much as some other, you know, faith groups (Alina).

However, when it came to what was seen as negative aspects, practices, and beliefs, many Muslims I spoke with made a distinction between culture and religion. So while Alina and others felt culture and religion were integrated in Islam, they relegated a separate cultural category for those aspects deemed to be negative. These negative aspects varied depending on the individual but were often aspects that are repeatedly brought out as 'evidence' in islamophobic statements and negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims more generally. These aspects included gender inequality, wearing niqab,

and anti-homosexuality. In each case, participants constructed these aspects as culture and not part of Islam.

For instance, Sabrina felt that gender divisions and inequality were cultural issues that were often 'mixed up' as religion. Sabrina insists,

You're supposed to respect women. And there's nothing wrong with women working, you know? There's no rule that says women have to stay home. You know? I mean the Prophet's first wife, she worked! She was wealthy, she supported him! You know? And like, honestly, but people, I think people mix up culture and religion too much. And it causes a big mess.

Faizah similarly labeled aspects as cultural when she had difficulty accepting them as part of Islam. Throwing her hands up in frustration she exclaims,

I still find it difficult to understand why all homosexuals are going to go to hell or women who don't practice Islam or, well, anybody who doesn't practice the religion. So all these big secrets that happen in the religion about how people get punished, you know? Also the fact that I always had a boyfriend...there's always that tension between what the book, the Qur'an says and what my Muslims believe in, what my family believes, what I believe. It's often a blurred line with the culture (Faizah).

She feels that religion and culture are often burred and this is the problem when it comes to some beliefs such as condemning homosexuality. For his part, Dabir had difficulty accepting beliefs surrounding sex before marriage. Instead, Dabir labeled

these kinds of rules as cultural and pointed to the disparity between Muslim countries in terms of their rules and/or openness as evidence. Scanning the student union building he lowered his voice and admitted that he feels that some rules are just political tools and they come from the culture rather than the religion. For him, there are “true believers” of Islam and then another Islam that was taken over by culture.

Other participants made a culture-religion distinction when it came to certain practices such as wearing niqab. Wafa, had spent most of her life in St. John’s and felt that some newly arrived Muslims were following culture rather than religion, in particular by wearing the niqab.

I felt like their group was pretty much secluded and they wanted to be that way. It was very hard to penetrate through...Especially a lot of them wear the niqab and they had their own problems with that. I don’t share that because I don’t wear it and I’m not, I guess I respect them for whatever they want to do but they do have their own thing. And also kind of annoys me about it, the fact [that] they are more driven by culture than religion. So, I can’t support you with that, you know what I mean? If you had a problem with like religiosity, I’m more than happy to help you with that but if it becomes more about the culture than I can’t do that because it’s culture then...it’s your own thing (Wafa).

For Wafa, some practices such as wearing niqab are culturally driven rather than religious. While Wafa helps newcomers who are Muslim with difficulties settling into St. John’s due to religion, she argues that she cannot help with difficulties due to culture.

Nadia, a newcomer from South Asia who wears hijab, also views culture as detracting from religion. While we sipped tea in her quaint living room, Nadia told me she finds it easier to practice Islam in St. John's because she feels she can take out all the negative aspects, cultural aspects that get in the way of practicing. She says, "the basic things like which is not part of Islam, it's part of culture. Sometimes if I don't want to practice that but like because of the society and because of family you are, you will, you know, you are pushed to do that" (Nadia). Thus, a culture-religion separation was constructed by many Muslims in St. John's as a way to separate out negative aspects. What was left then, is an Islam free of negative cultural aspects. In other words, a 'true' or 'pure' Islam was created.

Several interviewees spoke of a 'true' or 'real' Islam versus something else that was perceived by the public and practiced by other individuals. During my interview with Raji he passionately argues, "I think a lot of bigotry against Muslims or against Middle Easterners is because these bigots don't know the real, the reality, the truth". Both Sabrina and Laila echo this idea of a 'true' or 'real' Islam. Sabrina says, "I've met a lot of women who're Muslim and they've lived lives that they don't want. They're in situations that they're not happy and they feel like they're trapped for one reason or another...that's not Islam" (Sabrina). Laila, pushing a stray hair back in place, argues, "you have to make them understand what's the real thing and what's not". As previously mentioned, Wafa helps Muslim newcomers with the process of settling into St. John's and in dealing with difficulties they experience due to their religion. For her there is a 'correct' view of Islam that she needs to help these newcomers and locals understand.

I've seen a lot of girls who went the wrong way and because they never had the support right? Not everyone has the best family or the right group of friends so they don't, they're hoping this group [the Muslim Girls Club] will help the girls and also help the Newfoundland community in general understand more about Islam and women specifically and have the correct view about it (Wafa).

Similarly, Fahad, a 1.5-generation immigrant and MUN student, talks about "knowing like what Islam is really about". After meeting Fahad at an MSA event he hesitantly agreed to be interviewed. Haltingly he explains, "Like, I mean the truth. You know, like not from the negative aspect, negative image from the, the wrong, the practice, people who are practicing wrongly" (Fahad). For many of these individuals, a 'real' or 'true' Islam is important to convey because of the negative perceptions others have of Islam.

The formation of a 'true' Islam as seen above is actively constructed in opposition to what is seen as negative practices and beliefs. Many scholars (Hall, 1996; Akpinar, 2006; Boyarin, 2006; Duderijia, 2008; and Rutherford, 1990) emphasize that identities are formed in relation to an 'other' and involve separating out the 'other'. This can be seen as occurring among the Muslims I spoke with who often spoke of themselves and their Islam in opposition to an 'other' Islam that is 'extremist' or political.

Irfan and I sat down in the student union building at MUN where he was completing a Master's degree. Having described himself as a 'moderate' Muslim I encouraged him to explain what he meant by this term. He responds, "So I'm not that much extremist.... this is not real Islam" (Irfan). In a similar vein Raji explained to me,

I think it is important [to have an imam] because majority of Muslims in town are youth, university students, college students, young families so there should be a certain law...it's very easy for people to be, you know, change in way or maybe given wrong perception about Islam and then they become, you know, extremists.

Here we see Raji separating Islam from a “wrong perception” and those who are “extremists”. Muhammad also makes this kind of separation. Having met several times at Friday prayers on campus, Muhammad and I finally grabbed a coffee and sat down to talk. As our conversation turned to perceptions of Islam and Muslims he used the term ‘good Muslims’ to separate out Islam from negative practices and acts. Irfan also made this distinction when he discussed terrorism. He argues, “It’s [terrorism] not related to Muslim[s]. Maybe something related, it’s, it’s politics more than, you know, Islam”.

Dabir also used the label of a political Islam. He distinguishes between spiritual Islam and what he calls political Islam and blames politics for co-opting Islam. Leaning forward excitedly he contends,

There are two types [of Islam]. There [is a] group that they, they’re more into the core of the, the, you know, religion or the very basic things. And there are a group that...is more political version of Islam, which is the publically known Islam, which has the extremist factors in there...Yah okay let’s put it this way, there is a political Islam and a spiritual Islam. The spiritual version is actually quite nice. Uh and I I like many of the things that they teach there (Dabir).

For Dabir and others discussed above, one interpretation of Islam is held above and in opposition to an 'other', which involves negative cultural aspects, terrorism, and extremism. Evidently, several Muslims in St. John's separate out negative practices and beliefs as cultural and, in doing so Islam is formed as purely religious and free from culture.

This 'true' Islam implies a universal Islam irrespective of regional differences, which is problematic when some Muslims adhere to these aspects now deemed cultural. Furthermore, 'true' Islam dismisses any understanding, recognition, or careful monitoring of instances of oppression, inequality, etc within Islam. Several participants spoke of this 'true' or 'pure' Islam in opposition to an 'other' Islam that was labeled 'extremist' or 'political'. In creating their Islam in opposition to an 'other' Islam, 'Western' unease is placated. Any negative associations or aspects are shifted onto the 'other' Muslim who is then constructed as legitimately feared.

These participants selectively constructed an image of Islam as free of all negative cultural aspects and thus Islam was imagined as 'true' and 'pure'. This idealist image of Islam is undoubtedly a philic account constructed in response to negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims.

Islamophilia

Throughout the previous subsection, we saw Muslims in St. John's presenting and representing Islam in particular ways, often in response to negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims. According to Shryock (2010), negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims may compel some academics to produce philic accounts of Islam. I argue that

Muslims are also involved in producing philic accounts of Islam in response to negative perceptions of their faith.

Some scholars (Frisina, 2010; Halafoff, 2011) have also pointed to a philic construction by Muslims albeit not in these terms. For example, Frisina (2010) argues that Muslims, in taking on an education role, promote Islam as peace (Frisina, 2010). Halafoff (2011) similarly points out that Muslims in the U.S., U.K., and Australia have responded to islamophobia by initiating multi-faith discussion and educational activities. In this way, Muslims affirm Islam's commitment to nonviolence and peace building (Halafoff, 2011).

Several participants selectively constructed an image of Islam as peace. In my conversations with Sabrina, a convert to Islam, she paints Islam as "beauty and balance and moderation and respecting yourself and respecting other people". Similarly Sheila's final comment during her interview with me was to describe a very idealist image of Muslims as "very calm, very peaceful, at peace, very soft spoken...like everybody takes the patience and the time to teach another or to talk to another. And just sitting in a room full of the women it's so stress free".

Even Dabir who is quite critical of Islam and religion in general contributes to this image of Islam. He describes spiritual Islam as having to do with poetry, love, and peace (Dabir). Additionally, a few participants argue that Islam is completely compatible with Canadian society in terms of multiculturalism, equality, and democracy. As Alina folds up her page of notes and placed it neatly into her purse she

reflects on her Islamic values and those she has gained during the past 10 years she spent in Canada.

“I think this Quranic teaching to which I subscribe deeply is very much consistent with what we try to formulate as multiculturalism in Canada and elsewhere. So I did not find any inconsistency between the climate of you know, social integration or accommodation however you choose to name it. I would my, with the core teachings of my religion” (Alina).

In these ways a particular image of Islam as peace, friend, and committed to ‘Western’ values is constructed.

Further, several participants attempt to control the image of the Muslim community in St. John’s and present selectively positive images of Islam. For example, a few participants felt that a second Friday Prayers held on MUN campus was not acceptable and worried this would impact negatively on the image of the Muslim community. Instead they wanted to present Islam and the Muslim community in St. John’s as moderate, united, and as similar to Christianity. Dalal explains this to me,

Sometimes the things that they [those giving the Friday sermon on university campus] say MANAL might view it as an extreme view. Sometimes, you know, some people might be focusing on differentiating between Muslim and Christianity and MANAL don’t really like that. Because, because they’re not, because they don’t want to create tension between- because not everybody who goes to Friday prayer are Muslim anyways, right? Because there might be some

other outside people and we don't want, you know, negative views of the Muslim community.

These individuals attempted to represent selectively positive images of Islam and the Muslim community by controlling the image projected to the public. In doing so, they work to render Islam familiar to the general non-Muslim public and maintain normative constructions of Islam.

In the above ways, Islam is selectively represented as positive, peace, friend, committed to 'Western' values, free of negative cultural aspects, and 'pure' or 'true'. These imaginings are consistent with definitions of islamophilia that scholars (Shryock, 2010; Sharify-Funk, 2009) have posited.

Muslims' participation in islamophilia is extremely troubling. While this use of islamophilia is undoubtedly a response to negative perceptions, these idealist accounts do little to challenge monolithic understandings of Islam. Islamophilia recreates the same problems of islamophobia by universalizing and essentializing Islam and Muslims. In fact, islamophilia maintains islamophobia by simply relocating negative perceptions onto an 'other' Islam that is legitimately feared. While philic accounts can be beneficial for some Muslims I spoke with in order to distance themselves from terrorism, it is a Band-Aid solution that fails to fix the real problem; monolithic understandings of Islam and Muslims.

However, other Muslims I spoke with presented Islam in a more nuanced way. Rather than constructing philic accounts of Islam as a strategy in combating negative

perceptions, some participants presented diverse accounts of Islam. This strategy is discussed in the next subsection.

Voicing Lived Practices

Unlike some Muslims in St. John's who employed philic accounts of Islam as a strategy against negative perceptions of Islam, others constructed a more nuanced image of Islam. As discussed earlier, many Muslims in St. John's experienced expectations of orthodoxy from non-Muslims and from other Muslims. Some participants reacted to these expectations by voicing their lived practices and in doing so challenged monolithic and orthodox understandings of Islam.

As a cultural Muslim, Habib often does not fit the expectations that others have of Muslims. Habib, as I mentioned earlier, is whole-heartedly aware of this and seems to have fun with this disconnect. "Once in awhile I will let them know, I'll just say "hey, I'm fasting today" and they will be all shocked. They say, "I never knew you were practicing Muslim". And I say, "yah, just because I drink doesn't mean I don't practice" (Habib). In presenting this disconnect to others, perhaps Habib and others involved in voicing their lived practices help create a more nuanced understanding of Islam and Muslims in the minds of others. He feels that when people think of Muslims they have a very orthodox picture in mind and that this is even more apparent in St. John's where knowledge of Islam and exposure to Muslims may be rather limited. The perception that non-Muslims in St. John's had little knowledge and/or exposure to Islam and Muslims was widespread among the Muslims I spoke with. They felt this was a major

issue and many suggested educational initiatives to improve local awareness and understanding.

During a conversation with Dina, she enthusiastically described an event she had been involved with called re-imagining Africa. This event was extremely well attended and broached a number of topics including the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, beliefs, and practices of Africans. Re-imagining Africa challenged a common perception of Africa as quite monolithic and Dina felt a similar event would be useful for Islam. Re-imagining Islam would present diverse understandings of Islam, going beyond the typical five-pillar description.

Similarly, Dabir was enthusiastic about educational initiatives that went beyond monolithic versions of Islam. He had only been in St. John's for two months when I met him and yet he was already quite involved with various groups and organizations at the university. He felt very strongly about educating locals about Islam and about the Middle East, especially about the diversity of belief and practice. As a non-practicing Muslim himself, Dabir argued he needed to do his share to break stereotypes surrounding Muslims and Middle Easterners, "I just want to tell them that like not all Middle Easterners are Muslim, first thing, not all not all Middle Easterners are Arab...for them to understand better about other people in the world, what they are like, what, what, how they believe". As such, he became involved in a program called 'Culture-to-Community' that connected international university students with young elementary, junior, and high school students.

The 'Culture-to-Community' program was started a couple years ago in St. John's. It invites international students and recent immigrants to visit rural schools and talk about their background, their religion, their culture, their jobs, etc. Currently the program has 18 volunteers from 11 countries and who have diverse religious commitments. According to the program's website it provides "students in the kindergarten to grade 12 school system in Newfoundland and Labrador with access to other cultures through direct, in-person contact with Memorial University students from diverse cultural backgrounds" and aims to "increase intercultural understanding and respect for cultural difference..." (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2012).

Habib also participates in this program and feels that it is a great way to break down stereotypes. He says, "it gives them [students] a different sense of who immigrants are" (Habib). In this way, intolerance, ignorance, and misunderstanding are fought while presenting differing and diverse lived practices. Instead of playing into philic or phobic accounts of Islam, these Muslims voice multiple Islams.

The idea of multiple Islams was first proposed by el-Zein (1977) who argues that Islam does not exist as something with an inherent meaning and essence. According to Eickelman (1981), el-Zein was extremely critical of anthropological accounts of Islam because they often used presupposed and fixed assumptions about what is religious and Islamic and made arbitrary binary distinctions between folk and elite Islam. Instead, el-Zein proposed using the term 'islams' (in plural form and without capitalization). According to McLoughlin, islams was meant to emphasize, "the reality that there is no single way of being Muslim and, moreover, that no 'normative'

interpretation of 'islam' is inherently more objective, reflective, or systematic than a folk one" (2007, pg.283). The term 'islams' proposed by el-Zein (1977) has been criticized by some scholars who either argue that Muslims would reject the idea of multiple 'islams' (Launay, 1992) or for ignoring important authority factors (Eickelman, 2002; Asad, 1986).

In attempting to recognize factors of authority and continuity I use a capitalized form of the term (i.e. 'Islams'). However, I maintain that diverse understandings exist. I argue that Muslims in St. John's voice multiple Islams as a strategy in subverting power and authority and in challenging a monolithic Islam. These Muslims thus (re)create multiple, dynamic, and ever-changing Islams.

Impact on Religious Identities

Having discussed the perceptions of Islam and Muslims in St. John's as well as the strategies employed to negotiate these perceptions, what is the resulting impact on the religious identities of participants? I explore this issue below; examining the diverse impacts negotiating perceptions have on the religious identities of Muslims in St. John's. First I examine an increase in knowledge of Islam among Muslims, which is an impact on religious identity that is often a result of taking on an educator role. Second I consider a reactive religious identity in terms of an increase in awareness and affiliation with a Muslim identity, increase in religiosity, and/or an increase in orthodox practice. These impacts are often linked with participants becoming representatives (either imposed or chosen). In contrast, other participants distance themselves from other Muslims and/or from Islam, which was associated with experiences of

expectations of orthodoxy. This final impact on religious identity is considered by exploring both switching groups and cultural Muslim identity.

Self-Education

For many Muslims in St. John's, the responsibility to take on an education role impacted their religious identity by compelling them to become more knowledgeable of Islam. In other words, participants felt self-education or an increase in religious knowledge was necessary to educate others and to defend Islam against negative stereotypes. Similarly, Shah (2012) found that British Muslims tend to educate themselves about Islam when confronted with threats to their 'Muslimness'. Further, according to Shah (2012) first generation immigrant Muslims did not know much about Islam before immigration but learned more about their faith after immigration. She also argues that second and third generations learned about Islam as a strategy to preserve their identities as Muslims (Shah, 2012).

Certainly there were participants in this study who increased their knowledge of Islam post-immigration. Some participants only gained this knowledge due to interaction with the diverse Muslim population in St. John's (rather than as a reaction to negative perceptions from non-Muslims). For these Muslim immigrants the diversity of Muslims in St. John's was something they had never experienced and thus their increase in knowledge was primarily education of the variety of Islams that exist.

However, the majority of participants involved in self-education did so in response to negative perceptions of others and with the intention of taking on an educator role. For example Wafa began to educate herself about Islam following

negative experiences of others questioning her about her hijab. Folding her hands neatly on the table between us she points out,

I also wore hijab but I faced a lot of difficulties initially. The thing was I felt like I didn't know my religion enough to explain it to other people...It kind of made me go and learn more about my religion and that drove really the religious studies in my life. I start[ed] teaching myself, reading more about Islam, reading the Qur'an more often... (Wafa).

Further, when she was faced with the responsibility to help educate during 'Doors Open Days', Wafa felt she needed to learn more about Islam.

That [Doors Open] was pretty much the first time I was ever really teaching anyone about Islam and when that responsibility came to me it made me scared cuz I didn't know enough to explain to others. So he [a prominent member of the mosque] used to give us like pamphlets and books and that was the initial thing...I start googling and youtubing and I start hearing a lot of lectures and that kind of led one thing to another... (Wafa).

Rabi, a professional who has lived and worked in Canada off and on over the years, shares this sentiment of self-education. Looking over his glasses at me he explains, "You have to have knowledge to give, to pass on, like you have to prepare your lecture before you, you have to know more than students so that you can actually teach them" (Rabi).

For Alina, the worry is that even practicing Muslims don't understand the reason behind their practices and therefore aren't able to counter negative comments and/or questions. She recounts,

Most of the time I observe that even the so-called practicing Muslims they don't have enough and strong ownership of their own...religion. So they don't know why, for instance, they pray. They don't know why they wear hijab. So when challenged by, you know, non-Muslims they're kind of speechless...So I think education for both parties, practicing Muslim and people of non-Muslim faith they need to educate themselves (Alina).

Siddra, is quite conscious of her lack of knowledge about Islam and during her interview for this project she voiced her concern that she wasn't giving the 'right' answers. She says that co-workers often ask her questions about Islam and she worries that she doesn't give the 'correct' explanation. Unlike many other participants Siddra has not yet taken the next step of educating herself about Islam however, she is conscious of the necessity of knowledge in confronting comments and questions about Islam. Even Amira, who is not practicing, has felt compelled to educate herself about Islam because of the many people who assume she is Muslim.

Clearly, education of self and others is an important aspect of religious identity for these Muslims. The negative perceptions of Islam impact religious identities of participants by compelling them to take on an educator role and to increase their knowledge of Islam. Education has thus become an everyday social and religious

'practice' for many of these Muslims. This public role also impacts religious identity in what has been termed 'reactive identity formation' (Nagra, 2011).

Reactive Religious Identity

Some scholars (Moghissi et al, 2009; Duderijia, 2008; Khan, 2002) argue that religious identities can be reactive in order to challenge the dominant perceptions of one's faith. In other words, discrimination often causes an increase in affiliation with one's religious identity or 'reactive identity formation' (Nagra, 2011). Afshar et al (2006) and Nagra (2011) further argue that an increase in ascribed identity of Muslims post 9/11 has led to an increase in religious identity and increase in religiosity.

For many who I spoke with, 'standing out' or becoming representative increased their awareness of their religious identity and often increased their affiliation with Islam. Standing outside his office at MUN one afternoon Raji reflected on the changes in his religious identity after emigrating from a Muslim majority country. Glancing quickly at his watch so as not to miss Friday prayers he admits,

I must say, you know, I'm more, cuz I'm more aware of my religion. Living in a country where, you know, they have other religions and, you know, you have Hindu people, Christians, Jews. You have all different religions. And so you, that's my identity, you know, becomes like an identity. It's, it's very different from living in in back in your country where everybody else is Muslim and Christians, or maybe some Jews, or maybe some other faiths, you know, they're minorities so you don't feel like belonging to, this kind of thing (Raji).

When I asked Tobias about any differences in how he expresses his religious identity in St. John's compared to in his home country he responds, "[In his home country] I didn't have to express it because everybody, because it's a majority Muslim country. Here I don't have to pronounce I am a Muslim but I am forced into it sometimes, pronouncing [it]". In this way, imposed representativeness increased Tobias' affiliation with his Muslim identity and most certainly increased his awareness of that identity in public.

For others being visible and/or representative meant a direct impact on their religious identity in terms of an increase in their level of religiosity. Wafa felt this increase in religiosity after moving to St. John's from a larger Canadian city. In St. John's she felt more visible and representative of Islam and Muslims.

For me personally, I think I became more religious and more practicing, through really living in St. John's. I don't think I would have been the same if I was in B.C. In B.C. there's so many people like you that you get passed unnoticed right? And you don't, you're not put in the situation where your forced to become a leader of the, and represent your religion because there's so many other people. So here, because you're in that situation, and really for me personally, made me a lot stronger and more practicing because of that (Wafa).

For Wafa, moving to St. John's meant becoming a representative of Islam and this led to an increase in her religiosity and her level of religious practice. It is important to note that an increase in religiosity was by no means the rule among Muslims in St. John's. In fact, a few interviewees cited a decrease in their religiosity.

Distancing Oneself from Muslims and/or Islam

While many Muslims in St. John's increased their Muslim identity and/or increased their knowledge of Islam, others did quite the opposite. Some participants distanced themselves from other Muslims and/or from Islam due to perceptions and expectations. In fact, distancing themselves from other Muslims and/or from Islam allowed these participants to avoid expectations of orthodoxy that other Muslims held of them. This was done either by switching between religious and ethnic groups or by becoming a cultural Muslim.

Switching groups

As previously discussed, identities have a situational aspect and switching between religious and ethnic identities is one example of this. Several scholars (Tweed, 2006; Ali, 2011, Eid, 2007) have argued that identities are dynamic, in constant movement, and situational. According to Afshar et al (2006), multiple identities can be empowering, and different identities are mobilized in different situations. I found this in my discussions with Dina.

Dina felt empowered by her multiple identities and she employed different identities depending on the situation in order to avoid others' expectations of orthodoxy. Moving away from the other Friday prayer attendees she throws her hands up,

Because me like I don't identify as anything. Like I'm, when people look at me they don't think I'm African right? Because I wear the hijab...So at first I

was like “oh my God what am I going to do?” like I don’t fit with anybody. But now really that’s, that’s perfect for me. Because like I have, I go with the Nigerian crew, chill with them. I have like my classmates some of them are from there so I go chill with them. I go with the, like the Muslims so like I don’t identify as anything so nobody would be like “oh yah you know she’s being rebellious” or “she’s doing this”. So, which is perfect (Dina).

In this way she is able to move between groups and have a fluid and situational identity. The result is that she successfully avoids being pinned into one category with certain ‘rules’ and it allows her to evade the expectations of others.

Cultural Muslims

While switching groups may allow some participants to avoid the expectations imposed on them for a time, other interviewees felt the need to distance themselves even further from Islam and other Muslims. This was done by shedding a religious identity and instead identifying as a cultural Muslim.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, research on cultural or symbolic identities has increased in the past couple decades. In his work on Judaism, Gans (1994) describes symbolic religiosity as involving “decontextualized religious (and secular) objects of all kinds, including foods, books, and records, art on Jewish themes, candlesticks, household items with Jewish themes or symbols” (pg.585). In fact, for several participants who identified as non-practicing Muslims, food, music, holidays and decorations were cited as continued connections they had to Islam. Furthermore, participants felt that they couldn’t say they weren’t Muslim, that Islam was part of their

background and would always be (whether they wanted this or not). Perhaps this is due to what Eid (2007) has called an ethnicization of Islam. According to him, Muslims often use Islam as an ethnic identity marker and this seems to be consistent with some of the Muslims I spoke with who identified as non-practicing Muslims but still felt attached to Islam and certain traditions. This identity seemed to allow interviewees sufficient distance from the expectations of orthodoxy they experienced from others while still holding onto their family's background and sometimes to their connection with a Muslim majority country. The term "cultural Muslim" remains uncommon outside of academia and was not used by participants to describe themselves (with one exception). Therefore, while participants often seemed to fall into this category with the identities, practices, and beliefs that they described, 'cultural Muslim' remains an etic term.

As a self-described non-practicing Muslim, I was curious about Dabir's relationship with Islam. He explained his move away from Islam, "Honestly I kind of moved away from the religious groups and uh most of the like religious Muslims. I wouldn't care if someone religious Christian, it has nothing to do with me. They're not going to question me on what I do. But I moved away from the religious Muslim groups" (Dabir). I asked him if he felt that other Muslims judged him, to which he agreed he did feel they judged him. Amira similarly felt others judged her according to certain expectations of orthodoxy. She says she finds it difficult to be herself because she doesn't fit into the mould people have for her. This became increasingly clear as Amira unraveled her complex understanding of identity as non-practicing, spiritual, and as having a multifaith background.

I don't fit in, into one block that people want to fit me in. I love and hate it at the same time. I love it because I'm unique. It means I could, with a few words, with a few sentences I could fit in if I want to. So I can say the right things...I can go to the mosque and hang out for some kind of event but then there's a certain level where I can't stand it anymore and I gotta get out (Amira).

Sometimes Amira is invited to Muslim community events but she says "I don't belong there. So it's evidence that I don't belong there. Because I'm not wearing a scarf. Because I, because I wear skirts without pants on underneath". Despite her feeling that she is separate from the Muslim community, she still feels a connection to her Muslim background and continues to connect with aspects of Islamic culture.

Similar to Amira, Akeem feels like other Muslims won't accept him and consequently he distances himself from them. Shrugging he says, "I will just avoid being around Muslims just because I know they're not going to accept who I am. And they're very, like they could be liberal, they could be anything but it comes down to few points that they will not accept...I just don't need that around me" (Akeem). Faizah also felt that she wasn't accepted by other Muslims. She related to me that she felt other Muslims were judging her for her "Westernized" behaviour such as dying her hair, having piercings, and having a boyfriend, "that was not an acceptable behaviour for an Arab or for a Muslim woman here or anywhere. So I definitely didn't feel like I belonged to that group, to fit in with them" (Faizah). In response to this, Faizah started to distance herself from Islam. However, she has recently come to appreciate aspects of her Middle Eastern and Islamic culture and now incorporates many aspects into her life

such as celebrating Eid, eating what she considers traditional food, and decorating her house with Islamic symbols.

Both Faizah and Dabir felt that other Muslims' expectations of orthodoxy directly impacted their religious commitment. Dabir tells me, "There are different interpretations. There is spiritual, there's more political. And that side is what, I think if they were practicing that side [spiritual] of Islam I would never kind of walk away from it [Islam]". Similarly, Faizah feels that she was "forced out of the mosque and forced out of Islam" because she couldn't reconcile tensions between Islamic beliefs and practices and her commitment to sexual equality, freedom of expression, and human rights. Further she points out, "it seems to me that if you don't believe in these very important pillars of Islam, then how can you be considered a Muslim" (Faizah). Still, she holds onto and finds meaning in other parts of Islam. She wonders "if the people were[n't] so critical for someone in my situation, maybe we wouldn't be so reluctant"(Faizah). Perhaps she never would have distanced herself from Islam if it were not for others' critiques and expectations of orthodoxy.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined three themes in the data that point to how Muslims in St. John's negotiate perceptions of Islam and Muslims and the impact this has on their religious identities. While islamophobia was not an important factor for Muslims in St. John's, negative perceptions, curiosity, and expectations of orthodoxy were significant experiences. The vast majority of participants blamed a lack of education as the cause of 'harmless' curiosity, negative perceptions, and expectations.

Many Muslims in St. John's took up an educator role as a strategy in order to change people's perceptions. Education was seen as the primary method in negotiating perceptions and misunderstanding and was employed by the vast majority of participants. Another related strategy was becoming representative of Islam and Muslims. For many Muslims I spoke with, a public identity as representative was chosen and/or imposed upon them. Becoming representative was often a response to negative perceptions and whether or not they chose this role; participants were deeply concerned with the image they projected of Islam and of Muslims. In terms of negotiating expectations of other Muslims, participants often strategically accommodated more orthodox practices in order to ensure their continued acceptance by these other Muslims. An alternative strategy used by some Muslims in St. John's was to separate culture and religion and thus create a 'true' Islam. This strategy sometimes coincided with constructing a philic account of Islam as a way to combat islamophobia and negative perceptions of Islam. In contrast, other Muslims in St. John's challenged monolithic phobic and philic understandings of Islam by relating their lived practices. In telling their own stories nuanced Islams emerged, challenging existing perceptions and expectations of both non-Muslims and Muslims.

Lastly, I explored the impact negotiating perceptions had on the religious identities of Muslims in St. John's. Many interviewees were compelled to become more knowledgeable of Islam and to take on a more public identity, thus impacting their religious identities. Further, as visible religious minorities, many participants felt an increased awareness of their religious identity, increased affiliation with Islam, and/or increased religiosity. However, those Muslims in St. John's who felt overwhelmed by

the pressure, negative perceptions, and/or expectations often distanced themselves from Islam and other Muslims. This led to a decrease in affiliation with a Muslim identity and in some cases to a cultural Muslim identity.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Conclusions

Thinking back to my conversations with Dina I am reminded of our second meeting. Sitting with our coffees in the engineering building I repeated to her the story she had told me of the caretaker accusing her of making a bomb and her concern about a widespread lack of knowledge. Shrugging, she says education is key. “Key to what?” I ask. “Key to everything. Key to understanding between religions, cultures, and ethnicities” she responds.

Sitting back into the folds of the leather couch she sighs, staring back at passers-by. While I am sans-hijab now, I can feel furtive glances and curious faces all turned towards Dina. Despite the often unwanted attention, Dina consciously takes on a representative role for Islam and other Muslims. For her, this is important albeit tiresome in the struggle to improve public perception of her religion.

We sit chatting about unrelated things, laughing about the gossip that had arisen following my arrival in the community. One theory, which Dina thought particularly amusing, was that I was a new wife of one of the international students. Dina burst out laughing not bothering to cover her mouth, which earned her a sharp disapproving look from another Muslim woman sitting nearby. Still giggling Dina turned to me rolling her eyes. Clearly the expectations of other Muslims meant little to her and Dina seemed to flaunt her differences, preferring to switch between multiple identities. My time with Dina and the other participants in this study made it clear to me that many Muslims are

active in combating perceptions and misconceptions of their religion and, in doing so, they employ diverse strategies.

Throughout this thesis I examined how Muslims in St. John's negotiate perceptions of Islam and Muslims from both non-Muslims and other Muslims. I inquired into the strategies Muslims in St. John's used to combat these perceptions. Furthermore, I questioned how perceptions of Islam and Muslims impact Muslims' religious identities.

The above questions were first considered in the context of existing literature. I outlined historic and current notions of identities and the construction of identities. I also discussed the factors that scholars have argued influence identity formation. These factors included gender and discrimination. Literature concerning islamophobia in particular was examined and how this may impact identities. Lastly, I examined research pertaining to strategies used in combating negative perceptions. These included the culture-religion separation, islamophilia, and cultural or symbolic identities. Drawing on the existing body of literature, I used a multifaceted approach to religious identities as dynamic and situational, as both formed from the outside and from within, and as influenced by many factors.

In order to answer my research questions I conducted an analysis of 30 semi-structured interviews with Muslims in St. John's, Newfoundland. Semi-structured religious life history interviews provided detailed and rich discourse on how these individuals negotiated their identities in everyday life. A case study approach was adopted, which helped keep this study to a manageable size and scope. Additionally,

this research contributes to rectifying gaps in the literature by focusing on the everyday experiences of Muslims in a small Canadian city.

My findings show that islamophobia was rarely experienced by Muslims in St. John's and when it was experienced, it did not seem to play a big role in their lives. However, participants did report widespread curiosity as well as negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims (although this did not necessarily lead to discrimination or islamophobia). Participants also reported perceptions of Islam and Muslims as monolithic and that others held expectations of orthodoxy. These perceptions and widespread curiosity played an important role in the negotiation of religious identity by Muslims in St. John's.

Participants employed a number of strategies in order to negotiate the above perceptions. The vast majority of participants took up an educator role as their primary strategy against 'harmless' curiosity, negative perceptions, and islamophobia. Many of these participants also became representatives either by choice or by having it imposed on them. Becoming representatives of Islam and of Muslims was seen as a strategy to counter negative perceptions. In terms of expectations of orthodoxy, some participants conformed especially when it came to the expectations of other Muslims. Accommodating other Muslims was seen as a strategy that ensured their continued acceptance within the 'Muslim community'. Another strategy used by some participants in combating negative perceptions was to separate culture from religion and thus create a 'true' Islam. Linked to this, some participants constructed philic accounts of Islam. While these individuals were often attempting to combat islamophobia, the

construction of philic accounts of Islam do little to change the monolithic and essentializing understandings of Islam. Further, philic accounts simply relocate negative perceptions onto an 'other' Islam. However, other participants were able to present a more nuanced understanding of Islam. This was done by voicing their lived practices.

Considering these strategies employed by Muslims in St. John's, what was the impact on their religious identities? First, others' curiosity and negative perceptions often compelled interviewees to increase their knowledge of Islam, educating themselves and others. Participants also cited an increase in their awareness of and increased affiliation with their Muslim identities. For some, this meant an increase in their religiosity and/or in their orthodox practices. However, other participants reported distancing themselves from Islam and from other Muslims. These individuals often felt too much pressure to conform to expectations.

Scope and Limitations

In the previous section I discussed the findings of this study and the possible implications. However, it is important to note the limitations of this research study. These limitations stem from the fact that the research data was garnered from a relatively small sample and from a distinct city. As a case study, this research is not necessarily representative of the wider population of Muslims in Canada. Although this research sample is diverse in many ways (i.e. age, sex, home country, religious commitment, etc.), there is no way to determine if it is representative of the Muslim population in St. John's. However, using available census data and MANAL's

membership lists, we can get a sense of the larger Muslim population in St. John's and compare this to my research sample.

According to MANAL (n.d.) a great number of international students significantly increase the Muslim population, at least for the time they spend in St. John's. Furthermore, MANAL (n.d.) notes about half their membership are students. This has been taken into consideration and about half the sample used for this study are students.

It was also noted earlier that the Muslim population in St. John's is highly educated and remains quite transient (MANAL, n.d.; Statistics Canada, 2001; Statistics Canada, 2006). Again the current study reflects this transient and well-educated nature of the population. About half of the participants in this study arrived to St. John's less than five years ago. Further, 26 of the participants have university education and 19 have graduate level education.

Throughout interviews with Muslims in St. John's and according to MANAL (n.d) it was continually pointed out that the population is extremely diverse, especially when it came to country of origin. Interviewees reflected this diversity having immigrated from no less than 17 different countries as well as those born in Canada and/or St. John's. Additionally, it was noted that converts were becoming more common in St. John's and three converts were included in this sample. Finally, steps were taken to reach Muslims with diverse levels of commitment and six participants identified as non-practicing and/or as cultural Muslims.

Unfortunately there is no way of knowing how representative these numbers are as those MANAL lists as members are typically practicing or at least committed to the Muslim community. Perhaps a larger project with a bigger sample of participants and more advanced use of snowballing may shed more light on the general make-up of the Muslim population in St. John's. Until such a project is developed, this study does reach a diverse group of Muslims in St. John's and gives an in depth look into their everyday experiences.

Another issue I wish to discuss is the generalizability of this research. As previously mentioned, St. John's has an extremely small Muslim population, the city is generally very homogenous (Statistics Canada, 2001; Statistics Canada, 2006), and a single-mosque community. This make-up of St. John's limits the ability to generalize the findings of this research. However, I would like to point out that this project is meant as a case study and is not meant to be generalized to other areas of Canada or to be representative of the wider Muslim population in Canada. This study is instead a contribution to research in smaller Canadian cities where little research concerning Muslims has been conducted. This study may be a starting point for thinking about other small Canadian cities.

Future Research

This study has presented findings concerning Muslims in Canada taking up an educating role as well as becoming representatives of Islam and Muslims. I would argue that these strategies in combating negative perceptions are particularly important in small Canadian cities where populations remain relatively homogenous (Statistics

Canada, 2001; Statistics Canada, 2006). I would also argue that Muslims living in single mosque communities may experience more expectations of orthodoxy from other Muslims as shown in this study due to the small population and because Islamic activities are centralized in one building. Since most research with Muslims in Canada has tended to focus on large Canadian cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, and Vancouver, I would urge more research to be carried out in small cities where the experiences of Muslims may be markedly different.

Further, I would argue that this study is a starting point to think about the construction of philic accounts of Islam by Muslims. Certainly the culture-religion separation and creation of a 'true' Islam may be more broadly applicable to Muslims in other parts of Canada. I found a similar phenomenon occurring in Halifax (Downie, 2011) and several scholars (Warner et al, 2001; Roy, 2009; Williams and Vashi, 2007; Ali, 2011; and Voas and Fleischmann, 2010) have discussed this phenomenon as occurring in Canada, the U.S., Europe, and elsewhere. However, there remains little research on islamophilia (although Shryock, 2010 has made significant contributions) and virtually no empirical research on the phenomenon. As I have argued throughout this thesis, islamophilia is extremely problematic and more research is needed in order to understand this phenomenon and the possible solutions.

One solution to the so far polarized philic and phobic accounts of Islam is to present lived practices. Voicing the lived practices of Muslims in Canada with all their diverse, difference, and contradictions creates a more nuanced account of Islam and Muslims. In doing so, these lived practices challenge perceptions of Islam and Muslims

and expectations of orthodoxy by recounting their own practices and identities. Islams are thus revealed as multiple, dynamic, and ever changing.

References

- Afshar, H., Aitken, R., Franks, M. (2006). "Islamophobia and Women of Pakistani Descent in Bradford: The Crisis of Ascribed and Adopted Identities". In *Muslim Diaspora: Gender, Culture and Identity* (Moghissi, H. ed.). Routledge Islamic Studies.
- Ahmed, L. (2011). *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, From the Middle East to America*. Yale University Press.
- Akpinar, A. (2006). "Discourses of Islam/Secularism and Identity-Building Processes Among Turkish University Youth". In *Muslim Diaspora: Gender, Culture and Identity* (Moghissi, H. ed.). Routledge Islamic Studies.
- Akter, N. (2010). *The Religious Lives of Immigrant Muslim Women in Canada: The Case of Bangladeshi Women in St. John's, Newfoundland*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.
- Alba, R. (2005). "Bright versus Blurred Boundaries: Second-Generation Assimilation and Exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States". *Ethnic Racial Studies* 28: 20-49.
- Ali, M. (2011). "Muslim American/American Muslim Identity: Authoring Self in Post-9/11 America". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 31(3): 355-373.
- Allen, C. (2010). *Islamophobia*. Ashgate Publishing.
- Ammerman, N. T. (1987). *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World*. Rutgers University Press.
- Anderson, B (2006) *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso
- Asad, T. (1986). "The idea of an anthropology of Islam" *Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies*, Georgetown University.
- Bannerji, H. (2000). *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism, and Gender*. Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Baumann, G. (1996). *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bayart, J. (2005). *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*. University of Chicago Press.
- Beaman, L. G. (2011). "'It was all Slightly Unreal': What's Wrong With Tolerance and Accommodation in the Adjudication of Religious Freedom?" *Canadian Journal of Women and Law* 23: 442-463.

- (2012). "Battles Over Symbols: The 'Religion' of the Minority Versus the 'Culture' of the Majority". *Journal of Law and Religion* 28(1): 67-104.
- Bectovic, S. (2011). "Studying Muslims and Constructing Islamic Identity". *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34(7): 1120-1133.
- Bisoondath, N. (1994). *Selling Illusions: Selling Multiculturalism in Canada*. Penguin.
- Bloul, R. (1996). "Engendering Muslim Identities". In, *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe* (Metcalf, B. D., ed.). University of California Press.
- Bouchard, G. (2007). "The Canadian Immigration System: An Overview". *Institute for Research on Public Policy*. Retrieved from http://www.irpp.org/miscpubs/archive/bouchard_immig.pdf
- Boyarin, D. (2006). *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bracke, S., and Fadil, N. (2012). "'Is the Headscarf Oppressive or Emancipatory?' Field Notes from the Multicultural Debate". *Religion and Gender* 2(1): 36-56.
- Brown, A. (2010). "Constructions of Islam in the Context of Religious Arbitration: A Consideration of the 'Shari'ah Debate' in Ontario, Canada". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30(3): 343-356.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge.
- Canadian Race Relations Foundation (2012). "Canadians Regard the Internet as the Place Where Racism is Most Prevalent". Canadian Race Relations Foundation, Mar 21, 2012. Retrieved from [http://www.crr.ca/images/stories/pdf/Racism and Prejudice Sources Trust and Blame.pdf](http://www.crr.ca/images/stories/pdf/Racism_and_Prejudice_Sources_Trust_and_Blame.pdf)
- Canas, S. (2008). "The Little Mosque on the Prairie: Examining (Multi) Cultural Spaces of Nation and Religion". *Cultural Dynamics* 20(3): 195-211.
- CBC News (2012). "St. John's Muslims hope to build second mosque: Community has outgrown the first one". *CBC News*, Mar 27. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/story/2012/03/27/nlsecond-mosque-327.html>
- (2013). "St. John's Muslim community to have own cemetery". *CBC News*, Mar 16. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/story/2013/03/16/nl-new-muslim-cemetery-2013-03-16.html>
- Cesari, J. (2002). "Islam in France: the Shaping of a Religious Minority". In, *Muslims in the West. From Sojourners to Citizens* (Haddad, Y. Y., ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- (2011). "Islamophobia in the West: A Comparison Between Europe and the United States". In *Islamophobia: The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century* (Eposito, J. L., Kalin, I. eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chen, C. (2008). "Rethinking Race, Ethnicity and Religion in the Contemporary United States: The Case of Asian American Evangelical Christians and Muslims". Presented at the Woodrow Wilson Cent., Washington, DC., Sept 15. <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/new-scholarship-race-and-ethnicity8212rethinking-race-religion-and-ethnicity-the-united-states>
- Downie, C. (2011). *Renegotiating Islam: The Challenges and Coping Strategies of Immigrant Women*. Unpublished Honours Thesis, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Duderija, A. (2008). Factors Determining Religious Identity Construction Among Western-Born Muslims: Towards a Theoretical Framework. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 28(3): 371-400.
- Ebaugh, H. R., Chafetz, J. S. (2000). *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira.
- Eickelman, D. F. (1981). "A Search for the Anthropology of Islam: Abdul Hamid El-Zein". *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13: 361-365.
- (2002). *The Middle East and Central Asia: an anthropological approach (4th ed)*. Prentice Hall.
- Eid, P. (2007). *Being Arab: Ethnic and Religious Identity Building Among Second Generation Youth in Montreal*. McGill-Queen's University Press.
- El-Zein, A. H. (1977). "Beyond Ideology and Theology: The Search for the Anthropology of Islam". *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6: 227-254.
- Eliade, M. (1987). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. MacMillan.
- Fadil, N. (2009). "Managing Affects and Sensibilities: The Case of Not-Handshaking and Not-Fasting". *Social Anthropology* 17(4): 439-454.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). "Ch 3: Critical Discourse Analysis". In *How to Analyse Talk in Institutional Settings: A Casebook of Methods* (McHoul, A. and Rapley, M., eds.). London: Continuum.
- Frisina, A. (2010). "Young Muslims' Everyday Tactics and Strategies: Resisting Islamophobia, Negotiating Italianness, Becoming Citizens". *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 31(5): 557-572.
- Gans, H. J. (1994). "Symbolic Ethnicity and Symbolic Religiosity: Towards a Comparison of Ethnic and Religious Acculturation". *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17: 577-592.

- Goodman, M. J. (2006). "Diaspora, Ethnicity, and Problems of Identity" In, *Muslim Diaspora: Gender, Culture and Identity* (Moghissi, H. ed.). Routledge Islamic Studies.
- Haddad, Y. Y. (2007). The Post-9/11 Hijab as Icon. *Sociology of Religion* 68(3): 253-267.
- Haji, R., Lalonde, R. N., Durbin, A., Naveh-Benjamin, I. (2011). A Multidimensional Approach to Identity: Religious and Cultural Identity in Young Jewish Canadians. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* 14(1): 3-18.
- Halafoff, A. (2011). "Countering Islamophobia: Muslim Participation in Multifaith Networks". *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22(4): 451-467.
- Hall, S. (1996). "New Ethnicities". In, *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (Morley, D., Chen, K. eds.). Routledge.
- Hegland, M. E. (2002). "The Power Paradox in Muslim Women's Majales: North-West Pakistani Mourning Rituals as Sites of Contestation over Religious Politics, Ethnicity, and Gender. London". In, *Gender, Politics, and Islam* (Eds. Saliba, T., Allen, C., & Howard, J. A.) The University of Chicago Press.
- Helbling, M. (ed.) (2012). *Islamophobia in the West: Measuring and Explaining Individual Attitudes*. London: Routledge.
- Hirji, F. (2006). "Common Concerns and Constructed Communities: Muslim Canadians, the Internet, and the War in Iraq". *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 30(2): 125-141.
- Hojabri, A. (2006). "Like Parvin, Like Najiba, Like Heba, We Are All Different: Reflections on Voices of Women in Diaspora". In *Muslim Diaspora: Gender, Culture and Identity* (Moghissi, H. ed.). Routledge Islamic Studies.
- Jones, R. D. (2010). "Islam and the Rural Landscape: Discourses and Absence in West Wales". *Social and Cultural Geography* 11(8): 751-768.
- Jouili, J. S. (2006). "Knowledge, Empowerment and Religious Authority Among Pious Muslim Women in France and Germany". *The Muslim World* 96: 617-642.
- Kaba, L. (2002). "Americans Discover Islam through the Black Muslim Experience". In, *Islam in North America: A Sourcebook* (Kószegi, M. A., Melton, J. G. eds.). New York: Garland Publishing.
- Karim, H. (2009). "Press, Public Sphere, and Pluralism: Multiculturalism Debate in Canadian English-Language Newspapers". *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 40(1): 57-78
- Kellner, D. (1995). *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity, and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern*. Routledge.

- Khalema, N. E., Wannas-Jones, J. (2003). "Under the Prism of Suspicion: Minority Voices in Canada Post-September 11". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 23(1): 25-39.
- Khan, S. (2002). *Aversion and Desire : Negotiating Muslim Female Identity in the Diaspora*. Women's Press.
- Korteweg, A., Selby, J. A. (eds.) (2012). *Debating Sharia: Islam, Gender Politics and Family Law Arbitration*. University of Toronto Press.
- Launay, R. (1992) *Beyond the stream: Islam and society in a West African town*. University of California Press.
- MacMaster, N., Lewis, T., (1998). Orientalism: from Unveiling to Hyperveiling. *Journal of European Studies* xxviii, 121-135
- Mahmood, S. (2008). "Feminism, Democracy, and Empire : Islam and the War of Terror". In, *Women's Studies on the Edge* (Wallch, S. J. ed.). Duke University Press.
- MANAL (n.d.). "Newfoundland Islamic Centre: Masjid Al-Noor". The Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Retrieved from <http://www.manal.ca/sites/default/files/MasjidAlNoorArchivalDoc.pdf>
- MANAL (2012). "Mosque Renovation Project". The Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. June 17, 2012. Retrieved from www.manal.ca
- Marcotte, R. D. (2010). "Muslim Women in Canada: Autonomy and Empowerment". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30(3): 357-373.
- McDonough, S. (1990). "Religion and Ethnicity among the Muslims of Montreal". Presented at the Learned Societies Conference. Victoria: British Columbia.
- (1994). "Muslims of Montreal". In *Muslim Communities in North America* (Haddad, Yvonne Y, and Jane I. Smith, eds.). State University of New York Press.
- McGown, R. B. (1999). *Muslims in the Diaspora: The Somali Communities of London and Toronto*. University of Toronto Press.
- McLoughlin, S. (2007). "Islam(s) in Context: Orientalism and the Anthropology of Muslim societies and cultures". *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 28(3): 273-296.
- Meer, N., Modood, T. (2009). "Refutations of Racism in the 'Muslim Question'". *Patterns of Prejudice*. 43: 335-354.
- Memorial University of Newfoundland (2012). "Culture-to-Community Educational Outreach Program". Memorial University of Newfoundland. Oct. 15, 2012. Retrieved from www.mun.ca/isa/culture2community/

- Modood, T. (2005). *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Moghissi, H., Rahnema, S., & Goodman, M. J. (2009). *Diaspora by Design: Muslims in Canada and Beyond*. University of Toronto Press
- Moran, C. D. (2007). "The Public Identity Work of Evangelical Christian Students". *Journal of College Student Development* 48(4): 418-434.
- Nagra, B. (2011). "Our Faith Was Also Hijacked by Those People': Reclaiming Muslim Identity in Canada in a Post-9/11 Era". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37(3): 425-441.
- Okin, S. M. (ed.)(1999). *Is Multiculturalism Bad For Women?* Princeton University Press.
- Parvez, Z. F. (2011). "Debating the Burqa in France: the Antipolitics of 'Islamic Revival'". *Qualitative Sociology* 34(2): 287-312.
- Portes, A., and Rumbaut, R. (2006). *Immigrant America: A Portrait: Third Edition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rahnema, S. (2006). "Islam in Diaspora and Challenges to Multiculturalism". In *Muslim Diaspora: Gender, Culture and Identity* (Moghissi, H. ed.). Routledge Islamic Studies.
- Robins, K. (1996). "Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe". In, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (Hall, S., Du Gay, P. eds.). Sage Publishing.
- Roy, O. (2009). *Holy Ignorance: When Religion and Culture Part Ways*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rutherford, J. (1990). *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Shachar, A. (2009). "What We Owe Women: The View From Multicultural Feminism". In, *Towards a Humanist Justice: The Political Philosophy of Susan Moller Okin* (Satz, D., Reich, R., eds.). Oxford University Press.
- Shah, S. (2012). "Muslim Schools in Secular Societies: Persistence or Resistance!". *British Journal of Religious Education* 34(1): 51-65.
- Sharify-Funk, M. (2009). "Representing Canadian Muslims: Media, Muslim Advocacy, Organizations, and Gender in the Ontario Shari'ah Debate". *Global Media Journal-Canadian Edition* 2(2) 73-89.
- (2010). "Muslims and the Politics of 'Reasonable Accommodation': Analyzing the Bouchard-Taylor Report and its impact on the Canadian Province of Quebec". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30(4): 535-553.

- Shryock, A. (2010). 'Introduction: Islam as an Object of Fear and Affection.' In *Islamophobia/Islamophilia: Beyond the Politics of Enemy and Friend*, 1–28. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Smith, J. I. (1999). *Islam in America*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Statistics Canada (2001). "Population by religion, by province and territory (2001 Census)". *Statistics Canada*, Census of Population. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo30a-eng.htm>
- (2006). "Visible Minority Population, by Metropolitan Areas (2006 Census)". *Statistics Canada*, Census of Population. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo53b-eng.htm>
- (2010). "Projections of the Diversity of the Canadian Population". *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-551-x/2010001/hl-fs-eng.htm>
- (2011). "Population and Dwelling Count Highlight Tables, 2011 Census". *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/index-eng.cfm>
- Sunstein, C. (2009). "On the Tension Between Sex Equality and Religious Freedom". In, *Towards a Humanist Justice: The Political Philosophy of Susan Moller Okin* (Satz, D., Reich, R., eds.). Oxford University Press.
- Trifkovicargue, S. (2003). "Islam's Love-Hate Relationship with Homosexuality". *FrontPage Magazine*, Jan 24. Retrieved from <http://archive.frontpagemag.com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=20145>
- Tweed, T. A. (2006). *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*. Harvard University Press
- Voas, D., Fleischmann, F. (2012). "Islam Moves West: Religious Change in the First and Second Generation". *Annual Review of Sociology* 38: 525-545.
- Warner, S. R., Martel, E., and Dugan, R. E. (2001). *Catholicism is to Islam as Velcro is to Teflon: Religion and Ethnic Culture Among Second Generation Latina and Muslim Women College Students*. Paper presented to the Midwest Sociological Society, St. Louis.
- Williams, R. H., & Vashi, G. (2007). "Hijab and American Muslim Women: Creating the Space for Autonomous Selves". *Sociology of Religion* 68(3): 269-287.
- Yousif, A. F. (2008). *Muslims in Canada: A Question of Identity* (2nd ed.). Legas Publishing.

Zama, N. K. (2009). *Understanding the Experiences of Discrimination in Muslim Americans Post- 9/11: A Qualitative Study*. PhD. Dissertation, New York University.

Zine, Jasmine (2001). "Muslim Youth in Canadian Schools: Education and the Politics of Religious Identity." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 32(4): 299-423.

Appendix A: Consent Form

Research Project Title: “Religion in the Everyday: Negotiating Islam in St. John’s, NL”

Investigators: Lori G. Beaman, Professor, University of Ottawa; Jennifer A. Selby, Assistant Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Dear Participant:

You have been asked to participate in a research study. This consent form provides you with information about the research study. If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. Your decision to participate in the study is entirely voluntary.

The investigators involved in this study are Dr. Lori Beaman and Dr. Jennifer Selby. Their research assistants are Caitlin Downie and Jennifer Williams.

The interviews we will conduct will be semi-structured in that we have a number of topics we would like to address but not a specific questionnaire to be completed. With your permission the interview will be recorded as an audio file. An interview may take between 30-60 minutes. Questions about emphasize religious practices and beliefs in everyday life, how and whether you practice Islam, your thoughts on the lives of Muslims in St. John’s, as well as demographic information.

This research intends to augment the scholarly literature on religious accommodation practices and on-the-ground negotiation of religiosity in a Canadian context; to engage in analysis with religion and migration in engagement with the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial government; and to address larger political and philosophical conceptualizations of secularism and its relationship to Islam in the West.

Should you feel any discomfort in answering questions, you may refuse to answer any particular question or withdraw from the study altogether. Participants will not be paid to participate in the study. Interviews will take place in mutually agreed-upon quiet and comfortable locations. With your permission, the interviews may be taped using a small digital recorder.

Records of observations and conversations will be kept private and will be made available only to the research team. Data will be stored securely using encryption on a laptop computer for five years in keeping with ICEHR guidelines. Data will be retained for a minimum of five years, as per Memorial University policy on integrity in Scholarly Research. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure confidentiality. This information will be used for research purposes only, which includes academic articles, publications, MA theses, and both academic and public presentations.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy.

If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861). It has also been reviewed by the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at the University of Ottawa (ethics@uottawa.ca or 613-562-5387).

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had the opportunity to ask questions you may have about the study.

Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in a study and that, should you change your mind, you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

You have been given a copy of this agreement.

Name of Participant: _____ (Please print)

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____