

Muslims in Canada: Exploring Collective Identities

by

Erin Geneva MacDonald

Bachelor of Arts, Saint Mary's University, 2012

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Supervisory committee

Dr. Kimberly Speers (School of Public Administration)

Supervisor

Dr. Oliver Schmidtke (School of Political Science)

Outside Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Kimberly Speers (School of Public Administration)

Supervisor

Dr. Oliver Schmidtke (School of Political Science)

Outside Member

The thesis explores the collective identities present among Sunni and Shii Muslims in Canada and their experiences of identity construction and collective identity construction in Canada. The thesis also seeks to identify successes and failures of integrating Canadian Muslims into the culturally dominant identity. Finally, the thesis recommends policies by which Canada may improve efforts to integrate Muslim youth into Canada as a means to prevent disenfranchisement, isolation, and the possibility of social marginalization. Finally, the thesis proposes hypotheses that may guide similar research in the future, as well as policy recommendations that may serve to facilitate better intercultural relations in the future.

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Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the privilege I had to live and partially complete my studies on un-seated Coast Salish territory. One often hears “Canada is a nation of immigrants” in reference to those residing in Canada who were born elsewhere. But Canada is full of the descendants of immigrants-settlers.

I situate myself in the context of this thesis research as a settler Canadian.

I also am grateful to the hospitality of Rwanda’s people- The country in which I resided while writing the majority of this thesis.

Dedication

“Why do people move? What makes them uproot and leave everything they've known for a great unknown beyond the horizon? ... The answer is the same the world over: people move in the hope of a better life.”

-Yann Martel, *The Life of Pi*

I dedicate this study to the immigrants of Canada. I hope that you have found in Canada, whatever it was you left your home to search for.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This thesis explores the issue of Muslim youth and identity conflict in Canada and seeks to understand collective identities, as well as the phenomenon of otherment between Canadian Muslims and non-Muslims. Within the context of this research, it is important to not make generalizations about the Muslim community within Canada, which in reality, is an extremely diverse nation and not a homogenous group. Indeed, within the global Muslim community and within Canada, Muslims are a heterogeneous people differing on the basis of sect, cultural background, and interpretation.

The overall goal of the thesis is to explore the role that identity conflict plays among Muslims in Canada, as well as the existence of collective identities in Canada and out-group suspicion as circumstances that may exist in isolation or conspire to foster disenfranchisement or rejection of the Canadian identity. This thesis aims to first and foremost explore the issue of Muslim youth and identity conflict in Canada although the research also focuses on the wider Muslim community. This identity conflict may occur when their group identity as Muslims is seen as superior to their identity as Canadians, or when the Muslim group identity is seen as incompatible with or threatened by the Canadian identity. This thesis explores this issue of identity conflict, as occurring when individuals see two aspects of their identity as being mutually exclusive, or at the very least incompatible with each other (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-10). Kriesberg's (2003, para. 1-10) lenses will be used in this study to better understand identity conflict among Canadian Muslims.

Specific to the research approach, Pomerance's exploratory versus explanatory research dichotomy affirms that it is not enough to describe a research endeavor as simply

qualitative. For example, a qualitative research design could imply both exploratory or explanatory research approaches, and these approaches are deemed to be distinct and not well-suited to being used interchangeably (1982, pg. 16). In this thesis, a qualitative approach is used that is exploratory rather than explanatory, given that this topic is a relatively new area of research and there has been relatively little written about this subject in the Canadian context and in general especially as it relates to the radicalization of some Muslim youth.

There are several ramifications to utilizing the exploratory rather than explanatory approach. Pomerance identifies that the main aspect distinguishing exploratory research from its distinctive counterpart, explanatory research, is the absence of a hypothesis in exploratory research (1982, pg. 16). Explanatory research seeks to identify relationships between variables and causality. Essentially, explanatory research seeks to identify why a certain phenomenon is taking place through identifying direct causality and operates on a defined hypothesis. Conversely, exploratory research seeks to explain how something is happening, and aims to indicate some potential explanations of why and whether or not a certain phenomenon is in fact occurring, and in what ways it is occurring (it also seeks to generate hypotheses). Exploratory research carries many descriptive elements, (describes as much as is possible) and it is also most appropriate to areas of study that are fairly new, in need of further exploration in the future, and about which relatively little is known (Pomerance 1982, pp.16-18). Exploratory research is also most appropriate to new areas of research where the body of research done on the subject is still relatively limited, but where researchers nonetheless have some reason to believe that there are elements of the subject area worthy of exploration (Stebbins, 2001, para. 14-15).

The research pursued within this thesis is also intended to shed light on salient issues related to Muslim youth and integration in Canada and to identify policy recommendations for the Government of Canada and the provincial and territorial governments to consider that may help to improve the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada, as well as relationships between Canadian Muslims and agents of the Canadian state. It is also hoped that the thesis research will help to pave the road for further research to be conducted in this area and, thus, this thesis situates itself within the discipline of advocacy research, which has an active component. Advocacy research, is defined by Scott and Marshall (2009, para. 1) as a form of descriptive policy research conducted by those addressing specific social issues. Such “studies seek to measure social problems with a view to heightening public awareness of them and providing a catalyst to policy proposals and other action to ameliorate the problem in question” (2009, para. 1). Ameliorating the issues of Islamophobia, Muslim youth and integration into a multicultural Canada is an effort toward which this thesis aims to make a contribution.

Indeed, the inspiration for this thesis stems from the realization that there is a need for society and government to facilitate better relations between Muslims and non-Muslims residing in Canada. This reality extends to amending relations between Muslim citizens and the Canadian state. This occurs within a very specific and current environment; within the reality that Islam is the fastest growing religious affiliation in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011, para. 12), Canada experiencing its first terrorist attack that the government has deemed as having an Islamist motivation (“Attack on Canada’s Parliament,” 2014, para. 1-3), and within the context of growing Islamophobia in Canada (“Canadian anti-Muslim sentiment is rising,” 2013, para. 1-3; Zine, 2004, pg. 111). It is also important to note that radicalized Canadian individuals with Fundamentalist Islamist sympathies (both converts and born

Muslims who have been radicalized) have participated in terrorist activities in Europe, in the Middle East, and in Africa (Public Safety Canada, 2014, para. 14-25). Finally, this thesis also aims to identify ways to prevent radicalism among Muslim youth and to engage the mainstream, moderate Muslim communities, and ideally, all Muslim communities in these efforts.

1.1 Conceptualization of Terms

In the study of politics and dispute resolution, many terms have contested definitions to some degree, and ergo, it is important to conceptualize and define terms early on in a thesis so the readership can have a fulsome understanding of the overall analysis and the arguments being made.

The following phrases and words are briefly defined to provide context and an understanding of the main terms being used in this study and when relevant, will be further elaborated on in the rest of the thesis:

Muslim: Any person self-identifying as a Muslim, regardless of Sunni or Shii sect. It is recognized there are different interpretations of Islam, (more complex than Sunni and Shii); however, the exploratory, and general nature of this research explores the identity of “Muslim” in a general manner. The Sunni or Shii affiliation of informants is indicated; however, the readership should keep in mind this is not a comparative study and should be an area of further research.

Identity conflict: Identity conflict in this thesis was explored as it is defined by Lederach and Kriesberg. Kriesberg posits that identity conflict occurs when people see two aspects of their identity as being mutually exclusive, or at the very least in conflict with each other (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-30). As Kriesberg gives a thorough explanation of group identity,

and its potential to be a source of conflict, Lederach (1995, pg. 8-10) provides a complementary view that reveals more about the manifestations of identity conflicts, and how they may be distinguished from other sorts of conflicts. He takes a similar definition of what identity conflict is, and identifies it, as does Kriesberg, as a construction of group identity as an experience of shared meaning that is culturally subjective.

Lederach has remarked that “all conflicts are identity conflicts” (Lederach, 2005, para. 1) on some level or another, because of his view that “conflict emerges through an interactive process based on the search for and creation of shared meaning” (Lederach, 2005, pg. 9). Lederach sees identity construction as a human need, and posits that an individual’s collective identity is rooted in the human need for interconnectedness, belonging and shared meaning with others. He views responses to conflict as related to collectively shared experiences (that may be culturally or socially specific) and a collective sense of meaning “rooted in the shared knowledge and schemes created and used by a [group] of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing and responding to social realities around them” (Lederach, 1995, pg. 9).

Kriesberg sees identity conflict as emerging when a collective identity one espouses is perceived as being threatened by an “other.” Regarding identity construction and identity conflict, Kriesberg (2003, para. 7-11) identifies a number of sources drawn from in the construction of identity, including ethnicity and nationality. Kriesberg views identity as being multifaceted with individuals espousing several different identity roles. People hold roles on the basis of family, occupation, religious affiliation, and ethnicity. Kriesberg also describes the concept of “primary” identities, meaning the identity that is most important to an individual throughout their daily life. People’s identity roles may also be equally important to them, or may be in a hierarchy. It is also important to understand that identity roles may rise

to the forefront of an individual's consciousness, or become more important to them based on a situation. For example, an individual may view their identity as a parent as equally important as their identity as a citizen, but may feel differently if they were for example asked to testify against their child in the event of criminal behaviour. Depending on the circumstance, an individual may feel more connected to their identity, or experience a conflict of identity and feel one of their identities more acutely (Kriesberg, 2003).

In other cases, an individual may feel more strongly connected to a collective identity than an individual identity they espouse. They may also be mobilized to action based on a group identity, and feel strong empathy, and solidarity with their own in-group members. Group identity is also characterized by a mentality among group members of "us" and "them" which has the potential to result in a conflict of identity if a group identity is threatened in any way. Individuals may be willing to make tremendous personal sacrifices or make considerable efforts to preserve a group identity they hold in high importance. Group identities are often based on shared values, beliefs and traditions, and are also characterized by what they are not, just as much by what they are. Thus "otherment" is a component of group identities, which can result in conflict if a group identity is threatened (Kriesberg, 2003).

Kriesberg identifies different sources of identity and while there are many types, this thesis will explore the identity source of religion (2005, para. 7-30).

Youth: Youth will be defined as those persons between the ages of 15-30.

Identity Politics: Involves the political action of defending particular vulnerable groups that have been marginalized. Identity politics as a "mode of organizing is intimately connected to the idea that some social groups are oppressed" ("Identity Politics," 2012, para. 3) and "that

one's identity [...] makes one peculiarly vulnerable to cultural imperialism” (“Identity Politics,” 2012, para. 3). The issue of identity politics is particularly salient in the post-colonial and globalized world, where members of collective identity groups can be mobilized based on a collective memory of marginalization (“Identity Politics,” 2012).

Radical Islamism: Defined as a set of radical, extremist beliefs resulting from a distortion of the mainstream Islamic religion, not to be confused with Islam. Islam and radical Islamism are regarded as two different and distinct entities that should not be confused with each other (Pipes, 1998, para. 1-16). Radical Islamism is defined as a totalitarian ideology that aims for “the re-inauguration of the Islamic might in the world: to achieve this goal, the use of violence is not rejected” (Mozaffari, 2007, abstract).

Islamophobia: Unfounded hostility toward, or fear of Muslims and a belief that Islam is a violent and dangerous ideology. A belief that Islam is “monolithic and cannot adapt to new realities” (Center for Race and Gender, Berkeley, 2015, para. 1) and also that “Islam as a religion is inferior to the West. It is archaic, barbaric, and irrational” (Center for Race and Gender, Berkeley, 2015, para. 1). Orientalist in nature, Islamophobia is an ideology seeing Muslims as inherently dangerous and a threat to human progress, which has no valid place in the modern world (Center for Race and Gender, Berkeley, 2015, para. 1).

Canadian Identity: This term is subjective and dynamic and is a subject of much debate in Canadian politics and society. For the purposes of this thesis, the Canadian identity will be recognized as a socially and politically constructed term depending on such variables as history, region, race and ethnicity, time, world events, and culture.

Radicalization: The definition of radicalization used in this thesis comes from CSIS: “...is the process whereby individuals move from holding moderate, mainstream beliefs towards

adopting extremist political or religious ideologies. Individuals who become radicalized may support or become involved in violent extremism” (CSIS, 2014, para. 1).

1.2 Thesis Goals and Research Questions

This study aims to explore the issue of Islamophobia in the post 9/11 globalized world, how this may contribute to the exclusion and disenfranchisement of Muslims in Canada, and how Islamophobia may cause conflict on the basis of collective identity, primarily focusing on the youth demographic when possible and relevant.

The central research question is as follows: How do Muslims and Muslim youth in Canada understand their identity?

The secondary questions that support the main research question are:

- How do Muslims and Muslim youth perceive themselves within Canadian society?
- To what degree do forms of collective identity play an important role in the experiences of Muslim youth in defining their identity?
- Do Muslim youth experience isolation, alienation or marginalization and if so, what are the issues that may cause this?
- How are Muslim youth in Canada affected by identity conflict?
- Are there different types and levels of identity conflict?
- How does this conflict manifest itself? What may cause some youth to become impacted by identity conflict and others not?
- What may be done to prevent Muslims in Canada from developing hostile feelings toward Canadian institutions or feelings of isolation?

- Are there differences between males and females in their experiences of identity conflict?
- How do Muslim youth in Canada understand their Muslim identity in the context of Canadian society?
- Are there any sectarian differences between the experiences of Sunni and Shia Muslims?

1.3 Importance of Topic

Expected Increase in Population

By 2050, the world's population is expected to exceed 9 billion (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013, para. 1). Islam, already the world's largest religion after Christianity, is growing and gaining more converts each year than any other religion in the world. Indeed, while Christianity is losing followers, Islam is gaining them (Act Beyond, 2014, para. 1; "The World's Fastest Growing Religion is," 2015, para. 3). Following this phenomenon is the fact that the world's population is growing at a more substantial rate in Muslim countries than non-Muslim countries. For example, the Gaza Strip, which is a nearly exclusively Sunni Muslim population, is one of the world's most densely populated areas, and growing quickly at a rate of 5.4% per annum (UNDP, 2014, para. 1-6). Countries such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Pakistan and Nigeria are quickly producing many of the world's new inhabitants. Of the millions of people emerging from these nations, the majority are expected to be Muslims (24/7 Wall Street, 2011, para. 1-3). This means that Islam will very soon rival Christianity as the world's largest religion, and will have more than 2 billion adherents (Act Beyond, 2014, para 1; "The World's Fastest Growing Religion is," 2015, para. 1; World Religious Population, 2014, para. 1).

There are many ramifications to the phenomenon of a rapidly growing population of any religious group. Conflicts related to over-population on a mass scale are predicted by several experts. For example, Gwynne Dyer, a well-known independent journalist and author of *Climate Wars*, asserts that over-population and imminent global food, water and energy shortages are imminent, and these issues have already exacerbated existing conflicts. Over-population, and subsequent competition over scarce resources is expected to exponentially contribute to such problems (Dyer, 2008, pp. 6-10). This sentiment is also echoed by famous American scientist Jared Diamond (Diamond, 2005, Prologue, pp. 1-23), best-selling author of *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (2005), *The World Until Yesterday: what can we learn from traditional societies* (2012), and *Guns Germs and Steel: the Fates of Human Societies* (1999).

Effects of Poverty

This scenario creates possible fertility ground for extremism to be born and to thrive (Borgen Project, 2014, para. 1-10). For example a report by the Borgen Project (a Seattle-based Humanitarian NGO) cited poverty as being linked to increased religiosity, and that the poorest countries on earth have the highest number of citizens identifying as religious. The Borgen Project references a 2012 report published by the Fata Research Center that stated that there was, "... a stunning correlation between poverty, lack of educational opportunities, lack of employment and growing up in a violent society that leads youths to become religiously extremist. 89 percent of those surveyed emphasized the essential "importance of youth role in bringing prosperity to the region" (Borgen Project, 2014, para. 8).

There are also extremely affluent individuals who espouse radicalist beliefs and contribute to the radicalization of others. For example, the Bin-Ladens were among the wealthiest families in the Saudi Kingdom (Sasson, 2009, pp. 17) prior to Osama Bin-Laden

being expelled and stripped of his citizenship for his terrorist activities and indeed, he is an example of the potential for well-educated and affluent people to become radicalized (Fisk, 2005, pp. 4-9). Despite the possibility for people of any economic walk of life to adopt radicalist ideologies, the potential for poverty to increase an individual's vulnerability to radicalism must be given due consideration. Poverty should not be viewed as a universal predictor of an individual's heightened susceptibility to radicalism; however, its potential to influence an individual's persuasion to radicalization is acknowledged (Borgen Project, 2014, para. 1-10).

The emergence of Al Shabaab, (the Somali-Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist organization responsible for numerous attacks and the deaths of hundreds of people in East Africa) in the failed and impoverished state of Somalia, is another prime example of despondency leading to religious extremism ("Who are Somalia's Al-Shabaab?" 2015, para. 1-5). Somalia is the top-producing nation in the world of pirates, which causes serious hindrances to global shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean, is telling of the lengths that desperate people are capable of resorting to if they are presented with no alternative for survival. This also illustrates the vulnerability of severely marginalized groups to delinquent activity (Bahadur, 2011, pp. 25-33).

Adding to the importance of promoting co-existence between Muslims and non-Muslims in the West is that according to the UN High Commission of refugees (UNHCR), the top five refugee producing countries (Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Syria and Sudan) are countries that are predominantly Muslim, and these produce 55% of all refugees in the UNHCR database. When pondering this reality, one should remember to also consider the number of people who are domestically displaced, as well as the 4.9 million (nearly exclusively Muslim) Palestinians registered under the UN special agency for Palestinians (UNRWA, United

Nations relief and works agency for Palestinian refugees in the Near East). Conflicts in Mali and Ethiopia are also expected to produce an increasing number of refugees in the coming years (UNHCR, 2013, para. 1-10). Moreover, the majority of the conflicts producing these refugees are deeply protracted, have been on-going for several years and do not show any indication of imminent resolution. Adding to the issue of disenfranchised Muslim youth, is the alarming fact that UNHCR reports a large and record-breaking increase in recent years in the number of unaccompanied refugee children, for whom the whereabouts of parents or guardians is unknown (UNHCR, 2013, para. 8). It is expected that large portions of these refugees are going to find their way into Europe and North America, including Canada.

On the other hand, the reality that thousands of Westerners have travelled to Syria to join ISIS indicates the global nature of the problem of Radical Islamism (“Why Westerners are fighting for ISIS,” para. 1-8). Many believe that this means, as per Huntington’s premonition, a “clash of civilizations” (Fox, 2002, pg. 415) is imminent, which means concurrently that an imminent conflict between the Muslim and the secular world on a mass scale is a very strong likelihood according to some commentators (Fox, 2002, pg. 416).

Identity Conflict in Canada: Addressing the Issues and Moving Forward

Despite some alarmist rhetoric in the media, and the emergence of Islamophobia, there is still an opportunity for Canada to maintain its multicultural and open values. Canada is a global pioneer in pluralism and adopted an official policy of multiculturalism in 1971 (Government of Canada, 2012, para. 1-8), becoming the first country in the world to do so. This presents, at least a possibility that Canada could be successful in integrating Muslims and non-Muslims. Since adopting the multicultural policy, Canada has accepted immigrants from all over the world, and has actually become one of the top immigrant receiving countries globally (World Bank, 2010, para. 1).

Despite having a relatively small population, Canada ranks fifth in the world for having the largest prevalence of immigrants (World Bank, 2010, para. 1). Canada also provides certain protections and rights to its immigrants and citizens, such as the first fundamental freedom outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: “Everyone has the following freedoms A) freedom of conscience and religion” (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982, para. 2).

If perceptions of Canada globally are of relevance, and if the very safe environment and the quality of life are any indication of the effect that immigration/multiculturalism has had on Canada as a nation, then Canada’s efforts to integrate immigrants and the country’s ability to function as a diverse and multi-cultural society could be considered to have been a success. At the very least, it seems unlikely that Canada’s efforts in multiculturalism have been detrimental. For example, Canada has the 10th lowest crime rate in the entire world (Nation Master, 2002, para.1). Moreover, according to a BBC poll in 2014, Canada was ranked second only to Germany as being the most well liked country in the world, whose influence was seen as being “mainly positive” (“Russian image has deteriorated: BBC World Service Poll,” 2014, para. 24). Canada is also ranked as one of the best places in the world to live (“What are the 10 best countries to live in, The Richest, 2013, para. 1).

These accomplishments demonstrate at least a possibility that Canada’s multiculturalism has contributed to making it a stronger country, and Canada’s diversity has afforded the nation with certain advantages. For example, Canada’s aging demographic presents an issue that has been partially amended by immigration (Merette, 2009, pp. 145-147), and Canada’s diversity permits us to enjoy very positive relations among many countries. It has enabled solid trade relations with the EU, as well as with emerging economies in the Latin American and Pacific region. Canada’s multiculturalism also enables the country to attract exceptional

talent and ability among immigrants and prosper in the increasingly globalized economy (Canadian Council of Chief Executives, 2005, para. 1-40).

Although Canada's multicultural experiment could be perceived, in light of the examples provided above, as having been an overall success, it has not been without its obstacles and failures (Kymlicka, 2010, pg. 4-7). Despite efforts to encourage diversity, Canada has not yet been successful in eradicating sexism, homophobia, racism and discrimination in general. One group that has been affected by discrimination are Muslims (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2012, para. 1-10), and Muslim youth, due to their developmental stage and subsequent vulnerability, have been disproportionately impacted. Islamophobia is an issue in Canada that has been a hindrance to the realization of multiculturalism in Canada, as well as the full realization of equality and human rights in Canada. Islamophobic views in Canada are also on the rise ("Canadian anti-Muslim sentiment is rising," 2013 para. 5; Zine, 2004, pg. 111).

There is evidence to suggest, in congruence with the testimony of thesis interview informants, that Islamophobia has increased in Canada's largest city since 9/11 (Zine, 2004, pg. 111-112). For example, a 2004 study stated that "According to a report by the Toronto Police Services, there was a 66 percent increase in hate crimes in 2001 [and] the largest increase was against Muslims" (Zine, 2004, pg. 111). According to an Angus Reid Poll, 46% of Canadians held a negative view of Muslims in 2009, and this rose to 54% in 2013 ("Canadian anti-Muslim sentiment is rising," 2013 para. 5). These sentiments are even more prevalent in Quebec, where 69% of people have a negative view of Islam. In 2013, 32% of Canadians ("Canadian anti-Muslim sentiment is rising," 2013) stated that it would be unacceptable for their son or daughter to marry a Muslim. According to a 2013 study, "rejection of the idea of a child marrying into any of the other religions such as Christianity,

Judaism, Buddhism, or Sikhism was considerably lower” (“Canadian anti-Muslim sentiment is rising,” 2013 para. 2013. para 5). Views about the other religions surveyed (Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Sikhism) have remained more or less constant between the years 2009-2013 (“Canadian anti-Muslim sentiment is rising,” 2013 para. 2-3). Reports also exist that online hate speech is being used to propagate Islamophobia in Canada by far-right extremist groups (Iqra, 2015, para. 1-25; “Why Islamophobia is difficult to stop,” 2014, para. 1-20). This is despite “Section 319 of the Criminal Code of Canada [which] forbids the incitement of hatred against ‘any section of the public distinguished by colour, race, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation” (“Why online Islamophobia is difficult to stop, laws not strong enough say experts,” 2014, para 31; Criminal Code of Canada, 1985, Section 319). There are thousands of Canadian members of the “Anti-Islam Alliance” Facebook page, which as of February 2015 has nearly 30,000 members worldwide (<https://www.facebook.com/Anti-Islam-Alliance-104201582969970/timeline/>).

According to a report published by Dr. Uzma Jamil in the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2012), less than 43% of Ontario residents hold a positive perception of Muslims and 60% of Ontario residents believe that Islamophobia has increased since 9/11. Despite the concerning trends of rising Islamophobic attitudes in Canada, cases exist of non-Muslim Canadians defending the rights of Muslims who are being discriminated against. For example, passersby in St. Catherine’s Ontario did not hesitate to call police when a 17 year-old hijab wearing girl was physically attacked by three teenage girls outside a convenience store (“Canadian anti-Muslim sentiment is rising,” 2013 para. 1-2). Dozens of non-Muslim volunteers offered to help clean up a vandalized mosque in Cold Lake, Alberta after the attack in Ottawa inspired Islamophobic actions (“Volunteers help to clean up Cold Lake mosque,” 2014, para. 1-3). Perhaps the most well-known example of Canadians

defending Muslims from bigotry is the “social experiment” posted on YouTube in which a Canadian actor poses as a belligerent Islamophobe in Hamilton Ontario. Several bystanders came to the aid of the Muslim youth (actor) in traditional clothing being verbally abused by the Islamophobic assailant. The video concludes with one particular bystander becoming so enraged that he actually punches the actor posing as the abuser directly in the face (“Canadian Actor punched in the face after Islamophobia experiment goes wrong in the wake of Ottawa shooting,” 2015, para. 1-4).

As these aforementioned examples indicate, it would seem that the issue of Muslims living in Canada is a complex one, with some Canadians privately or openly harbouring Islamophobic attitudes, and others willing to defend the rights of Muslims as fellow citizens to practice their religion and to be accepted as full-fledged Canadians. While it would appear that there is substantial variation among Canadians in their views of Muslims, it appears that Islamophobic attitudes do in fact exist (although exactly how prevalent this is cannot be definitively quantified) in Canada and subsequently have some potential to foster identity-based conflicts, and to create obstacles to the successful integration of Muslims (especially Muslim youth) in Canada and to the full success of multiculturalism (Galabuzi, 2001, pg. 8; thesis informants).

In the context of understanding Islamophobia, it is relevant to note that there are cases that have occurred within Canada during which some Muslims have developed negative, or even hostile opinions about Canada’s institutions (“Homegrown terrorist: Toronto 18 bomb plotter Saad Khalid recalls his radicalization,” 2014, para. 1-18). The most extreme example is the case of the Toronto 18 (a terrorist plot thwarted by CSIS); reports exist from CSIS that allege that as many as 130 Canadians have gone abroad to participate in the activities of ISIS and others are currently being monitored (Public Safety Canada, 2014, para. 14-25). Less

extreme examples of anti-Western sentiment among Muslims in Canada are more common. One survey conducted in 2006 (Pew Research Center) of Muslims in 8 different countries on their opinions about Western respect for Muslims and Muslim societies, revealed that the majority feel they have been on some level or another shown disrespect or hostility by the West (Pew Research Center, 2006, para. 1-35). The well-known scholar Tariq Ramadan has also stated the need for Muslims residing in Western countries to recognize the difference between religion and culture, and that they must understand how to integrate better into their chosen countries and abandon cultural practices that no longer apply. He states that Muslims living in the West should work harder to abide by the laws of their chosen culture, learn its language and practice a discretionary level of loyalty to it (Ramadan, 2013, para. 5-18).

Tariq Ramadan poses the potent question “Are we Muslims living in the West, or are we Western Muslims (as cited by Informant C)?” He posits that there is a need for the Muslim identity to be defined as it fits in the modern Western context, and that this problem comes just as much from outside the Muslim community as it does from within. Millions of Muslims now reside in North America, Europe and Australia, and many of them are not immigrants, but were born in those countries and have spent their entire lives in Western countries. Therefore, their countries of adoption make an oversight when they neglect to weave Muslims into the fabric of their cultural identity. Conversely, Muslims, and especially Muslim youth at a crucial developmental stage make a similar reductionism when defining their own identity as exogenous from their adopted countries in which they reside. The two are inextricably linked. Ramadan also identifies the problems associated with the “we and them” (othering) discourse that has surrounded the issue of Muslims and Westerners for such a long time, and suggests that “we” is adopted, as Muslims can no longer be viewed exclusively as immigrants and Western countries cannot be viewed as simply hosts. The

reality is different, Muslims and Western countries are interconnected, their roles are not clearly defined, and thus, barriers cannot be so rigid (Ramadan, 2013, para. 1-20). Ramadan explains the challenging yet vital task Muslims must embark upon to enable their full integration into their chosen countries:

Islam is a tremendously heterogeneous religion, with Muslims coming from a diversity of cultures, nations, and ethnicities. Muslims have a responsibility to be faithful to their religious principles and to fully and actively participate in their home Western societies while being confident that the flexibility of the Islamic legal principles and the latitude of laws within Western countries are compatible. To be fully and actively participating citizens, Muslims need to nurture a sense of attachment, belonging, respect, pride, and loyalty in “my country,” a feeling that this is “my home” as well as “my children’s future.” With all the recurrent confusion and misinterpretation both within and surrounding Islam, this can sometimes be a demanding undertaking (Ramadan, 2013, para. 4).

Ramadan (2013) suggests one must take caution not to view the task as being impossible, and perceived that many Muslims have fully integrated into __secular Western democracies, and embraced the Western countries that have become their homes. Others in his view have found this task an insurmountable one and have been severely impacted by a conflict of identity. Youth (in the views of my thesis informants), are particularly impacted by this challenge of defining their identity as Muslims in a Western society due to the added challenges of adolescence and the physical, and psychosocial changes that accompany it. This struggle, for some youth can result in turmoil and in some cases, can have societal ramifications (para. 5-15).

Immigrants are also often impacted by poverty (Galabuzi, 2001, pg. 6). The CSJ Foundation for Research and Education reported a 24% wage gap between racialized groups (which would comprise of many first and second generation immigrants) and other Canadian demographics (Galabuzi, 2001). According to one 2013 study, over 15% of Canadians live in

poverty, and very low-income neighbourhoods have a higher proportion of immigrants than other areas. In 2005, immigrant males in Canada earned an average of 63 cents for every dollar earned by a non-immigrant Canadian and immigrant females earned only 56 cents for every dollar earned by their non-immigrant counterparts (“National Household Survey: Immigrants, minorities struggle in Canada,” 2013, para. 16-17). Immigrants often have unrealistic expectations about Canada, and may face problems finding employment that is in accordance to their education level and experience (“National Household Survey: Immigrants, Minorities struggle in Canada,” 2013, para. 1-10). All of these factors may have the potential to contribute to the marginalization and disenfranchisement of immigrants (Galabuzi, 2001, pg. 6-8). Thus, the issue of Muslim youth and identity conflict in Canada, is one that can sometimes cause problems, and is therefore worthy of study.

1.4 Organization of Thesis

This thesis is organized into eight sections to facilitate the most comprehensive reading of and understanding of the topic under study. After the preliminary section, the background and context are described (Chapter 2) and following, the literature review (Chapter 3) is included. This is followed by a section on methodology and methods (Chapter 4). Interview findings are discussed in Chapter 5, and this chapter covers the findings of the primary research in this thesis. Chapter 6 covers the secondary research portion of the thesis (Situational Analysis), and Chapter 7, (Discussion and Analysis) pulls together all findings of the research in order to draw conclusions. The final Chapter (8) is where the findings will be situated in the exclusively Canadian context and policy recommendations will be made. The way forward for Canada in improving its efforts to integrate Muslims youth, as well as areas for further study will be suggested.

Chapter 2: Background - International and Domestic Context of Muslim Youth and Identity Conflict

2.0 General Background

Identity conflict among Muslim youth in Canada takes place in a domestic as well as international and globalized context. This is especially relevant considering the diverse backgrounds of Muslim youth in Canada, as members from different sects and communities, as recent immigrants, as second-generation immigrants from several regions of the world, and as well as Canadian converts. According to the interview findings, discussed later in the thesis, there is reason to consider the possibility that within Canada, there are collective identities inspired by the separation between Muslims and non-Muslims as well as within the diverse Canadian Muslim community, related to sect, race, or country of origin. The diverse international nature of Muslims in Canada, as well as the globalized nature of the world means this thesis research must necessarily be situated in a domestic as well as international context.

This background chapter addresses the following issues: adversarial identities in a multicultural Canada, examples of identity conflict in Canada, examples of initiatives to promote stronger relationships between the Muslim community and the Canadian state, conceptualizing identity, and addressing identity conflict in Canada in the context of a western democracy. This chapter is intended to provide the global and domestic context for further exploration of the topic.

2.1 Adversarial Identities in a Multicultural Canada

According to Kriesberg, group identities are often defined just as much by what they are *not*, rather than by what they are. Moreover, they are constructed against, or in reaction to an

“other” (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 16). This thesis will attempt to bring understanding and explanation of the group under study, to understand their group identity and how it is defined against an “other.” This identity construction may be influenced by the context of multiculturalism, secularity and a potential loss of the Islamic identity among Muslim youth in Canada.

Identity conflict is deep-rooted, values-driven and often features an element of intractability. Identity conflict is also often characterized by group identification against an other - a phenomenon of “otherment” (Buber, 1923, pg. 3-6; Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-20). Buber identifies “otherment” as the progression of objectification and dehumanizing that enables the other to be viewed as an “it” rather than as a “thou” (Buber, 1923, pg. 3-6). “Otherment” as understood by Buber is also echoed in the discourse of Orientalism, and so this thesis aligns with the paradigm of “otherment” and objectification existent in the discourse of Orientalism (and simultaneously Occidentalism), within the framework defined by Edward Said (Said, 1978, pg. 9-11).

This process of othering can be further exacerbated by other circumstances, such as religious differences, economic inequality, and territorial disputes. If it is accompanied by non-compromising identities, collective victim identity, exclusivity and adversarial identities, it can result in the manifestation of an identity conflict (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 12-20). Group identities can be triggers in identity conflicts when people view one group identity as more important, or incompatible with another identity they espouse. It is important to note that every human has several identities, such as man or woman, parent or grandparent, Muslim, Christian or atheist (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-20). According to Kriesberg’s (2003, para. 4-10) framework, identity conflict generally occurs when a group identity is seen as more significant than an individual’s own identity, or when a collective identity a person

feels a strong connection to is perceived to be threatened. Kriesberg gives the well-known example of the Palestinian suicide bomber, willing to sacrifice their personal identity (as a parent, student, friend etc.) to preserve their group (Palestinian) identity, or to preserve members of their own identity group (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 4).

Another example of the conflict potentially caused by collective identities is that of the former Yugoslavia, whose citizens ultimately viewed their diverse group identities as Bosnians, Serbs or Croatians as superior to their collective group identity as citizens of the former Yugoslavia (Kriesberg, 2003, para.6). This may occur by the construction of Muslim group identity against an *other*; in this case the Canadian/Western identity (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 12-42). It is noted here that the 'Canadian identity' given Canada's diverse population, and fairly recent history as an independent state make the "Canadian identity" difficult to define.

Kriesberg (2003, para. 7-11) identifies sources of identity, which if present in a conflict, indicate an identity (and therefore potentially intractable) conflict (rather than a different and more surface level form of conflict) including: persistent identities, primary identities, victimhood, non-compromising identities, views of the other, inclusivity, nationalism and adversarial identities. Religion is often a primary, and uncompromising source of an individual's identity (Kriesberg, 2003. para. 10-20). Kriesberg indicates that these sources may also be *causes* of identity conflict. For example, a collective perception in an identity group of victimhood, may result in an attitude espousing the justification of violence toward a perceived aggressor.

2.2 Examples of Identity Conflict in Canada

In some isolated cases, Canada's Muslim youth have connected to victim identity, and have subsequently been drawn to radical interpretations of Islam that may manifest themselves violently. It is also known that terrorist activities do occur within Canada's borders (CSIS, 2014, para. 1-3). For example, one of the most notorious cases of domestic terrorism in Canada was the Al Qaeda inspired Toronto 18 plot that involved 18 Muslim men of various backgrounds, 17 of whom were 30 years of age or younger at the time, including four juvenile offenders ("The Toronto 18," 2010, para 1-5; Miller & Sack, 2010, pg.1). This case indicates the potential vulnerability of Muslim youth to radicalism in Canada. The elaborate plot identified its goals as the destruction of several buildings in downtown Toronto and the beheading of the Prime minister ("The plan to behead the prime minister," 2006, para. 1). Particular aspects of the Canadian identity were identified as inspiring the plot such as Canada's secularity, close alliance with the United States and its support of American involvement in Afghanistan (Miller & Sack, 2010, pg. 3).

Another example of domestic terrorist activity is the recent case of the Canadian branch of the Islamic society of North America being stripped of its charitable status after the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) discovered it distributed \$280,000 to a terrorist organization in Pakistan ("Islamic Charity's status revoked after alleged ties to a terrorist organization," 2013, para. 1-5). Furthermore, a 22-year-old Canadian youth, Mustafa al-Gharib, (formerly Damian Clairmont) was found dead in Syria, after fighting with an Al-Qaeda affiliated group ("Damian Clairmont killed fighting with Al Qaeda linked rebels in Syria," 2014, para. 1-3). A 2014 report estimates that there may be up to 150 Canadian nationals actively fighting with Al Qaeda affiliated groups in Syria, and that upon their return they may pose a security threat (Public Safety Canada, 2014, para. 16-25).

In another case, two Muslim men (one aged 30) residing in Canada, inspired by links to Al Qaeda were recently charged for their plot to derail a passenger train on its way to Toronto (“Al-Qaeda linked terrorists allegedly planned to derail VIA passenger train,” para. 1-2). It was recently discovered that a Canadian national, Salman Ashrafi of Calgary, participated in a “martyrdom operation” in affiliation with ISIS, in Iraq, which killed 46 people (“Inside ISIS: Salman Ashrafi’s photo found in documents revealing underbelly of extremist group,” CBC News, 2014, para. 1-3). In early 2014, Mohamed Hirsi of Brampton Ontario, was apprehended in Pearson International Airport, after it was discovered that he intended to join Al-Shabaab in Somalia (“Toronto man told undercover officer it was “God’s will” for him to join Al-Shabaab,” 2014, para. 1-13).

These examples illustrate cases of disenfranchised youth and adults who have been lured and influenced by the jihadist narrative, which espouses a binary view of the world, described by the framework of Kriesberg (2003, para. 1-3) as “us” vs “them.” The tenets of the jihadist narrative implore Muslims to show their solidarity with global Radical Islamism due to what they view as the colonialist, Zionist, and anti-Muslim pursuits of the West. They often use videos of Muslims being killed by American troops to illustrate their position and rely on emotionally charged footage to convince others of the inherent evil in the “West” and assert the “West” as the enemy of Muslims the world over. They implore to the collective identity of Muslims all over the world to empathize with the plight of their brothers and sisters abroad and to take action, through violence to defend them (“Homegrown terrorist: Toronto 18 bomb plotter Saad Khalid,” 2014. para. 1-18; Barclay, 2010, pg. 8). All of the aforementioned examples of radical Islamists in Canada are symptomatic of a perception of Muslims as victims, of Western hegemony and colonial expansion, which relate to Kriesberg’s perception of collective victim identity, which has the potential to mobilize identity groups under

circumstances where they feel their collective identity has been threatened (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-20). Collective victim identity also shows a potential for Muslims to display solidarity with members of their own identity group, which are other Muslims, of many different nationalities and ethnicities, with whom they share a common and primary identity. It also most importantly shows the potential of identity conflict to exacerbate existing mental illness, a potent issue for youth due to their stage of development (“Ottawa shooting: was Michael Zihaf-Bibeau a terrorist or Mentally ill?,” Global News, 2014, para. 1-40; Simply Psychology, 2013, para. 40-53). This shows as well the potential for people to be mobilized to action based on identity claims, especially when a collective identity they espouse is believed to be threatened or under attack (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-50).

Collective identities may be united by a single source or by many other factors. For the purposes of this thesis research, which examines the extremely diverse Canadian Muslim Sunni and Shii communities it appears that very diverse individuals can form a collective identity based on religion (across ethnic, class, and linguistic lines). Groups appearing to be diverse (such as the Toronto 18, comprising of different national backgrounds, including Canadian converts) may be united by group identities connected by a primary identity they hold in high importance (Kriesberg, 200, para 4-40). The Toronto 18 members were ethnically diverse and according to Miller and Sack (2010, pg. 3) they were influenced by a feeling of connectedness to those belonging to their own identity group abroad, as well as feelings of hostility toward Canada’s state institutions due to their activities in Afghanistan, which could have been perceived to be harming fellow Sunni Muslims. The Toronto 18 members were also similar in their isolation, disenfranchisement, social ineptitude, despondency and unhappiness (“Homegrown Terrorist: Toronto 18 Bomb Plotter Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 1-20; “The Toronto 18,” ; 2014, para. 1-60) If terrorist activity of an

Islamist motivation has the potential to inspire Islamophobic attitudes (as it seems to have been the case after 9/11) (Zine, 2004, pg. 111, Informant A, C, D) then it appears plausible, that this case, which illustrates an extreme case of hostility toward the Canadian state may have contributed to Islamophobia in Canada. Since this event, efforts have been made by Canadian institutions and community representatives to integrate Muslim communities into broader Canadian society more deeply, and also to raise awareness about the wider issue of mental health among youth, who are at a crucial developmental stage (Simply Psychology, 2013, para. 30-50).

These efforts are attempting to promote better relations between Muslim communities and representatives of the Canadian state. For example, there has been a program launched that enables Muslim school children to meet RCMP officers, in an effort to promote better relations between Canadian Muslims and the state (“RCMP and Ontario’s Muslims: CAN they get Along?,” 2013, para. 1-20). A very recent initiative called “Meet a Muslim Family” has been launched in an attempt to address Islamophobia and has resulted in over 445 cross-cultural meetings since March 2015, which aim to promote better understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims (“Meet a Muslim family campaign off to a slow start in Halifax,” 2015, para. 1-13).

A more prominent figure among the Muslim Canadian community aiming to combat extremism and to encourage Muslims to embrace a more tolerant version of Islam is a famous advocate of moderate Islam, Egyptian-Canadian Dr. Jamal Badawi (Professor Emeritus and Volunteer Imam), who has been asked to speak all over the world on understanding Islam in the present age. He is a member of “*The Radical Middle Way*,” an NGO dedicated to promoting a more progressive, tolerant interpretation of Islam. Dr. Badawi regularly encourages a message of tolerance and inclusion in both his community sermons, and

university lectures in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and has helped facilitate interfaith dialogues all over Canada, encouraging positive relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Canadians (Radical Middle Way, 2012, para. 1).

2.3 Examples of Initiatives to Promote Stronger Relationships between the Muslim Community and the Canadian state

There are more examples abound of initiatives to promote better Muslim and non-Muslim relations in Canada, that also come from within the Muslim community. Another such example showcasing the efforts of the moderate Muslim Canadian community is *The Muslim Association of Canada*, which seeks to promote a modern understanding of Islam, which states its operational framework as an “approach that emphasizes the holistic message of Islam within the context of a pluralistic society and hence, a message that respects all faiths and Canadian institutions” (Muslim Association of Canada, 2015, para 3). *The Canadian Muslim Congress* espouses reconciling Islam with secularity and The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and states its mission as “Fighting Islamism on behalf of Muslims” (Voices for Human Rights, 2014, para. 1). Efforts such as those named in the examples above may have some potential to contribute to preventing rejection of the Canadian identity among Muslim youth.

2.4 Conceptualizing Identity

Kriesberg identifies the notion of “primary identity” and states that “the primacy or importance of an identity is another quality that affects its contribution to the persistence of a conflict. Persons and groups have multiple identities, but the identities are not all equally significant to them” (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 14). Each person’s identity is multifaceted, and each person’s identity is comprised of several different identity roles, of varying levels of

importance. Any given person may have a national, religious, ethnic, professional, familial or personal identity (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 10-40). Young Canadian Muslim immigrants may see their religious identity as more important than their national identity, without experiencing any conflict, as many people may see different roles of their identity as of more importance than their national identity (for example their identity as a parent may be more important to them than their identity as a Canadian). Identity conflict occurs when people see two aspects of their identity as being mutually exclusive, or at the very least in conflict with each other (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-13). This thesis is examining the concept of being a Muslim, and espousing that identity role, while still identifying as “Canadian” and the process of reconciling these two identities with each other when they may not always be viewed as compatible with each other.

Identity can also be just as much about what an individual’s identity is not, rather than what it is. This is often the case when one group identity is constructed in reaction to, or against an “other.” Particularly, this happens when collective identities are characterized against each other (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-30). In some circumstances, the Muslim identity has been constructed as being fundamentally incompatible with the policies of the Canadian state, and being a loyal Canadian citizen (i.e. under the extremist narrative as mentioned by convicted terrorist Saad Khalid) (“Homegrown Terrorist: Toronto 18 Bomb Plotter Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 1-20; “The Toronto 18,” 2014, para. 1-60; Miller, Sack, 2010, pg. 3).

According to the interviews and the opinions of informants about how identity conflict impacts individuals differently and to varying levels of depth, it may be the case that identity conflict among Muslim youth in Canada occurs in varying levels of severity. Informants provided several examples of where people may feel such conflict. For example, a Muslim immigrant may feel very comfortable with their Canadian identity, specific to the country’s

democratic, secular and open character, but he or she may feel an identity conflict in holding the common Islamic beliefs that consuming alcohol or engaging in pre-marital sex is immoral, while these are widely acceptable activities in Canadian society. While another Muslim experiencing identity conflict may have a more profound experience, and view more aspects of the Canadian identity as being problematic than the previous Muslim - and reject Canadian mores on sexuality and alcohol consumption, as well as multiculturalism, democracy and secularity.

2.5 Addressing Identity Conflict in Canada - A Western Democracy

Canada has one of the highest per capita intakes of immigrants of any country in the world, and thus the need for individuals to define their identity as a minority in a new context is salient (Immigration Watch Canada, 2010, para. 5-8). Fortunately, this process of co-habitation with other identity groups rarely manifests itself as a severe identity conflict, or violently, as it has in other regions (such as the former Yugoslavia, India and Pakistan, Israel and Palestine, Sudan, Kenya or Rwanda) (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 3-7). Yet, as demonstrated by the Toronto 18 plot, there are unusual and peculiar cases where identity conflict may result in an individual feeling their primary identity, or a significant collective identity to which they are connected is in contradiction with being Canadian or Western. ("Homegrown Terrorist: Toronto 18 Bomb Plotter," 2014, para. 1-20; "The Toronto 18;" Barclay, 2010, pg. 8). This internal conflict may in some cases contribute to an adoption of violence. Finding ways to understand and prevent this escalation of certain forms of identity conflict in Canada is of imperative importance to the Government of Canada (Public Safety Canada, 2014, para. 44-18).

Canada's multiculturalism policy has been quite successful (Bloemraad, 2012, para. 1-7), but it has not been without its obstacles, and Canada's cultural mosaic may have fostered identity conflicts among Canada's many diverse immigrant populations, as immigrants struggle to preserve their identities in a new country, and feel that their primary identity is incompatible with being Canadian (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-12; "Homegrown Terrorist: Toronto 18," 2014, para. 1-25; Miller and Sack, 2010, pg. 3). Hostility toward Canada (which may be a symptom of identity conflict) has existed in both latent and active forms, and there are people who have targeted Canadian interests or exploited Canada's open policies to further terrorist goals aimed at foreign targets. Examples of active (rather than latent hostility) include the Air India bombing of 1985 that killed 280 Canadians ("Feds call for vigilance, 28 years after Air India bombing," 2013, para. 1-3), The Toronto 18 plot of 2006 ("The Toronto 18," 2010, para. 1-10), and CSIS reports that there are many active terrorist entities in Canada (CSIS, 2014, para. 1). Canada's multiculturalism and its accompanying benefits and challenges, especially as they relate to the successful integration of Muslim youth are explored in further detail in the final chapter of this thesis, where policy recommendations are made. It is necessary, however, to situate this research in the context of Canadian multiculturalism from the outset.

The aforementioned examples of violence against Canada mean that some Canadians have rejected the authority of Canada's institutions (particularly those related to national defence, and our foreign relations) and actively turned against Canada. Although terrorist activity in Canada has been carried out by a variety of entities (of various ideological motivations), Canada's close relationship with and physical proximity to the United States, as well as Canada's involvement in Afghanistan has made radical Islamism a central threat to Canada's security (CSIS, 2014, para. 1; Miller and Sack, 2010, pg. 3). This threat may be

intensified by the presence of identity conflicts among Canadian Muslim youth, especially and nearly unanimously when such youth are characterized by a shaky psychological disposition, poverty, isolation or political disenfranchisement. Such rapid developmental evolution as well as the many changes that accompany adolescence may exacerbate any existing psychological ailments that a youth may be susceptible to, especially if such a youth falls prey to those who may subject them to malicious indoctrination (“Homegrown Terrorist: Toronto 18 Bomb Plotter Saad Khalid,” para. 1-20; Barclay, 2010, pg. 8).

Radical Islamists with affiliations to Al Qaeda are defined by extreme anti-Western sentiment and a profoundly binary worldview (“Homegrown Terrorist: Toronto 18 Bomb Plotter,” para. 1-20; Zenishek, 2013, para. 1-13; Qutb, 1951, pg. 1-10). The latter may be what inspired the Toronto 18, and Al Qaeda inspired entities remain a priority area for CSIS (CSIS, 2014, para. 5). Thus, Muslim immigrants, and second generation immigrants specifically will be the subjects of this research, as efforts will be made to understand what may ignite conflict among them, and in some cases for this conflict to manifest itself in violent ways. This is not to suggest that Muslims are in any way inherently inclined to terrorist activity.. Moreover, this thesis posits that radical Islamism and Islam are distinct entities, and that there is a process through which an individual becomes radicalized. This occurs when an individual leaves the spectrum of Islam and moves into the realm of radical Islamism-a different set of beliefs. Examination will be given to what factors may influence Muslim Youth in Canadian immigrant populations to develop a more binary and hostile worldview, and to develop negative feelings about Canada. It should also be noted that hostile and extremist views are exceptionally rare, and where they do occur, they nearly always are accompanied by confirmed or, at least, obvious indications of mental instability (“Michael Zihaf-bibeau, Ottawa Gunmen, asked judge to send him to jail,” 2014, para. 1-5).

This thesis explores identity conflict as occurring on a spectrum, with the majority of individuals falling somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, and some individuals barely being impacted at all.

Islamophobic attitudes grew in Western societies after the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Gallup, 2011, para. 1-5; Zine, 2004, pp. 110-111); for example a 2011 Gallup Poll states that

“Islamophobia existed in premise before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, but it increased in frequency and notoriety during the past decade. The Runnymede Trust in the U.K., for example, identified eight components of Islamophobia in a 1997 report, and then produced a follow-up report in 2004 after 9/11 and the initial years of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. The second report found the aftermath of the terrorist attacks had made life more difficult for British Muslims” (Gallup, 2011, para. 4).

There is some evidence to suggest that Islamophobic views are common in America, for example “in January 2002, a Washington Post/ABC News poll found that 14 per cent of Americans believed *mainstream* Islam encourages violence. By August 2010 that number had risen to 35 per cent, according to a Pew Forum survey” (“Islamophobia increases since 9/11,” para. 23). In the wake of anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States fueled by increasing concerns about ISIS, several Muslims residing in the United States have been attacked and murdered (“Chapel hill shooting: three Muslim Americans killed,” 2015, para. 1-8). In other Western democracies with which Canada shares similarities and enjoys strong international ties, there are similar examples of how the actions of radicalized individuals may have inspired a surge in Islamophobic attitudes. One such example takes place in Europe, specifically the Netherlands. After the assassination of a well-known Dutch filmmaker in Amsterdam (Theo Van Gogh) by a Moroccan Islamist who believed Van Gogh had attacked Islam in a film and felt compelled to defend it, a surge in xenophobic attitudes were observed in the Netherlands, with at least 20 mosques

being vandalized within a week of the murder (World Socialist Website, 2004, para. 1-10). Other Islamic centers and Islamic schools were firebombed in the weeks following the attack (The Journal of Turkish Weekly, 2004, para. 1-20). According to a 2013 study, 55% of Dutch are in favor of completely banning all immigration from Islamic countries, 64% of Dutch surveyed believed that Muslim immigration has not been beneficial to the country, and 73% of the Dutch surveyed viewed a “relationship between Islam and the recent terror acts in Boston, London and Paris” (“Majority of Netherlands Favor ban on Sharia Law,” 2013, para. 1-8).

The possibility that Islamophobia (which has been rising according to Angus Reid polls at least since 2009) (“Canadian Anti-Muslim Sentiment is rising,” para.4) could further increase in Canada as a result of the 2014 shooting of an unarmed soldier in Ottawa (“Attack on Canada’s Parliament,” 2014, para. 1-10) is worth considering. Already this attack has partially inspired the creation of Bill C-51 (an Anti-Terrorism Bill) that some legal experts have cautioned has the potential to place Canadians at risk of having their constitutional rights violated (Clayton & Nadar, para. 1-28). It is worth considering the possibility that this bill, as well as increased anti-Muslim sentiments that could arise as a result of the Ottawa attack (“Attack on Canada’s Parliament,” 2014, para. 1-10) could serve to deepen Islamophobic sentiments in Canada, and cause challenges to Muslims living in, or attempting to immigrate to Canada (Clayton & Nadar, para. 1-28).

Even though the estimated 130 Canadians suspected by CSIS of terrorist activities in Syria (Public Safety Canada, 2014, para. 23) represent less than 1% of Canada’s Muslim population of over one million (Statistics Canada, 2011, para. 10-13), it is essential to recognize the profound and far-reaching impact of even one such incident for Canadians, and especially for Muslims living in Canada. The implications of this reality are two-fold:

- 1) Even though the threat of extremism in Islam is of a very low prevalence in Canada (less than 1%) it has such extreme implications that *every* effort possible must be taken to prevent it.

- 2) If trends viewed in other Western countries with which Canada has strong diplomatic relations and many similarities are relevant at all in the Canadian context, it is distinctly possible that Canadian anti-Muslim sentiments will rise. Therefore, actions must be taken to facilitate increased knowledge about Islam and to facilitate better understanding, tolerance and co-existence between Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada, and to prevent the deepening of out-group suspicion and attitudes of otherment.

These two implications serve as the direction as well as inspiration for this thesis research. It is hoped that studies akin to this one will help to inspire collaborative anti-extremist efforts between Muslims and representatives of the Canadian state as well as inspire more efforts to increase education about Islam and more cohesion between Muslims and non-Muslims residing in Canada. There is a need for more action-oriented research to be conducted on this topic in order to inform policies to better integrate Muslims in Canada, and to bring better understanding on the issue. The state of scholarship and academic understanding on the subject is addressed in the literature review to follow.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.0 Introduction

This literature review is far from an exhaustive exploration of the current body of research on this topic conducted thus far, given the vast amount of attention on this issue over the last 1.5 decades. This chapter will instead be a foundation for this research study and will provide an historical and current state analysis of the major themes being explored in this thesis. The literature reviewed in this thesis covers several different themes, but its main relevance is that it relates to the central research question of the thesis: “How do Muslim youth in Canada understand their identity?” The themes covered in the literature review are: identity conflicts, identity conflicts and immigrants, as well as identity conflict and muslim youth.

The database of the UVic library website was used to collect academic journals, as well as books. When using the UVic library database, as well as Google scholar when looking for sources to be included in the literature review, the researcher used some of the following search terms; “Islamophobia in the West,” “Islamophobia in Canada,” “Muslim Youth in Canada,” as well as “Muslim youth and identity conflict in Canada.”

The researcher also viewed the references used in sources in order to guide the research effort. During courses taken at UVic, the researcher was guided to use a resource in the form of a website called “Beyond Intractability” (<http://www.beyondintractability.org/>), which features many academic essays by established experts on conflict transformation. Texts used during course work were also utilized (ie. Lederach, Kriesberg, and Ury and Patton). The researcher also was guided to sources recommended by the thesis informants, for example, informant “C” recommended looking into the work of Tariq Ramadan.

Due to the very current nature of this research, and how it can be deeply influenced by ongoing events, it was necessary to integrate media sources into the thesis. This is also necessitated because of the ongoing theme of media as playing a huge part in influencing the topic of exploration. Further it is prudent, as unfolding events may influence the research and be necessarily included, yet are so recent that there are not yet scholarly studies about them available for consumption. These types of sources are not included in this literature review, but are nonetheless part of what was used for pursuing this thesis research.

Due to the fact that this research also has a practical and policy-related orientation, information provided by the government of Canada, as well as by non-governmental organizations (i.e. the Borgen Project), and inter-governmental organizations (i.e. United Nations) was also necessarily used, and these sources are not included in the literature review. In order to collect grey sources (such as media articles), the researcher relied on Google, and on known media databases (i.e. searching through the BBC, or CBC databases).

3.1 Establishing the Context

Identity conflict among Muslim youth living in the West (in Western democracies with which Canada shares many similarities) is a topic that has been studied (Sirin & Balsano, 2007, pp. 110-111; Kabir, pp. 244-253); yet, there is some space available for more research to be done, especially on an action-oriented note that is specific to Canada. There is, however, a baseline body of literature on Muslim youth and integration in Canada, particularly the scholarly works of Jasmin Zine (Wilfred Laurier University). Some of her studies include: “Muslim youth in Canadian Schools: Identity and the Politics of Religious Diversity (2001),” “Anti-Islamophobia Education as Transformative Pedagogy: Reflections from the educational Front Lines (2004),” as well as “Honour and Identity: An Ethnographic Account of Muslim Girls in a Canadian High School (2008).” Zine’s research does have an

action-oriented approach, especially in her 2004 work, in which she proposes pedagogical methods that could be used to improve understanding and address Islamophobia (Zine, 2004, pp. 112-118). Zine also identified the challenges Muslim girls especially face in integrating themselves into Canadian society (particularly while studying in public schools) that may cause internal conflicts (perhaps more than boys) and this research also has an action-oriented goal in shedding light on the ways that girls can assert themselves in ways that are congruent with their faith (Zine, 2008, pp. 57-59). Zine has also studied the issues of peer pressure and how Muslim youth may struggle with “fitting in” to Canada, which is widely accepting of practices that are frowned upon in Islam (Zine, 2001, pp. 401-408).

The work of Baljit Nagra has also addressed the issue of Muslims’ successful integration into Canada. Particularly, the work emphasizes the stigma Muslims have faced in the 9/11 aftermath, the gendered stereotypes often applied to Muslims as well as how the media has exacerbated Islamophobia. The emphasis of her work is that in Canadian public discourse, citizenship is not enjoyed by all Canadians equally, especially by those identifying as, or who appear to be Muslims due to depictions of an Orientalist nature as well as media propagation of Islamophobic stereotypes (Nagra, 2011, pp. 1-10). In another study, Nagra explores how even though Canada seems to have done a better job in its efforts to facilitate multiculturalism than Europe, there are still barriers to successful integration, and that Muslims seem to be experiencing increased instances of Islamophobia in the 9/11 aftermath (Nagra & Peng, 2013, pp. 604-616). Another study by Omar (2011) also explores the issue of multiculturalism, and the marginalization of Muslims in Canada. Omar examines the issues of identity in multiculturalism as well as how some groups have experienced identity marginalization. Omar makes a noteworthy suggestion for Muslims to respond to misperceptions about their community in an effective manner, and suggests that Muslims

themselves propose acts to be taken in order to amend the current situation (Omar, 2011, pp. 16-27).

Although the study of Islamophobia in the post 9/11 era is relatively current (spanning just 15 years), and could be made more substantive in the Canadian context, there nonetheless is adequate information available to explore the issue and to guide this exploratory research study. Some of the aforementioned examples feature research with advocacy related components, yet there is space for more to be done on this topic, especially as there is evidence to suggest (as mentioned by Zine and Nagra) that Islamophobia in Canada is a growing problem.

3.2 Identity Conflicts

The literature reveals that identity conflict, and particularly identity conflict among immigrants, is a well-studied topic providing sufficient material to conduct this research. When consulting this material, it is also important to note the difference between identity conflict and identity politics, a phenomenon which results when identity conflict is used to mobilize a population to engage in violence, terrorism or rebellion in order to assert their self-determination (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2012, para. 1; Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-60).

“Identity-based conflict is arguably the most important and challenging problem of our increasingly global world in which similarities and interdependencies across groups and nations compete against polarizing differences and antagonisms” (Rothman, 2012, preface, vii). Some have even asserted that “all conflicts are identity conflicts” (Lederach, 2005, para. 1). Regardless of whether or not identity plays a role in all conflicts, there is a wide consensus that it remains a significant factor in conflict, and is strongly linked to contributing

to a conflict's level of intractability (Bercovitch, 2003, para. 1-8; Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-60; Burgess, 2003, para. 1-3; Fiol, Pratt, O'Connor, 2009, pp. 32-33). Conflicts of identity, are thus placed into the category of being deeply rooted, values-driven, and intractable (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-60; Gillwald, 1990, pp. 115-121).

Identity conflicts are often defined by their high level of positionality, and the fact that they cannot generally be addressed by interest based negotiation (Ury, Patton, 1981, pp. 3-27). This is explained by the reality that identity conflicts are defined by their high level of intensity, rigid positions, and deep-rooted values, as well as incompatible identities, and threats to a collective identity (Maisse, 2003, para. 1-30).

There is a wide berth of literature on identity, identity conflict, deep-rooted or intractable conflict, as well as identity issues among immigrants. Identity, and subsequently identity conflict is a well-researched topic. Vern Redekop of St. Paul's University in Ottawa has been very instrumental in outlining the main needs of all persons who, if threatened may cause a deep-rooted conflict of identity. Within the framework of the human needs identified by Burton and Maslow (Marker, 2003, para. 1-10), he identified identity needs implicated in deep-rooted conflict (Redekop, 2005, para. 1-4). Redekop identifies these needs as follows: meaning, connectedness, security, recognition, and action. The theme of identity needs being implicated in deep-rooted identity conflict is echoed by several experts on the topic (Redekop, 2005, para. 5-15). For example, a study by Fiol, Pratt, and O'Connor at the University of Denver revealed social identity (paralleling Redekop's themes of meaning, connectedness, security and recognition) as being a trigger for identity conflict (2009, pp. 32-41). Group identity is also used in some circumstances to define, and position one identity group against another, to enable the common phenomenon of scapegoating prevalent in identity conflicts (Redekop, 1998, pp. 1-25).

3.3 Identity Conflict and Immigrants

The literature shows that identity conflict is particularly salient among immigrants, who are forced to redefine themselves in a new country, society and amidst a myriad of unfamiliar challenges (Smith, 2013, pp. 11-15; Schwartz et. al., 2006, pp. 1-15). Where there may be some remaining space for further research, is in the study of identity conflict among immigrants who are Muslim youth in Canada, specifically on their vulnerability to radicalism, and the policy implications of this phenomenon. Identity conflict among immigrants has also been identified as a factor that may contribute to radicalism among non-white, non-Western immigrants to Western nations (Mikulak et. al., 2013, para. 1-8). Another issue that impacts identity conflict among immigrants to Canada is the extent to which a religious identity is intertwined with a cultural or ethnic identity (Tastsoglou, 2001, pp. 1-7). Within the context of this thesis research, the very diverse nature of Canada's Muslims must be given recognition as a tremendously heterogeneous group. Many Muslims in Canada may feel strongly connected to their ethnic or Islamic identity, with many feeling the two as strongly linked, and others viewing their religious identity and ethnic identity as completely unrelated.

Identity preservation among immigrants has been found to happen most harmoniously when pluralism is encouraged, and ethnic minorities are accepted. Identity conflict, as well as exclusion of the host society is salient when there is an actual or perceived intolerance, and pressure to conform. This may occur when an identity one espouses is perceived as being in conflict with another, or when an identity one espouses is viewed as being threatened (Phinney et al., 2001, pp. 493-507; Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-30). The issue of a *perception* of hostility, or threat to a collective identity (especially if exacerbated by resource competition) can contribute to intense in-group vs. out-group otherment, exclusion, paranoia and identity conflict is prevalent in the literature, and is echoed by several experts (Hjerm 2009, pp. 47-59;

Art, 2011, pg. 3; McLaren, 2003, pp. 909-925; Schneider, 2008, pp. 53-55). Identity conflict among immigrants, especially dual-identity immigrants who see incompatibility between their identities have also been found to be more susceptible to radicalism (Mikulak, 2013, para. 1-4).

Perhaps the most influential expert on Islam and identity conflict in the West, immigration and radicalism among Muslims is the Somali expat, former Dutch politician, Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The researcher relied on her work and her opinions on why Muslims may fail to embrace Western host countries, and see their identities as Muslims as incompatible with Western (in this case Canadian) values (Ali, 2004, pp. 31-37). Ali has written several books on the subject, and there are also documentaries associated with Ms. Ali, including the *Honor Diaries*, as well as *Murder in Amsterdam*.

Many books offer perspectives on Muslim youth and identity conflict. Some, like Ali's are first-person accounts of Muslim youth living in Western nations such as *Intolerable*, by Kamal Al-Solaylee (a first person account of a homosexual immigrant from Yemen, who spoke of the identity conflict he faced as a gay Muslim and the experience of identity/religious conflict he experienced in his country of origin as well as after arriving to Canada). Aside from books depicting personal narratives, the researcher has consulted books written by experts on the subject (Hirji, 2010; *Missing Youth Citizenship and Empire after 9/11*, *Muslim Youth Challenges, Opportunities and Expectations*, Ahmad, Seddon, 2012; *Young Muslims, Pedagogy and Islam*, Khan, 2013). Noteworthy, is Khan's eighth chapter entitled "A symbiotic relationship: community cohesion, preventing violent extremism and Islamophobia" (pp. 151-175), which emphasizes approaches to reducing Islamophobia: preventing extremism, fostering community cohesion, reducing otherment and countering terrorism that engages the Muslim community (Khan, 2013, pp. 158-159). Ahmad and

Seddon (2012) discuss the identity conflict, indeed crisis, which impacts many youth in the globalized world, and also the gendered dimensions of Muslim women defining their identities in the West, or in the globalized world (Ahmad & Seddon, 2012, Introduction, pp. 1-12). Hirji explores the phenomenon of immigrant youth and hybrid identities in diasporic communities, pluralism and the collective identities that are formed among immigrant communities and the inner conflicts that may result from this (Hirji, 2010, pp. 47-58).

Social identity theory has also often been employed in the study of immigration and identity. It has also been used to explain in-group and out-group bias (Pfeifer, et. al, 2007, pp. 496-506). Furthermore, social identity theory among immigrants is a well-studied topic. It also may be exacerbated by PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) (Jaycox et. al., 2002, pp. 1104-1109) among refugees as well as anxiety and depression, which can be caused by such an extreme lifestyle change (Takeuchi et. al., 2007, para. 1-5). This application of social identity theory to the study of immigration and out-group bias may be logical, as social identity theory was developed in 1979, by Turner and Tajfel to explain intergroup discrimination on the psychological level (“Social Identity Theory,” 2002, para. 1). Social identity theory posits that each person consists of multiple identities, and therefore each individual is multifaceted and will have membership in several different groups (“Social Identity Theory,” University of Twente, 2002). “Different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel and act on basis of his personal, family or national ‘level of self’” (Turner et al, 1987, para. 2, “Social Identity Theory”). Thus, identity among immigrants can be understood by social identity theory, as it can cause people to act on behalf of their religious or ethnic identity rather than their adopted national identity (Pfeifer, et. al, 2007, pp. 496-506). Immigrants may also feel a need to revive their cultural roots while in a host

country, to preserve their group identity from being absorbed by the dominant national culture (Perez & Padilla, 2003, pp. 35-38).

3.4 Identity Conflict and Muslim Youth

Studies on identity conflict among Muslim youth, and their vulnerability to identity conflict (and in some cases radicalism) could be enhanced by adding an element of policy research. Identity conflict among immigrants has largely focused on ethnic identity, and further study may be required on the multi-ethnic yet specific identity of Muslim youth, especially from the perspective of policy development. There is some need for further study on when, how and within which conditions does a collective identity (Islam in this particular study) lead to identity conflict and potentially violent manifestations in Canada. This is also an important topic, as Muslims tend to strongly identify with their religion, regardless of whether or not they reside in a secular society, and regardless of their ethnicity (Baroud, 2009, para. 10-15).

This topic is also likely to become more salient as many Muslims begin to look to Canada amid growing anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe (Baroud, 2009, para. 1-18). It may also become more prevalent, if Canada begins to follow some anti-Muslim and xenophobic trends emerging in Europe (Baroud, 2009, para. 10-15). Although identity among Muslim youth in Canada has already been studied (Asghar, 2013, pp. 1-28; Kazemipur, 2009, pp. 1-11; Nagra, 2011, 2013; Zine, 2001, 2004, 2008), more studies may be needed to understand how identity conflict may lead to radicalism. Most importantly, this is an area in need of research in order to develop policies to make Canadian Muslims feel more included and connected to the Canadian identity.

3.5 Conclusion

There have been studies conducted on Muslim youth and identity conflict in Canada such as those conducted by Asghar, Kazemipur, Nagra, Zine, and the literature reveals that Muslim youth may face unique challenges in situating themselves in the West because of some of Islam's values that are in contradiction with practices that are commonplace in Canada. As well as due to socio-economic marginalization, Muslim youth in Canada may have to define themselves in the highly globalized, post 9/11 era (Sirin & Fine, 2007, pp. 151-160; Tindongan, 2011, pp. 72-79) through the process of "reactive identity formation" (Nagra, 2011, Abstract), a phrase coined by Dr. Nagra (University of Toronto) who completed a doctoral dissertation on the marginalization of Muslim youth in Canada. In her view, this marginalization occurred because of the hostile environment in which Muslim youth reside (Nagra, 2011). Her research is valuable in understanding how the post 9/11 era may cause identity conflict among Muslim youth amidst a climate of Islamophobia. However, there is room for further studies regarding Muslim youth in Canada that integrate their potential vulnerability to radical ideologies. There is similarly space for scholarship exploring how the Canadian state may assist in ideally addressing and preventing identity conflict among Muslim youth. Of particular need, are further studies in this area that account for mental health issues that are prevalent among youth (of any religious persuasion) due to their developmental stage.

It seems established based on the literature that there are salient issues regarding the integration of Muslims, particularly youth in Canadian society, and that Muslims face barriers to full integration. There is some space available for research into this subject that has an action-oriented, and policy approach. It is hoped that this thesis will make some small contribution to this somewhat under-researched area and inspire further inquiry by other

scholars into the subject. It is also interesting to note that a sizable portion of studies on this subject conducted so far appear to be done by members of the Muslim community, and it may be of value (within the interest of fostering more cohesion and collaboration) for further research to be conducted on this issue by those who are not members of the community, particularly if they can involve members of the community in the research being conducted (as has been the case in this study which was conducted by an outsider, but which included the opinions of interviewees).

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

4.0 Introduction

The completion of this thesis was made possible through the use of qualitative, and explorative (Pomerance, 1982, pg. 16-18) research methodologies and methods. The research was conducted via the interpretivist paradigm, and was inspired by the need to conduct a study of critical inquiry addressing emerging social issues and through the research, attempting to identify potential avenues for addressing the issues that are identified to be salient. Essentially, the research methods/methodologies attempt to identify actions that could be taken in order to improve the situation.

4.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that will be guiding this study is interpretivism. The ontological approach of interpretivism assumes “that reality as we know it is constructed inter-subjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially” (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008, para. 2). Interpretivism also espouses a “transactional or subjectivist epistemology” meaning that “we cannot separate ourselves from what we know. The investigator and the object of investigation are linked such that who we are and how we understand the world is a central part of how we understand ourselves, others and the world” (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008, para. 3). The interpretivist paradigm is also more suitable here than a less subjective approach such as positivism, as the research will seek to define subjective terms as they relate to their own specific context, rather than causal relationships that can be replicated in other experiments or cases (Lin, 1998, pg. 1-2). It is also more appropriate here as a large portion of the research

occurred via semi-structured interviews, and was interpreted through the inextricable subjective lenses of the researcher (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008, para. 2).

As the interpretivist research paradigm assumes that a researcher and a subject are inherently influenced by the researcher's own values, the truth must be negotiated via dialogue. This necessitates the following research processes:

- Findings or knowledge claims are created as an investigation proceeds. That is, findings emerge through dialogue in which conflicting interpretations are negotiated among members of a community.
- Pragmatic and moral concerns are important considerations when evaluating interpretive science. Fostering a dialogue between researchers and respondents is critical. It is through this dialectical process that a more informed and sophisticated understanding of the social world can be created.
- All interpretations are based in a particular moment. That is, they are located in a particular context or situation and time. They are open to re-interpretation and negotiation through conversation

(Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008, para. 5-8).

The interpretivist approach was applied to the methodology and methods, and the research methods were qualitative. This methodological perspective employs a relativist ontological perspective which assumes that reality is based on perception and understanding of reality based on lived experience and social norms. Essentially, it asserts that reality is subjective. This approach is well suited to qualitative research that involves interviews, as it seeks to understand reality as it is perceived in an individually subjective manner based on a person's lived experiences. It is also suitable for exploratory research that seeks to understand social phenomenon that cannot be measured objectively. For example "religious freedom is a right in Canada" is an objective fact that is verifiable by consulting the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Government of Canada, 1982, para. 2). However one thesis informant saying "Canada is welcoming to Muslims" and another saying "Canada is not welcoming to Muslims" are not objective facts. Their

testimony is not factually valuable, moreover it is valuable from the interpretivist perspective as an individual subjective experience and unique case (Lin, 1998, pp. 1-2). Informants that give contradictory testimony have provided information that is nonetheless valid, as they have revealed their lived experiences and reality as they perceive it to be. As this is more suited to exploratory research (Pomerance, 1982, pg. 16), it does not assume the same paradigms as found in research conducted from the perspective of positivism (Lin 1998, pp. 1-2). Exploratory research does not seek to provide predictions or explanations, instead its goal is to bring deeper understanding of a research area. It assumes that reality is socially constructed, that the researcher cannot be objective, and therefore the conclusions reached by the research are valuable in their ability to bring deeper understanding, to give a voice to a marginalized group or to shed light on an observed phenomenon, the conclusions reached as a result of such research are not meant to be seen as definitive objective facts (Research Methodology, 2015, para. 1-14). “Interpretivism studies generate qualitative primary data of a high level of validity, but low level of reliability and this primary data is empathetic in nature” (Research Methodology, 2015, para. 14).

Using a qualitative research design framework approach is most appropriate to complement this interpretivist approach because it is more explorative, and it is seeking to reveal truths and lived experiences (Research Methodology, 2015, para. 1-14). The main difference in qualitative and quantitative research methods is that quantitative research aims to generate statistics, and to generate measurements of the subject in question. In order for quantitative studies to be of any relevance, they must obtain statistics by relying on a large sample size of informants, and they must operate in a context where generating statistics is possible. Quantitative research can be suited to measuring something in terms of breadth, but not always in a profound depth (Spellberg, Fogel et. al., 2012, pp. 288-290). Qualitative research

attempts to measure how, and why an observed phenomenon is taking place. This approach, is more suitable to exploratory research, in order to generate hypotheses of how and why a phenomenon is occurring, to generate understanding, and to hopefully pave the foundation for more extensive, quantitative and explanatory research in the future. This makes qualitative research more suitable for this particular research study, as it is a new subject, the research is exploratory, the sample size is small, and it seeks depth of interviews and understanding rather than breadth of information through many subjects (Pomerance, 1982, pp. 16-18).

In line with the need to collaboratively reach a conclusion between the researcher and the community under study, dialogue and transparency is facilitated. In this study, this requirement has been fulfilled by providing informants the opportunity to view the completed thesis, and by providing them with the researcher's contact information so they may bring up concerns with the researcher at any stage of the process, and to change their mind, or clarify any of their statements in the future.

4.2 Methods

This thesis employed a qualitative, and explorative (Pomerance, 1982, pp 16-18) approach to the research and sought to understand individual, and subjective truths on a subject that is difficult to actually quantify. In order to assure the most current and primary approach to this research, qualitative, in-depth interviews were conducted. Five subjects were interviewed between September - December 2014. Authorization was obtained from HREB (see Annex A) for this research and the researcher followed all necessary ethics and confidentiality protocols. As some of the research interview subjects were representatives of associations and community leaders, they were not exactly a part of the youth demographic

being studied (aged 15-30), yet they work directly and closely with Muslim youth and are therefore able to represent them.

The research also encompassed the avenue of policy research, and attempted to reveal which interview findings may be relevant to the development of policies which may address or prevent identity conflict in Canada's Muslim youth. The research also involved some policy research. This component was enabled by looking to see what interview findings may be relevant to the development of policies, which may address or prevent identity conflict in Canada's Muslim youth. The perspective of policy development is the lense applied to the following data analysis. As the thesis used the testimony of informants, all necessary protocols regarding research involving human beings were adhered to throughout the study.

4.2.1 Document Review, Situational Analysis

The secondary data analysis involved reviewing books, scholarly journal articles as well as government and media sources given the very current nature of this research. It also involved observing documentaries, news reports as well as government reports on the topics of immigration and integration, multiculturalism, radicalism and identity conflict among Muslim youth in Canada. The overarching goal of the document review was to conduct a situational analysis and understand the research in the current social environment and context.

4.2.2 Key Informant Interviews

The primary research consisted of semi-structured interviews. Representatives from associations of Muslim youth were interviewed. Representatives of Muslim student associations were also interviewed. Informants were contacted via phone, skype or email. More than 100 people were invited to participate in this study as representatives of

associations serving Muslim youth. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Interviewees were aware of the fact they were being recorded.

The questions asked were related to conflicts of identity, and attempted to shed light on the symptoms of identity conflict among Canada's Muslim youth. The study was introduced by explaining identity conflict among Muslim youth then asking questions, while also expanding upon them, probing more if necessary and inviting informants to talk about identity conflict among Muslim youth anecdotally.

4.2.3 Situational Analysis

As this thesis research takes place in a specific and highly current social, cultural, political and economic context, a research method appropriate is that of situational analysis (Clarke, Friese, 2013, pp. 873-875). "Situational analysis [...] [can be used] for qualitative data analysis in social sciences and related research [...]. The focus is on analysis of the situation being researched: the elements in it, the relations among elements, the conditions of possibility for action, and related discourse (Clarke, Friese, pp. 873-875, para. 1)."

Situational Analysis is inclusive of feminist approaches, dynamics and differences of power, historical, visual and cultural discourses. "The situation of inquiry itself, broadly conceived, is the unit of analysis" (Clarke, Friese, 2013. pp. 873-875, para. 1).

Situational Analysis is also compatible with the interpretivist theoretical framework employed in this research. "Ontology and epistemology are ultimately nonfungible. What can be known and how we can know it are inseparable" (Clarke, Friese, 2013, pp. 873-875, para. 2). Situational analysis also allows for an in-depth analyses of narrative discourses, making it a suitable method to employ for a thesis relying primarily on in-depth interviews (Clarke, Friese, 2013, pp. 873-875, para. 7-9).

As this thesis research has an active orientation, this further suits it to the research method of situational analysis. “Situational analysis identifies and evaluates the unique state of the environment and circumstances within which a person, organization, or program is operating and how these elements interact with one another in both the present and the future” (Trevino, 2013, pp. 878-882, para. 1). Trevino (2013) further illustrates the usefulness of situational analysis in addressing a specific problem or issue in need of being addressed by identifying the types of organizations that can benefit from the use of situational analysis: “Organizations that can benefit from crisis-management-based situational analysis include businesses, non-profits, governments, first responders, emergency response units, families, and individuals” (pp. 878-882, para. 2). In the context of this research it is hoped that the situational analysis will provide a context for the research in order to inform policies and further research to be conducted on the topic in order for such organizations in the Canadian context to improve their efforts to integrate Muslim immigrants to Canada (Trevino, 2013, pp. 878-882).

4.2.4. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was an overarching method employed throughout this study, and was applied to both interviews (primary research) and document analysis (secondary research). The researcher sought out common themes in identity conflict of Muslim youth, from the voluntary participating informants and also from secondary sources. The researcher also sought common themes from studies done on the subject in other Western nations with Muslim populations (ex. The United States, Britain, Australia, etc.) and looked for common themes such as isolationism, economic inequality, the influence of Al Qaeda and other Islamist propaganda on youth (especially via the internet), failure to integrate, anti-Western sentiment, multiculturalism and other themes that were revealed to be salient among the

literature. The researcher also looked for common perceptions, experience and concerns expressed between different informants.

When analyzing the data thematically (especially the data collected from informants), the researcher identified (see figure 2) how often informants gave reference to a particular theme in order to assess its significance. Similarly, the researcher examined other academic studies that gave references to particular themes, and took note of common themes mentioned throughout the studies. The researcher then compared findings from Canada, to those from other countries, in order to see if there were significant differences in how often a theme was mentioned in the Canadian context compared to other countries in order to identify possible peculiarities to the Canadian data.

4.3 Comparative Analysis

Finally, the researcher made a comparative analysis via document review of the findings of the semi-structured interviews with the findings of other studies conducted on identity conflict among Muslim youth, and identified similarities and differences. The researcher also looked for differences in themes, and observed different descriptions of identity conflict among Muslim youth that were identified by this study's particular informants. The researcher compared different symptoms of identity conflict identified by the specific available informants in other academic studies conducted, as well as hypotheses from other studies for the symptoms of identity conflict. The frame of reference for comparison was taken from interviews, so that all comparisons are seen as they relate to the specifically Canadian recent situation (Harvard College Writing Center, 1998, para. 4).

4.4 Thesis Limitations and Delimitations

. Limitations and Delimitations are a component of all research endeavors, and this research was not an exception. There were limitations in the time constraints, analysis (as it was subjective and done by one person) as well as in the sample size of the research. The research was also limited by the worldview as well as personal biases of the researcher (Simon, 2011, pp. 1-3). The differences between them are largely related to what can be controlled versus what is outside of the control of the researcher. Recognition of limitations and delimitations is an essential effort in any research effort, particularly those that address real-time and organic phenomenon in society that are outside of the researcher's control.

The limitations of a study are those that are outside of the researcher's control, and that may not have been anticipated or intended. Delimitations are more purposeful, and are the result of a researchers understanding that in order for a research effort to actually be feasible, it must be kept within a scope that is realistic and relatively specific (Dissertation Support, 2015). "Delimitations are set so that your goals do not become impossibly large to complete" (Dissertation Support, 2015, par. 2).

The delimitations and limitations for this thesis research are outlined below.

4.4.1 Delimitations

A delimitation of the research, is the fact that the literature review is not exhaustive, rather it provides a general baseline for the current context of research done on the topic. An intended delimitation of the study was also that the informants were intended to be limited to youth between the ages of 15-30, yet this was not the ultimate outcome of the research. Another delimitation of the research is that it only addresses the phenomenon under study in urban areas, and thus the issue is not explored in any of Canada's rural environments. One more

delimitation of the study, is that although it is recognized that the Canadian Muslim community is heterogenous, the research is limited to exploring the 2 broad sects of Sunni and Shii, and attention is not given to more specific, offshoot Islamic sects (Ie. Ismailis, Druze, Sufis, Wahhabis etc). Another intended delimitation of the research is its intention to look more at the youth demographic than other Muslims in Canada.

4.4.2 Limitations

The most significant limitation of this thesis is that the sample is too small to be considered representative of the large, and highly diverse community of Muslims living in Canada. Despite the fact that over 100 potential informants or potential gatekeepers were contacted, the researcher was only able to obtain 5 interview subjects. It is regrettable that a wider demographic of Canadian Muslims is not represented in the research. This is also the reason that the thesis does not involve a quantitative analysis as the sample was simply too small to employ them. If more informants had been included in the research, then it would have been possible to do some quantitative analysis of the interview findings. Originally, it was intended that the analysis of the interview findings would include some quantitative elements, but unfortunately, the sample size was too small to allow this.

Another limitation in the analysis is that there was only one person who primarily reviewed and analyzed the research findings (the recordings were not peer-reviewed). This means that the research is subjective, as it was not reviewed by several people. Yet this delimitation is not so severe as the basic structure of the interviews are presented. The supervising committee was consulted and the interviews were recorded, allowing them to be reviewed and analyzed in sufficient detail. The reason that the analysis of interviews was done by only one person, was because it was necessary to protect the privacy of the participants.

The two general categories of Islam are Sunni and Shii (with many more specific sects within each umbrella category). It was hoped that the number of informants would be large enough to make some comparisons between Sunni and Shii, however the final sample size was too small for this to be explored in detail. Informants were therefore generally asked about their experiences being simply “Muslim” without being probed for a distinction between Suni and Shii. Finally, a major limitation in the research was the fact that although it was intended to shed light on Muslim specifically, only 2 out of 3 informants were in the youth demographic, and although the older informants work very closely with Muslim youth, it is a limitation that the research could not include more testimony from Muslim youth directly.

Chapter 5: Findings - Interview Results

5.0 Informants

As a qualitative endeavor, this research leaned heavily on using the primary research method of interviewing members of a specified group in order to bring deeper and more holistic understanding. This thesis research could not have been possible, or valuable without a primary research component, in the form of qualitative in-depth interviews. Five thesis informants chose to participate in this study, despite the fact that over 100 invitations were sent out to potential informants (mostly via email but also by phone). This in itself, is a significant finding, and says something about the existence of out-group suspicion among Muslims in Canada.

The informants consisted of 2 Shii Muslims, 3 Sunni Muslims, 2 males and 3 females ranging in age from 21-47 years of age. Among the 5 informants, 4 reside in the Lower Mainland Vancouver area, and one resides in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) (See figures). All subjects were Canadian citizens. Two requested to view the completed thesis (the others were made aware of this option but did not express an interest, (they have the researcher's contact info and are aware that they may request to view the thesis at any time). In the paragraphs below, the demographic data of the informants is illustrated in as much detail as confidentiality will allow according to the participant consent form (see Appendix A) and based on conversations with informants regarding their concerns of confidentiality. It was intended that there would be approximately 20-30 informants, and that the institutional affiliation as well as complete demographic data of each informant could be included. Since the sample size resulted as being significantly smaller than hoped, the researcher has limited the demographic data presented for each informant in order to assure their anonymity in a small sample size. The informants' ethnic background ranged from being of Pakistani,

Ethiopian, one from Fiji as well as 2 being of Indian/Ugandan origin (there was a large Indian community in East Africa, but those residing in Uganda were expelled by the dictator Idi Amin in the 1970s).

It was hoped that the informants would include many Muslim youth themselves, in order to get a deeper understanding of how age and developmental stages can play a role in identity conflict. Unfortunately, there were not enough young people from within the community willing to participate as interview subjects.

5.1 Profiles of Thesis Informants

In order to facilitate the most comprehensive reading of the following sections, it is necessary to have an understanding of the demographic data of the informants whose data has been used. Please see below a table, in which the key demographic characteristics are presented, as well as the codes by which they are identified (A-E).

Figure 1: Profiles of Thesis Informants

Informants	Sex	Sect	Age	Relation to Canada	Citizenship
A	M	Sunni	38	Grew up in Canada	Canadian
B	M	Shii	47	Canada since mid- childhood	Canadian

C	F	Sunni	21	Grew up in Canada	Canadian
D	F	Sunni	33	Grew up in Canada	Canadian
E	F	Shii	25	Canada since mid- childhood	Canadian

The informants described in the following paragraphs will henceforth be referred to as they appear in the section below: *Informant, A, B, C, D, E.*

Informant A:

Informant A is male and was 38 years old at the time that he was interviewed. He grew up in Canada and is of the Sunni Islamic sect.

Informant B:

Informant B is a Shii male who was 47 years old at the time that he was interviewed for this research study. He has lived in Canada since mid-childhood.

Informant C:

Informant C is a Sunni female who was 21 years old at the time she was interviewed. She grew up in Canada. She was quite politically informed and brought many issues of class, politics and socio-economic issues into her perspectives. Informant C was born in Canada.

Informant D:

Informant D is a Sunni female who was 33 years old at the time she was interviewed. She grew up in Canada. She works with Muslim youth. Informant D was born in Canada.

Informant E:

Informant E is a Shii female who was 25 years old at the time she was interviewed. She has resided in Canada since mid-childhood.

Although there were only 5 informants, they showed sufficient diversity to make at least some basic and foundational conclusions about Muslim youth and identity conflict in Canada. 4 out of 5 informants were representing Muslim associations that included, or served exclusively Muslim youth. There were similarities and differences among informants, and there appeared to be differences in their level of engagement with their own community and with Canadian society at large (i.e. whether or not they appeared to be politically inclined). Thus, they approached the subject from five very distinct and unique perspectives and each offered a valuable insight.

Perhaps the starkest difference of opinion was between informant “A” and informant “E.” Besides the age difference and being of different sects (Sunni and Shii respectively), informant A felt strongly that all Muslim women were obligated to practice the tradition of hijab and Informant “E” felt otherwise. They were perhaps the most far apart on the socio-political spectrum of left and right. Informant A, and E showed the starkest differences of opinions among all informants, but there were varying levels of agreement among all. However both of these even vastly different informants considered themselves to be nonetheless practicing Muslims. There were very different levels of political awareness expressed among informants about how politics in Canada had an impact on Muslims. For

example informants A, and C, displayed a much higher level of engagement with Canadian politics than the other informants, yet they disagreed to the extent to which politics influenced the lives of Muslims. It should also be noted that all informants showed a basic cognizance of politics in Canada. Where they vastly differed was how much they initiated bringing this element into the conversation.

Informants brought their experiences of living in the Vancouver and Toronto areas as well as one informant who grew up in Edmonton and who also lived in Quebec for several years and was able to comment on living in those areas. They had different understandings of their religion, and one (B) was able to comment from the perspective of being a parent of Muslim youth.

Although it is unfortunate that this study only includes five informants, and is therefore not sufficient to give definitive conclusions about the highly complex topic of Muslim youth and identity conflict in Canada, the interviewees show sufficient diversity to make some foundational observations about the subject paving the way for further studies. When considering the conclusions taken from the interviews, it is important to remember that this study is not definitive and is only an exploratory probe into a complex subject, this research is not intended to be, and should not be interpreted as explanatory.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Interviews were conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews. All interviews were based on the questions included in the paragraphs below. All questions may not have been asked explicitly in every interview, this is in the event that conversationally, the answers to questions were volunteered. Answers to questions were much longer than they appear below, but they have been condensed for the purposes of keeping the thesis concise and

comprehensive. The most significant answers and findings are discussed in further detail in the next sections. These questions and answers have been summarized for the purposes of identifying trends and anomalies as well as making comparisons (See Figure 2). Interview findings will be addressed in more detail in 5.3.

Figure 2: Interview Questions

	Informants				
	A	B	C	D	E
1) What in your opinion are the biggest challenges facing Muslim youth in Canada?	Identity, and finding the balance between being a Muslim and fitting in	Maintaining faith in a society that contradicts the faith, balance between faith and the pressures that are outside	The media causing problems in people's perceptions of Muslims	Fitting in, not sure how to be a Muslim in non-Muslim society, not being confident in their Muslim identity	Finding balance between tenets of Islam and fitting into Canada's society
2) Do Muslim youth feel welcomed or ostracized by Canadian society?	Depends on the area and how open-minded people are-doesn't see this as related to how diverse an area is, moreover a result of human biases	Generally welcomed, especially among peers but there are pockets of people who are unwelcoming	It depends on your look and whether or not you have an accent, your class, neighbourhood etc.	Never have had problems. Muslims are welcome	Very welcomed
3) Is there any incompatibility between being a Canadian and being a Muslim?	Sometimes people feel that way and this is generally related to Canada's political and military activities	Some people may feel that way but they should not. The two are congruent. There is no	No, none at all. Canada's democratic values are in line with Islam, and the	No, not any incompatibility	No, no conflict in most interpretations

		problem with being Canadian and Muslim	government is one small part, it's not necessarily reflective of Canada		
4) What are the most common complaints/concerns Muslim youth have about Canada?	People who are discriminated against will complain, but generally complaints are rare, people like Canada	That society may have a bad perception about them	Some bad perceptions, political issues	Media stigmatization, political foreign policies	Canada's foreign policies becoming too Americanized
5) Is Islamophobia a serious concern?	Islamophobia does very much exist yes	Yes. It is very real and a problem	Islamophobia does exist but generally Canada is very open	A small problem in some areas	It is a problem that exists
6) Do Muslim youth fear a loss of their religious identity by residing in a largely non-Muslim society?	Yes some do, and they may feel that society is against them and are afraid of being stigmatized	It is a challenge and some people do fear a loss of their/or their children's religion	Immigrants do, born Canadians not much	Yes it is a major concern	Older people do
7) Do Muslims feel more solidarity with Muslim or non-Muslim Canadians? Is there a difference?	Yes, as Muslims we are a global community and we should feel solidarity as global Muslim collective	There is slightly more solidarity with Muslims, yet we are still very happy to be Canadian	It is natural to want to be closer to people you have things in common with, but at the same time this is not a requirement, there is no issue	Muslims do usually feel more connected to other Muslims	solidarity with Muslims, but still a strong affinity to Canada, they are separate and cannot be in a hierarchy

			being aligned with non-Muslims		
8) Can you tell me about any youths you know who have been impacted by identity conflict?	Yes, there is identity conflict among youth in political and social areas of life	Yes there is identity conflict, it is not always deep but it does exist	Identity conflict is prevalent, especially for young girls	Yes, it is very common among youth	Yes identity issues among youth are very prevalent
9) Do women, practicing hijab have a different experience in Canada by being more visible as Muslims than Muslim men?	Yes there are different pressures on women and men, but often the girls fare better than the boys. Though some become very impacted, especially regarding their participation in school	Yes it can be harder for them because they are identified as Muslims, but if they have the confidence it will not bother them	Yes. It is much more difficult for females	It is harder for females	Yes it can be different for females in hijab

“What in your opinion are the biggest challenges facing Muslim youth in Canada”

- **Informant A:** Informant A specified the difference mainly as finding the balance between being a Muslim and “fitting in.”
- **Informant B:** This informant spoke of maintaining faith in a society as a member of a minority, balance between the faith and resisting the pressures that exist outside that are influential.

- **Informant C:** Informant C spoke of the problems being caused by the media in Canada's perceptions of Muslims.
- **Informant D:** Informant D thought the issue was more related to fitting in, not being sure how to be a Muslim in a non-Muslim society, as well as not being confident in their Muslim identity.
- **Informant E:** She explained the issue (similarly to A, and D) as finding a balance between the tenets of Islam and fitting into Canada's society.

“Do Muslim youth feel welcomed or ostracized by Canadian society?”

- **Informant A:** Informant A stated that it is circumstantial whether __Muslims feel welcomed or not in Canadian society____. He perceived that how welcoming an area is to be related to the area people are living in, and how open-minded the people in that area are. He did not see the level of acceptance as being related to how diverse the area is, but more related to human biases.
- **Informant B:** This informant stated that Muslims feel generally welcomed, especially among peers but there are pockets of people who are unwelcoming.
- **Informant C:** She explained that the level of acceptance versus hostility is somewhat complex, it depends on a person's appearance and whether or not they have an accent, their class, neighbourhood etc.
- **Informant D:** This informant has never had problems with __Islamophobia__ and believes that Muslims are welcome.
- **Informant E:** This informant feels that Muslims in Canada are very welcomed.

“Is there any incompatibility between being a Canadian and being a Muslim?”

- **Informant A:** This informant stated that sometimes Muslims may feel that way and this is generally related to Canada's political and military activities.
- **Informant B:** Informant B stated that some Muslims may feel that way but he believes they should not. He thinks being Canadian and being Muslim are very congruent, and that there is no problem with being Canadian and Muslim
- **Informant C:** She thinks there is no problem at all. She believes Canada's democratic values are in line with Islam, and the government is one small part, it is not necessarily reflective of the opinions of all, or even the majority of Canadians.
- **Informant D:** This informant does not see any incompatibility.
- **Informant E:** This informant believes that there is no conflict at least in most interpretations.

“What are the most common complaints/concerns Muslim youth have about Canada?”

- **Informant A:** This informant said that people who are discriminated against will complain, but that generally complaints are rare, and Muslims like Canada.
- **Informant B:** This informant believed that the most common concern was that society may have a bad perception about them.
- **Informant C:** This informant stated it was some bad perceptions, as well as politics showing disregard for the interests, and well-being of Muslims
- **Informant D:** She believes that concerns are mainly media stigmatization, and politics/foreign policies.
- **Informant E:** She believed the main issue to be Canada's foreign policies becoming too Americanized.

“Is Islamophobia a serious concern?”

- **Informant A:** This informant viewed it as a major issue.
- **Informant B:** He stated that, yes, it is a serious concern, and it is very real and a problem.
- **Informant C:** She said that, yes, Islamophobia does exist but generally Canada is very open.
- **Informant D:** She opined that it is a small problem in some areas.
- **Informant E:** She acknowledged its existence but did not see it as particularly salient.

“Do Muslim youth fear a loss of their religious identity by residing in a largely non-Muslim society?”

- **Informant A:** He stated that, yes, some do, and they may feel that society is against them and are afraid of being stigmatized.
- **Informant B:** He stated that it is a challenge and some people do fear a loss of their/or their children’s religion
- **Informant C:** She believed that immigrants do feel this, but born Canadians not much.
- **Informant D:** She said that, yes, it is a major concern.
- **Informant E:** She believes that older people do feel this way.

“Do Muslims feel more solidarity with Muslim or non-Muslim Canadians? Is there a difference?”

- **Informant A:** He stated that, yes, as Muslims we are a global community and we should feel solidarity as a global Muslim collective.
- **Informant B:** He perceived there to be slightly more solidarity among Muslims, yet Muslims are still very happy to be Canadian.

- **Informant C:** She stated that it is natural to want to be closer to people with whom you share similar values, and characteristics, but at the same time this is not a requirement, there is no issue being aligned with non-Muslims.
- **Informant D:** She believed that Muslims do usually feel more connected to other Muslims.
- **Informant E:** She remarked on a solidarity with Muslims, but also asserted a strong affinity to Canada, and that the two identities are distinct. She emphasized that they are separate and cannot be in a hierarchy, of importance.

“Can you tell me about any youths you know who have been impacted by identity conflict?”

- **Informant A:** Informant A viewed a prevalence of identity conflict among youth in political and social areas of life.
- **Informant B:** He perceived that **yes**, there is identity conflict; it is not always deep but it does exist.
- **Informant C:** She believes that identity conflict is prevalent, especially for young girls.
- **Informant D:** She opines that identity conflict is very common among youth.
- **Informant E:** She said that identity issues among youth are very prevalent.

“Do women, practicing hijab have a different experience in Canada by being more visible as Muslims than Muslim men?”

- **Informant A:** He stated that, yes, there are different pressures on women and men, but often despite more intense pressure the girls fare better than the boys. Though

some become very impacted by discrimination and participation in Canadian society, especially regarding their willingness to express themselves in school.

- **Informant B:** He said that it can be harder for them because they are identified as Muslims, but if they have the confidence it will not bother them.
- **Informant C:** She believes it is much more difficult for females.
- **Informant D:** She agreed that it is harder for females.
- **Informant E:** She believes it can be different for females in hijab (she herself does not practice hijab).

5.3 Analysis of Interview Findings

Within this section-themes that occurred in the interviews will be explored. There will also be an analysis of what may have been talked about by some subjects but not others, differences and comparisons between the subjects will be discussed.

5.3.1 Unanimous Opinions among informants

Respondents were unanimous in their largely positive sentiments about Canada, and expressed gratitude for the advantages awarded to them by being Canadian. There were vast differences among informants in their perceptions of the level to which Islamophobia is a concern, but there was unanimous opinion that it does exist. A very significant finding is that even when the question was not directly presented, *all* informants felt that the media played a very strong role in propagating Islamophobic stereotypes. One informant actually opened the interview by expressing concern about the impact of 9/11 on Muslims' experiences in Canada. Informants were similarly unanimous in their opinion that women who wear hijab have a more difficult time living in Canada, and are more likely to experience Islamophobia.

There was also unanimous opinion on the fact that identity conflict is a salient issue among Muslim youth. There was a unanimous opinion among informants that fear of losing the Muslim identity (to widely varying degrees) is an existing concern among many of Canada's Muslims, but that this has generational and inter-cultural dimensions. These dimensions were perceived as related to the level of conservatism present in the culture of origin, and the age a person is when they arrive in Canada. Older people were perceived as having deeper concerns about this than their younger counterparts.

5.3.2 Differences of Opinion

Informants all agreed that Canada is fairly welcoming but widely disagreed on the extent to which Canada is welcoming. There was disagreement on whether or not being a Canadian can be incompatible with being a Muslim. This had largely to do with Canada's foreign policies that were seen to be harmful to the global Muslim community, or perceived as too "Americanized." Informants did not all agree that education would prevent Islamophobia and out-group suspicion. The informants also did not all agree that Islamophobia would be more likely to exist in rural areas.

5.3.3 Anomalies

Only one informant "C" stated the media as creating the biggest challenge for Muslim youth living in Canada. Informant "C" was the only informant to bring up issues of class in relation to being welcomed in Canada. Informant "A" is the only person who gave a prescriptive answer to the Question "Do Muslims feel more solidarity with Muslim or non-Muslim Canadians?" in stating very emphatically that they "should" feel solidarity with Muslims.

5.3.4 Themes

- Media perpetuating Islamophobia, especially after 9/11.
- Canada blindly following American foreign policies, and not taking its own stance.
- Praise for the heroic efforts of Canada's RCMP force.
- Canada's openness to alcohol consumption, dating and "the hyper-sexualization" of Canadian society was a common theme as being seen as an issue that contributed to identity conflict among Muslim youth.
- The opinion that fearing a loss of religious identity is more common among immigrants, and the older generation.
- Unfavourable attitudes about the (Conservative) government.
- Appreciation for Canada's democratic and peaceful values.
- Sadness and disappointment regarding Canada's lack of assistance to Muslim civilians suffering due to protracted conflict.
- Disdain for extremist elements of Islam and insistence that this is not the real interpretation of the religion.
- The idea that misinformation about Islam was a contributing factor to Islamophobia.
- The idea that Muslims needed to be involved in combatting extremist elements within Islam.
- The opinion that identity conflict can seriously impact youth.
- The opinion that many Canadians are welcoming, open-minded and not prejudiced against Muslims.

5.4 Conclusions from Interview Results - Thematic Analysis

Although there were variations among the informants, and there were not many unanimous findings, there are nonetheless some conclusions that may be drawn from the interviews. One conclusion is that there are Muslims in Canada who feel that Canada's policies on multiculturalism are not inclusive enough for Muslims. For example informant A gave the following statement regarding this issue:

...I lived in Quebec for about 5 years, and there are certain things in Quebec, you can see even from a distance, a big sign intolerance, we don't like you. We don't want you to be different you have to fall into what Quebec society is. And they're coming up with their own charter of whatever it was, it's basically we don't accept you for who you are and you have to fit into our society, and this means you have to change your appearance you have to change this, change this...not realizing that symbols for some people are not just symbols they're actually religious commandments. It's not a religious commandment for a Christian to wear a cross. It's a symbol of their Christianity, they choose to wear it because it's a reminder to themselves it shows other people that this is who I am. But it's not a religious requirement. A hijab for a Muslim woman is a religious requirement. So again it shows insensitivity and it shows lack of knowledge of what you're dealing with. And so these kinds of things if Canada has taken on this policy of being multicultural, it's not enough to say that we respect you but you have to change. If Canada wants to be portrayed as a multicultural country, then it has to be done with a little bit of respect. When you show, you can be at conflict with someone sides, have the opportunity to win the conflict, but when you disrespect the other party, then you're marginalizing them.

Informant A went further to say that he felt Muslims in Canada were politically singled out and ridiculed on certain occasions:

I think most of the government organizations and agencies themselves are multicultural, so I don't see any issues, what remains is the administration of the country. Even though the administration tries to portray itself as multicultural and multi-ethnic and it may be. This is all about the mindset, not having a certain number of people from a certain number of countries to make the numbers look better, this is about the mindset. We talk about appreciating the differences, we should really appreciate the differences. We shouldn't just appreciate the differences that we're ok with, and then the rest are all wrong, and unfortunately, our government does tend to come across that way. It has been over... I'll give you an example,

something pops to mind. You probably remember I think it was about 3 years ago, the Minister of immigration, passed this law about women have to unveil. When they're taking the oath of citizenship. That was and is a non-issue. That never was an issue. Where did it come out of? Did it happen that you asked people to unveil and they refused? Did someone act disrespectfully? Did you ever have a case where...the excuse was we don't know the identity of the person. No one ever denied any officer ever the right to verify their identity. It's never happened. No woman has come into Canada and if the officer says can you remove your veil so we can verify your identity, no woman has denied that. At best, she would ask for a female officer instead. So you took a non-issue, you made it into an issue, it was so obvious that this was catering to the votes of a certain mind set of people who don't want this diversity, they want everyone to be what they call Canadian. And you picked one religion out and you started bashing it. And the minister of immigration at that time the comments he said, they were so ignorant. They were completely ignorant, they were devoid of knowledge, he should have consulted with scholars of the religion to see what this is all about, and they showed complete lack of religious sensitivity. They showed no respect for a person's religion.

Informant *B*, had a much more positive overall perception of Canada's attempts to facilitate multiculturalism than informant *A*, but still had some concerns regarding some members of Canada's political establishment and their lack of understanding about their Muslim citizens:

I think it's [Islamophobia] pretty real. Again when we see the prime minister of Canada making statements a couple of years ago I think it was CBC an interview, saying the biggest threat in the country now is Islam, it's like wow, coming from the leader the prime minister, things like that, and events that happen and if you don't do the necessary to disassociate the event by an individual or a group of individuals, and sometimes they support statements or allow statements that, that cycle, can certainly fuel Islamophobia, so it's definitely a concern.

It is clear from these excerpts that there are concerns about Islamophobia and misinformation and lack of education regarding the religion among Canada's political representatives. Informants believed that the general Canadian public needed to be better

informed about Islam, and that Muslims themselves should be an integral part of this effort.

However it is worth mentioning that informant A was concerned that education would not be effective in reaching all misinformed people:

I think education level has a lot to do with it. But it's not-education is important in this particular context, but it's not everything. There are a lot of educated racist people. There are a lot of people that are very educated but they're extremely biased when it comes to certain things. Everyone has their own biases, and for some people that bias is something to do with a race, ethnicity or a religion. And at no point are they willing to back off on that. So even though they are aware, even with all the education there is a certain kind of an ignorance that blankets in certain minds.

Other than being concerned about Canada's domestic policies on multiculturalism not being inclusive enough of Muslims, some expressed the opinion that Canada was often blindly following America's policies, without maintaining enough autonomy. This was a concern when Canada would be involved in harming Muslims abroad, or failed to offer humanitarian aid to Muslims in strife. Examples of these views can be seen from informant *E*, as well as *D*.

For example informant *E*'s opinion was:

... if the US decides to go to war with certain countries in the Middle East Canada just follows. And it seems like they just follow the US foreign policy rather than having their own, and in a lot of cases that does mean, attacking a Muslim country. So some of our foreign policies don't seem appropriate, they seem like let's just follow America. So that would be a complaint, so have more of an independent foreign policy...

Informant *D* opined that:

I am a little disappointed in what's going on there [Syria] and that Canada isn't really contributing in any sort of way. We do, or I do wish that Canada would help more. But I do understand that there's various reasons why they're not. You do have to know all the details before you can make a statement like that. You know and it does affect us. You see Muslims dying for no real reason, they're all innocent, and you do get angry about it and it's very unfortunate, so the whole situation, like all the countries the whole Middle East, it's going through a lot of difficult times right now, and it's really sad to see it's got to this state, when you look at the history

of why they are this way, it's just unfortunate. And I think there are a lot of extremists there, and they're making it a lot worse. We try to help in various ways, like sending clothes sending money that type of thing. But other than that we kind of feel a little helpless.

Aside from the common theme among informants that Canada was not showing a sufficient level of empathy for victims of protracted armed conflicts who were Muslims, that Canada's foreign policies were too Americanized, and that some of the informants felt that Canada's multicultural policies were not inclusive enough for Muslims, the more common concern regarding Muslim youth and identity conflict was that they were influenced by Canada's culture to turn away from their religion and engage in activity that is not permitted by their faith (pre-marital sex, alcohol consumption etc.). Although there was agreement among informants that girls practicing hijab had a more difficult time "fitting in", there were differences in the opinion of whether males or females seemed to be more impacted by identity conflict.

For example informant C believed that the social pressures on Muslim females were more significant than for Muslim males:

... And those struggles are, especially there is so many struggles that Muslims have and Muslim men have. But Muslim women, I mean holy mother it's just---hhhh You'll see Muslim girls that leave the house in abayas and hijabs and they'll have an entire outfit tucked into their TNA bags that they'll swap the minute they get to school or into a shopping center. They'll lie about going to the library and instead be at a boy's house. They'll say oh drop me off at such and such place and I'll walk there, so my mom doesn't see you or something. So all of these things that aren't allowed within Islam and to be able to experience that, peer pressure.

Informant A, believed that females are better able to cope with the challenges presented by identity conflict during youth:

Depending on the upbringing of the female, and what country they're from also, plays a big role in this. There are some cultures that are very conservative as it is, but when it comes to girls, they're even more

conservative. So it's a matter of pride for them that their girls are so upright and all of those things. And when it comes to the future of the girl, people, the people that she's going to eventually marry, the man and his family, are looking at those kinds of things they want the perfect girl, she's never done this, she's never done this, this is the first person she's been with, she doesn't go out, she doesn't... So on the one side there can be a lot of pressure to have that kind of a character that kind of a profile, and on the other side she's being pulled in other directions, by her friends and by all of these things. Depending on her upbringing and her own level of practice, I find that girls are more stable in these things, they don't bob as much back and forth maybe because there's more pressure on them, maybe they feel there's a lot riding on them. Or maybe women are just more stable in general. I think in some aspects women are stronger than men.

There was a salient theme among informants that Canada's openness to alcohol, and pre-marital relations made things difficult for Muslim youth and that trying to fit in with Canada. Also, there was an opinion that curiosity about activities commonly accepted in Canada but frowned upon by Islam as well as uncertainty about their own religious values may cause Muslim youth to experience identity conflict. There was also a theme that Muslim youth who have developed a certainty about their religious identity had the confidence required to resist temptations and to continue following the Islamic lifestyle. Both Sunni and Shii informants recognized these issues.

The issue of the media propagating Islamophobia was an unanimous opinion among informants. Three informants brought up the importance of Muslims themselves making the effort to appear in the media and help dispel the negative perceptions about Muslims and to help in the effort to spread correct information about Islam. Informant *C* had very vivid examples of how media hype regarding Islamophobia had impacted her and her family:

In my experience, well things got tougher after 9/11. I do remember when 9/11 happened I was in the 3rd or 4th grade, and that morning we had a substitute teacher, and that morning she was called out of the room, and then she came back in and sort of told us ok terrorists have blown down a building in NYC, and I didn't really think of it too much at the time, went home, it was on the news, didn't really watch the news that much, my parents wanted to shield me from it all. Islamophobia

was incredibly rampant after that. Kids started to look at me differently at school, this is all in Vancouver, and we got lots of stares whenever we'd go out, when we went to the superstore to the shopping centers, people would just stare, and I didn't really know, wasn't fully aware of the consequences of the circumstances Muslims would have after 9/11. I was a bit young and my parents weren't really telling me everything. But I did notice, folks are acting a bit different towards my mother and I. And both of us have headscarves on, hijabs on and there was, I'll say lots of bad customer service my mom would get, and then my mom would retaliate and managers would have to be called in. So a few superstores in Vancouver know who my mom is. And so kids started to ask questions and pull on my hijab and ask if I was bald under there...My best friend who was Phillipino, her mother was a sweetheart but her father said she could no longer play with me because I was a terrorist.

It would appear from the findings of the thesis interviews that Islamophobia as well as identity conflict exists among Muslim youth in Canada. Such identity conflict has been experienced and/or observed by at least five individuals (although a wider study would be needed to determine the *extent* to which this is an issue). Mostly, informants see no feeling of incompatibility between being a Canadian and being a Muslim and in the cases where these feelings do exist, this is related to Canada's militant activities and foreign policies being too Americanized. Informants perceive Muslims in Canada generally as very happy with Canada, and most find that Canada is welcoming and safe for Muslims, although cases of Islamophobia are not uncommon. Informants believe most (but perhaps not all) cases of Islamophobia could be addressed by bettering education and awareness about the Islamic religion and by explaining to non-Muslims the meaning and context behind certain passages in the Koran. Mostly the media was blamed for spreading negative views about Islam.

When it came to the issue of extremism in Islam, and why some youth may develop hostile feelings about Canada, there were differences of opinion. All informants condemned such actions but felt differently about the causes for such actions as well as the way to address this issue. Most informants also stressed that, at least within Canada, there are very few people who espouse anti-Canadian views (although the existence of anti-American views

was deemed to be more prevalent). Some informants felt that individual responsibility should be placed on those who took illegal actions to harm Canada, while others felt dealing with this issue should be a collective effort. Some felt that Canadian Muslims should be stern with their counterparts displaying feelings of hostility to Canada (Informant A even said he would suggest to them to go live in another country). The prevailing view was that the Muslim community should collaborate with authorities in a joint effort to prevent such phenomena.

For example informant *E* stated:

It [A current initiative] is Muslims trying to prevent young Muslims from going to extremism. So that is something that can be done, these extremists may be more likely to listen if the message is coming from other Muslims. If a moderate Muslim sits down with them and says you know are you actually reading the Koran that isn't what it says, and maybe they would listen, I don't know what their psyche is like, but it may be easier, coming from another Muslim. But I also think it could be policy makers that could get involved, I think lots of sides can help prevent this and we can all work together to prevent this.

The opinion that there is an existence of hostile feelings about Canada was not unanimous among informants. But where it existed, it related to Canada's foreign policies, military activities being too Americanized as well as Canada's failure to offer humanitarian assistance to some Muslim civilians impacted by protracted conflicts. Informant *E* believed the development of these opinions was more likely to occur in the event that a youth had a personal connection to a country being impacted. This perhaps may also be more likely in cases where Muslims felt a strong connection and feeling of brotherhood within the "global Muslim community" as described by informant *A*. Informants also generally agreed that even people with hostile feelings towards Canada's institutions or governmental policies, would very likely be a long way from actually acting on those feelings.

In the case of extremism, and acts of violence being committed, informants gave different opinions on what the causes may be. One was extreme despair and anger at the

West's perceived negative influence in other countries, the most common opinion was mental illness (especially in the case of Michael Zihaf-Bibeau, the Ottawa shooter). Another was vulnerability to malicious indoctrination via the internet, that some youth may be vulnerable due to isolation, naïveté, or narcissism, generally accompanied by mental illness. Although most informants agree that Muslims should take a pro-active role in addressing this issue, a challenge was identified due to the fact that an affected individual may be secretive about their plans, and was likely influenced online in isolation (not in a mosque). This would make them extremely difficult to identify, even among peers. The need to offer guidance, education and psycho-social assistance to all Muslim youth in order to enable their positive development was discussed, as well as the necessity to teach the correct meaning of the Koran and to deepen their understanding of the complexity of the modern globalized world. They stated that things are not as black and white as they may seem to a disenfranchised young person.

Generally informants seemed to feel solidarity with other Muslims more than non-Muslims,. They also saw themselves as sharing characteristics with other non-Muslim Canadians on the basis of a shared nationality. They saw being Canadian as well as Muslim as mostly compatible, and their Muslim, and Canadian traits as being distinct yet important aspects of their identity.

There were some opinions that Muslims living in Canada as a religious minority feared a loss of their religious identity. However, this was generally perceived as an issue pertaining to new immigrants, and members of the older generation. All informants placed individual responsibility on each Muslim to choose to practice their religion or not and stressed that Canada is a free country, and that a person has their own choice to be a good Muslim or not. Informants felt comfortable expressing their religious identity publicly (for

example mentioning to colleagues that they were fasting, needed prayer time accommodation etc.).

Attitudes of out-group suspicion and otherment were reported, but they were believed to be the exception rather than the norm. Mostly, the informants seemed to feel that this was more of an issue from the outside, and stressed that they had made a conscious decision to live in Canada.

Overall, the interviews reveal that in the opinions of informants, identity conflict is common, but seems to happen to varying different degrees and in many different ways. It also seems, that there are differences in identity conflict related to sect, age, the amount of time an individual has resided in Canada and the circumstances surrounding an individual's decision to live in Canada. Canada seems to be doing a passable job in integrating Muslim youth into society but more efforts could be made, especially regarding the media, foreign policy and education about Islam. When considering the opinions of informants one may ponder the idea that it is possible that joint efforts could be most effective in this initiative. Muslims tend to feel more comfortable with living as a minority in Canada if they have been in the country for longer periods, if they have a local community to connect with and if they are confident in their identity as a Muslim. Most saw their identity as Muslims, as Canadians and as a part of a globalized world. Their views and the testimony revealed during the interviews, indicate a likelihood that the experiences of Muslims in Canada cannot be viewed as exogenous from the globalized context in which they occur, and that their countries of origin as well as how strongly connected they feel to the world Muslim community may impact their understanding of their identity in Canada as Muslims. Their experiences take place in a broader, more complex and globalized situation. This globalized situation is explored in further detail in the chapter to follow.

Chapter 6: Findings - Document Review, Situational Analysis

6.0 Introduction: The Globalized Context of Immigration and Identity Conflict

This thesis seeks to understand Muslim youth in the Canadian context, while situating it in its globally relevant context. As indicated by thesis informant A “the world has gotten very small.” As the world becomes increasingly globalized, and Canada as a diverse nation draws immigrants with attachments to a multitude of different countries (Immigration Watch Canada, 2010, para. 6; Canadian Immigrant, 2013, para. 1-6), it is important to realize that nothing exists in isolation. Thesis informants remarked on how they feel more connection to those sharing their religious views, who were members of their collective Islamic identity. When situating this research in the context of the globalized world, it is important to realize the potential for Muslims to feel very strongly emotionally impacted by the harm inflicted on Muslims throughout the world.

Many Muslims and non-Muslims alike feel that the tremendous suffering experienced by Muslims throughout the world at the hands of America and its allies must not be ignored (Fisk, 2005, pg. 851). Well-known Middle East correspondent Robert Fisk (who resided in the Middle East more than 25 years) believed this experience of a shared identity among Muslims to be particularly salient. He included a quote from an anonymous humanitarian aid-worker who believed American authorities were concealing the number of Iraqi casualties of the 1991 war: “Or maybe the Americans killed more than 200, 000 – and they’re worried the Arabs would be disgusted at, say, the slaughter of a quarter of a million fellow Arabs” (Fisk, 2005, pg. 851).

There are many examples of the suffering and indignities committed against Muslim civilian populations that may have the potential to agitate their counterparts around the globe

(Fisk, 2005, pg. 851) (including but by no means limited to those about to follow). In 1993, Canadian peacekeepers photographed themselves with the corpse of a 16 year-old civilian Somali boy (Shidane Arone) who died after being tortured by nine Canadian soldiers for several hours. Out of all nine soldiers involved, four were acquitted and the harshest reprimand was one 5-year prison sentence (“Torture by Army peacekeepers in Somalia shocks Canada,” 1993, para. 1-12; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Development Canada (DFATD), 2015, para. 54). According to the cultural information/ travel advisories issued by DFATD, this incident is still extremely relevant in shaping global Somali perceptions of Canadians (DFATD, 2015, para. 54).

In another incident, in 1988, American troops in the Persian Gulf shot down an Iranian passenger plane, killing all 290 civilians on board (“The forgotten story of Iran flight 655,” 2013, para. 1). The plane crash was reported on by Robert Fisk, famous British journalist, and Middle East correspondent, who described the wreckage three days after the crash and stated: “[T]here is no avoiding some terrible conclusions: that so many of the dead- sixty-six- were children, that some of the coffins are so very small” (Fisk, 2005, pg. 319). Within one 3-week period in July 2014, UNICEF’s (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) Gaza Office reported that 230 children were killed by Israeli Defense Forces. Chief of the Gaza UNICEF Office , Ms. Pernille Ironside stated that “[w]e see children killed, injured, mutilated and burnt, in addition to being terrified to their core. The consequences run much deeper than previous flare-ups” (UNICEF, 2014, para. 3). Robert Fisk remarked on the Iraq war in 2003:

“It was an outrage, an obscenity. The severed hand on the metal door, the swamp of blood and mud across the road, the human brains inside a garage, the incinerated, skeletal remains of an Iraqi mother and her three small children in their still-smouldering car. Two missiles from an American jet killed them all – by my estimate, more than 20 Iraqi civilians, torn to pieces before they could be ‘liberated’ by the nation that destroyed their lives. Who dares, I ask myself, to

call this ‘collateral damage’?” (“Bush is killing those he wants to liberate,” 2003, para. 1-3).

He again observed in 2006: “I can’t help wondering today how many of the innocents slaughtered in Haditha took the opportunity to vote in the Iraqi elections -- before their ‘liberators’ murdered them” (“Robert Fisk: on the shocking American occupation of Iraq,” 2006, para 9). It is difficult to find definitive numbers on the number of civilian deaths in Iraq since 2003, one widely used source, the *Iraq Body Count Project* reports more than 100,000 (Iraq Body Count Project, 2011, para. 11).

It seems possible that Muslims living in Canada who connect strongly to their collective Muslim identity may be impacted by such events. For example, when asked about how she and her community were emotionally impacted by the civilian deaths in Syria, Informant D (who does not share an ethnic or linguistic background with Syrians, only a religious identity) stated that:

I am a little disappointed in what's going on there and that Canada isn't really contributing in any sort of way. We do, or I do wish that Canada would help more. But I do understand that there's various reasons why they're not. You do have to know all the details before you can make a statement like that. You know and it does affect us. You see Muslims dying for no real reason, they're all innocent, and you do get angry about it and it's very unfortunate, so the whole situation, like all the countries the whole Middle East, it's going through a lot of difficult times right now, and it's really sad to see it's got to this state, when you look at the history of why they are this way, it's just unfortunate. And I think there are a lot of extremists there, and they're making it a lot worse. We try to help in various ways, like sending clothes sending money that type of thing. But other than that we kind of feel a little helpless

An excerpt of the interview with informant A is also worth considering here:

Researcher: Do you think, because I’m mostly looking at youth, so youth in any context sort of have a conflict of identity, whether it’s religious or ethnic, or what kind of music they want to ascribe to, it’s common. So I’m wondering, Muslim youth that are in Canada, may strongly identify with their religion, they may not, but do you think that when they see these things, like Canada siding so much with the United States in peacekeeping operations, that give such vilifying perspectives of Islam in the media, or

Stephen Harper's recent visit to Israel, where he gave not much recognition to Palestine, do you think a Muslim youth who is more politically minded, because of course I'm sure there's a lot of people who aren't political at all and don't pay attention to these things, but do you think that a youth who is more politically minded might, I don't know, I guess I'm kind of wondering, might anybody develop some feelings of incompatibility between being a Canadian and being a Muslim?

Informant A: Absolutely, yes. Whenever a country will take a stance that conflicts with one's belief system, a sort of dichotomy is created in the mind. Ok who am I supposed to side with, and that creates-it creates an inner conflict, it creates confusion, and a person starts weighing their interests, what does my interest lie in? And it also leads to a lot of frustration especially when it happens over and over again. People do get frustrated.

Researcher: Can you talk anecdotally, about anytime you've seen a person have this sort of inner conflict? Or how they've sort of tried to cope with that sort of stress?

Informant A: I think I've gone through many such first-hand experiences. Or dealt with many youth who've gone through such experiences. Simple example, like what you have mentioned. For some people and they don't even have to be Muslim are very emotional about the Israel/Palestine issue. I have non-Muslim friends who are very emotional about the Israel/Palestine issue. They, when they see that you're constantly and sort of without any reservations just supporting one side, and you're treating the other side as wrong, or as baseless or they don't deserve any respect they don't deserve any importance, when you see that, the first thing is that it *hurts* because you're connected to those people, either because you're from that part of the world or you share the same beliefs as them, and so on and so forth. So a conflict is definitely created and a struggle begins inside, and you think do I suppress this, am I supposed to voice my opinion am I supposed to, you know what am I supposed to do? And yes where is my place in this society, if this is what leaders are saying, is that representative of the country? Is that their own statements? Who else are they speaking on behalf of? And yes, am I compatible to this...absolutely the question arises.

When considering identity conflict among Muslim youth in Canada, the effect of the global situation for Muslims must be taken into account, as it seems that this has the potential (according to informants) to substantially impact identity conflict while mobilizing those of a

collective identity group. Notice that according to informant D (and this was echoed in other interviews including that of informant A) that this happened in socially conscious, , altruistic and humanitarian ways, such as seeking further knowledge, becoming more politically engaged or sending clothes and supplies to Syrian civilians impacted by the country's conflict. Googling "*Muslims in Canada sending supplies to Syrian refugees*" results in several results of instructions provided by Muslim communities across Canada on how to make clothing or food donations to be shipped to Syria (i.e. the Um Anas clothing drive in Toronto, <https://www.facebook.com/events/1427691150800381/>).

This finding suggests a possibility that Muslims in Canada can be mobilized based on their collective identity as Muslims and based on conflicts that are international rather than domestic involving members of their shared identity group. This shows a possibility that Muslims in Canada relate to their collective identity group, not just domestically but internationally, across linguistic, cultural and ethnic lines and that they may take action to assist those of their identity group. It also appears that this mobilization among those espousing Islam (in its normative, mainstream and moderate forms) is most likely to manifest within positive, legal and non-violent parameters.

6.1 Identity conflict and Empathy for the plight of Muslims Abroad

For the purposes of this research, with its intention to improve relations between Canada and Muslim youth, the small potential for the plight of Muslims abroad to mobilize individuals espousing radical Islamism (abnormal, extremist and violent interpretations of Islam) to take illegal and violent actions (as was the case of Saad Khalid, and Damian Clairmont) is also recognized and seen as an area that must be addressed. It is significant that Saad Khalid (convicted Toronto 28 terrorist, sentenced at age 23) indicated the suffering of

Muslims abroad as inspiration for his adoption of radical Islamism and eventually the activities that lead to his incarceration (“Homegrown Terrorist: Toronto 18 Bomb Plotter,” 2014, para. 11-43). Showing the plight of Muslims and imploring Western Muslims to take violent action is a tactic used by those seeking to radicalize others over the internet such as the late Anwar Al-Awlaki, an American born al Qaeda cleric, the late Anwar Al-Awlaki (assassinated in a CIA drone strike in 2011) (“The American who Inspires Terror from Paris to the US,” 2015) whose online influence has been attributed to the radicalization of individuals all over the world (Barclay, 2010, pp. 1-3; “Obituary: Anwar al- Awlaki,” 2011, 1-34). Among his inflammatory statements are:

With the American invasion of Iraq and continued U.S. aggression against Muslims, I could not reconcile between living in the U.S. and being a Muslim, and I eventually came to the conclusion that jihad against America is binding upon myself just as it is binding on every other Muslim.... (“Purported Al-Awlaki message calls for Jihad against the US,” CNN, 2010, para. 2)

To the Muslims in America, I have this to say: How can your conscience allow you to live in peaceful coexistence with a nation that is responsible for the tyranny and crimes committed against your own brothers and sisters (“Purported Al-Awlaki message calls for Jihad against the US,” 2010, para. 6).

Saad Khalid, explicitly attributes his radicalization to the late Awlaki. It appears that he played directly to the identity conflict that many Canadian Muslims experience, and appealed to their sense of collective identity. In the case of those espousing radical Islamism, rather than Islam (as in the case of Saad Khalid), identity conflict, if paired with extreme isolation, and mental instability may have the potential to mobilize Islamists based on their collective identity to take negative actions (“Homegrown Terrorist: Toronto 18 Bomb Plotter,” 2014, para. 11-43). This furthers the possibility that there may be a necessity to successfully integrate Muslim youth into society, and to provide them with effective services

(especially in the area of mental health in the opinions of thesis informants) in order to protect them from those who seek to exploit their vulnerabilities and radicalize them.

Successfully integrating Muslim youth into society is an endeavor that Canada is not alone in attempting to facilitate. There are several studies that have been written on this subject. There are also several extremely influential voices on this subject, whose opinion, while not akin to that of the researcher (some believe Islam has no place in the modern developed world), will also be acknowledged as having relevance due to their power of influence. Their opinions, as well as the findings of other studies will be compared with the findings among the thesis informants of this study.

6.2 Comparative Analysis via Document Review: Influential Opinions

A salient finding among the interviews conducted specific to this thesis, as well as other studies is that Muslim youth living as a religious minority, especially in Western countries, experience identity conflict. However, experts on the subject disagree as to the extent to which extreme cases of identity conflict are pervasive.

6.2.1 Incompatibility between Islam and the “West”

Beginning with one of the most well-known authorities on the subject, and also on one polarized end of the spectrum of opinions, is the extremely influential, author of best-selling books, and former Dutch politician, and former Muslim turned atheist Ayaan Hirsi Ali. While in office, she advocated for mandatory medical screening of females from Muslim majority countries to identify parents who had subjected their daughters to FGM (female genital mutilation), and also publicly attacked Islam as incompatible with the values of the West. Ali is extremely critical of Islam and sees it as irreconcilable with the West’s open,

democratic and liberal values (Ali, 2004, pp. 31-37), a view she has argued in several literary works as well as films (i.e. *Honor Diaries*, 2004, *Caged Virgin*, 2004).

She does not view any possibility of reconciling Islam with the West, and believes it cannot be reformed - only defeated. For example when introducing her most recent book "Heretic," Ali made the following statement expressing her views that Islam is inherently violent, and incompatible with Western values:

It simply will not do for Muslims to claim that their religion has been "hijacked" by extremists. The killers of IS and Boko Haram cite the same religious texts that every other Muslim in the world considers sacrosanct. And instead of letting them off the hook with bland clichés about Islam as a religion of peace, we in the West need to challenge and debate the very substance of Islamic thought and practice. We need to hold Islam accountable for the acts of its most violent adherents ("Islam is not a Religion of Peace," 2015, para. 43).

During a 2007 interview, Ali stated that

... we [the West] are at war with Islam. And there's no middle ground in wars. Islam can be defeated in many ways. For starters, you stop the spread of the ideology itself; at present, there are native Westerners converting to Islam, and they're the most fanatical sometimes. There is infiltration of Islam in the schools and universities of the West. You stop that. You stop the symbol burning and the effigy burning, and you look them in the eye and flex your muscles and you say, "This is a warning. We won't accept this anymore." There comes a moment when you crush your enemy ("The trouble is the West: Ayaan Hirsi Ali on Islam, Immigration, Civil Liberties and the Fate of the West," 2007, para. 15).

During the same interview, Ali was asked if she was referring specifically to *radical* Islam, to which she replied: "No. Islam, period. Once it's defeated, it can mutate into something peaceful. It's very difficult to even talk about peace now. They're not interested in peace" (para. 14).

Ali was exposed to a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in her youth while living in Kenya as a religious minority (Kenya is a Christian majority country) and spoke about the conflict of identity she experienced, and how it drove her to more radical ideals. In her

opinion, this is a common situation for Muslim youth living as religious minorities in other countries (The Opinion Pages, 2011, para. 1). She spoke of this experience and the internal conflict it caused her in her memoir, *Infidel*; “[a]ll the other young people who joined the Brotherhood movement wanted to live as much as possible like our beloved Prophet, but the rules of the last messenger of Allah were too strict, and their very strictness led us to hypocrisy” (Ali, 2006, Chapter 7, pg. 35). Ali sees deep incompatibility between being a Westerner and being a Muslim and believes most Muslim immigrants are opportunistic, having no desire whatsoever to adopt Western values and seeking only to take advantage of social services, financial assistance and the security offered by residing in the West. They want to reap the benefits of being in the West, but feel no loyalty or obligation whatsoever to give back to it, as they see themselves first and foremost as Muslims, clan members, or members of an extended family network and do not think of themselves as citizens with a responsibility to a country, especially a country that is secular and filled with “infidels.” She also cites examples of Muslim youth in the West (many of them converts) who joined ISIS, committed violent acts and overall have actively turned against the values of the West. She implores Western liberals to protect themselves from Muslim immigrants, and to not allow them to protect and conserve their cultural practices. Although Ali has repeatedly criticized Islam in its entirety and sees it as fundamentally violent and misogynistic, it is worth noting that her newest book *Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now*, suggests that she believes that there is a possibility that Islam could *become* a religion that could be reconciled with the modern world, while she still affirms that, in its current state, Islam is not a peaceful religion (Ali, 2015, Introduction, pp. 1-58).

Ali speaks nearly exclusively from her own experiences, and uses very little figures or qualitative data to back up her claims, yet she remains perhaps the most authoritative

expert on the subject. She is not alone in her views. She has authored several bestsellers, and was named by TIME magazine as one of the most influential people of 2005 (Belfer Center, 2005, para. 8).

Another well-known expert on Islam and its incompatibility with the secular and modern way of life is the late Christopher Hitchens, author of several bestselling books, the most well-known being *God is not Great, How religion poisons everything* (2007, Religion Kills, pp 15-41). Hitchens saw religion as the equivalent of a malignant tumor in the body of the human race. Although Hitchens made his life's effort the complete extinguishment of religion in all forms, he saw Islam as the most problematic of all religions in the world, stating "he did not believe all [religions] were "equally bad in the same way all the time...[and that] the most toxic form that religion takes is the Islamic form" ("Christopher Hitchens comments resurface after "Charlie Hebdo" it's the most depraved religion," 2014, para. 6). He sees all sects and interpretations of Islam as completely incompatible with human progress, education, and evolution. He saw it as the worst hindrance to facilitating human collaboration and peace. Hitchens saw Islam as completely blocking human critical thought, and thus prohibiting human development:

Islam rather dangerously says, 'Ours is the last and final one. There can't be any more after this. This is God's last word. That is straightaway a temptation to violence and intolerance and if you will note, it's a temptation they seem quite willing to fall for ("Christopher Hitchens comments resurface after "Charlie Hebdo" it's the most depraved religion," 2014, para. 11).

Hitchens went further on to state that he believed that Muslims could not live in a secular liberal country, and sought only to impose a state based on Sharia:

The whole idea of wanting to end up with Sharia with a religion-governed state — a state of religious law — and the best means of getting there is Jihad, Holy War, that Muslims have a special right to feel aggrieved enough to demand this is absolute obscene wickedness and I think their religion is nonsense, in its entirety ("Christopher Hitchens comments

resurface after “Charlie Hebdo” it’s the most depraved religion,” 2014, para. 8).

Hitchens saw Islam as completely incompatible with the Western notions of tolerance, liberalism, democracy, feminism, human rights and secularity:

Some of its adherents follow or advocate the practice of plural marriage, forced marriage, female circumcision, compulsory veiling of women, and censorship of non-Muslim magazines and media. Islam’s teachings generally exhibit suspicion of the very idea of church-state separation. Other teachings, depending on context, can be held to exhibit a very strong dislike of other religions, as well as of heretical forms of Islam. Muslims in America, including members of the armed forces, have already been found willing to respond to orders issued by foreign terrorist organizations. Most disturbingly, no authority within the faith appears to have the power to rule decisively that such practices, or such teachings, or such actions, are definitely and utterly in conflict with the precepts of the religion itself (“Hitchens on Islam: What is needed from this very confident religion is more self-criticism and less self-pity and self-righteousness,” 2010, para. 2).

In his book *God is Not Great*, Hitchens attacks Islam (along with many other religions) in several passages. He views the religion as being deeply suspicious and opines in the chapter “the Koran is borrowed” the following:

“Although we do know that a person named Muhammad almost certainly existed within a fairly small bracket of time and space, we have the same problem as we do in all the precedent cases. The accounts that relate to his deeds and words were assembled many years later and are hopelessly corrupted into incoherence by self-interest, rumor and illiteracy” (Hitchens, 2007, pg. 127).

Although Hitchens’ views were extreme in their anti-Islamic sentiment by any measure, they came from a deeply atheistic perspective, as do the views of Ayaan Hirsi Ali and are in some ways rooted in contempt for religion of any form (“Christopher Hitchens comments resurface after “Charlie Hebdo” it’s the most depraved religion,” 2014, para. 1-7).

Although there are many critics of Islam from the atheist community, there are others among the Christian community who are influential, especially in the United States. Like

Hirsi Ali, they are not credited for their quantitative facts or even qualitative data, but their views are nonetheless relevant because of the influence they wield, and their potential to cause hindrances to the acceptance and assimilation of Muslims. Interview informants also expressed concern regarding hostile attitudes about Muslims that are largely propagated by the media. Ali, Hitchens and others have been very influential in the media. Some, like Ali and Hitchens, see the task of reconciling Islam in the West as totally impossible while there are others who, while still espousing a negative view, see at least some possibility for reconciliation.

Another well-known critic of Islam is a Christian, and the well-known author and founder of *Jihad Watch*, a very popular website monitoring Islamic extremism in the world today. Robert Spencer has gained considerable notoriety, especially in the United States for his anti-Islamic views, and some of his statements have become so inflammatory that he has actually been barred from entering the UK. For the purposes of this thesis, it is acknowledged that Wikipedia is a source of questionable academic integrity. The following excerpt has been included because of its potential to influence others, and as it could be a likely destination for those seeking to follow Spencer's example. The Wikipedia page describing Spencer's views on Islam is as follows:

Spencer does not believe that traditional Islam is "inherently terroristic" but says he can prove that "traditional Islam contains violent and supremacist elements", and that "its various schools unanimously teach warfare against and the subjugation of unbelievers". However, he rejects the notion that all Muslims are necessarily violent people. He has said that among moderate Muslims, "there are some who are genuinely trying to frame a theory and practice of Islam that will allow for peaceful coexistence with unbelievers as equals." Spencer has also said that he would welcome any Muslim who renounces jihad and dhimmitude to join him in his "anti-jihadist efforts", but feels that anyone pursuing his called-for reforms will face a difficult task, because "the radicals actually do have a stronger theoretical, theological, and legal basis within Islam for what they believe than the moderates do." He has also argued that many so-called reformers are not interested in genuine reform, but instead are aiming

to deflect scrutiny of Islam (2015).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Spencer_\(author\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Spencer_(author))

Although he sees Islam as an obstacle to human development and progress, Robert Spencer is not as polarized in his views as Hirsi Ali and Hitchens as he does recognize that Islam does contain some moderate elements, and there is some room for Muslims of moderate factions to co-exist with non-Muslims in the West. He also recognizes that this presents some level of hope as even among some of Islam's harshest critics there may be at least the glimmer of a possibility of co-existence. There are some very influential Muslims working to promote a more tolerant and moderate form of Islam, that is perfectly in line with the values of the West, and contrary to Hirsi Ali, Hitchens and Spencer, they believe that Islam can be adapted to the context of the West, and that the obstacles presented to integration of Muslims within the democratic, secular and liberal framework of the West are rooted in culture, rather than religion. It is worth noting also, that this is the prevailing view of the informants of this thesis. All viewed the Western values, of peace, democracy, plurality and tolerance as very much in line with what they perceived their own interpretation of Islam to espouse.

6.2.2 The potential to reconcile Islam with Secular Modernity

According to a 2007 article published in *Middle East Quarterly*, there is a consensus among Muslims scholars that living in the West is less desirable than living in a Muslim majority country as this will tempt Muslims to stray away from the religion and lose their own religious identity. "Many jurists believe Muslim migrants to the West have only two paths to follow: reaffirmation of Muslim identity or its complete abandonment" (Shavit, 2007, para. 14). Yet this is not the view of several of the informants of this thesis, who

believe that living in Canada as a Muslim deepened their faith, as they have to practice as a minority and prioritize their religion due to their individual commitment. They believed this facilitated more sincere commitment to the religion than in many Islamic majority countries, where the culture will “take care of it for you” (Informant B), because it is easy to follow a religion when it just means following the actions of everyone around you. Informants believed living as Muslims in Canada, and overcoming the challenges of living as a minority strengthened their Islam, and saw Islamic values as congruent with Canada, not something they had to abandon to fit in.

The informant’s views about reconciling Islam with Canada successfully, and not having to make a choice between choosing to be Muslims, and isolating themselves from Canada, or abandoning their religion are echoed by highly regarded experts on the subject, who although not always as influential as the aforementioned persons, are far more authoritative due to their more scholarly approach to expressing their opinions on the subject. Reza Aslan, a well-known expert on Islam in the West, and professor at California State University is one such expert.

Aslan believes that Islam can be perfectly reconciled with the Western way of life and believes that the Muslim communities living in the West are in a prime position to export their moderate and modernized interpretation of the religion to the rest of the Muslim world that is in need of progressing. He sees a major obstacle to this effort as the marginalization and discrimination that Muslims face in the West while living as a religious minority. It would seem from viewing Aslan’s opinions, that an effective way for the West to fight the problem of radical Islamism would be to support the moderates within their own countries and encourage them to influence their foreign counterparts, rather than waging an actual, literal war against radical Islamism. He also points out that Islam cannot be considered as incompatible with democracy as the world’s most populous Muslim nation (Indonesia) is a

democracy, and several other large Muslim majority countries (Pakistan, Turkey, and Bangladesh) are democratic (Aslan & Khan, 2014, para. 1-22).

An interesting characteristic about Aslan is that he perceives interpretations of Islam as highly diverse and individualistic, thus, some could easily be reconciled with secularism while others may not be. He gave the example of Egypt, where as many as 90% of inhabitants believe Islam should take a definitive role in politics. In Tunisia, also an Arab North African country, far less than 90% would advocate for religion to have any role at all in politics. This marks a stark comparison, and only includes two countries in the same region, of the same Sunni sect sharing a language and ethnicity. The vast interpretations of Islam among its nearly two billion global adherents are decidedly much more diverse (Aslan & Khan, 2014, para. 1-11).

Further, Aslan also sees Islam as first and foremost an identity, before it is a faith. He sees it as also diverse in that it varies according to the individual. He also sees this in a positive light, as it allows for more flexibility in reconciling one's identity with one's current cultural context, and believes that this means a positive future for Muslims seeking to retain their identity in the secular Western world. This is a pertinent finding for the study of Muslim youth (as their developmental stage makes questions of identity prominent) but is promising in that young Muslims will have the freedom to adapt their own identity to the Western way of life. This is also in agreement with many of the informants who saw the younger generation as perfectly capable of reconciling their Islam with the West, while still maintaining their Islamic faith. Informant B also remarked on the progress made in Muslim non-Muslim relations through initiatives taken by the Muslim youth to educate the public about their tolerant, flexible and peaceful religion (Aslan & Khan, 2014, para. 1-26).

Aslan saw Islamophobia as causing problems to the successful integration of Muslims into the West as well as some Muslim's attachments to cultural practices that do not have any

place in the modern era, which he viewed to be exogenous from the Islamic religion (Aslan & Khan, 2014, para. 1-26). His sentiment is echoed by the well-known scholar Tariq Ramadan (Ramadan, 2013, para. 9-11). Ramadan views the identity crisis currently taking place in the West as causing some scapegoating of Muslims, in order to divert attention from deeper and more intractable social conflicts. He views this identity crisis in the West as positive in one way, as it leaves a gap for Muslims to define themselves in the West somewhat on their own terms, as being “Westernized” is far from rigidly defined, at least at the present stage (Ramadan, 2013, para. 1-24). He states his views on Islam and the West as “[t]oday and for the future, Islam is a Western religion and an irrefutable part of Western identity” (Ramadan, 2013, para. 2). Thus he does not see any conflict between being a Muslim and residing in a Western country as a religious minority.

Ramadan does, however, view collective identities as well as attitudes of “othering” as being salient features of life for Muslims as well as other minorities residing in the West. He sees this as happening primarily from outside the Muslim community as Muslims of many different sects, nationalities and races are grouped together and constructed against the West as an “other.” Ramadan sees Islam and Western ideals as compatible, and he also is optimistic about the future of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims residing in the West, provided Muslims are able to extricate themselves from culturally subjective interpretations of the religion that he sees as separate from the religion’s core sources. He perceives that this hinders successful integration into the West. He also sees it as crucial for race to be removed from the equation of identity and Islam in the West. He views problems with successful integration of Muslims in society as occurring due to internal and external difficulties experienced by Muslim communities residing in the West. He views “othering” as a phenomenon causing hindrances to successful integration that is a shared blame between Muslims as well as non-Muslims.. Yet Ramadan is still optimistic about the future:

Acknowledging the contribution of the other and that their presence can be positive, that we all have room to learn more and need to open up in order to live together, is the only way to achieve a deep sense of what it means to be a humanist advocating respectful pluralism. Living together does not mean that we should forget ourselves; rather, it is about being true to ourselves and our principles while maintaining positive interaction with those who are different. We may have different paths and have different religions, but we surely have a common future (Ramadan, 2013, para. 20).

The views of Ramadan are quite in line with those expressed by my thesis informants; (informant C even mentioned him explicitly) and it is worth noting that Ramadan includes Canada in his frame of reference.

Thus it seems that the most well-known opinions on reconciling Islam with the West are divided between those that see it as compatible with the West and those who do not believe that it is compatible. There are extremist elements, of course, in Islam that espouse the West as the root of all evil and advocate its demise (Sayyid Qutb is the most well-known example). Qutb (an early Egyptian Muslim brother) is widely known as the “Godfather” of Islamist anti-Western sentiment. His most famous work *Milestones* was written after returning from studying in the United States. He is known for his Occidentalism sentiment against the West and his extremely binary view of the Muslim world, which he considers to be completely incompatible with the West. Radical in life (he was hanged in 1966 for plotting the assassination of Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser), he has inspired Islamists as influential as Osama Bin Laden, and is often cited as having planted the ideological seeds that define modern radical Islamist groups such as Al Qaeda (Zenishek, 2013, para. 1-10), and Al Shabaab (the Somali group responsible for several terrorist attacks in Kenya) (“Who are Somalia’s Al-Shabaab?,” 2015, para. 1-26). Qutb’s views espouse extreme out-group hostility, and a binary view of the world existing between Islam and the West.

For the purposes of this research, it is acknowledged that there are Islamist views that

encourage Muslims to isolate and defend themselves from the West as a perceived enemy. However, as these are somewhat removed from the study of Muslim youth and identity conflict, these views will not be included in the study with the same level of depth. Those who espouse views akin to or inspired by Qutb take a less central position to this research, although it is acknowledged that the groups aforementioned and inspired by Qutb may have contributed to both the phenomenon of Islamophobia (indirectly), or to the radicalization of certain Muslim youth via the internet.

Overall, there are many views on the subject of integrating Muslims into the West, and the issue of identity seems to be rooted in most perspectives. It is a significant finding that the opinions of informants were most akin to the views of experts who saw Islam as reconcilable with the West (Ramadan and Aslan). This is a promising indication for the future of Canada's multicultural endeavors as well as peaceful relations between those espousing different worldviews on a more globalized scale.

Regarding Islamophobia, it is interesting that all informants acknowledged its existence in Canada, but viewed its prevalence as existing in vastly differing levels of severity. One study published in 2008 revealed that anti-Muslim attitudes are on the rise in Europe, and that levels of Islamophobia are linked to education level. This is in agreement with all informants but one (informant A) on the opinion that education could be useful in dispelling Islamophobic attitudes ("Anti-semitism, Islamophobia, on the rise in Europe, decline in the US," 2008, para. 5). An interesting finding of the same study was the finding that Islamophobic attitudes, while rising in Europe, have declined in the United States.

Interestingly, a Gallup poll discovered that Canadians were (less so than Americans) more likely than Europeans to have negative views of Muslims (agreeing with the statement "they do not respect our society") (Gallup, 2011, para. 9). When this poll is juxtaposed with the thesis informants, who perceived that Canadians are often welcoming of Muslims, one

may ponder the possibility that just because Canadians are not explicitly acting on Islamophobic attitudes, does not mean that they do not harbor them privately. The next election, and whether or not Canadians vote favorably toward bills that may increase scrutiny of certain groups may be an indication of just how accepting of Muslims Canadians *really* are (“What the world can learn from Canadian Multiculturalism,” 2015, para. 7-24; Hanniman, 2008, pp. 271-272).

Comparing the interview findings with the results of a Pew research Poll may be telling of differences between Canadian and American Muslims:

In a 2007 poll by the Pew Center, 63 percent of U.S. Muslims said they saw no conflict between being a devout Muslim and living in a modern society. But 32 percent conceded that, yes, there is such a conflict, and almost 50 percent of the Muslim American questioned in that poll said they think of themselves as Muslims first, Americans second. Only 28 percent, little more than a quarter, considered themselves Americans first (Sandall, 2010, para. 28).

Informants did not see conflicts between being Canadian and being Muslim, and most did not place the two in a hierarchy; they rather saw them as separate entities that were both important to their identity. It seems a possibility that Canadian Muslims may be more comfortable in the Western citizenship than their American counterparts.

6.2.3 The Middle Ground

There are differing views on the subject of whether Islam is compatible with modernity from those outside the Muslim community, some who view moderate Islam as at least feasible in the Western context, while others do not. Nevertheless the views of the Muslims and non-Muslims discussed have been influential and are worth comparing. It seems a small gap in current discourse that many of those so critical of Islam are not engaging the Muslim community in their activities, and are often not consulting Muslims’ views on the subject. It would appear that those on the more positive side of the camp (Ramadan being an

exception) are sometimes guilty of otherment, and of placing blame on the other. Those who do not see Islam as reconcilable with the West place exclusive blame on Muslims and do not see any responsibility on themselves to deal with the issue other than to “defend” themselves against it. It would seem that experts on the side of blaming the West for othering Muslims (other than Ramadan) have generally not given enough thought to the problem of some Muslim communities becoming insular and not putting enough effort into contributing as citizens to their adopted countries. The findings from the interviews on this study show that there is hope in the future for Muslims to take more responsibility in collaborating with non-Muslims to facilitate better relations, and all informants assisted in enabling this effort by agreeing to be interviewed. Hopefully, engaging more Muslims in this pursuit will lead to more common ground, collaborative efforts and recognition of the moderate elements present in Islam by those airing on the more Islamophobic side. Still, the fact that so few Muslims residing in Canada agreed to take part in this study is interesting. One may wonder if Ramadan’s prescription that Muslims in the West be more self-reflective about their own role, and take a more active part in contributing to their Western countries of habitation will ever be heeded. There is a need for more self-reflection, less otherment and blaming from those on both sides of the issue in order to get to more moderate stances and to meet in the middle.

It appears there is still a long journey ahead to reaching this goal in Canada, and that more collaborative, and less divisive approaches are needed. It also appears that the media has played a role in exacerbating identity-based conflicts and that many influential voices on the issue are polarized. This is a relatively new area of study that takes place within a complex and challenging context, therefore, more exploration is required in order to bring deeper understanding of the issue, especially in the context of current events. There is a need

for further study, as well as further collaboration between Muslims and non-Muslims living in the West to cooperate and understand each other, particularly in the Canadian context. This is further explored in the following two chapters.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Analysis

7.0 Introduction

It appears a strong likelihood that identity conflict, and the phenomenon of “otherment” is a salient issue among Muslim youth in Canada. It also appears, that collective identities are present. It also seems possible according to the views of some informants, that collective identities have the potential to be divisive, and cause conflict when collective identities are seen as being incompatible with each other. Yet, it appears that collective identities are not always based on the grounds of religious affiliation, rather there are sectarian, national, ethnic and class distinctions regarding identity among Muslims in Canada. Based on the interviews, it appears that Canadian Muslims may often feel a collective identity with their fellow Muslims (especially if these Muslims share their own membership of the same Sunni or Shii Sect), and feel more connected to other Muslims than to non-Muslims. Still, it would seem that Muslims in Canada do not feel that being a Muslim precludes them from feeling a connection to their chosen nation, and trying to become contributing citizens. Informants remarked on Canada’s multiculturalism, and how this allowed them the legal right to practice their religion without any interference. It seems that identity conflict forces youth to examine their religion more critically, and take their own individualized version that is suitable to their personal context or adopted culture.

Muslim youth appear to be more susceptible to identity conflict than older Muslims in Canada due to their developmental stage of life, their lack of confidence in their Muslim identity as well as their temptation to participate in aspects of mainstream Canadian life that are frowned upon by Islam. Identity conflict also appears to be impacted by a youth’s culture of origin, and how flexible the interpretation of Islam is in that culture. Indeed it appears that

collective identities do exist in Canada, and that identity conflict among Muslim youth is a common phenomenon.

7.1 Significance of Findings

It is a significant finding that informants reported largely positive feelings about Canada as well as Canadians and feel that being a Canadian and being a Muslim are compatible. It is also significant that informants reported wide diversity in the tolerance levels of non-Muslim Canadians as well as their attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims. It is a significant finding that the majority of informants believe that education level and having adequate information about Islam influence levels of Islamophobia. The possibility of education reducing Islamophobia is also indicated by a 2011 Gallup poll, which showed that in North America and several European countries, education level was strongly indicative of an individual's perceptions of Muslims (Gallup, 2011, para. 20-33).

It is a very significant finding that informants often mentioned politics as being an area of contention for Canadian Muslims, and that they did not feel that politicians were sufficiently educated about Islam or that Canadians acted with a sufficient level of autonomy regarding foreign policies that would impact Muslims. This finding however, should not be viewed in isolation; especially given the fact that informants expressed overwhelmingly positive sentiments about Canada and its inhabitants. It is possible that facilitating more inclusion of Muslim points of view within politics could facilitate better relations.

It is significant that all informants expressed extreme disdain for radical elements within Islam, and if these informants are in any way indicative of the wider Muslim community in Canada, the majority are not jihadist sympathizers. It is an extremely significant finding that the majority of informants supported a collaborative approach to

addressing the possibility of radicalism within Islam and felt that the moderate Muslim community in Canada has a central role to play in this effort.

Most informants said they felt more solidarity with fellow Muslims (reflecting Aslan's (2012) view that Islam is primarily an identity (Aslan views all religions as primarily an identity that has subjective meaning and importance peculiar to each individual, para. 1-30), while still feeling connected to other Canadians, showing a presence of collective identity, and according especially to informant A, potential for conflict along these lines. Informants described some level of out-group suspicion among Muslims in Canada, and the very low participation rate of informants among the approximately 100 who were invited to be interviewed is possibly evidence of this out-group suspicion. Informants seemed to view this shared identity as important when they perceived Muslims to be stereotyped as being a homogenous group, when they felt collectively disrespected as a group, when they sought friendships and marital partners, as well as when they observed the suffering of Muslims in other areas of the world (when these Muslims were perceived as being innocent civilians). They felt that this out-group suspicion was largely confined to first generation, or new immigrants and the elderly. Yet, the fact that only 5 out of more than 100 people invited to be a part of this study agreed to participate, is indicative of the possibility that out-group suspicion may be much more salient than informants believe. It is also worth noting that the researcher who was sending out the invitations is of Caucasian background, and has a name that is extremely unlikely to be assumed as being the name of a Muslim.

7.2 Significance of the Existence of Collective Identities and Identity Conflict among Muslim Youth in Canada

According to the testimony provided by thesis informants, it is at least probable that most Muslim youth living in Canada feel connected to and are often very proud of their

Canadian identity.. Within the effort of exploring collective identities among Muslims in Canada, it appears that there is reason to suspect (indicated by informants) that there is a sense of collective identity among Muslims living in Canada, suggesting that collective identities are in fact present. This is significant in addressing the issue of identity conflict in Canada, as there may be some level of out-group suspicion among Muslims living in Canada, although according to informants this is likely to subside the longer an individual has resided in Canada and is generally more likely to impact immigrants who are newer to Canada.

According to the views of informants, it may be the case that identity conflict among Muslim youth is a prevalent occurrence in Canada, and that there are a variety of manifestations of this phenomenon, the majority of which are not peculiar to followers of the Islamic religion. These include perhaps the most perennial symptom of youth: rebelling against one's own parents. This can be a particularly stressed relationship, if youth regard their parents as culturally backward, or holding on too tightly to traditions not appropriate to their newly adopted country. It can also be difficult if youth disagree with their parent's interpretation of the religion. It appears that manifestations of identity conflict among Muslim youth in Canada have gendered differences. Informants indicated that although identity conflict is perhaps more common and more profound among females, they may be less likely to act out and rebel against the culture of their parents than their male counterparts.

Identity conflict among Muslim youth in Canada seems to be as rooted in the youth's country of origin and their family's culture as it does relate to the fact that they are Muslims. As informants mentioned, for some Muslims their religion is merely a part of their cultural identity and is not a central or guiding feature in their lives. During interviews, many informants stated that identity conflict would vary greatly depending on the cultural background of an individual and how conservative their country of origin may be in their

cultural practices, with those originating from countries with more rigid cultural practices having a more difficult experience adjusting. For some, religion is the focal point of their entire lives and they take an extremely conservative interpretation, which they may in some cases attempt to impose upon their children. This (some informants perceived) impacts the youth's experience of identity conflict. It would appear based on the views of informants that extremely rigid parents may have the unintended effect of causing their children to actually turn away from religion (in some cases to completely renounce it).

More conservative families (according to informants) often place more restrictions on their daughters than their sons and it would appear that this is strongly influenced by the parent's culture of origin. This may have the effect of some girls following their conservative interpretation extremely closely, to the point where they may isolate themselves from participation in wider Canadian society, or it may (particularly as mentioned by informant C) influence them to develop an extremely duplicitous personality and to engage in activity that is absolutely taboo in their religion.

Muslim youth (in the view of informants) seem to be most impacted by identity conflict in that they are sometimes torn between following the teachings of their religion and activities that are widely accepted in Canadian society such as dating, un-Islamic fashion trends, pre-marital sexual relations, alcohol consumption and frequenting night clubs. Girls, according to informants, seem to have a more difficult time with these issues, and when they rebel and try to follow Western practices, often resort to a high level of deception. Youth who are not confident in their Muslim identity are also (in the opinions of informants) more likely to engage in Western activities frowned upon by Islam.

All of this means that peer pressure, impacting nearly all teens, may have deeper effects for Muslims, as engaging in them may be insulting their own (or at least their

family's) religious identity. As informants pointed out, there are some Muslims who find their parents' version of Islam so oppressive that they actually leave the religion, or at least stop actively practicing it suggesting that, at least for some Muslims in Canada, their desire to fully participate in all aspects of mainstream Canadian life (including many practices frowned upon by Islam such as dating, and consuming alcohol) is stronger than their connection to their religious identity.

In cases where Muslim youth feel identity conflict in wanting to fit in with their peers, they may eventually lose their religious identity, or they may come to a better understanding of their identity as Muslims, living in Canada, and how to situate themselves in this context. It seems that some youth, on their way to established adulthood, lose their Islamic identity or find some way to reconcile being Canadian with being a Muslim. This reconciliation (in the perception of informants) means taking a more critical and personal interpretation of the religion, and finding its meaning and place in everyday Canadian life. It also means potentially rejecting some cultural practices that may be common place in the countries of origin, but not explicitly necessitated by their own religious interpretation (for example choosing whether or not to wear the hijab).

Identity conflict among Muslim youth seems to largely be a developmental, psychological and sociological phenomenon that is similar to the conflicts of identity that characterize the experiences of the vast majority of youth. The famous developmental psychologist Erik Erikson identified eight developmental stages that make up the trajectory of an individual's life (Sokol, 2009, pg. 2). The two most crucial stages (and coincidentally those that are relevant to this research) are the two stages that take place during an individual's developmental stage of youth. The first of these two stages is the "Psychosocial Crisis: Identity versus. Role Confusion" (Ray of Hope Counseling Services, 2012, para. 16-

20; Sokol, 2009, pg. 2) which takes place between 12-19 years of age. The second of these developmental stages is between the ages of 19-34 and is characterized by a psychosocial crisis known as the Intimacy vs. Isolation stage (Ray of Hope Counseling Services, 2012, para. 16-24; Sokol, 2009 pp. 1-2).

The first of these two stages involves an individual's desire for autonomy and personal agency. The person begins to think of themselves as a separate entity from their family unit, rather than existing as exclusively part of that unit. The individual will look at other groups to which they seek membership and belongingness. They begin imagining themselves as members of a society, rather just members of a family. They want to fit into society, a wider group than their small family of origin. This is the stage where a person first begins to fathom the roles they will eventually fulfill as an adult. These are largely related to the occupational and sexual roles the person will espouse as an adult. It is during this stage of development that one can be seen to engage in a lot of experimentation with different activities. They will be pre-occupied with re-examining their identity and trying to decide "who they are" as individuals (Simply Psychology, 2013, para. 1-39; Sokol, 2009, Abstract).

This stage is often accompanied by a deep sense of role confusion. As a result of exploration and experimentation an individual will spend a lot of deciding what they want to be when they grow up, and what their place will be in society, as well as how all of this will relate to where they are and where they came from (their family of origin) (Sokol, 2009, pp. 3-6). This developmental stage is often accompanied by intergenerational conflicts. Due to the normative participation of extended family among many immigrant communities, intergenerational conflict may be particularly difficult for Muslim youth as it could involve more generations than simply their parents. Intergenerational conflict could involve wrestling among value systems that vary widely in their level of conservatism, making identity conflict

at this crucial developmental stage particularly difficult (Simply Psychology, 2013, para. 41-53).

This stage is often characterized by experimenting with different ideologies or social groups. It is also often accompanied by rebellion, often against one's own family. Informant C actually described a common phenomenon of this stage as "rebellious against one's culturally backward parents" and having an inner conflict while being torn between the conflicting ideologies of Islam and Western, hyper-sexual and capitalist, secular and multi-cultural society. Although it is common for any youth to feel an extreme conflict of identity and role confusion at this stage, Muslim youth may be more severely impacted as intergenerational, cultural, moral and ideological divides may be much more difficult to reconcile with each other. The Canadian role, and the Muslim role may seem further apart than they need to be, depending on the definition of "Canadian" being espoused by one's peers and the definition of "Muslim" being espoused by one's parents and often extended family. It is easy to see the conflict a youth may find themselves in, when their friends are telling them that being a Canadian and "fitting in" means dating, drinking, attending parties, and wearing provocative clothing and listening to pop music when their parents are vehemently opposed to all of these things and insist that God is as well. Erikson's theory also posited that forcing an individual into a certain identity role at this crucial stage could actually force them into a negative identity. This may even occur through attachment to an identity that an individual does not actually feel a strong connection to under normal circumstances. Moreover it becomes an identity born out of a reactive circumstance (Simply Psychology, 2013, para. 41-55). Informant C describes this, when responding to the question of whether or not some youth (females in this case) feel remorse after engaging in activities that are forbidden by their Islamic faith:

I know that some do. But I can't say the same for all. For some it's this desire to experiment, just a little bit. I'm not forfeiting my Islam, I just want to try it, just a little bit. It won't be it's not a big deal, no one will see. And then they'll feel really guilty afterwards...

It seems that experimenting with the temptations of Canadian culture create substantial problems for Muslim youth in Canada, and that this developmental stage can be particularly difficult as they try to define their roles as Muslim men or women in a society where they are a minority and live a different lifestyle than many of their peers. Although it is likely the norm rather than the exception for every youth (whether Muslim or otherwise) to experience identity conflict at this point in their lives, because of the differences between Canada's sexual liberalism and the teachings of Islam have the potential to make Muslim youth have a particularly profound and difficult experience (Simply Psychology, 2013, para. 30-50). This may also result in a youth becoming misguided and lured by those who promise them a sense of belonging and purpose (as was the case with Saad Khalid) ("Toronto 18 Terrorist Saad Khalid," 2014, para. 1-25; Barclay, 2010, pp. 6-10).

As the children of immigrants sometimes have a more difficult time, due to economic hardships (Galabuzi, 2001, pp. 3-4), or having to take on some adult responsibilities due to their parents' limited ability in English/ French, some youth may face challenges that hinder their development, and may contribute to absenteeism or dropping out of school, or even delinquency (Informants A, C) It is therefore important that Muslim youth (particularly immigrants or the children of first generation immigrants) are provided with social services, and positive mentorship (Kymlicka, 2010, pp. 7-8) to ease the passage between the preteen years and young adulthood, as failing to provide this support may contribute to the failure of an individual to develop their ability to become a contributing member of society. It is also important that this support be offered in a culturally sensitive manner (Informants A, C, D).

The second and perhaps even more crucial developmental stage as defined by Erikson is the sixth developmental stage in an individual's life and is known as the intimacy vs. isolation stage, occurring between ages 19-34. At this stage, role confusion (though still salient) has faded to the background as the individual becomes fixated on matters more pressing to them at the time. At this stage, an individual learns how to function independently and to live as an autonomous adult, separate from their original family unit. At this stage, people still strongly feel the need to "fit in" to society and with peers. This need is deeper at the former rather than the latter portion of this sixth developmental stage of youth. This is also the stage in which most importantly a person feels the need to identify with a new group, or to find their own family unit. There is a strong urge for love and intimacy at this stage. Finding a sense of deep belonging and a sense of identity as part of a family, or at least as part of a strong group identity, is extremely salient at this developmental stage (Simply Psychology, 2013, para. 32-48; Sokol, 2009, pg. 3-6).

As the need for intimacy, and for a strong group identity is at the forefront of an individual's fixation at this stage of life, it follows that a person who does not achieve this need begins to feel a profound loss and particularly this stage can be characterized by an overwhelming feeling of loneliness. It is also at this stage where individuals feel the need to align themselves to ideologies, and group identities in order to provide them with some security throughout their life. It is at this stage where individuals are at their most vulnerable to align themselves with negative influences, as the feeling of loneliness can be very severe. For Muslim youth in Canada, this may have the potential to be an even more difficult experience, as it may be difficult for them to find someone with whom they share Islamic values, and even the same interpretation of religion. It may also be difficult if they find themselves in relationships with others with whom they do not share a cultural background

and religious identity. All of this can make it difficult for Muslim youth to make deep friendships and also to find a spouse or romantic partner, while maintaining their identity and living in a society that looks very favorably upon experimental dating and pre-marital co-habitation (Simply Psychology, 2014, para. 10-50; Informants).

This is also the time when loneliness can drive youth into negative and perhaps even abusive relationships. It is at this stage where a youth may fall victim to those seeking to exploit their vulnerability and they may be more vulnerable to malicious indoctrination (Simply Psychology, 2014, para. 10-50; "Toronto 18 Terrorist Saad Khalid," 2014, para. 1-25). If at this stage a youth's experience is characterized by a conflict of identity involving political inclinations, there can in some cases be consequences for the individual as well as society. A lonely individual impacted by identity conflict could be easy prey for those seeking to victimize a person via manipulation ("Toronto 18 Terrorist Saad Khalid," 2014, para. 1-25).

Several informants identified Canadian foreign policies as agitating Muslim youth in Canada. This was particularly likely when such policies were seen as blindly following American policies or to be showing a disregard for the well-being of Muslim foreign civilian populations. If this is coupled with extreme isolation, as well as mental instability (informants generally opined mental instability), it can in rare cases lead to the radicalization of Muslim youth in Canada. In the case of Damian Clairmont a (severely bi-polar) Canadian Muslim convert, found dead after fighting with ISIS in Syria, as well as Michael Zihaf Bibeau (the Ottawa shooter), mental instability, isolation as well as the developmental stage they are in necessitating an escape from what could be extreme loneliness and mental anguish, has the potential to drive them into the hands of those who seek to exploit their vulnerabilities ("Damain Clairmont killed while fighting with Al Qaeda linked rebels in Syria," 2014, para.

1-35; “Michael Zihaf-Bibeau, Ottawa gunmen asked judge to send him to jail,” 2014, para. 1-24). These two individuals also had a history of delinquent activity such as alcohol and drug abuse, and prior arrests, which indicates that they were perhaps disenfranchised, inclined to rebellion and social isolation (“Damain Clairmont killed while fighting with Al Qaeda linked rebels in Syria,” 2014, para. 1-35; “Michael Zihaf-Bibeau, Ottawa gunmen asked judge to send him to jail,” 2014, para. 1-24; “Attack on Canada’s Parliament,” 2014, para. 1-5).

Although there are many converts to Islam, (and by no means should they all be viewed with suspicion), religion can offer a safe haven for an unstable and isolated young person who has been rejected by their family, and perhaps society. In the case of Michael Zihaf-Bibeau, this level of desperation had even included begging to be incarcerated, a request that was ultimately refused (“Michael Zihaf-Bibeau, Ottawa gunmen asked judge to send him to jail,” 2014, para. 1-24; “Toronto 18 terrorist Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 11-14). The trend of mentally ill Canadians converting to Islam and subsequently falling into an extremist version of it may not be large, but it does exist, as does the existence of some Muslims adopting a more radicalized version of their religion (“Michael Zihaf-Bibeau, Ottawa gunmen asked judge to send him to jail,” 2014, para. 1-24).

If this instability, loneliness and disenfranchisement are influenced by feelings of hostility toward Canada, it is possible that an individual may feel compelled by the jihadist narrative. For example, Saad Khalid, one of the Toronto 18 plotters (currently serving a 20-year prison sentence) has publicly apologized for his actions and also offered insights into what influenced his radicalization. He stated that his hatred and anger was not directed toward Canadian people, but more so was brought on by a quest for personal significance as well as anger at Canada’s involvement in harming innocent Muslim civilians around the world (the Afghanistan mission was stated as an explicit aggravator for Khalid). He stated

that “[i]t was Canadian foreign policy specifically in Afghanistan ... My rationale was that if I were to go over to Afghanistan to fight, I would be just one more person, while in Canada I could make a bigger difference. I would be more useful to the ‘cause’ this way. I couldn't step away now (“Toronto 18 Terrorist Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 17).”

Associate Professor Lorne Dawson of Waterloo University has done extensive research on the subject of Western radicalization. He sees identity conflict as well as other factors including “triggering life events” as having the possibility to exacerbate conflict and bring on depression, as well as mental instability. He stated “[i]n most cases, there will be a precipitating factor, [...] A person's mother may die and they have a very strong attachment to their mother, their relationship may crumble ... they may lose their job, lose their career, something that they had been relying on to provide stability or certainty in their world goes away” (“Toronto 18 Terrorist Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 25).

Following a traumatic event, it is common for a person's mental stability to be compromised, making them extremely vulnerable to predatory outside influences (National Institute of Mental Health, 2014, para. 1-21):

Dawson [professor at the University of Waterloo] points to several factors in the radicalization process, ranging from how globalization of the internet enables radicalization everywhere to how immigrant children can be more likely to embrace extremist views. ‘They wanted to be a good child to their family and their parents, but they couldn't buy the traditional cultural values and mores and practices of their parents because they weren't living in Morocco. They weren't living in Saudi Arabia anymore or Pakistan. They're living in a modern urban Western context. They're kind of neither one nor the other’ Other potential factors along the path to radicalization include an individual's quest for significance and a willingness to take risks. A charismatic leader can also be influential at key points. There can often be an event in a person's life that can lead to a final decision to participate in an extreme action (“Toronto 18 Terrorist Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 22).

Khalid discussed being extremely distraught after the sudden death of his mother, retreating more into religion and becoming extremely isolated. He was then influenced online by an American born al Qaeda cleric, the late Anwar Al- Awlaki, who has been credited with inciting terrorism and murder all over the world via the internet. Some even believe that he inspired the Kouachi brothers to instigate the recent Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris. The infamous and extremely influential and dangerous Awlaki also apparently inspired Khalid of the Toronto 18 over the internet. Rather than receiving guidance and support in his darkest hour, Khalid found himself lured by the exhortations of the twisted Awlaki (“The American who inspires terror from Paris to the US,” CNN, 2015, para. 1-20; “Toronto 18 terrorist Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 11-14). He has said of the influence of Awlaki:

He had a knack for telling a good story, so when I came across his lectures on jihad, I was hooked [...] Here was someone I respected and he was connecting global grievances that Muslims share with what your responsibility is in terms of these issues. I was left with the understanding that it was religiously incumbent on me to assist in defending Muslims whose land had been invaded (“Toronto 18 Terrorist Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 11).

Since his incarceration, Khalid has received counselling from mental health professionals as well as a Muslim Imam. He has said that:

When we did talk about questions I had, he essentially challenged me and my arguments, [...]“When I didn’t have any answers for him that is when I really began to analyze my actions and thinking. He provided me with material that argued against the legality of terrorism [...] There will probably always be someone who will be allured by the extremist narrative. It took me a long time to be convinced that I was wrong (“Toronto 18 Terrorist Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 38).

Although Khalid represents a minority of Muslim youth in Canada, his narrative is compelling in that it follows a pattern of isolation and mental instability preceding the path to radicalization. He has also explained how the intervention of mental health professionals as well as a guide from his own religious faith (the Imam) have been able to influence him to

change his mind. If Khalid is being truthful, then this finding offers tremendous hope for the effort of preventing radicalism in Canada. Many other Canadian converts to Islam, as well as Muslims who have moved from mainstream Muslim beliefs to radical Muslim beliefs have displayed signs of mental instability, and had sometimes operated for lengthy periods in extreme isolation. This means that with the assistance of those trained to address the issue, and with the right intervention, such a person may effectively be persuaded to abandon their plans to engage in activities incited by a terrorist entity (“Toronto 18 terrorist Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 1-40; Siddiqui, 2014, pp. 1-10).

Michael Zihaf-Bibeau had reportedly been asked to leave a Burnaby mosque and told not to come back, based on his bad behaviour and the fact that he did not like the open and welcoming nature of the mosque. Of course those in charge of administration of a mosque cannot be expected to identify mental instability; yet one may ponder the possibility that if someone from the mosque had tipped off another who may have been able to provide some assistance to the deranged Zihaf-Bibeau, his tragic actions could potentially have been prevented (“Michael Zihaf-Bibeau, Ottawa Gunmen,” 2014, para. 1-34).

While it is important to understand that radicalism presents a minimal threat to Canada and Canadians (it is much more likely in Canada to be a victim of another type of violent crime than terrorism) (National Pardon Center, 2008, para. 1-7), it has extremely far-reaching consequences for the Canadian Muslim community and Canadian society at large. It is telling that Khalid made a point of offering a specific apology to the Canadian Muslim community for the damage he had caused (“Toronto 18 Terrorist Saad Khalid,” 2014, para. 36-40). After the Ottawa shooting, Canadians are now divided on the adoption of the controversial new anti-terrorism Bill (Center for Canadian Policy Alternatives, 2015, para. 1-40), and more than ever, Canadians are being inundated by some media reports telling them

that radical Islamism is a threat to national security. While it would appear (based on reports from CSIS and Public Safety Canada) that the number of Canadians lured by the jihadist narrative is growing, one could argue that several hundred Canadians, among a population of over a million Muslims in Canada represents far less than 1% of Canadian Muslims.

Therefore, this should not raise nearly the level of alarm that it has, especially in the media.

As all informants mentioned, the media plays an extremely crucial role in influencing the perception of Muslims among the Canadian public. The less than 1% of Muslims who engage in radical activities, should be placed in the wider Canadian context, where 10% of citizens have a criminal record for some type of illicit activity. Yet, terrorism remains a media fixation, and has impacted Canadian Muslims, and especially Muslim youth in Canada due to their developmental stage; perhaps it has even contributed to an accompanying sense of identity conflict (National Pardon Center, 2008, para. 1-7).

It is, therefore, of importance to note that informants believed that the Muslim community in Canada should take an active role in combatting radical Islamism, and more importantly its extremely profound and divisive effects in Canadian society. One way suggested by informants is for Muslims in Canada to take a more vocal and visible role in not just cooperating with authorities to identify and report potentially dangerous individuals but to take an active public role in engaging with the Canadian media. This is to allow Muslims in Canada to have their own voice and to have the opportunity to dispel attitudes that may be unfavourable to them. As all informants felt that Muslims could play an important role in amending this problem caused by the media, it should be considered that such efforts could have a positive impact on facilitating more understanding and trusting relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada.

It is an extremely significant interview finding that informants unanimously reported favourable opinions of Canada's RCMP force. Informant D even made a comparison between Canadian Muslim's relationship with the police force and the relationship between African Americans and the police force in Ferguson Missouri, opining that the Canadian relationship between Muslims and the police is not similar. This is extremely significant as it means that although Muslim Canadians may often feel that they are stigmatized by stereotypes existing in society at large, they still feel that they are treated fairly in both the law enforcement and judicial system. As police are the face of the law, and often the first point of contact for an individual's experience with the justice system, the fact that all informants felt that RCMP officers treated them fairly and without prejudice is an extremely positive indication. This is also interesting as perceptions of Canada's police force in general have indicated that citizens have been losing faith in the RCMP force in recent years. It thus seems that Muslims may have a better opinion of the RCMP force than other demographics of the Canadian populace ("Public Opinion of RCMP down "significantly" in past five," 2013, para. 1-18).

As the stakeholders perhaps most likely to be impacted by Islamist actions, as well as steps that Canada takes to address them (ie. Bill C-51, which many believe is unconstitutional) (Clayton & Nadar, 2015, para. 1-40), Muslims have a strongly vested interest in promoting better relations between themselves and their non-Muslim Canadian 'comrades.' It is significant that most informants felt this way, and indicates a possibility that Muslims in Canada are eager to be included and active in this effort. There are many ramifications for the significant findings of the interviews thus far, and it is clear that the issue of Muslim youth and identity in Canada is complex. Yet there is hope that even a secular, sexualized and capitalist society can be reconciled with those who follow the teachings of the Koran, and that even in this post 9/11 age and amidst the "war on terror" we

can learn to understand respect, and coexist with one another. There is hope for reconciliation between Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada, as evidenced by the fact that there has been successful reconciliation between identity groups sharing a far more volatile history than that of Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada. Yet, such efforts cannot be realized without the full support and participation of all stakeholders involved: Muslim youth, the wider Muslim community, Canadian state institutions, the general Canadian public, as well as the media. Potential actions to be taken in order to address this need are addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.0 The Presence of Collective Identities, Muslim Youth and Identity Conflict in Canada

Based on the testimony of the informants, it seems likely that collective identities are in fact present among Muslim youth in Canada, and that this has the potential to influence thought and behavior. Yet it appears that these identities are more fluid and not as easily defined or evident as one may assume. Here, it is prudent to revisit identity as it was defined in the introduction “as a group phenomenon resulting in group identities and a worldview characterized by a perception of “us versus them” (Kriesberg, 2003):. Group identities according to this framework are often defined by what they are *not*, rather than by what they are; moreover, they are constructed against an “other” (Kriesberg 2003; MacDonald, 2015, pg. Based on this framework of defining identity, it would appear there is a strong likelihood that there is an existence of both group identities, as well as identity conflict in Canada among Muslims. This refers to the conflicts that individuals feel when they feel connected to the suffering of those of their own identity group as well as when they may feel that different identities they espouse are at some level of incompatibility with each other (Kriesberg, 2003, para. 1-35; Lederach, 1995, pp. 8-10).

Based on the interview findings, there may be widely varying levels of severity in identity conflict, and it should be noted that there are many different sources of identity exogenous of religion among Muslim youth in Canada. It seems that there may be many who identify more deeply with their religious identities than others, as well as those who still identify quite strongly with their national identity. The phenomenon of identity conflict is indeed a complex one in the Canadian context.

While there are collective identities related to being a self-identifying Muslim, based on a person's country of origin, as well as their religious sect within Islam, there does not appear to be (based on the interviews) a high prevalence of identity constructed against an "other" with the "other" being Canada or Canadians. Moreover, this potentially significant "other" seems to be unrelated to Canada or Canadian citizens; it is rather related to some practices that are commonplace in Canada, and forbidden in Islam. The perceived "other" may also be connected to Canada's political policies that are seen to be too much in line with the perceived hegemonic foreign affairs agenda of the United States and are perceived as showing little regard for the well-being of Muslims abroad. It seems possible that the "other" that a reactive Muslim identity is constructed against is not Canada, and Canadian citizens generally, but is instead a construction of identity against the more hegemonic and "Americanized" aspects of the West. It is telling that even convicted Toronto 18 plotter Saad Khalid stated that his motivations were not born out of a hate for Canada or for Canadian citizens themselves. He even stated that he did not develop a hate for non-Muslims at the peak of his radicalization when he was engaging in the plotting of terrorist activities. Instead, he explained that "[i]t was Canadian foreign policy specifically in Afghanistan [...] my rationale was that if I were to go to Afghanistan to fight, I would be just one more person, while in Canada I could make a bigger difference. I would be more useful to the 'cause' this way. I couldn't step away now" ("Homegrown terrorist Saad Khalid," 2014, para. 15).

It says something about the state of collective identities among Muslims in Canada and identity conflict that even a youth having arguably one of the most extreme cases of identity conflict and collective otherment viewed distinctions among Canada as a state, the Canadian non-Muslim public (civilians) and the state institutions that he viewed as hostile to Muslims. This is demonstrative of the fact that collective identities among Muslims that may see

“Canada” as an “other” do not espouse hostile views of Canada generally, which an extremely positive indication for those is hoping to further the cause of multiculturalism as well as integration. If those espousing the most extreme cases of radical Islamism are not opposed to Canada and Canadians generally, then it seems likely that it is exceptionally rare for Muslims residing in Canada to have hostilities toward Canada, and Canadian citizens just because of their national affiliation, or non-Muslim identity.

It seems that Muslim collective identities are constructed against Western hegemony, which is not viewed as being synonymous with Canada. What is more interesting is that the “other” is just as much other Muslim’s collective identities that a Muslim may see themselves as distinctive from. This may include other sects of the religion, or more conservative, “too liberal” (affiliated but non-practicing), or extreme (radicalist) forms of the religion. This complex state of “othering” in Canada means that Canada may stand a very good chance of successfully integrating its Muslim population as their perceptions of Canadians and Canada in general may be overwhelmingly positive. This shows significant promise for the integration of Muslim youth into society in Canada as well as a promise for continuing Canada’s efforts to be a multicultural society.

8.1 Deepening Integration of Muslim Youth, and the Wider Muslim Population into Canadian Society

Based on my findings, it seems possible that Muslim youth are eager to integrate into, as well as contribute to Canadian society. Informants perceive that they want to be involved in educating the public about their religion and they want to live as members of Canadian society, and, generally, they do not wish to live in cultural isolation from the rest of Canada. Informants perceived that some others are somewhat apathetic, and simply want to live their

own lives with their families, friends and hobbies without giving much thought to their own place as Muslims in Canadian society and as a religious minority.

The opinions of informants indicate that there are some opportunities for engaging Muslim youth in efforts to facilitate better relations between Muslims and a Western “other.” Also, for promoting better relations in the future it could be more prudent to begin by addressing the younger generation who will pass on a more favorable attitude. Especially as there are many Muslims being born in Canada and also those who come to Canada very young, there is substantial opportunity to instill a positive attitude of Canada from an early age onward.

8.2 Policy Recommendations

Informants expressed disdain towards Canada’s unquestioning adherence to the foreign policies of the United States. These views are in accordance with other studies that have indicated rampant worldwide Islamic anti-American (and to a lesser degree anti-Western sentiment) (“Why do Arabs and Muslims Hate America,” 2012, para. 1-11; Ashinoff, 2005, para. 1-13; Chayes, 2015, para. 1-33).

Canada and the United States have a relationship unique from that of any other two countries on earth: “The United States and Canada share two borders and their bilateral relationship is among the closest and most extensive in the world. It is reflected in the high volume of bilateral trade -- the equivalent of \$1.6 billion a day in goods -- as well as in people-to-people contact. About 300,000 people cross between the countries every day by all modes of transport” (Embassy of the United States, 2011, para. 1). In light of this reality, and the many benefits that Canada enjoys as a result of this relationship, it is highly unlikely that Canada will ever relinquish or even distance itself from its very close and unique relationship

with the United States, (and this often means siding with Americans in foreign endeavors). Yet Canada could perhaps improve its efforts to integrate Muslim youth (or more mature representatives of the Muslim community who are able to represent Muslim youth) into policy-making decision processes, so that they may feel that their concerns have been heard and considered.

Recommendation 1: Revive Public Safety Canada's Roundtable Discussions with Canadian communities on Security

There have been some efforts to this effect in the past. It is recommended that such efforts are revived. For example, Public Safety Canada initiated a fairly short-lived initiative in communities across Canada in order to engage Canadian communities in the effort to foster a collaborative environment by which stakeholders could contribute to Canada's ongoing security. The "cross-cultural roundtables on security" were intended as a venue to "engage Canadians and the Government of Canada in a long-term dialogue on matters related to national security" (Public Safety Canada, 2014, para. 1). According to Public Safety Canada's website, there has not been a roundtable forum activity since June 16, 2014.

Since informants expressed an interest in collaborating and cooperating with governments in order to improve Canada's perception of the Muslim community and also to improve Muslim and non-Muslim relations in Canada, such initiatives could perhaps help to foster more trusting and collaborative relations in the future (Public Safety Canada, 2014, para. 1-8). It is recommended that such initiatives are revived. Informant A even explicitly agreed that this specific initiative was a good one and that it would help to foster improved relations in the future, and allow the Canadian Muslim community a forum by which to voice their opinions. As a result of this thesis research, it is recommended that this roundtable initiative will be revived in Canada.

The forward-thinking, optimistic and positive nature of this initiative is acknowledged, especially as Public Safety Canada is a Government agency that many Muslims may be suspicious of (due to their security activities, as touched upon also by informant A), it is a positive indication that they have worked to improve their reputation in the eyes of the Muslim community.

Recommendation 2: Following initiatives outlined in the “anti-terrorism handbook” revive efforts for collaboration between RCMP and Muslim community leaders in order to prevent radicalism

A Canadian Muslim woman by the name of Shahina Siddiqui (Winnipeg), president of the Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA), published in 2014 an “anti-terrorism handbook” titled “United Against Terrorism: a collaborative effort towards a secure, inclusive and just Canada.” The book was published as a joint initiative between the ISSA and the RCMP. The handbook has been widely disseminated among Muslim community leaders in Canada (“National anti-terrorist handbook launched in Winnipeg,” 2014, para. 1-23). The handbook’s raison d’être is defined in its introduction:

Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA) has identified the need to understand and evaluate the nature, origin, causes and impact of extremist messages on Canadian Muslim youth. These messages are coming from both Muslim extremists mainly through the Web...

Muslim extremists twist, abuse and misrepresent Koranic verses and the Prophetic traditions to support, justify and rationalize their hateful messages of violence and terrorism. Islamophobes also reinforce hatred against Muslims and demonize Islam using the same cut-and-paste approach to the Koran to argue that Islam condones terrorism.

Within these two extremes lie the overwhelming majority of Canadians — Muslims and non-Muslims alike — whose voices of reason, compassion, mutual respect and pluralism are being drowned-out by loud-mouthed hate-mongers and sensational media headlines. The work of the latter is creating discord which must be resolved in a constructive manner.

In order to bridge this gap — and in order to disseminate an accurate and responsible anti-violence civic narrative that is anchored in the Sacred Text and authentic Prophetic teachings, and which is inspired by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom — ISSA has partnered with the RCMP and NCCM to produce this handbook (Siddiqui, 2014, pg. 2).

The handbook makes some comparisons with Canada's allies with whom it shares similar socio-political values as well as open immigration policies regarding the process of radicalization of Muslim youth. In Canada, as well as in the UK and United States, there is some need to protect Muslim youth from radicalization, as well as assist Muslim youth to better integrate into society, and prevent their marginalization. The book is in line with the opinions of informants in that it seeks to guide representatives of Canada's Muslim community to prevent radicalization of Muslim youth in Canada (Siddiqui, 2014).

The handbook also seeks to address the issue of Muslim youth and identity conflict in Canada, stating that Muslims living in Canada should become full-fledged and contributing citizens of the country; "Muslim citizens of any country have the same duties towards the state as any other citizen" (Siddiqui, 2014, pg. 7). Siddiqui sees Canada's multiculturalism and values of peace as perfectly congruent with Islamic values, and does not feel that Muslim youth should experience a conflict of identity while residing in Canada as a religious minority as they are not prevented in any way from engaging in their religious duties. The book goes further in explaining that assimilating into Canada as Muslim immigrants does not equate to a betrayal of their religious, or ethnic identity. Siddiqui (2014) on page seven of the book states that:

Multiculturalism allows us the privilege to maintain and celebrate our cultural heritage as long as those traditions do not contradict or are in conflict with Canadian laws. Immigrants value the country they have chosen to be their home while identifying with their country of origin. This merging of cultures and immersion of values assists in their healthy integration. They feel proud to be Canadians because Canada honours their cultural and ethnic

heritage. Immigrants have been contributing to the Canadian society economically, socially and culturally since before confederation.

...Loyalty is not blind following when we remain loyal to the core values of justice, peace egalitarianism and service to humanity, our loyalties will not lead to any moral conflict, because the guiding principle is justice. You can speak against injustice and try to change the condition of the oppressed within peaceful and legal means without being disloyal to either your cultural heritage or religious and Canadian identities.

It is clear that Siddiqui recognizes the potential of identity conflict to exacerbate the challenges faced by Muslim youth in Canada. She also clearly observed the potential there is in collaboration between leaders of the Muslim youth community and the RCMP in addressing (and most of all preventing) radicalism among Muslim youth in Canada. She stated in her book that “[e]xtremists who have a violent agenda recruit young people to their way of thinking by using the same manipulation and brainwashing techniques that criminal gangs use (Siddiqui, 2014, pg. 12).” She is cognizant of the potential vulnerabilities present in young people, particularly if they are disenfranchised, and prescribes that youth who are alarmed by an encounter they have had (particularly online) should speak to an Imam, a trusted friend or an elder in their community. She is very wary of the vulnerability of Muslim youth to malicious indoctrination. She also states the import role of parents and elders to play in assuring that youth understand there is not a contradiction between being Muslim and being a Canadian citizen: “Make sure youth have a clear understanding that there is no dichotomy between being a Muslim and being Canadian. We can be both devout Muslims and loyal Canadians. We share the core values of human rights, freedom of religion, justice and rule of law” (Siddiqui, 2014, pg. 14).

Siddiqui is also very well aware of the sophistication of jihadists in their recruitment methods:

Extremist Muslim websites are equally dangerous and manipulate Islamic teachings and history to impress their political and ideological agenda.

They also take verses of the Koran out of context and use the prism of their self-interest to paint a picture that is misleading and erroneous of and about political, religious and social realities. Be aware that extremist websites use names of scholars that are not legitimate or assign misinformation to legitimate scholars. These sites are known for their hateful messaging, litany of wrongs done to Muslims and expressing hatred for non-Muslims, the “west” and of Muslims who teach peace and justice and have spoken up against terrorism. They are slick and visually impressive and glorify violence (Siddiqui, 2014, pg. 14).

Siddiqui has placed considerable effort into outlining possible steps that may be taken to minimize the risk of Muslim youth starting down the path of radicalization, and she has been quite influential. Her work is very well known and has been widely disseminated. As her goals are congruent with suggestions and opinions expressed by thesis informants, (one informant had even received a copy of the book), it is a policy recommendation that the RCMP and Muslim community leaders collaborate on anti-radicalization initiatives in the future, and collaborate in identifying youth who may be vulnerable.

It would however be an oversight of this thesis to neglect the controversy that has surrounded Ms. Siddiqui recently surrounding the dissemination of her anti-terrorism handbook. The RCMP in Canada have released an official statement relinquishing their ties with Ms. Siddiqui and her book (“Group stunned RCMP pulled support for anti-terrorism handbook,” 2014, para. 1-35) due to alleged obscure ties with a US organization that has been accused of transferring funds to the Islamist Palestinian group Hamas (listed by Canada as a terrorist entity) (Public Safety Canada, 2012, para. 46). The RCMP also have stated that they do not support the adversarial nature of the book (“Group stunned RCMP pulled support from anti-terrorism handbook,” 2014, para. 1-35). Although in light of some of the current allegations against Ms. Siddiqui one should perhaps examine her book with a critical lenses, it is worth noting that she has not yet been found guilty (and therefore according to our legal system is entitled the presumption of innocence), and she does have expertise in the field of

counselling, social service delivery and the specific issues impacting Muslim youth. Since her initiative to engage RCMP and Muslim community leaders is in line with the opinions of informants (as are the opinions expressed in the book) her work is worthy of consideration when pondering the policy recommendation of engaging Muslim youth leaders with the RCMP in an attempt to collaboratively prevent Muslim youth from becoming radicalized (“Senate Questions Muslim leader over alleged ties to radicalism,” 2015, para. 1-15).

Recommendation 3: World Religions Curriculum Taught in Public Schools

It is a significant finding that all informants but one believed that lack of education about Islam was a factor in the propagation of Islamophobic attitudes. Among informants, three saw at least some potential for relations between Muslims and non-Muslims to be improved by adding curriculum components about world religions in public schools. Among all informants, four believed that lack of awareness and education about Islam was a substantial factor in propagating anti-Muslim attitudes. It is important to note here that the social sciences and humanities discipline of *Religious Studies* is examined from a secular perspective and is a completely different discipline than the study of Religious Theology. Religious Studies, only seeks to educate others about the basic facts of a religion, and give some understanding of its historical, political and sociological context. There is absolutely no element of proselytization within the discipline of Religious Studies, as this is not its purpose. Its purpose is to promote understanding, not conversion.

It is recommended that public schools in Canada adopt a policy of teaching a course about world religions, that would include one unit on Islam in order to promote better understanding of the diverse religious traditions in Canada, and to foster more tolerant understanding and peaceful relations, between Muslims and non-Muslims as well as understanding and tolerance of other religious minorities. According to a report by the

Southern poverty law center on “teaching tolerance” there are many benefits to teaching religion in public schools, and it can be done in a culturally sensitive, secular and respectful manner. The report recommends teaching religion as other academic content, and to plan curriculum and details of the subject in a similar manner as other social sciences or humanities subjects. They recommend three main approaches to teaching religion in public schools: the historical approach (revealing historical and political influences relevant to religion), the literary approach (observing religious allusions made in well-known literary works and situating them in their literary context), and thirdly, the cultural studies approach (situating religion in its cultural context and exploring its influences on culture as well as culture’s influence in shaping religion) (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014, para. 1-20).

The issue of teaching religion in public schools is a contentious one, as it opens the risk of teachers with a certain agenda using this forum for religious proselytization. Still, it is recommended here based on the testimony of informants and it is a simultaneous recommendation that the curriculum for the subject to be peer-reviewed in order to assure it is fulfilling the agenda of teaching - not preaching. These efforts have already begun in some areas of the United States in an effort to promote better understanding of the globalized world, and the American Academy of Religion has disseminated guidelines on teaching religion in K-12 public schools (Moore, 2010, Executive Summary, pp. 1-3). The guidelines define their premises as “illiteracy regarding religion 1) is widespread, 2) fuels prejudice and antagonism, and 3) can be diminished by teaching about religion in public schools using a non-devotional, academic perspective, called religious studies” (Moore, 2010, pg. 1). They also specify the non-denominational and proselytizing goals of religious studies as having very targeted and timely goals:

There are important differences between this approach and a faith-based approach to teaching and learning about religion. These Guidelines support the former, constitutionally sound approach for teaching about religion in public schools—encouraging student awareness of religions, but not acceptance of a particular religion; studying about religion, but not practicing religion; exposing students to a diversity of religious views, but not imposing any particular view; and educating students about all religions, but not promoting or denigrating religion (Moore, 2010, pg. 1).

It seems that the potential benefits of teaching religion in public schools as well as the importance of regulating this initiative has been recognized elsewhere, and that there is potential for this subject to be taught in a respectful and sensitive manner that is of benefit to students. The recommendation of including religious studies in the curriculum of public schools is also in line with Canada’s official policy of multiculturalism (Government of Canada, 2012, para.1-10).

In order to assure the continuation of Canada’s multicultural success, especially in the midst of growing anti-Muslim sentiment (“Canadian anti-Muslim Sentiment is Rising,” 2013, para. 1-10, pg. 111, 2004), the possibility of teaching a world religions class in public schools has some potential to foster better relations between religious minorities (including Muslims). Canada’s multicultural agenda, as well as the opinions of informants that ignorance was an issue contributing to Islamophobia have caused the formulation of this recommendation of religion being taught in public schools, from a purely secular perspective in order to foster better understanding and to reduce out-group suspicion (Government of Canada, 2012, para. 1-8).

Recommendation 4: Training of Community Leaders in Mental Health and Muslim Youth

Among the informants, four out of five opined that mental health was a strong issue in influencing Muslim youth to adopt radical ideologies and that it would also contribute to

exacerbating an experience of identity conflict, perhaps leading to familial strife or depression, substance abuse, or deep confusion about one's religious values. It is also common for youth, due to their developmental stage to experience mental health issues in varying levels of severity. In the event that youth engage in alcohol abuse and drug use (even recreationally) they may face more difficulty in dealing with the identity conflict that is salient among their cohort (according to some informants), as they may feel guilt and increased inner conflict as a result of engaging in activities that are forbidden by their religious morals.

Teens, due to the rapid changes and challenges they are presented with may suffer unique and different mental health challenges than older adults, and therefore may be more severely impacted by identity conflict (American Psychiatric Association, 2015, para. 1). The American Psychiatry Association recommends steps by which teen mental health issues can be identified. Their prescription is that parents, educators and finally community leaders must be trained in identifying signs of mental distress in teens in order to identify and offer assistance to youth in need of assistance. They state that “[a]dults close to teens – especially parents, teachers, coaches and school personnel – can learn to recognize the warning signs of mental health problems in teens, and refer the teen to a mental health professional” (American Psychiatric Association, 2015, para. 2).

Community leaders who work with Muslim youth could play a more active role in addressing the mental health problems of youth, especially if they can view that the youth is suffering from an acute experience of identity conflict. Erik Erikson's identified identity crises that youth experience may also have the potential to exacerbate mental health issues and this can be especially difficult for Muslim youth, particularly if they are first generation immigrants (Mental Health, 2010, para. 1-3, informants A, B, C).

It is therefore recommended that Muslim community leaders are given some training from mental health professionals (psychologists, counselors, social workers etc.) in helping youth address their mental health issues. The government of Canada could set up a program with perhaps the Canadian Mental Health Association in order to assist Muslim community leaders in assisting Muslim youth with the challenges accompanied by their age as well as identity crisis (Mental Health, 2010, para. 1-4; Canadian Mental Health Association, 2015, para. 1). If more leaders serving Muslim youth have the mechanisms to identify what is just a typical teen experiencing growing pains, and what is an indication of a teen experiencing a serious mental health crisis, perhaps there could be a prevention of Muslim youth in Canada developing substance abuse problems, hostile attitudes toward their adopted country, or other negative effects that may result from a serious mental health crisis (teen pregnancy, traumatic experiences etc.).

According to an online resource dedicated to assisting parents of teenagers navigate their way through developmental challenges *Teen Family Aid*,

“[t]eenage years can be stressful and challenging. Yet, you may wonder whether a teen is experiencing just the typical ‘growing pains’ or a real mental health problem. While adolescence is a difficult time for many teens, there is a difference between ‘typical’ and ‘troubled.’ Mental health problems in teens are real, painful and, left untreated, can have serious consequences” (Teen Family Aid, 2015, para. 1).

There are clear benefits to assisting teens through mental anguish as well as clear consequences to failing to do so. Failing to invest in the wellbeing of youth can have serious consequences for a nation’s future, as they may fail to produce citizens capable of contributing and maintaining the standards and institutions of society. This may also have serious consequences as there may not be sufficient human resources for the care of those who have reached old age (retirement).

Failing to care for the mental wellbeing of youth may also take a toll on the justice

system, if disenfranchised youth turn to delinquent activity, and also on the social welfare system if such youth fail to become productive members of society and rely on social assistance. Any youth are vulnerable to mental instability, yet Muslim youth (especially first generation immigrants) may in some cases be more vulnerable because of the added pressures of trying to assimilate to a new society, or the potential burden of having to navigate a new system to parents who may have limited linguistic abilities. This may be especially true if they have come from a country impacted by armed conflict and are affected by traumatic reactions (that may have been left untreated for prolonged periods). If youth have a difficult immigration experience, experience racism or discrimination, it is possible they may develop negative attitudes about Canada's systems and feel distrustful and hesitant to access Canadian mental health services. As informants have outlined, Muslim communities must be actively involved in assisting Muslim youth in collaboration with Canada's institutions as Muslims (especially those who are troubled) may be more likely to trust members of their own community rather than outsiders.

Informants also mentioned that they were very willing to collaborate with Canada's institutions in order to assist Muslim youth who may be experiencing a negative experience of identity conflict, inner strife and in the rare and worst case scenarios who may develop hostile attitudes towards Canada and fall victims to malicious indoctrination via the internet. However, informants stated that they felt this issue was challenging as such youth are generally influenced under circumstances of extreme isolation and it is very difficult to identify them. Equipping these leaders with the skills necessary to identify such at risk youth may further encourage and enable them to participate in effective and successful efforts to identify and assist youth who are being severely impacted by identity conflicts and mental health issues.

As mental health is also an area of health that is often not taken as seriously as other

forms of health and is also frequently accompanied by stigmatization; it could perhaps also be helpful to not only equip community leaders with the skills to address mental health problems, but also to provide them with some level of education regarding mental health generally.

It is hoped that the results of this recommendation will be two-fold. First of all it will encourage at risk youth to be identified and guided towards appropriate mental health professionals who may provide them with much needed assistance and guidance. Secondly, it is hoped that this will help to identify youth whose mental state may make them more susceptible to malicious indoctrination, and guide them away from such negative and exploitive influences, as they may be more likely to trust the guidance of trusted leaders from among their own religious community.

8.3 Areas for Further Study: Hypotheses for further studies

There is more research needed to implement the policy recommendations made above, largely related to the fact that the sample size of the informants is far too small to be considered representative. It also may be possible, that those who agreed to participate are not entirely representative as they may be more forthcoming, progressive and eager to integrate than other Canadian Muslims. It is necessary for more stakeholder analysis to be conducted in order to implement such policies that will be of the most benefit to the stakeholders that will be served. Perhaps if more state actors, with more influence, resources and power become involved in these efforts they could become more successful and obtain the input of more stakeholders than the researcher was able to obtain for the purposes of completing this thesis.

There is also more need for research to be done in the area of Muslim youth and identity conflict in the specifically Canadian context, as much of the literature relied on for this thesis relied on research conducted on the subject in Europe, and the United States. In order for Canada to be more successful in its efforts to integrate Muslim youth into society, more research must be done on their subject in an academic setting and also from the perspective of policy development (following the efforts that have been made in this thesis research).

Within the context of the exploratory nature of this research, the following hypotheses have been generated. It is hoped that they will guide future research that is of a more explanatory nature.

Hypothesis 1: Identity conflict among Muslim youth is very common in Canada, and exists in varying levels of severity, and manifests in different ways.

Hypothesis 2: Some of Canada's foreign policies, that are perceived as being too aligned with the United States, or are perceived to show a lack of regard for Muslims abroad, have the potential to cause socio-political disenfranchisement among Muslim youth in Canada.

Hypothesis 3: Due to the prevailing patriarchal norms in Western society, as well as ignorance among non-Muslim Canadians regarding the content of the Koran, Muslim women face more substantial challenges to successful integration into Canada than Muslim men.

Hypothesis 4: Canadian Muslims feel they have been stigmatized due to the actions of certain radicalized individuals, and are deeply concerned about this. They are eager, and able to contribute and collaborate with state officials in the effort to prevent and address this issue.

As this research was exploratory, with a very small sample size, it is only possible to propose hypotheses. It is hoped that explanatory research studies with more research subjects

who are able to determine causality are conducted based on these hypothesis in the future.

Suggestions for future studies akin to this one are presented below.

8.4. Lessons Learned and Suggestions for Future Primary Research

As this research is exploratory with an inspiration to guide further studies, it is appropriate that suggestions for future research methodologies are presented. There were several important findings to be taken from this research, as well as an indication, in the low participation rate, that there may be out-group suspicion among Muslims in Canada, or potentially political apathy among Canadian Muslim youth (indicated by the fact that most of the informants were not actually from the youth demographic).

There are lessons learned from this study regarding the recruitment of informants and also suggestions for the future. All of the recruitment for this study was done by a researcher who is from outside of the community under study, and who is also a member of the dominant group in Canada (being Caucasian and of a European background). This, potentially presented a hesitation for informants because they may have felt uncomfortable with speaking of their personal experiences as Muslims with an outsider to their community, who is also a member of the group that could be perceived to have contributed to their social exclusion in some cases. Although the researcher largely relied on email in order to recruit informants, over 30 telephone calls were made to imams and community leaders to try and recruit them as “gatekeepers” those who may help to facilitate more recruitment of subjects, as members of the community under study. This attempt was largely unsuccessful. Only one informant recruited another informant successfully. Recruitment efforts may have been more successful if a “gatekeeper” (and most ideally more than one) was recruited from the offset of the research (during the proposal phase) in order to assure effective recruitment of subjects. In-person recruitment strategies (at the advice of the supervising committee) were

discouraged due to concerns about personal safety of the researcher. For future research, it is possible that in-person recruitment would be more effective in recruitment of informants for studies akin to this one.

Another component to explore in future research would be to obtain more biographical information about informants rather than just their demographic information. This could help to explain more of their perspectives, and how personal experiences may impact perceptions about Canada, or out-group members.

In trying to understand the highly complex topic under study, especially within such a diverse community, it is important that more inclusive and broader studies are conducted. The importance of understanding the complexity of the subject is further explored below.

8.5 Conclusion

It seems a strong possibility from the findings of interviews that identity conflicts among Muslim youth in Canada are abundant. It also may be that many youth adjust very easily and quickly to life in Canada, and many do not. It seems that there are many factors that influence a youth's experience of identity conflict, including their cultural background, the extent to which the region they live in is welcoming, as well as perhaps the support they receive from within their community. A youth's attachment to their religion as well as their level of commitment to Islam all seem to be relevant factors in determining their experience of identity conflict and how comfortable they feel in Canada.

There appears to be some level (and in varying levels of severity) of out-group suspicion between Muslims as well as non-Muslims in Canada that comes from among both groups, as indicated by the opinions of informants as well as by the fact that so few people agreed to participate in this study. There also seems to be some lack of understanding and awareness regarding Islam in Canada among non-Muslim Canadians as well as negative

stereotypes that are propagated by the media that may potentially serve as barriers to improving understanding, tolerance and awareness about the religion.

It would appear that there are collective identities present in Canada, as some Muslims do feel some level of solidarity with members of their own group. Yet this is not as simple as and non-Muslim, and is largely related to sect, cultural background and shared values. It is also possible that many Muslims residing in Canada feel a strong sense of collective identity with their fellow Canadians. Mutually exclusive identities seem to be rare in Canada, and Muslims may understand themselves most of the time as being just as much Muslim as they are Canadian, and generally feel strongly connected to Canada, their chosen home and feel connected to Canada based on Canada's tolerant and open values, which is what inspired many informants (or their parents) to make Canada their new home.

It may be that when it comes to the question of how Muslim youth understand themselves and their identity in Canada, the question posed by Tariq Ramadan (and explicitly cited by informant C "Are we Muslims in the West or are we Western Muslims?") is a salient one (Ramadan, 2013). It appears that it is indeed difficult for Muslims to define themselves as separate from the society in which they have come to live and call their home. It seems that collective identities do have some potential to become political conflicts, when the Muslim identity is threatened by an "other." For example, the niqab "wedge issue" is an example of how people may become polarized based on a collective identity (with Canadians being divided on whether the niqab is a celebration of, or an affront to Canada's identity as an open, free and secular country). Canada's adoption of Bill C-51 (Clayton & Nadar, 2015) (the anti-terrorism bill) allowing the state a considerable power in surveillance is another example of how Canadians may become polarized politically on identity issues. Some Canadians are in favor of preserving Canada's open values, and reject surveillance or

removal of the niqab, whereas others may feel these are necessary steps to protect our commitment to gender equality and human rights, national values, identity and sovereignty (“Proposed niqab ban could be thin edge of the wedge: Hébert,” *The Star*, 2015, para. 1-15). . Canadian Muslims, may feel politically disenfranchised based on these events, due to feelings of stigmatization. With the potential for ongoing events to impact the topic under study it seems important also that future research explores how collective identities may become political conflicts. This is necessary in preserving Canada’s multicultural and inclusive character, as well as preventing political disenfranchisement. As indicated by informant A, Muslims may be upset by Canada becoming too influenced by American political interests, and feel strongly impacted based on their shared collective identity with Muslims abroad, who may be harmed by some of America’s foreign policies.

It seems possible that collective identities (although present) do not play the upmost important role (are relevant in a lesser degree) in how Muslim youth perceive themselves; although there may be an existence of out-group suspicion among Muslims in Canada, this has more to do with age, being recent immigrants to Canada, as well as individual experiences (whether or not someone has experienced several instances of Islamophobia). Alienation and marginalization may very well be real experiences for some Muslim youth, and this seems to be based on ignorance and racism more than anything else. It is a significant finding, however, that all informants spoke of the complexity of the topic under study and recognized a high level of variety among Canadians in their awareness level and tolerance of Muslims in Canada. None of them made generalizations regarding Canadians being racist or Islamophobic.

It seems that class (according to informants) is not a significant indicator of how a person would experience identity conflict in Canada. It seems that the most salient factors in

a youth having a negative experience of identity is cultural background, the influence of parents, negative experiences of Islamophobia, viewing Canada's political policies as synonymous with American policies, as well as mental instability.

According to informants, Muslim youth are generally happy with Canada and want to become contributing citizens. Yet, Canada could improve its efforts to improve Muslim youth (hence the recommendations made above), and increase awareness and understanding among Canadians about the Muslim religion. Muslim youth seem to feel that their religion is frequently misunderstood by their non-Muslim peers, even if they are outwardly accepting.

It is promising to see that informants have such a positive opinion of Canada's law enforcement agencies and believe that Muslims are generally respected and treated fairly. In order to keep the true spirit of Canada alive, it would appear that Muslims need to be just as engaged in promoting better relations as do Canada's non-Muslims. It is hoped that works akin to this one will continue in the future and will encourage efforts among Muslims as well as non-Muslims in Canada to foster more understanding, tolerance and unity. Efforts such as these may be vital to preserving Canada's current ideals of being a true multicultural democracy.

The potential of ongoing events to influence perceptions must be constantly included in studies on this issue in the future. These efforts must be considered as they relate the post 9/11 and globalized context. Robert Fisk's (2005) reflections on this transformative day are of value here:

Those four planes had taken off like ours, heading off into the bright morning with friendly crews and law-abiding passengers... I walked round the plane with the purser. I didn't like it. I guess I came back with the images of thirteen passengers in my mind, thirteen I didn't like because they had beards or stared at me in what I could easily translate

as hostility or because they were fiddling with worry beads or reading Korans. Of course, they were all Muslim. In just a few minutes, the so-called liberal Fisk who had worked in the Middle East for a quarter of a century-who had lived among Arabs for almost half his life, whose own life had been saved by Arabs on countless occasions in Lebanon, Iraq and Iran- yes, that nice, friendly Fisk had turned into a racist, profiling the innocent on board his aircraft because they had beards or brown eyes or dark skin. I felt dirty. But this, I already suspected, was one of the purposes of this day. To make us feel dirty, to make us so fearful- or so angry- that we no longer behaved rationally (Fisk, 2005, pg. 1028).

It is essential that ongoing events are included in the discourse of studies related to Muslim youth, Islamophobia and integration into Canada. If Canada is to be successful in preserving its multicultural, tolerant, peaceful and inclusive values- Canada as a nation must maintain a grounded, and rational stance on responding to events that may unfold. In order to preserve its character, Canada may be wise to take a measured and rational path and refrain from reactionary actions to new developments. If Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada continue, and also improve their efforts to live in peace, the future looks very promising. A “clash of civilizations” (Fox, 2002, pg. 415) can therefore be averted and Canadians, of their diverse characters will continue to live in relative harmony, peace and tolerance with each other.

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Appendix A: HREB
Approval



Human Research Ethics Board

Application for Research Ethics Approval for
Human Participant Research

The following application form is an institutional protocol based on the

[Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)

Instructions:

1. Download this application and complete it on your computer. Hand written applications will not be accepted. You will receive a response from the HREB within 4-6 weeks.
2. Use the *Human Research Ethics Board Annotated Guidelines* to complete this application:
<http://www.uvic.ca/research/conduct/home/regapproval/humanethics/index.php>.
Note: This form is linked to the guidelines. Access links in blue text by hitting CTRL and clicking on the blue text.
3. Submit one (1) original and two (2) copies of this completed, signed application with all attachments to: Human Research Ethics, Administrative Services Building (ASB), Room B202, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700 STN CSC, Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
4. Do not staple the original copy (clips O.K.).
5. If you need assistance, contact the Human Research Ethics Assistant at (250) 472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca
6. Please note that applications are screened and will not be entered into the review system if incomplete (e.g., missing required attachments, signatures, documents). You will be notified in this case.
7. Once approved, a Request for Annual Renewal must be completed annually for on-going projects for continuing Research Ethics approval.

A. [Principal Investigator](#)

If there is more than one Principal Investigator, provide their name(s) and contact information below in Section B, Other Investigator(s) & Research Team.

Last Name: MacDonald

First Name: Erin

Department/Faculty: Public Administration

UVic Email: egmacdon@uvic.ca

Phone: 250.721.8057

Fax: 1-250-721-8849

Mailing Address including postal code: University of Victoria, PO Box 1700 STN CSC, Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada

Title/Position: (Must have a UVic appointment or be a registered UVic student)

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty | <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate | <input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D. Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Master's Student | <input type="checkbox"/> Post-Doctoral |

Adjunct or Sessional Faculty (Appointment start and end dates): _____

Students: Provide your Supervisor's information:

Name: Kimberly Speers

Email: kspeers@uvic.ca

Department/Faculty: Public Administration

Phone: 250.721.8057

Graduate Students: Provide your Graduate Secretary's email address: jselina@uvic.ca

All PIs: Provide any additional contacts for email correspondence:

Name: Oliver Schmidtke (Second Reader)

Email: ofs@uvic.ca

Name:

Email:

B. [Project Information](#)

Project Title: Muslim youth in Canada: Exploring Collective Identities

Anticipated Start Date for Recruitment / Data Collection: **August 31, 2014** Anticipated End Date: **December 30, 2014**

Geographic location(s) of study: Canada

Keywords: 1. Urban 2. Youth 3. Online 4. Identity
Conflict

Is this application connected/associated/linked to one that has been recently submitted? Yes No

If yes, provide further information: NA

All Current Investigator(s) and Research Team:

(Include all current co-investigators, students, employees, volunteers, community organizations.)

Contact Name	Role in Research Project	Institutional Affiliation	Email or Phone
Erin MacDonald	Primary Investigator, MA candidate	UVic, Public Administration	egmacdon@uvic.ca
Dr. Kimberly Speers	Thesis supervisor	UVic, Public Administration	kspeers@uvic.ca

Dr. Oliver Schmidtke

Second Reader

UVic, Political Science

ofs@uvic.ca

For Faculty Only: Any Graduate Student Research Assistants who will use the data to fulfill UVic thesis/dissertation/ academic requirements: Include all current Graduate Student Research Assistants

Student/Research Assistant

Email or Phone

NA

C. [Multi-Jurisdictional Research](#)

Does the proposed project require Research Ethics Board (REB) approval from another research ethics board(s)? Yes No

If yes, list the other research ethics board from which you or research team members have sought approval or will seek approval: NA

(Attach proof of having applied to other research ethics board(s). Please forward approvals upon receiving them. Be assured that UVic ethics approval may be granted prior to receipt of other research ethics board approvals.)

If you have answered "yes" above, please indicate your role in the multi-jurisdictional research project (Check all that apply):

- Recruiting participants
- Collecting data
- Analyzing data (with or without identifiers) collected by you and/or UVic research team members
- Analyzing data that *contains* identifiers: Data to be collected by non-UVic research team members as outlined in this application.

Analyzing data that *does not* contain identifiers: Data to be collected by non-UVic research team members as outlined in this application.

Dissemination of results via publications, reports, conferences, internet, etc.

Other (*explain*):

D. [Agreement and Signatures](#)

For further information, on signature requirements, please see the [Guidelines for Signatures](#).

Principal Investigator and Student Supervisor affirm that:

- *I have read this application and it is complete and accurate.*
- *The research will be conducted in accordance with the University of Victoria regulations, policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and all relevant sections of the TCPS 2.*
- *The conduct of the research will not commence until ethics approval has been granted.*
- *The researcher(s) will seek further HREB review if the research protocol is modified.*
- *Adequate supervision will be provided for students and/or staff.*

Principal Investigator

Student's Supervisor or co-Supervisor (for student applicants only)

Signature

Signature

Print Name

Print Name

Date

Date

Chair, Director or Dean

(To be signed by the person to whom the PI, or student's supervisor reports, and must not be the same person as the PI or student's supervisor. The Research Ethics Office cannot accept applications with duplicate

signatures)

I affirm that adequate research infrastructure is available for the conduct and completion of this research.

Signature

Print Name

Date

E. [Project Funding](#)

Have you applied for funding for this project? Yes No If yes, please complete the following:

Source of Project Funding	Funding Applied	Funding Approved	Project Title Used in Funding Application (or additional information)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Will this project receive funding from the US *National Institutes of Health (NIH)*?

Yes No

If yes, provide further information:

If you have applied for funding, have you submitted a funding application or contract notification to the UVic Office of Research Services?

Yes No

Have you previously submitted an In-Principle Research Ethics Application for release of preparatory research funds associated with this project?

Yes No

F. [Scholarly Review](#)

What type of scholarly review has this research project undergone?

External Peer Review (*e.g., granting agency*)

Supervisory Committee or Supervisor—required for all student research projects

None

Other, please explain:

G. [Other Approvals and Consultations](#)

Do you require additional approvals or consultations from other agencies, community groups, local governments, etc.?

Yes, attached Yes, will forward as received No

(Attach proof of having made request(s) for permission, or attach approval letter(s). Please forward approvals upon receiving them. Be assured that ethics approval may be granted prior to receipt of external approvals.)

If **Yes**, please check all that apply:

School District, Superintendent, Principal, Teacher. Please list the school districts or schools:

Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) if you are UVic faculty, student or staff and will be conducting minimal-risk research under the auspices of the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), involving VIHA staff, patients, health records, sites and/or recruitment through VIHA sites (including recruitment via poster placement), you must use the [Joint UVic/VIHA application form](#). For above minimal risk research, please contact the UVic Research Ethics Office.

Other regional government authority, please explain:

- Community Group (e.g., formal organization, informal collective)**, please explain:
- Other Research Ethics Board (REB) Approval**, please explain:
- UVic Biosafety Committee Approval**. *Attach your Biosafety Approval, or your correspondence with the [Biosafety Committee](#), to this application. Note that Research Ethics Approval is contingent on Biosafety Approval.*
- Other Approval**, please explain:

H. [Researcher\(s\) Qualifications](#)

In light of your research methods, the nature of the research, and the characteristics of the participants, what training, qualifications, or personal experiences do you and/or your research team have (e.g., *research methods course, language proficiency, committee expertise, training on the equipment to be used*)?

I have taken a research methods course (MA level), as well as a field research methods course (BA level). I will also rely on the expertise of Dr. Speers, and similarly on Dr. Schmidtke.

I. [Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples of Canada \(Including First Nations, Inuit and Métis\)](#)

The TCPS 2 (Chapter 9) highlights the importance of community engagement and respect for community customs, protocols, codes of research practice and knowledge when conducting research with Aboriginal peoples or communities. "Aboriginal peoples" includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis regardless of where they reside or whether or not their names appear on an official register. The nature and extent of community engagement should be determined jointly by the researcher and the relevant community or collective, taking into account the characteristics and protocols of the community and the nature of the research.

1. Conditions of the Research

- 1a. Will the research be conducted on (an) Aboriginal – First Nations, Inuit and Métis – lands, including reserves, Métis settlement, and lands governed under a self-government agreement or an Inuit or First Nations land claims agreement?

No

Yes, provide details:

- 1b. Do any of the criteria for participation include membership in an Aboriginal community, group of communities, or organization, including urban Aboriginal populations?

No

Yes, provide details:

If yes, describe how the laws, customs and regulations of the host country will be addressed (*consider research Visas, local Institutional Research Ethics Board requirements, etc.*):

NA

K. [Description of Research Project](#)

5. Purpose and Rationale of Research

Briefly describe in non-technical language:

Please use 150 words or fewer.

5a. The research objective(s) and question(s)

The central research question is as follows: “ How do Muslims understand their identity in Canadian society and are collective identities present?”

The research will be exploratory rather than exploratory.

The sub questions that my research will seek to shed light on are:

- How do Muslim youth perceive themselves in Canadian society?
- To what degree do forms of identity conflict play an important role?
- What are the issues that may cause Muslims to experience isolation, alienation or marginalization?
- How are Muslim youth impacted by identity conflict?
- Are there different types and levels of identity conflict?
- How does this conflict generally manifest? What may cause some youth to become impacted by identity conflict and others not?
- What may be done to prevent Muslims from developing hostile attitudes toward Canadian institutions or feelings of isolation?
- Are there differences between women and men in their experiences of Identity conflict?

Essentially, I am seeking to understand identity conflict among Muslim youth in Canada, and in some cases, how this identity conflict may manifest severely, and make some youth become isolated, marginalized or disillusioned with Canada's institutions.

5b. The importance and contributions of the research

The importance of the study is to understand ways to further include Muslim youth in Canadian multicultural society and to assure that their interests are represented. It is also to understand identity conflict among Muslim youth in Canada, and how it may be addressed, in an effort to prevent isolation or marginalization. It is also to suggest policies by which the Canadian government can enable the betterment of relations between Muslim youth and Canadian institutions

The importance of the study is to bring understanding about Muslim youth and identity conflict in Canada, with the intention of creating and implementing policies that prevent isolationism, and potential alienation from society in Canada.

5c. If applicable, provide background information or details that will enable the HREB to understand the context of the study when reviewing the application.

There is no client for this project. My own knowledge of the Canadian Muslim community is based on my undergraduate degree in Religious Studies, and my travels to the MENA region, most notably my first co-op in Morocco (a Muslim majority country), thus I am very familiar with the religion of the cohort under study from both an academic and a real world sense. My ties to the Canadian Muslim community are minimal and are related to friendships with members of the Canadian Muslim community. I will not use any Muslim I have a prior friendship with as an informant. I will not use any member of the Canadian Muslim community I interviewed as an informant for projects completed during my undergraduate studies as an informant for this study.

My second reader (Oliver Schmidtke) has experience in researching identity politics (and also within Muslim communities). My primary supervisor has interviewed hundreds of individuals throughout her career.

RATIONALE: In some cases, Muslim youth have been so severely impacted by disenfranchisement, isolation and marginalization that it has led to both passive and active rejection of the Canadian state. Some experts, have mentioned identity conflict and rejection of the Canadian state as contributing factors to the radicalization of some very disenfranchised, isolated and vulnerable Muslim youth. They also have raised concerns about the need for more policies that address the issue of Muslim youth and disenfranchisement in Canada. Thus, understanding disenfranchisement, identity conflict, (identity conflict is defined by this study as an experience of feeling that two or more identity roles one espouses are in conflict with, if not fundamentally incompatible with each other, and feeling a need to subjugate one over the other. Identity conflict is generally characterized by a feeling of being torn between conflicting loyalties. It is also likely where an individual feels that an identity role of significance is being

threatened or subjugated) and exclusion among youth, and their experiences of adapting to and defining their identity in Canada requires further study.

Public debates about Muslim dress, as well as Islamophobia, and post 9/11 anti-Muslims sentiment have caused some Muslim youth to feel ostracized, or unwelcome in Canada, and this has caused some divides in Canadian society, as well as redefinitions of what it means to be a Canadian Muslim in some cases.

L. [Recruitment](#)

6. Recruitment and Selection of Participants

- 6a. Briefly describe the target population(s) for recruitment. Ensure that all participant groups are identified (*e.g., group 1 - teachers, group 2 - administrators, group 3 - parents*).

I will seek to interview representatives of Muslim youth associations in Canada, as well as potentially Muslim youth themselves. I will seek to interview informants who are involved in the Muslim youth community, such as Imams (religious leaders), or presidents of Muslim student associations, or Muslim youth associations. I will be looking to understand Muslim youth who are between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine. I will not interview any informant under the age of 18. I may also interview informants over twenty-nine, but who work directly with Muslim youth, and are therefore able to represent them. These are representatives of Muslim youth as defined by the researcher (myself). These people are able to represent Muslim youth as they work directly with them, are members of their community and understand them. They may also have more experience in addressing the concerns of many different youth, thus their observations may be more valuable than one youth who is only able to represent themselves.

Group 1 –Representatives of Muslim student associations.

I will interview ideally 11-22 representatives of University Muslim youth associations, located in Canadian cities of at least one million including the Greater Toronto Area, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, and Ottawa. In order to include Atlantic Canada, I may also include Halifax, as the most populous city in the Atlantic region. I will interview ideally at least two informants from each organization, to get a more thorough perspective. The universities that will be targeted are: University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Toronto, Ryerson University, York University, University of Ottawa, Carleton University, Concordia University, McGill University, Dalhousie University, and the University of Calgary.

Group 2 – Representatives of Muslim youth associations

I will interview ideally 5-6 representatives of Muslim youth associations in Canadian cities of at least one million (Greater Toronto Area, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Ottawa), and perhaps Halifax. Additionally, I will interview representatives of Muslim youth associations in Canada that are online communities (not focused on serving any one specific area of Canada).

Online communities offer publications, chat rooms, information, and contact information of others sharing similar interests. An online forum is a forum in which individuals may or may not remain anonymous while sharing ideas, opinions and discussion via online communication.

The representatives of Muslim youth associations who will be contacted to participate in an interview are from:

The representatives of Muslim youth associations who will be contacted to participate in an interview are from: Muslim youth association, Muslim youth Canada, Canadian association of Muslim youth.

Group 3 - Community Representatives

I will interview ideally 4-5 community representatives, such as Imams, or religious leaders heads of representatives of student groups, or heads or representatives of online or community groups residing in Canadian cities of at least one million (Greater Toronto Area, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Ottawa), and also Halifax.

The community organizations who will be contacted to participate in an interview are: Canadian association of Jews and Muslims, BC Muslims, Scarborough Muslim association, Muslim association of Canada, Ottawa Muslim Association, Ahmadiyya Muslim community Canada, Daily Muslims, National Council of Canadian Muslims, Muslim Canadian Congress, Canadian Muslim Union, Islamic circle of North America, Chinese Muslim Association of Canada, Canadian Islamic Congress, Dawanet, Torontomuslims.com, Muslimfest, Understanding Islam Academy, BC Muslim Association, Young Muslims, Salaam Canada (queer Muslims), Canadian Council of Muslim women.

6b. Why is each population or group of interest?

Group 1: Representatives of Muslim Student Associations

This group is of interest because they provide an avenue to understanding Muslim youth and identity conflict that is more accessible than interviewing Muslim youth about their own personal experiences. Informants will be able to represent large groups and draw from a larger pool of experiences. They may also be more likely to participate if they are not asked to talk about something as personal as their own experiences. Many associations also aim to promote better Muslim and non-Muslim relations and to educate non-Muslims about their beliefs. They will therefore be more likely to speak to me and encourage education than a Muslim youth may be in their private life. They may also be experienced in working with Muslim youth, be

youth themselves, and able to understand their unique struggles, and represent them accurately.

Group 2: Representatives of Muslim Youth Associations

Representatives of Muslim youth associations may be youth themselves or older. However, they will be experienced in serving Muslim youth specifically and able to represent them accurately. They will also be likely to participate in the study, as most Muslim youth associations have mandates to promote positive relations between their own community and the wider Canadian population.

Group 3: Community Representatives

This group is of interest because they are the main role models of the Muslim community, and may have considerable influence. Their opinions are therefore valid because they may influence others with their perspectives. They will also have served large groups of people, and may have a variety of anecdotal experiences to draw from, in having served many people.

- 6c. What are the *salient* characteristics of the participants for your study? (*e.g., age, gender, race, ethnicity, class, position, etc.*)? List all inclusion and exclusion criteria you are using.

I will include any Muslim, residing in Canada for at least 6 months, who has obtained, or who intends to obtain status as a Canadian citizen, and who can represent by membership of an association, or by having a role of leadership in the Muslim community, the experiences of Muslim youth. The reason I will choose informants who have resided in Canada at least 6 months, is because I want them to have an understanding of Muslim youth in the specifically Canadian context.

- 6d. What is the desired number of participants for each group?

I intend to interview 14-20 informants. Ideally, I will interview between 4-6 from each group, and hopefully more. They will be intended to be an explanatory representation of urban Muslims in Canada. They will be chosen based on their potential to represent Muslim youth in the urban Canadian context.

- 6e. Provide a detailed description of your recruitment process. Explain:

- i) List all source(s) for information used to contact potential participants (*e.g., personal contacts, listserves, publicly available contact information, etc.*). Clarify which sources will be used for which participant groups:

I will use listserves, as well as publicly available contact information to recruit. I will first compile a comprehensive list of ideally at least 20 Muslim associations in Canada that serve Muslim youth in cities of at least 1 million (and Halifax). I will also compile a list of Muslim student associations serving university campuses geographically located in Canadian cities of

at least 1 million (and Halifax) in order to be representative of the specifically urban context. I will also contact imams serving congregations in cities of at least one million. I will use publicly available contact info to invite potential informants to participate in this study. I will frond the contact info of Muslim associations on their websites, which I will find via google searches. I will then ask the representatives to please circulate the script among their communities and then have them contact me.

- ii) List all methods of recruitment (*e.g., in-person, by telephone, letter, snowball sampling, word-of-mouth, advertisement, etc.*) *If you will be using "snowball" sampling, clarify how this will proceed (i.e., will participants be asked to pass on your study information to other potential participants?). Clarify which methods will be used for which participant groups.*
- iii) I will use public contact information and invite informants ideally via phone, but also via email.
- iv) I will also use snowballing, in that I will ask each informant to pass on information about my study to relevant colleagues in their community. Interested parties will be asked to contact the researcher for further information.
- v) I will clarify to informants that this is merely a request to be interviewed, and they are under no obligation to participate.

- vi) If you will be using personal and/or private contact information to contact potential participants (as stated above), have the potential participants given permission for this, or will you use a neutral third party to assist you with recruitment? *Note that this is not a concern when public and/or business contact information is used.*

- NA

- vii) Who will recruit/contact participants (*e.g., researcher, assistant, third party, etc.*) *Clarify this for each participant group.*
- viii) I, Erin MacDonald will recruit all participants directly, except in the case of snowballing.

- ix) List and explain any relationship between the members of the research team (including third party recruiters or sponsors/clients of the research) and the participant(s) (*e.g., acquaintances, colleagues*). Complete item 7 if there is potential for a [power relationship](#) or a *perceived* power relationship (*e.g., instructor-student, manager-employee, etc.*). If you have a close relationship with potential participants (*e.g., family member, friend, close colleague, etc.*) clarify here the safeguards that you will put in place to mitigate any potential pressure to participate.

- x) NA

- xi) In chronological order (if possible) describe the steps in the recruitment process. (*Include how you will screen potential participants where applicable*). Consider where in the process permission of other bodies may be required.

I will first identify leaders of organizations and congregations, as well as community leaders. I will identify ideally at least 30 potential participants. I will then send invitations to participants (See appendix A) along with the informed consent agreement (See appendix B) to let them know the protocol for the potential interview.

7. [Power Relationships \(Dual-Role and Power-Over\)](#)

If you are completing this section, please refer to the:

[Guidelines For Ethics in Dual-Role Research for Teachers and Other Practitioners](#) and the [TCPS 2, Article 3.1 and Article 7.4](#).

Are you or any of your co-researchers in any way in a power relationship, including dual-roles, that could influence the voluntariness of a participant's consent? Could you or any of your co-researchers potentially be *perceived* to be in a power relationship by potential participants? *Examples of "power relationships" include teachers-students, therapists-clients, supervisors-employees and possibly researcher-relative or researcher-close friend where elements of trust or dependency could result in undue influence.*

Yes No Varies

If *yes* or *varies*, describe below:

- i) The nature of the relationship:

- ii) Why it is necessary to conduct research with participants over whom you have a power relationship:

- iii) What safeguards (steps) will be taken to ensure voluntariness and minimize undue influence, coercion or potential harm:

- iv) How will the power or dual-role relationship and associated safeguards be explained to potential participants:

Recruitment Materials Checklist:

Attach all documents referenced in this section (*check those that are appended*):

X Script(s) – in-person, telephone, 3rd party, e-mail, etc.

- Invitation to participate (*e.g., Psychology Research Participation System Posting*)
- Advertisement, poster, flyer
- None; please explain why (*e.g., consent form used as invitation/recruitment guide*)

M. [Data Collection Methods](#)

8. Data Collection

Use the following sections in ways best suited to explain your project. If you have more than one participant group, be sure to explain which participant group(s) will be involved in which activity/activities or method(s).

8a. Which of the following methods will be used to collect data? *Check all that apply.*

<p>X Interviewing participants:</p> <p>X in-person</p> <p>X by telephone</p> <p>X using web-based technology (explain): skype</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Conducting group interviews or discussions (including focus groups)</p>	<p>X Attach draft interview questions</p> <p>See Appendix B</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Administering a questionnaire or survey:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In person <input type="checkbox"/> by telephone</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> mail back <input type="checkbox"/> email</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> web-based* (see below)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, describe:</p> <p>*If using a web program with a server located in the United States (e.g., SurveyMonkey), or if there are other reasons that the data will be stored in the US (e.g., use of US-based cloud technology, sharing data with US colleagues, etc.), you must inform participants that their responses may be accessed via the U.S. Patriot Act. Please add the following to the consent form(s):</p> <p><i>“Please be advised that this research study includes data storage in the U.S.A. As such, there is a possibility that information about you that is gathered for this research study may be accessed without your</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Attach questionnaire or survey:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> standardized (one with established reliability and validity)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> non-standardized (one that is un-tested, adapted or open-ended)</p>

<i>knowledge or consent by the U.S. government in compliance with the U.S. Patriot Act. "</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Administering a computerized task (<i>describe in 8b or attach details</i>)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Observing participants <i>In 8b, describe who and what will be observed. Include where observations will take place. If applicable, forward an observational data collection sheet for review.</i>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recording of participants and data using: X audio <input type="checkbox"/> video <input type="checkbox"/> photos or slides X note taking <input type="checkbox"/> flipcharts <input type="checkbox"/> data collection sheet (<i>attach</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Images used for analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Images used in disseminating results (<i>include release to use participant images in consent materials</i>)
<input type="checkbox"/> Using human samples (<i>e.g., saliva, urine, blood, hair</i>) <i>Attach your Biosafety Approval, or your correspondence with the Biosafety Committee, to this application. Note that Research Ethics Approval is contingent on Biosafety Approval.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Using specialized equipment/machines (<i>e.g., ultrasound, EEG, prototypes etc.</i>) or other. (<i>e.g., testing instruments that are not surveys or questionnaires</i>). Please specify:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Using other testing equipment not captured under other categories. Please specify:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Collecting materials supplied by, or produced by, the participants (<i>e.g., artifacts, paintings, drawings, photos, slides, art, journals, writings, etc.</i>) Please specify:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing secondary data or secondary use of data (Refers to information/data that was originally gathered for a purpose other than the proposed research and is now being considered for use in research (<i>e.g., patient or school records, personal writings, lesson plans, etc.</i>)). <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary data involving anonymized information (Information/data is stripped of identifiers by another researcher or institution before being shared with the applicant). <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary data with identifying information (Data contains names and other information that can be linked to individuals, (<i>e.g., student report cards, employment records, meeting minutes, personal writings</i>)). <i>In item 8b describe the source of the data, who the appropriate data steward is, and explain whether (and how) consent was or will be obtained from the individuals for use of their data.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please specify:	

- 8b. Provide a sequential description of the procedures/methods to be used in your research study. Be sure to provide details for all methods checked in section 8a. Clarify which

procedures/methods will be used for each participant group. Indicate which methods, if any, will be conducted in a group setting. *List all of the research instruments and interview/focus group questions, and append copies (if possible) or detailed descriptions of all instruments. If not yet finalized, provide drafts or sample items/questions.*

I will send invitations to informants via email, or phone. All interviews, will take place in-person, or via phone or skype. I will record interview sessions, on my private laptop, which is password protected and stored in a locked private residence. I will ask those I initially contact to forward invitations to other potential informants.

Due to lack of face to face rapport, I will take certain precautions when using skype. I anticipate that the only interviews that will take place face to face will be in Vancouver or perhaps Halifax.

I will also tell informants where I am located (likely in a private residence), that I am alone, and that they will not be overheard. I will also make sure that the camera is on, that they can see me, and begin (after assuring their privacy) by asking them if they have questions about me.

I will install a program on my computer (such as real player) to record skype calls. If informants wish to speak via phone, I will put them on speaker phone and record them on the same program on my personal computer. I will inform interview subjects that they are being recorded, and that all files will be stored on my password protected laptop, in a locked private residence and destroyed after my thesis defense.

- 8c. Where will participation take place for each data collection method/procedure? *Provide specific location, (e.g., UVic classroom, private residence, participant's workplace). Clarify the locations for each participant group and/or each data collection method.*

Skype or phone interviews will be conducted in my private residence. I may travel to cities in Canada of more than 1 million (most likely Vancouver) to interview informants. If so, I will interview informants in their work place, or place of study (aka classroom).

- 8d. For each method, and in total, how much time will be required of participants? *Clarify this for each participant group, each data collection method, and any other research related activities.*

Each interview will take approximately one hour.

- 8e. Will participation take place during participants' office/work hours or instructional time?

No Yes. Indicate whether permission is required (*e.g., from workplace supervisor, school principal, etc.*) and how this will be obtained:

Participation will take place at a time specified as most convenient for informants. The people I interview will likely not need permission of work supervisors, as most will be working on a volunteer basis. I will do all that is necessary to work around the schedules of informants.

Data Collection Methods Checklist:

Attach all documents referenced in this section (*check those that are appended. Where draft versions are appended please ensure that final versions are submitted when available. If final versions differ significantly after you have obtained Research Ethics approval, you will need to submit a [Request for Modification](#)*).

Standardized Instrument(s)

Survey(s), Questionnaire(s)

X Interview and/or Focus Group Questions

See section J for attached questions.

Observation Protocols

Other:

N. [Possible Benefits, Inconveniences, and Risks of Harm to Participants](#)

9. Benefits

Identify any potential or known benefits associated with participation and explain below.
Keep in mind that the anticipated benefits should outweigh any potential risks.

To the participant

X To society

X To the state of knowledge

The benefits are that participants will be able to voice their views in a context where they are often stereotyped and their views are not considered. This study will give them a voice. This will also benefit society where policy recommendations are made, and will benefit the state of knowledge as this is a subject in need of further study.

10. Inconveniences

Identify and describe any known or potential inconveniences to participants:
Consider all potential inconveniences, including total time devoted to the research.

Time devoted to research.

11. Level of Risk

The [TCPS 2](#) definition of “minimal risk research” is as follows:

“Research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research.”

Based on this definition, do you believe your research qualifies as “minimal risk research”?

Yes it is minimal risk. No, it is not minimal risk.

Explain your answer with reference to the risks of the study and the vulnerability of the participants:

Participants will all be adults, who are self-identifying Muslims and who volunteered to represent their community. I will not coerce or deceive them in any way. They will also be representatives of congregations and associations that have expressed a desire to aid in the betterment of Muslim and non-Muslim relations.

12. Estimate of Risks of Harm

Consider the inherent foreseeable risks associated with your research protocol and complete the table below by putting an X in the appropriate boxes. Be sure to take into account the vulnerability of your target population(s) if applicable:

Potential Risks of Harm	Very unlikely	Possibly	Likely
i) Emotional or psychological discomfort, such as feeling demeaned or embarrassed due to the research	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Fatigue or stress	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Social risks, such as stigmatization, loss of status, privacy and/or reputation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Physical risks such as falls	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Economic risk (e.g., job security, salary loss, etc.)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vi) Risk of incidental findings (<i>See Article 3.4 of the TCPS 2 for more information</i>)		X	<input type="checkbox"/>
vii) Other risks:	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Possible Risks of Harm

If you indicated in Item 12 (i) to (vii) that any risks of harm are *possible* or *likely*, please explain below:

13a. What are the risks? (i.e., elaborate on risks you have identified above)

The only risks are that there is a very small risk that informants may feel embarrassed demeaned or uncomfortable. This is because I will be asking them about things that they may have had negative experiences with.

13b. What will you do to try to minimize, mitigate, or prevent the risks?

In order to prevent any discomfort participants may feel due to the nature of the questions being asked, I will give them information on the study prior to their granting permission to participate, to provide them with accurate expectations. This will be an effort to allow them to make an informed decision. I will inform participants that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

I will also inform interview subjects that they are able to contact me if there is anything they wish to clarify about their interview.

13c. How will you respond if the harm occurs? (i.e., what is your plan?)

I will ask informants if they wish to withdraw from the study. I will grant informants confidentiality, and always behave in a professional and compassionate manner.

In order to reduce the risk of stigmatizing a community to which I am an outsider, and understanding nuanced testimony from interview subjects, I may consult friends or experts who are members of the cohort under study for guidance on how to best approach the subject.

13d. If you have indicated that there is a risk of Incidental Findings (vi) please outline your proposed protocol for information and/or action.

The only incidental findings I anticipate are perhaps an informant telling me about knowledge of radicalist activities. I anticipate this as very unlikely yet possible. If such activities are illegal, I will of course report them to appropriate authorities. These illegal activities may be engaging in, or plotting to engage in violent activities, or attempting to incite others to engage in such activities.

13e. If one or more of your participant groups could be considered vulnerable please describe any specific considerations you have built into the protocol to address this.

NA

14. Risk to Researcher(s)

14a. Does this research study pose any risks to the researchers, assistants and data collectors?

NA

14b. If there are any risks, explain the nature of the risks, how they will be minimized, and how you will respond if they occur.

NA

15. Deception

Will participants be fully informed of everything that will be required of them prior to the start of the research session?

Yes

No (If no, complete the [Request to Use Deception](#) form on the ORS website)

O. [Incentives, Reimbursement and Compensation](#)

16a. Is there any incentive, monetary or otherwise, being offered for participation in the research (e.g., gifts, honorarium, course credits, etc.)

Yes

No

If yes, explain the nature of the incentive(s) and why you consider it necessary. *Also consider whether the amount or nature of the incentive could be considered a form of undue inducement or affect the voluntariness of consent. Clarify which participant groups will be provided with which incentives.*

16b. Is there any reimbursement or compensation for participating in the research (e.g., for transportation, parking, childcare, etc.)

Yes

No

If yes, explain the nature of reimbursement or compensation and why you consider it necessary. *Also consider whether the amount of reimbursement or compensation could be considered a form of undue inducement or affect the voluntariness of consent. Clarify which participant groups will be provided with which kind of reimbursement or compensation.*

16c. Explain what will happen to the incentives, reimbursement or compensation if participants withdraw during data collection or any time thereafter (e.g., compensation will be pro-rated, full compensation will be given, etc.)

NA

P. [Free and Informed Consent](#)

Consent encompasses a process that begins with initial contact and continues through to the end of the research process. Consult Article 3.2 of the TCPS 2 and Appendix V of the Guidelines for further information.

17. Participant's Capacity (Competence) to Provide Free and Informed Consent

Capacity refers to the ability of prospective or actual participants to understand relevant information presented about a research project, and to appreciate the potential consequences of their decision to participate or not participate. See the [TCPS 2](#), Chapter 3, section C, for further information.

Identify your potential participants: (Check all that apply.)

Competent	Non-Competent
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Competent adults <input type="checkbox"/> A protected or vulnerable population (e.g., inmates, patients)	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-competent adults: <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of family/authorized representative will be obtained <input type="checkbox"/> Assent of the participant will be obtained (note that assent of the participant is always required)
<input type="checkbox"/> Competent youth aged 13 to 18: <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of youth will be obtained and parental/guardian consent is required, due to institutional requirements (such as school districts) or due to the nature of the research (e.g., risks, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of youth will be obtained, parents/guardians will be informed <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of youth will be obtained, parents/guardians will NOT be informed <input type="checkbox"/> Other, explain:	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-competent youth: <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of parent/guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Assent of the youth will be obtained (note that assent of the participant is always required)

<input type="checkbox"/> Competent children under 13 (<i>who are able to provide fully informed consent</i>): <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of child will be obtained and consent of parent/guardian will be obtained <input type="checkbox"/> Other, explain:	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-competent children (<i>young children and/or children with limited abilities to provide fully informed consent</i>): <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of parent/guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Assent of the child will be obtained (note that assent of the participant is always required)
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18. Means of Obtaining and Documenting Consent and/or Assent:

Check all that apply, consider all of your participant groups, attach copies of relevant materials, complete item 19:

X Signed consent (*Attach consent form(s) - see [template](#) available*)

X Verbal consent (*Attach verbal consent script(s) - see [template](#) available.*)

Explain in 19 why written consent is not appropriate and how verbal consent will be documented.

As I reside in a Canadian city of less than one million (Victoria), it is unlikely I will interview participants face to face. If I do, I will obtain signed consent. However, I will interview most of my participants via phone or skype over long distances, thus making obtaining signed consent in person impractical. I will have informants sign and scan their signatures, and then email them to me. I will also email each participant a consent form, along with the original invitation, so they may read it before the interview and fully understand it.

Letter of Information for **Implied** consent (*e.g., anonymous, mail back or web-based survey. Attach information letter, see [template](#)*)

Signed or **Verbal assent** for non-competent participants (*Attach assent form(s), or verbal assent script(s)*).

Explain how verbal assent will be documented in 19.

Other means. **Explain** in 19 and provide justification.

Consent **will not be obtained**. See [TCPS 2](#) Articles 3.5 and 3.7. **Explain** in 19.

Signed consent from the parents/guardians for youth/child participants (*Attach consent form(s)*).

Explain how parents/guardians will provide informed consent for child/youth participants in 19.

Information letters for the parents/guardians of youth/child participants (*Attach information letter(s)*). *If consent will not be obtained from parents/guardians and the parents/guardians will not be informed, explain why not in 19.*

19. Informed Consent

Describe the exact steps (chronological order) that you will follow in the process of explaining, obtaining, and documenting informed consent. Ensure that consent procedures for all participant groups are identified (e.g., group 1 - teachers, group 2 – parents, group 3 – students). Be sure to indicate when participants will first be provided with the consent materials (*e.g., prior to first*

meeting with the researcher?). If consent will not be obtained, explain why not with reference to the [TCPS 2](#) Articles 3.5 and 3.7.

First, participants will be emailed, or read over the phone, script one (See Appendix A), as well as the consent form (Appendix C). If invited participants respond via the phone, they will be emailed the informed consent form.

iew, **Ongoing Consent**

Article 3.3 of the TCPS 2 states that consent shall be maintained throughout the research project. Complete this section if the research involves interacting with participants over multiple occasions (including review of transcripts, etc.), has multiple data collection activities, and/or occurs over an extended period of time.

20a. Will your research occur over multiple occasions or an extended period of time (including review of transcripts)?

Yes

No

20b. If yes, describe how you will obtain and document ongoing consent. If consent procedures differ for each group or activity, please clarify each group or activity that you are referring to.

21. Participant's Right to Withdraw

Article 3.1 of the TCPS2 states that participants have the right to withdraw at any time and can withdraw their data and human biological materials.

Describe what participants will be told about their right to withdraw from the research at any time (i.e., who to contact and how). If compensation is involved, explain what participants will be told about compensation if they withdraw. *If you have different participant groups and/or different data collection methods, clarify the different procedures for withdrawing as necessary.*

After participants agree to partake in the study, they will immediately be informed of their right to withdraw at any time, by contacting me via provided email or phone.

22. What will happen to a person's data if s/he withdraws part way through the study or after the data have been collected/submitted? If applicable, include information about visual data such as photos or videos. If you have different participant groups and/or different data collection methods, clarify the different procedures for withdrawing as necessary. Ensure this information is included in the consent documents.

Participant will be asked if he/she agrees to the use of his/her data. Describe how this agreement will be documented:

It will not be used in the analysis and will be destroyed.

It is logistically impossible to remove individual participant data (*e.g., anonymously submitted data*).

When linked to group data (*e.g., focus group discussions*), it will be used in summarized form with no identifying information.

Free and Informed Consent Checklist:

Attach all documents referenced in this section (*check those that are appended*):

Consent and Assent Form(s) – Include forms for all participant groups and data gathering methods

Letter(s) of Information for Implied Consent

Verbal Consent and Assent Scripts

See all forms attached above in section 18.

Q. [Anonymity and Confidentiality](#)

23. Anonymity

Anonymity means that no one, including the principal investigator, is able to associate responses or other data with individual participants.

23a. Will the participants be anonymous in the data gathering phase of research?

Yes No

23b. Will the participants be anonymous in the dissemination of results (*be sure to consider use of video, photos*)?

Yes

Maybe. Explain below.

No. If anonymity will not be protected and you plan to identify all participants with their data, provide the rationale below.

It will be logistically impossible for participants to remain anonymous. It will however, be possible for them to remain confidential, meaning, only I will link their data to their identity. I will grant all participants confidentiality.

24. Confidentiality

Confidentiality means the protection of the person's identity (anonymity) and the protection, access, control and security of his or her data and personal information during the recruitment, data collection, reporting of findings, dissemination of data (if relevant) and after the study is completed (e.g., storage). The ethical duty of confidentiality refers to the obligation of an individual or organization to safeguard entrusted information. The ethical duty of confidentiality includes obligations to protect information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss or theft.

24a. Are there any limits to protecting the confidentiality of participants?

Yes, there will be some limits to confidentiality.

Yes, there are some limits to the researcher's ability to protect the confidentiality of participants (*Check relevant boxes below.*)

Limits due to the nature of group activities (*e.g., focus groups*): The researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality

Limits due to context: The nature or size of the sample from which participants are drawn makes it possible to identify individual participants (*e.g., school principals in a small town, position within an organization*)

Limits due to selection: The procedures for recruiting or selecting participants may compromise the confidentiality of participants (*e.g., participants are identified or referred to the study by a person outside the research team*)

Limits due to legal requirements for reporting (*e.g., legal or professional*)

Limits due to local legislation such as the U.S.A. Patriot Act (*e.g., when there will be data storage in the United States*). When using USA based data instruments and data storage systems researchers are responsible for determining if this applies.

Other:

- 24b. If confidentiality will be protected, describe the procedures to be used to ensure the anonymity of participants and for preserving the confidentiality of their data (*e.g., pseudonyms, changing identifying information and features, coding sheet, etc.*) *If you will use different procedures for different participant groups and/or different data methods be sure to clarify each procedure.*

I will keep the identities of all informants confidential. I will keep all documented research on a password protected computer, and store it in a locked private residence. After the defense of my thesis, all data will be destroyed.

- 24c. If there are limits to confidentiality indicated in section 24a. above, explain what the limits are and how you will address them with the participants. *If there are different procedures for different participant groups and/or different data collection methods, be sure to clarify each procedure.*

The association, or institution which the informant is representing will be mentioned in the thesis. The answers of informants will not be linked to their institutional affiliation, but there is a chance that it could be known that informants did participate in the study, although it will be highly improbable for their testimony to be linked to their association/institutions, and thus, personal identity. I will inform participants of this limit to confidentiality.

R. [Use and Disposal of Data](#)

25. Use(s) of Data

- 25a. What use(s) will be made of all types of data collected (*field notes, photos, videos, audiotapes, transcripts, etc.*)?

It will be used only by myself and my committee for the research components of my MA thesis.

- 25b. Will your research data be analyzed, now or in future, by yourself for purposes other than this research project?

Yes No Possibly

25c. If yes or possibly, indicate what purposes you plan for this data and how will you obtain consent for future data analysis from the participants (*e.g., request future use in current consent form*)?

NA

25d. Will your research data be analyzed, now or in future, by other persons for purposes other than explained in this application?

Yes No Possibly

25e. If yes or possibly:

i) Indicate whether the data will contain identifiers when it is provided to the other researchers or whether it will be fully anonymous (*note that “fully anonymous” means that there is no identifying information, links, keys, or codes that allow the data to be re-identified*).

j) NA

ii) How will you obtain consent from the participants for future data analysis by other researchers? (*If the data will be transferred in fully anonymous form, this request for future use can be made in the current consent form. If the data will contain identifiers or links/keys/codes for re-identification, consider requesting permission to contact the participants in the future, to obtain consent for the use of the data at that time*).

NA

26. Commercial Purposes

26a. Do you anticipate that this research will be used for a commercial purpose?

Yes No

26b. If yes, explain how the data will be used for a commercial purpose:

NA

26c. If yes, indicate if and how participants will benefit from commercialization.

NA

27. Maintenance and Disposal of Data

Describe your plans for protecting data during the project, and for preserving, archiving, or destroying all the types of data associated with the research (*e.g., paper records, audio or visual recordings, electronic recordings, coded data*) after the research is completed:

27a. means of storing and securing data (*e.g., encryption, password protected computer files, locked cabinet, separation of key codes from raw data etc.*):

Password protected computer files, locked in a private residence. All files will be deleted after the research is completed.

27b. location of storing data (*include location of data-storage servers if using web-based technology*):

My personal password protected laptop.

27c. duration of data storage (*if data will be kept indefinitely, explain why this is necessary and state whether the data will contain identifiers or links to identifiers*):

It will be destroyed after my thesis defense.

27d. methods of destroying or archiving data. If archiving data, please describe measures to secure or protect the data. If the archiving will involve a third party (*e.g., library, community agency, Aboriginal band, etc.*) please provide details:

Data will be deleted from my computer, One year after my thesis defense, hard copies of consent forms will be shredded.

28. Dissemination

How do you anticipate disseminating the research results? (*Check all that apply*)

Thesis/Dissertation/Class presentation

Presentations at scholarly meetings

Published article, chapter or book

Internet (*Students: Most UVic Theses are posted on "UVicSpace" and can be accessed by the public*)

Media (*e.g., newspaper, radio, TV*)

Directly to participants and/or groups involved. Indicate how: (*e.g., report, executive summary, newsletter, information session*):

Other, explain: I will inform participants that they will be able to access my thesis should they desire. I will tell them that I will either document their desire to receive access to my thesis from the outset of the research, and remind them that they have my contact info, and my ask to view my thesis in the future.

5. [Conflict of Interest](#)

29a. Apart from a declared dual-role relationship (Section K, item 7), are you or any of the research team members in a perceived, actual or potential conflict of interest regarding this research project (*e.g., partners in research, private interests in companies or other entities*)?

Yes No

29b. If yes, please provide details of the conflict and how you propose to manage it:

NA

Attachments*



*Ensure that all applicable attachments are included with all copies of your application.

Incomplete applications will not be entered into the review system. You will be notified in

Information for Submission

- Applications may be printed and submitted double-sided
- Do **not** staple the original application with original signatures (clips O.K.)
- The two photocopies may be individually stapled or clipped
- Do **not** staple or clip the individual appendices

Title and label attachments as Appendix 1, 2, 3 etc. and attach the following documents (check those that are appended):

Section I - Recruitment Materials:

X Script(s) – in-person, telephone, 3rd party, e-mail, etc.

X Invitation to participate

Appendix B: Invitation

Script/Invitation to participate:

Good day _____(name here). I hope this finds you well.

I am an MA candidate of Dispute Resolution, within the faculty of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. Currently, I am seeking participants for my MA thesis study. I am working with the permission of the UVic Human Research Ethics Board, and under the supervision of Dr. Kimberly Speers, and Dr. Oliver Schmidtke. Should you require, you may verify this with their contact info.

UVic Human Research Ethics Board: 1-250-472-4545/ethics@uvic.ca

Dr. Kimberly Speers: Kspeers@uvic.ca/ 250.721.8057

Dr. Oliver Schmidtke:ofs@uvic.ca/1-250-721-7490

I am conducting a study on Muslim youth in Canada and identity conflict. The purpose of the study is to understand experiences among Canada's Muslim youth in acculturation, integration, adaptation and inclusion in Canada, and to recommend policies by which the government of Canada can facilitate better integration, inclusion and representation of Muslim youth in Canada.

I would like to interview you, and ask you your opinions on this matter, as a representative of the Muslim community in Canada, serving Muslim youth.

In order to be eligible for this study you must be a self-identifying Muslim, at least 18 years of age, have resided in Canada for at least 6 months, with the status of, or intention to obtain status as a Canadian citizen, or permanent resident.

I would be very grateful for your participation in this study, or also, if you could forward this email you know who may be a suitable participant.

I thank you for your consideration,

Kind Regards,

Erin MacDonald

Appendix C: Sample Questions

The following, is a non-exhaustive list of questions I will ask of my informants.

- 1) In your experience, what are the most common challenges of Muslim youth?
- 2) What do you believe may cause identity conflict among Muslim youth?
- 3) What would you say is a general manifestation of identity conflict among Muslim youth?
- 4) Do Muslim youth feel welcomed or ostracized by Canadian society?
- 5) Do Muslim youth see any incompatibility between being a Canadian and being a Muslim?
- 6) What are the most common complaints Muslim youth have about Canada?
- 7) Is racism a significant concern expressed by Muslim youth?
- 8) Do Muslim youth fear a loss of their religious identity by residing in a secular society?
- 9) Do Muslim youth feel comfortable expressing their opinions and beliefs to their non-Muslim Canadian counterparts?
- 10) How prevalent of a concern is Islamophobia, and does it ever cause youth to feel their identity is being threatened?
- 11) Do Muslim youth feel more solidarity with their non-Canadian Muslim counterparts than they do with their fellow Canadians?
- 12) Are there differences between males and females in the way identity conflict manifests?

Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

Muslim youth in Canada: Exploring Collective Identities

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Muslim youth in Canada: Exploring Collective Identities* that is being conducted by Erin MacDonald

Erin MacDonald is a graduate student in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by email egmacdon@uvic.ca).

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Dispute Resolution. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Kimberly Speers. You may contact my supervisor at 250-721-8057 or kspeers@uvic.ca. You may also contact the UVic Human Research Ethics Board at 1-250-472-4545/ethics@uvic.ca. You may specify that you wish to view the completed thesis once it has been approved by UVic.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to explore the following research question: Are Canadian Muslim youth affected by identity conflict, and what are the manifestations of such identity conflict where it exists?

The research will be exploratory rather than explanatory.

I am seeking to understand identity conflict among Muslim youth in Canada, why it exists, how it may manifest and finally, how it may be addressed, particularly by Canadian institutions.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because further study is needed on identity conflict of Muslim youth in Canada specifically, and their experience of identity conflict. This is also important to improve efforts to reduce Islamophobia, facilitate better Muslim and non-Muslim relations in Canada and to make policy recommendations to the Canadian government to improve inclusion of Muslim youth in Canada, and to improve relations between Canadian Muslim youth and the state. These recommendations will be made accessible to the UVic community, particularly within the faculty of Public Administration, which includes politicians, political researchers, and those involved in public service research. It will also be available to hundreds of graduate students bound for co-ops and careers in the public sector.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your membership of the group under study (Muslims of Canada) and your potential to provide insight on the experiences of Muslim youth in Canada.

What is involved

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include an interview with me via phone or skype, of approximately one hour, at a time of your convenience.

Notes will be taken from this interview, and it will be recorded.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including time allocated to participate.

Risks

The only risk in your participation in this study is that you may find the subject emotionally difficult to discuss.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include promoting better understanding of Muslim youth in Canada and their experiences of identity conflict, as well as facilitating better relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as between young Muslims and the Canadian state.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be destroyed and removed from analysis.

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by not linking the data you provide to your identity. Access to recordings will be restricted to myself, and the two supervising professors of my thesis committee. They will be stored on my personal password protected laptop, which is stored in a locked private residence. One year after my thesis defense, all files will be destroyed. Electronic files will be deleted, and hard copies will be shredded. The only limit to confidentiality, is that your institutional affiliation will be mentioned in my thesis, but your testimony, will not be linked to your particular institution, and your testimony will be one among 20-30.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways, as a thesis, or perhaps a published article. You may request to view the completed thesis.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of after my thesis defense, by being deleted from my personal hard drive.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include my supervising thesis committee members, Dr. Kimberly Speers (kspeers@uvic.ca) and Dr. Oliver Schmidtke (ofs@uvic.ca) .

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Appendix E: Figures

Figures**Figure 1: Profiles of Thesis Informants**

Informants	Sex	Sect	Age	Relation to Canada	Citizenship
A	M	Sunni	38	Grew up in Canada	Canadian
B	M	Shii	47	Canada since mid- childhood	Canadian
C	F	Sunni	21	Grew up in Canada	Canadian
D	F	Sunni	33	Grew up in Canada	Canadian
E	F	Shii	25	Canada since mid- childhood	Canadian

Figure 2: Interview Questions

	Informant				
	S				
	A	B	C	D	E
1) What in your opinion are the biggest challenges facing Muslim youth in Canada?	Identity, and finding the balance between being a Muslim and fitting in	Maintaining faith in a society that contradicts the faith, balance between faith and the pressures that are outside	The media causing problems in people's perceptions of Muslims	Fitting in, not sure how to be a Muslim in non-Muslim society, not being confident in their Muslim identity	Finding balance between tenets of Islam and fitting into Canada's society
2) Do Muslim youth feel welcomed or ostracized by Canadian society?	Depends on the area and how open-minded people are- doesn't see this as related to how diverse an area is, moreover a result of human biases	Generally welcomed, especially among peers but there are pockets of people who are unwelcoming	It depends on your look and whether or not you have an accent, your class, I neighbourhood etc.	Never have had problems. Muslims are welcome	Very welcomed
3) Is there any incompatibility between being a Canadian	Sometimes people feel that way and this is generally related to Canada's political and military activities	Some people may feel that way but they should not. The two are congruent. There is no problem with being	No, none at all. Canada's democratic values are in line with Islam, and the government is one small part, it's not	No, not any incompatibility	No, no conflict in most interpretations

and being a Muslim?		Canadian and Muslim	necessarily reflective of Canada		
4) What are the most common complaints/concerns Muslim youth have about Canada?	People who are discriminated against will complain, but generally complaints are rare, people like Canada	That society may have a bad perception about them	Some bad perceptions, political issues	Media stigmatization, political foreign policies	Canada's foreign policies becoming too Americanized
5) Is Islamophobia a serious concern?	Islamophobia does very much exist yes	Yes. It is very real and a problem	Islamophobia does exist but generally Canada is very open	A small problem in some areas	It is a problem that exists
6) Do Muslim youth fear a loss of their religious identity by residing in a largely non-Muslim society?	Yes some do, and they may feel that society is against them and are afraid of being stigmatized	It is a challenge and some people do fear a loss of their/or their children's religion	Immigrants do, born Canadians not much	Yes it is a major concern	Older people do
7) Do Muslims feel more solidarity with	Yes, as Muslims we are a global community and we should feel	There is slightly more solidarity with Muslims, yet we are still very	It is natural to want to be closer to people you have things in common with, but at the same time this is	Muslims do usually feel more connected to other Muslims	solidarity with Muslims, but still a strong affinity to Canada, they are separate and cannot be in a hierarchy

<p>Muslim or non-Muslim Canadians?</p> <p>Is there a difference?</p>	<p>solidarity as global Muslim collective</p>	<p>happy to be Canadian</p>	<p>not a requirement, there is no issue being aligned with non-Muslims</p>		
<p>8) Can you tell me about any youths you know who have been impacted by identity conflict?</p>	<p>Yes, there is identity conflict among youth in political and social areas of life</p>	<p>Yes there is identity conflict, it is not always deep but it does exist</p>	<p>Identity conflict is prevalent, especially for young girls</p>	<p>Yes, it is very common among youth</p>	<p>Yes identity issues among youth are very prevalent</p>
<p>9) Do women, practicing hijab have a different experience in Canada by being more visible as Muslims than Muslim men?</p>	<p>Yes there are different pressures on women and men, but often the girls fare better than the boys. Though some become very impacted, especially regarding their participation in school</p>	<p>Yes it can be harder for them because they are identified as Muslims, but if they have the confidence it will not bother them</p>	<p>Yes. It is much more difficult for females</p>	<p>It is harder for females</p>	<p>Yes it can be different for females in hijab</p>