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Toward an Inclusive Islamic Identity? A Study of First- and Second-Generation Muslims in Canada

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Sociology

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Abstract

Toward an Inclusive Islamic Identity? A Study of First- and Second-Generation Muslims in Canada examines the intergenerational differences between first- and second-generation Muslims living in Canada, and the way in which they define their personal identities as *both* Muslim and Canadian. It aims to investigate the integration experiences of Muslims in Canada in order to understand how closely they derive a sense of belonging from Islam and/or their religious communities, and how their identification with Islam limits or stimulates their sense of belonging in Canada. The main research question I pose, therefore, is: how does being Muslim affect the likelihood that Muslim immigrants and their children feel at home in Canada? Utilizing 50 in-depth interviews with Canadian Muslim men and women from various national and ethnic backgrounds, I arrive at several important findings. First, the data presented in this study illustrate that the religious expression and involvement of Muslims living in Canada is diverse, and that Muslims construct their personal and Islamic identities as Canadians in unique and alternative ways. Secondly, against the widespread and monolithic depiction of Muslims, and particularly young Muslims, as “extremist” and “radical”, this study illustrates that first- and second-generation Muslims living in Canada identify as *both* Muslim and as Canadian. Importantly, respondents reveal that Islam and Canadian principles of democracy and liberalism, despite claims of their incompatibility, are in fact non-tenuous. For example, interview data revealed that for immigrant Muslims, adherence to their religious faith and the democratic and liberal principles heralded in Canada were complimentary. Thus, for them being a good Muslim was equated with being a good Canadian as well. Contrastingly, while abandoning the traditions and culture of their immigrant parents, the second-generation Muslims in this study established a hybrid identity that merged the teachings and principles of Islam with broader Canadian values. Interviews also revealed that identity negotiation for first- and second-generation Muslims living in Canada is coloured by gender insofar as the female interviewees describe the added pressure of protecting their family’s honour and integrity.

Keywords

Islam; immigrants; second-generation; belonging; integration; generational; hybrid identity; third culture; gender; culture; family honour

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Alhumdullilah.¹

¹ Praise be to God.

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Chapter 1

1 Introduction

On September 11th, 2001 I vividly remember being in the head office of my grade school, volunteering at the front desk during lunch hour when the mother of a fellow student frantically ran in informing us that the United States of America had been attacked. The school went into lockdown and we all anxiously waited in our classrooms with the lights off, frightened and restless. On that day, the world changed. The tragic events of 9/11 weighed heavily upon us all; but the ongoing remnants were felt perhaps most heavily by the millions of Muslims living in the West who had nothing to do with the attacks but were suddenly viewed as “Other” (Said 1978). Such Othering (Said 1978) was typified when years later during my grade ten Civics and Careers class, my teacher associated “terrorism” with “violence”, “inciting terror”, and “*hijacking planes*”. As a Canadian-Muslim woman, and the daughter of a man born in a Muslim-majority Lebanon, I knew then that the way I was perceived by non-Muslims in the native-born Canadian society to which I was born, was going to be as an outsider.

Since 9/11, a popular response to the “question” of Muslims living in the West – that is, individuals who live and contribute to the society in which they live, while simultaneously practicing the Islamic faith – has been their supposed inability to integrate into mainstream society (Kazemipur 2014). Debates have been raised regarding whether or not Muslim immigrants are able to integrate into their new host societies; and moreover, claims are being made that Muslim immigrants are actively working *not* to assimilate or integrate. More recently, the children of Muslim immigrants living in the

West have also received substantial attention as questions of their allegiances to their nation-state continue to be raised. The supposed incompatibility of Islamic and Western beliefs and values has occupied the concerns of numerous politicians and academics alike, begging the question of whether or not Muslims in the West can practice Islam and be active citizens of Western societies (Huntington 1997; Duell 2016). Such concerns have been further accentuated by the troubling growth of Islamic fundamentalist movements such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which has recruited many of its adherents from Western countries. The supposed growing extremist ideologies of *native-born* Western Muslims also suggests that Islamic and Western philosophies are perhaps, antithetical.

Samuel Huntington (1997) argues that civilizational conflicts “are particularly prevalent between Muslims and non-Muslims” (258). Proposing a conceptual framework for understanding the post-Cold War world, Huntington (1997) suggests that conflicts between Islamic and non-Islamic cultures will continue to rise. He argues that wars between Muslims and non-Muslims, and between Muslims and other Muslims are evidence that “Islam’s borders are bloody and so are its innards” (258). He cites the forces behind these conflicts as Islam’s inability to adapt to Western conceptions of democracy and modernity, such that, “wherever one looks along the perimeter of Islam, Muslims have problems living peaceably with their neighbours” (256). Echoes of and support for Huntington’s thesis have been espoused all across the West, and conservative party leaders such as France’s Marine Le Pen and the Netherland’s Geert Wilders have advocated ending the immigration of Muslim people from Muslim countries altogether. Canadians, too, find themselves debating the multicultural policies that have been

heralded by many as a defining feature of a Canadian national identity. International events in cities such as Paris, London and Melbourne, where bombings on innocent civilians were linked to Islamic fundamentalists, have sparked questions and concerns as to the immunity of Canadian cities and neighbourhoods from such acts as well. Despite such discussions, a study by Environics (2016) found that the Canadian public remains widely optimistic about immigration and about multiculturalism as a policy, but also show signs of anxiety about the ability for newcomers, particularly Muslim newcomers, to integrate. Among Canadians at large there is a sense that Muslim-Canadians are not eager to adopt a “Canadian identity” but instead prefer to see themselves as “Muslim First”.

With what seems like growing fervor and tenacity from Islamic fundamentalist militant groups like the ISIL and the Talibans’ of Afghanistan and Pakistan, I am often left questioning, with regret, whether or not Huntington’s clash of civilization thesis is correct. Accordingly, the following doctoral dissertation entitled, “Toward an Inclusive Islamic Identity?” is guided by a desire to understand what the ‘average’ Muslim in Canada actually believes, feels and identifies with. To what degree, for example, does the mainstream media encapsulate and properly represent most Muslims in Canada? And is there, as Huntington suggests, something inherent among Muslims that simply renders them incapable of adjusting and adapting to the West’s modern, liberal and “progressive” ways of life? And of particular importance, how do Muslims who are born in Canada negotiate their identities as part of the larger Canadian majority and as Muslims, and how does that affect their relationships with their immigrant parents? In the following study

my aim is to understand the identifications of Muslim Canadians from their own subjective realities.

This study will present qualitative data on first- and second-generation Muslims who live in London, Ontario, Canada. I chose to specifically collect data from both Muslim immigrants as well the children of Muslim immigrants to illustrate the broad diversity in the way in which Muslims identify as Muslims, and how those identifications are coloured by one's place of birth. The results presented demonstrate that like any group, the classification of "Muslim" is not stable and uniform, but rather an identity that is constantly in flux and specific to each individual. Conceptualizations of home and belonging were not clear-cut or obvious, but rather, they were situational and fluid. Thus, it was common for my interview participants to identify as both Muslim *and* Canadian, or to see no conflict between identifying as such. This study, therefore, will attempt to add to the conversation about Muslims living in the West, and specifically in Canada, by presenting an alternative perspective to Muslim belonging and integration, absent of preconceptions and prejudice from the media or elsewhere. Instead it will present the attitudes of Muslims like myself, who see Islam as a unifying source of belonging – an Islamic *Ummah*² if you will – and also adopt the values and norms of the nation in which they reside, which, importantly, include the right to religious freedom. Additionally, this study fills a unique niche insofar as it brings to the surface the differences and/or similarities in the ways in which first- and second-generation Muslims living in Canada identify as both Muslim and as Canadian and the way in which their previous national

² *Ummah* – Arabic word meaning 'nation' or 'community'.

identity, their current Canadian identities, and their religious identities as Muslim may conflate, overlap or contest one another. In this way, this dissertation also acts as a partial response to my own existential questions that emerged back in the office of my elementary grade school.

1.1 Muslims in the Canadian Context

The earliest record of Muslim immigration to Canada dates back to 1871. By the end of the 1930's the Canadian census reported the permanent residence of approximately 645 Muslims in Canada (Environics 2016). Primarily as a result of political and economic unrest in the Muslim majority world, the number of Muslim immigrants to Canada has increased remarkably (Abu-Laban 2008). Canadian immigration policy, first in 1962, and then again with the introduction of the point system in 1967, altered the orientation of immigration preferences in Canada from a country-of-origin based policy to one based on migrants' skills in relation to the demand for those skills (Beach et al. 2003). With a very small Muslim presence in Canada in the mid to late 1800s, it was only in the early 1970s that Muslims began arriving in Canada in substantial numbers, once the "criteria [for receiving immigrants] emphasized education, skills and the employability of the applicant" (Hamdani 1999: 203). The majority of Muslim immigrants entered Canada after World War II. Their immigration was influenced by a number of factors including Canada's economic advantages, increased educational opportunities, political alienation for origin countries, and the freedom of faith and expression granted under Canadian constitutional laws (Hamdani 1999).

Currently, Iran and Pakistan are the most common countries of origin from which Muslims migrate to Canada; however, Muslims in Canada come from a multitude of

countries all around the world including different parts of the Arab world, the Caribbean, Bangladesh, Turkey, Eastern Europe and East Africa (Environics 2016).

Since the large influx of Muslims into Canada beginning in the 1960s, the number of Muslims living in Canada has substantially risen. The increase in the population of Muslims living in Canada has been rapid with estimates of about 579,640 Canadian Muslims in 2001 (Statistics Canada 2001) and just over 1 million in 2011 (Statistics Canada 2013). According to Mata's (2011) projections, the population of Muslims in Canada is predicted to reach approximately 3 million by the year 2031. If this forecast is accurate, the Muslim presence in Canada would rise from its current 2.8 percent of Canada's total population, to 6.6 percent in 2031 (Mata 2011). This would be a significant leap in such a relatively short period of time.

In accordance with Canada's immigration goals, the percentage of Muslim immigrants who hold post-secondary degrees has been steadily rising over the past several decades (Li 2003). A study by Beyer (2005) reveals that immigrant Muslims³ in Canada hold the second highest levels of post-secondary educational attainment compared to all other religious groups in Canada (188). However, despite the fact that changes in Canada's immigration policy have led to increasingly well-educated immigrants entering the country, for Muslim immigrants, more than other immigrant groups, the return on their education is not met properly upon their arrival. There are more Muslims in the lower income bracket (earnings lower than \$30,000) than any other religious group (Beyer

³ This figure differs by gender. Beyer (2005) revealed that both Muslim men and women have significantly high levels of educational attainment; men enter Canada with slightly higher levels than Muslim women.

2005). Moreover, despite their high levels of educational attainment, recent immigrant cohorts are less likely to be employed, have relatively high unemployment rates, and have a significant risk of low-income status (Beach et. al 2003). These findings suggest that Muslims in Canada may be facing some form of economic marginalization.

In contrast, very little scholarly attention has been dedicated to the educational and labour market outcomes of second-generation Muslims in Canada. In one of the only Canadian studies that examine second-generation educational and labour market outcomes across religious categories, Beyer (2005) finds that Canada's second-generation immigrant youth, including Muslims, are highly educated. In measuring postsecondary educational attainment, rates of second-generation immigrants with university degrees, including Muslims, is 10-20% higher than the national average (Beyer 2005). These higher levels of education, however, are not reflected in their personal income levels. Gosine (2000) finds that despite holding higher levels of education than immigrants, income levels are not higher for second-generation immigrants. Beyer (2005) echoes Gosine and claims that among the second-generation, "when religion is factored in [...] Muslims take the place of Blacks as the most disadvantaged group" (194). He finds, for example, that 85.5% of native-born Muslim women have postsecondary educations, yet 81.5% of them earn less than \$30,000 annually (Beyer 2005). Similarly, 83.5% of native-born Muslim men have postsecondary educations and 79% earn less than \$30,000 annually (Beyer 2005).

Beyer (2005) suggests that inconsistencies in the education-income relationship for both Muslim immigrants and second-generation Muslims may be attributed to prevailing North American stereotypes about Islam and subsequent acts of discrimination. Such a

claim may be supported by the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) which reported a 1600% increase in hate crimes (including verbal harassment, death threats and physical attacks) against Muslims between September 2001 and September 2002 across Canadian cities (Media release, March 10, 2003). Ninety-percent of hate crimes reported between 2001 and 2002 were attributed to the September 11th attacks in the United States. To highlight the effects of the rise of hate groups targeted at Muslims, in 2000, only one hate crime directed at a Muslim was recorded (Helly 2004). According to more recent figures from Statistics Canada (Allen 2015), police reported 65 hate crimes motivated by hatred against the Muslim religion, signifying an increase of 20 incidences from 2012. This is a significant decline from 2002 and a much lower rate than hate crimes targeting other groups, specifically members of the Jewish religion (181 hate-motivated crimes in 2013) (Allen 2015). The National Council of Canadian Muslims also noted that a particularly high percentage of hate crimes involved attacks against Muslim women wearing hijabs (National Council of Canadian Muslims 2014).

Perhaps contradictorily, however, in a recent Environics (2016) study on Muslims in Canada, only about 27 percent are very or somewhat worried about discrimination against Muslims, with this proportion down significant since 2006 (66 percent). And approximately four in ten are very or somewhat worried about being misjudged by their neighbours or colleagues on account of their religious affiliations. Interestingly, concerns about discrimination and misjudged perceptions by non-Muslims were most pronounced by Canadian-born Muslims who were younger and more highly educated.

1.2 Methodological Overview

As noted earlier, my personal focus for this study stems from my life experiences as a Muslim woman born in Canada, with an immigrant father from Lebanon, constantly struggling with my own sense of identity. It took until my senior year of high school in a relatively white, middle class city for me to begin to really question my Canadian-ness. Deciding to take a trip to Lebanon to visit and reflect on my ancestry and to step into the streets of my father's native land, I found myself returning back "home" to Canada feeling somewhat dissatisfied. Engaging with locals, indulging in unique foods and desserts, witnessing the beauty of the vast mountains and clear blue sea made my home town in Canada feel somewhat lacking. Thus, I decided to visit Lebanon again one year later. With high expectations, and an undecided return ticket, I set out to be in the country I felt like I had belonged to. What I encountered in my second trip, however, was dissatisfaction. I could not relate to the people on any meaningful level; people stared at me as if I held a sign that said "I am not from here"; I often offended people with my limited understanding of the Arabic language; and most significantly, I just could not adapt to the culture – the way in which every day ordinary things "got done". Wanting desperately to return to Canada, I only found that the notion of "home" and of true belonging to a nation did not exist, at least for me. I was stuck in between two worlds.

The conceptual considerations that guided this study echo the theoretical frameworks used to examine the integration and sense of belonging of immigrants and their children more broadly. Of main importance was the recognition that notions of belonging and home, concepts we largely neglect when conceptualizing integration, are of the utmost importance to members of the first and second generations. With growing numbers of

young Western-born Muslims fleeing to the Muslim world to fight with Islamic Jihadist parties, the consequences of feeling homeless or unwelcome are evidently severe. Therefore, this paper will draw its definition of integration from Penninx and Garces-Mascenaras (2014), who define it as “the process of becoming an accepted part of society” (14). For them, the process of integration is produced as people with diverse ethnocultural backgrounds interact, and is therefore not a definition limited to immigrants alone. Moreover, they view acceptance in society as a two-way process that is reached vis-a-vis attempts made both by individuals, as well as the openness of the society to being accepting (Penninx and Garces-Mascenaras 2014).

Dorothy Smith (1987) posits that in order to properly understand the experiences of people, it is imperative to begin from the actualities of their lives. Thus it was my mission to further explore the multi-faceted issues of belonging and identity. My intent was to articulate some meaningful answers while simultaneously walking the path of discovery alongside my research participants. Accordingly, I employed qualitative research methodology in this study. The choice to use qualitative research methods was based on its ability to capture the real and raw emotions, experiences and subjectivities of interview participants. The data presented in the following set of papers was derived from 50 in-depth interviews with first- and second-generation Muslim men and women living in London, Ontario. I recruited interviews using several strategies. I relied on the use of personal networks to spread the word about the study. I contacted Western University’s Muslim Student Association as well as the board of directors at the local London Muslim mosque to find interviews. These contacts aided in locating respondents by sending out emails pertaining to my research interests to their group listservs. While

Western's Muslim Student Association and the London Muslim mosque aided me in locating initial participants, I relied heavily on snowball sampling and ended my interviews by asking interviewees if they knew anyone else that I would be able to interview. In fact, the majority of participants (both first- and second-generation) were recruited based on snowball sampling. Among first-generation respondents, initial participants posted the study's Letter of Information on their Facebook pages to attract others, or telephoned members of their networks to ask if they would be interested in being interviewed. Among the second-generation, most participants were current or recently graduated students from Western University (all but two participants), and thus most interviews took place on campus in between participant's classes. Being on campus and around second-generation Muslims helped to attract more second-generation participants to the study, as new participants would approach me after seeing someone they knew being interviewed in a nearby study room.

The interviewees chosen for this study were required to identify as Muslim and be Canadian. Although this could be perceived as unduly biasing my sample or leading to foregone conclusion about the ways in which participants identified as Muslims and Canadians, it should be noted that it was my central aim to understand the identification of *practicing* Muslims in London, Ontario and to what degree being a practicing Muslim affected other forms of identification. Thus, respondents either had to be born in the Muslim majority world and have migrated to Canada (first-generation) or they had to be born in Canada to one or more immigrant parents (second-generation). While separate interview guides were used during the interviews for first- and second-generation participants, respondents were encouraged to elaborate where they saw fit and to discuss

any additional topics that they felt were important. For further information on the types of questions asked during interviews, consult the Appendix for interview guides.

The study consisted of a total of 50 interviews. Of the 50 interviews, three were joint spousal interviews, and one was a group interview. I am fully aware of the potential limitations of interviewing couples; despite this, however, it was a preference made by participants and proved to be dynamic by adding greater depth to the data. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded thematically, although themes and trends became almost instantly apparent during the interview process. While I provided my participants with my full attention during interviews, I kept a journal and would spend approximately thirty minutes after each interview writing down initial thoughts, key points and common themes for each participant. Specifically, journal notes compared participants' expressions to other participants within specific samples, as well as across generation (i.e. to compare first- and second-generation attitudes). I then transferred written information from interviews into various charts in order to document both overwhelming themes, as well as subtle nuances and paradoxes.

1.2.1 Participant Profile

Twenty of the 50 participants were Muslim immigrants and the remaining 30 were second-generation native-born Muslims. All respondents were Canadian citizens. Respondents had different national origins⁴ including Pakistan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, UAE, and Syria, reflecting the diversity of Muslim

⁴ National origin here refers to either the birthplace of respondents (immigrants), or to the birthplace of the respondent's parents (second-generation)

immigrants living in Canada. The study interviewed no recent immigrants; in fact, immigrant participants were residents of Canada for a substantial amount of time. The most recent immigrant to Canada had been living in the country for seven years. An overview of participants' national origin is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Participant National Origin

National Origin	Number of Participants
Lebanon	17
Pakistan	13
Syria	3
Libya	2
Saudi Arabia	2
Iraq	3
Bosnia	1
Palestine	7
Egypt	1
United Arab Emirates	1
50	Total

An equal number of men and women were recruited for the study, as demonstrated in Table 2 below, allowing me to compare responses from men and women to identify similarities and differences in their identifications.

Table 2 Participants by Gender

	First Generation	Second Generation
Gender Composition		
Male	10	15
Female	10	15
Total	20	30

While many respondents did not visibly wear any religious symbols, 16 women wore the hijab. Regrettably, almost all of the respondents interviewed belonged to the Sunni sect of Islam, and thus, findings cannot provide any nuanced commentary on sectarian issues in the Muslim world, or speak to the way in which identity formation is formed across sect. Additionally, all interviews were collected in London, Ontario, which has hosted immigrants from the Muslim world (mostly from Syria and Lebanon) for nearly a century. Thus, London's Muslim community and its migrant connections to the Middle East are deep-rooted and the experiences of Muslims in London may greatly differ from more recent immigrant populations or more racialized immigrants in larger metropolitan cities such as Toronto or Vancouver.

Moreover, the study's sample consists of individuals from a mostly educated, middle-class background. Table 3 below provides an overview of participants by level of education and demonstrates the significantly high educational attainment rates of the

respondents in this study, and particularly among second-generation participants (none of which had below a high school level education). While the return on education may not be as high for Muslim immigrants as for other immigrant groups (or the native-born population), I infer from respondents' high levels of education that most participants occupy mid to high socioeconomic status. Furthermore, among the six immigrant respondents with less than a high school education, five were entrepreneurs who, despite low levels of formal education, found economic success in Canada. Thus, I am not able to speak to the experiences of Muslims from less privileged background, and hence, I cannot fully address how social class might influence the results. This is certainly an important topic for future research, and would have added great insight into this current project

Table 3 Participants by Educational Level

	First Generation	Second Generation
Educational Level		
Bachelors or Higher	9	28
High school	5	2
Less than High School	6	0
Total	20	30

My personal contacts within the London Muslim community demonstrates my partial “insider” status as a researcher on this topic. As a Muslim myself, and one with an immigrant father, I felt I could relate to the expressions of similarly situated second-generation Muslim youth, and could also hear the voice of my father in the immigrant participants. One advantage to my partial insider status was my familiarity with the group of respondents, which I believe enabled many fellow Muslims to speak freely and comfortably and to reveal their true sentiments and attitudes. As a partial insider, thus, I shared many similar experiences with my participants, and as a consequence, I was able to generate greater conversation about feelings and beliefs that they might have otherwise deemed as controversial or inappropriate (for example, discussing gender roles, marriage preferences, etc.).

I am equally cognizant, however, that as a young visibly Muslim woman, certain individuals (i.e. Muslim men) were not going to be completely open with me and in fact were less likely to participate in the study altogether. Recruitment of Muslims from more conservatively religious backgrounds was more difficult as I believe participation in a project concerned with identification with Islam and national affiliation is potentially too exposing. Additionally, as a Muslim and thus as an insider, I also carried my own beliefs, attitudes and predispositions with me to the interviews. The questions I asked, the degree to which I probed certain topics, and the way in which I understood and analyzed the interview data were inevitably filtered through my own experiences and sentiments as a second-generation Canadian Muslim. I am aware, thus, that at times my personal understanding of the Muslim community in London may have caused me to take for granted some of the subtleties and nuances in my data.

Despite my partial insider status, however, I attempted to approach the study absent of any preconceived notions of how “we” Canadian Muslims perceive “our” identities as Muslims and Canadian. Perhaps the truest testament of this was the divergence of my own attitudes and beliefs from the findings presented in the following doctoral dissertation. Though I am myself a Canadian Muslim and found myself sharing many similar experiences with my second-generation participants in particular, I felt that the general attitudes expressed by participants in the findings presented below are not reflective of my own attitudes. I attribute such differences, at least partially, to my rooted position within a critical academic discipline. Accordingly, it should be noted that Canadian Muslims represent a vast range of races, sects, cultures, languages and values. Throughout the dissertation, however, I will denote the label “Canadian Muslims” as a category of collective identity based on the commonality of respondents’ religious affiliation, and because every respondent also labeled themselves as such. Naturally, this study does not claim to represent all Muslims in Canada. Respondents were not chosen randomly, and thus the findings purported here cannot be generalized to the wide population with any degree of statistical confidence. However, this study does provide an in-depth examination of the lived experiences and interpretations of a wide range of immigrants and their children.

1.2.2 Conceptualizing Identity

Vital to my discussion of Muslim belonging in Canada is the operationalization of key concepts, such as diaspora, identity, culture and ethnicity, as they are terms that are consistently employed throughout this dissertation and were readily used by participants throughout the interview process as well. To the extent that this dissertation aimed to test

the potential existence of a Muslim community rooted in common symbolic bonds in the form of religious text and/or practices, it was important to determine whether Muslim participants in this study constituted a diaspora. The formation of diasporas – that is, established ‘homes away from home’ – has largely been a result of advanced globalization and large scale international migration (Allahar 2001). New flows of people, ideas and culture have brought increasing social and cultural diversity to many cities. This has, in turn, posed new challenges with respect to people’s sense of identity, how social groups relate to one another, and how people organize their daily lives (Phillips 2007). Central to these challenges has been a concern with ethnoracial divisions and hierarchies, typified in policies and practices surrounding multiculturalism, which highlight a tendency toward ethnic segregation and diasporic formation in the early stages of immigrant settlement (Phillips 2007).

Although the meaning of the term is highly contested, diasporas are largely made up of migrants, voluntary and involuntary, whose pre-migration networks, cultures and capital remain salient post migration (Brubaker 2005). Diasporas are dispersed, oriented toward some sort of real or imagined homeland, and maintain boundaries by distinguishing themselves from other groups, stemming from a desire to re-create a sense of culture and community in their new homes (Brubaker 2005). Diasporic communities, thus, come to be defined by primordial myths of descent and belonging, which emphasize boundary maintenance and a distinctive identity (Brubaker 2005). Diasporas rooted in ethnic and national attachments and identities elicit high levels of uncritical devotion.

Although boundary maintenance and the preservation of identity are stressed, Stuart Hall (1990) suggests that “the diaspora experience... is defined, not by essence or purity, but

by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; but a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*” (235, italics original). Hall’s (2006) definition of cultural identity points out that what we call “identity” is an ongoing process “of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’” (435). In this way, it “belongs to the future as much as to the past” (Hall 2006: 435). Identities are not *a priori*; they do not transcend culture, history, time, and place (Hall 2006). They are historical; they “come from somewhere”; they change in and through power relations that are temporal, placed, spatial, and situational (Hall 2006: 435).

Edward Said (1978) demonstrates the fluid and often tenuous nature of identity in his attempt to dismantle the central epistemic hold of Orientalism and its conceptualization of Islamic civilizations. Said (1978) suggests that the construction of identity, in every age and society, involves establishing opposites and ‘Others’. He posits that Orientalism has led the West to conceptualize Islamic culture as static in both time and place, as “eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself” (Said 1978: 162). Such notions have given Europe and the West a sense of its own cultural and intellectual superiority. The West, he argues, has defined itself as an innovative, expanding and dynamic culture and as a “spectator, the judge and jury of every facet of Oriental behavior” (Said, 1978: 109). This self-image has come to embody imperial conceit, wherein the West has made it its duty to teach the Orient (the colonized) the meaning of liberty and democracy, presupposing Oriental inferiority.

In order to construct a dichotomy between East and West, Said (1978) argues that Orientalists must define the essential qualities of Eastern cultures, uniformly, in negative terms. Orientalism, thus, has produced false descriptions of both Arab and Islamic

cultures. He suggests that portrayals of Arabs as menacing, untrustworthy, dishonest, irrational and anti-Western are ideas into which Orientalist scholarship has evolved. These images of the Arab, according to Said (1978), are the foundations of policies and ideologies developed by the West.

Said's work has been complemented but also criticized by Homi Bhabha (1997), particularly with regards to Said's argument that "there is always... the suggestion that colonial power (i.e. the West) and discourse is possessed entirely by the colonizer" (77). Bhabha purports instead that the effort of Orientalising must always *fail* since the colonial subject is constructed within a repertoire of conflictual positions which threaten colonial domination. Specifically, Bhabha (2004) proposes a theoretical framework based in the notion of hybridity in an attempt to demonstrate that the subject of colonialism is always resistant. Bhabha claims there is a space "in-between the designations of identity" and that "this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha 2004, 4). Hybridity, according to Bhabha, presupposes that an individual has access to two or more ethnic, and subsequently, cultural identities. According to Bhabha (2004) hybrid identities are able to transverse those cultural identities and to negotiate between them, forming a new identity altogether.

The importance of ethnicity, culture and religion-- typified in the basic belief of "La Illaha Il Allah, Muhammad RasulAllah"⁵ as the basis of identification – are highlighted

⁵ Refers to the Islamic testament of belief that there is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is his Messenger.

in literature on the identification of Muslims in the West (Valentine et al. 2009; McDonough and Hoodfar 2005; Ghorashi 2003; Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007; Ramji 2008). Accordingly, I borrow from Nagel's (1994) conceptualization of ethnic identity. His definition of ethnicity stems from the issue of boundaries; that is, ethnic identity and belonging depend upon who is a member of a particular group and who is not. Boundaries also designate which ethnic categories are available for individual identification at a particular time and place. Ethnic boundaries are defined by ancestral histories, immigration and subsequent growth of subpopulations from similar parts of the world, and by governments in order to serve them with census-taking (Nagel 1994). Accordingly, the formation of an ethnic identity involves a dialectical process of internal and external processes, as well as individual's self-identification – it involves “a kind of labeling process engaged in by oneself and others” (Nagel 1994: 153).

According to Nagel, the substance of ethnicity is culture. Culture refers to the basic materials used to construct meaning within an ethnic group. Culture “dictates the appropriate and inappropriate content of a particular ethnicity and designates the language, religion, belief system, art, music, dress, traditions, and lifeways that constitute an authentic ethnicity” (Nagel 1994: 161). For Swidler (1986), culture “consists of... symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal... practices such as language, gossip, stories and rituals of daily life” (273). Nagel extends Swidler's (1986) definition by suggesting that such symbolic vehicles of meaning are socially constructed, and are not simply passed down as historical legacies. Culture, like ethnicity, is constructed by the actions of individuals

and groups and their interactions with the larger society, and thus, they are constantly fluctuating and changing.

The existence of ethnic based enclaves in North America and Europe has prompted social scientists to rethink models of ethnicity rooted in assumptions about the inevitability of assimilation. The resiliency of cultural, religious, and linguistic differences has led to a search for a less evolutionary way to understand differences among people in societies. The result has been greater developments in models of ethnicity that stress the situational and fluid nature of ethnic identification. My intention, thus, is to employ models of ethnicity and culture throughout this dissertation that emphasize the “ways in which ethnic boundaries, identities, and cultures, are negotiated, defined and produced through social interaction inside and outside ethnic communities” (Nagel 1994: 152).

Throughout this dissertation, I employ the term ethnoculture or ethnocultural to reference the ethnic identities of participants and the subsequent culture that defines those identities. Expressions from participants indicated that ethnic boundaries, particularly among first-generation immigrant Muslims, were maintained by a culture driven by *izzat* which is the Arabic word that refers to the protection of one’s family honour. For example, many of the second-generation participants spoke of their parents as too “cultural” insofar as they too heavily ascribed to the rituals and practices of their ethnic groups. Moreover, many second-generation participants accused their parents of filtering their understanding of Islam through their ethnocultural beliefs.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

Because the literature concerning the perception of Muslims across generations remains seriously underdeveloped, this project seeks to: (1) understand the creation of religious identity, specifically Islamic identity, within the Canadian context; (2) to analyze the impact of different geographies (i.e. immigrant vs. non-immigrant) on the emergence and sustenance of a common Islamic identity; and (3) to understand the effects of religion on the ways in which immigrants and their offspring may or may not become a repository for potential feelings of insecurity and frustration, or conversely, of acceptance. Central to my project are the following questions: to what extent do Muslims living in Canada establish their own practices and policies to preserve their Islamic identities, and how does this vary from generation to generation? How do notions of nationalism and citizenship affect the religious identities of Muslims? And lastly, how do young Canadian Muslims negotiate their identities as Canadian *and* Muslim, in comparison to their immigrant parents?

Accordingly, the first manuscript in this dissertation examines the identifications of immigrant Muslims living in Canada. Utilizing interview data from first-generation Muslim Canadians, this section tests the legitimacy of claims made by some scholars that transnational Muslims constitute a diaspora rooted in a collective consciousness of exclusion. The findings highlight that despite identifying as “Muslim First” – that is, Islam as the most important marker of identity for immigrants – they also very strongly identified as Canadian and with Canada’s concomitant beliefs in liberal democracy and freedom of religion. These findings were particularly significant when juxtaposed with

similar studies conducted in different European countries which highlight the tensions between Muslim immigrants and their host societies.

Manuscript two focuses on the children of immigrants who, ostensibly, are Canadian born, yet find themselves juggling the language and culture of their parents' home societies with their Canadian habits and tendencies. Unlike their immigrant parents who face the reality and pressures of assimilation and integration into the host society, second-generation Muslims asserted a distinctive Islamic identity by identifying most strongly with the global *Ummah*. Findings revealed that second-generation Muslims expressed feeling neither 'here nor there' and thus constructed their identities in diverse and hybrid ways.

Findings from manuscripts one and two are underscored in manuscript three, which demonstrates the intergenerational differences between Muslim immigrants and their children by examining the gendered negotiations related to subscribing to a Muslim identity. As researchers it is important to let the experiences and expressions of your respondents present a story. And with great reluctance I wrote this manuscript on the experiences and expressions of Muslim women. I speak of reluctance because as a Muslim woman, and one that wears hijab myself, I knew my female respondents would place their trust in me and I did not want to contribute to the portrayal of what Cooke (2008) defined as the *Muslimwoman* – that is, as women who share a singular identity, often laden with oppression. However, because the female respondents in this study, both first- and second-generation, spoke so heavily about their gendered experiences, I could not avoid it. Thus, manuscript three deals with one aspect of what being "Muslim First" truly entails – the formation and negotiation of gendered norms for immigrant women

and their children. Findings highlight the pressures for Muslim women to uphold the honour of their families by conforming to traditional gender roles; simultaneously, the findings epitomize the ways in which second-generation Muslims have formed alternative identities reflective of fluidity and hybridity. I conclude the dissertation with some recommendations for future research on this topic as well as policy related implications.

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Chapter 2

2 Canadian and Muslim: An Examination of First-Generation Canadian Muslims living in Canada

2.1 Introduction

Accelerated patterns of transnational migration at the onset of the 21st century stimulated questions concerning how global migration may affect and shape migrants' sense of belonging. Immigrants from countries with a deep-rooted Islamic tradition encounter particularly difficult challenges related to the adoption of multiple identities, as they are not only faced with challenges based on their countries of origin or ethnocultural identifications, but they must also find a space for their religious practices and tendencies *outside* of the Muslim majority world. Religion, both as an institution, and in terms of personal attitudes and beliefs, has the potential to stimulate, deter or regulate immigrants' sense of belonging. Moreover, religion, in the context of immigration, plays a role in the construction, preservation and/or abandoning of ethnic, national, transnational and global identities (Bastian, Champion and Rousselet 2001; Ebaugh 2003). This, coupled with growing perceptions of an ideological rift between Islam as a religious doctrine and values governing Western democracies, has led to a rapid expansion of scholarship related to attitudes toward Islam and Muslims and their ability to properly integrate in the West. This perceived "tension" between Islam and the West is said to leave Muslim immigrants with a sense of rejection from their host societies (Moghissi et al. 2009).

Accordingly, drawing from conceptualizations of diaspora, and specifically Moghissi et al.'s (2009) notion of "Muslim diaspora" rooted in a *collective consciousness* of exclusion, this study will present qualitative data of first-generation Muslim immigrants

($n = 20$) who were born in a Muslim-majority country and then moved to and currently reside in Canada. The interviews conducted for this study reveal that regardless of how religious or how secular the Muslim immigrant participants proclaimed to be, they highly identified as “Muslim First”. However, the Muslim immigrants interviewed did not express that their identification as Muslim was in any way oppositional to being Canadian, and thus, they *all* also identified as Canadian. Moreover, for the majority of participants, being Canadian was equated with being a good Muslim, as being a good Muslim was equated with being a good, upstanding citizen. These findings were especially enlightening when compared to similar studies conducted by Valentine et al. (2009) in the UK, Ghorashi (2003) and Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007) in the Netherlands, and Thomson and Crul (2007) in Belgium and France, where Muslims identified with Islam as a response to the everyday discrimination and exclusion that they experience in their host countries.

2.2 Conceptual Framework & Literature Review

The study of globalized religion grew out of a need to make sense of the religious practices and beliefs of non-Christian immigrants to the West. Traditionally, its focus has been on the ways in which religion creates international or transnational connections that have the capability of provoking or producing some form of *universal* identity that transcends national boundaries. For most immigrants, leaving “home” and migrating to another place is accompanied by enduring connections to, rather than dismissal of, their countries of origin. According to scholars of transnational belonging, religion, and specifically religious movements operating in broad geographic contexts, engage in increasingly homogenized forms of worships and organization that give rise to global

communities that reach far beyond their communities and cultures and that challenge local religious forms (Levitt 2002; Van Dijk 1997). Transnational migrants, therefore, can use religion as an alternative means for seeking immediate acceptance and belonging in their new host societies. According to Levitt (2002), these religious global communities may fall within national boundaries, but often *coexist* with them, with migrants having greater and stronger loyalties to religious identifications than political or nationally-defined spaces.

The capacity for migrants to participate in their religious organizations and practices is strongly influenced by the role of the state and its regulation of religious expression. For example, a study by Lesthaeghe (2000) of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in Belgium discovered that unlike Moroccan immigrants, Turkish immigrants were highly likely to engage in religious transnational activities. Lesthaeghe (2000) attributes this finding to the Belgium government's supportive relationship with the Turkish Ministry of Religion.

Accordingly, the study of and relationships between migrant activity and religious practices can be understood as one component of much broader work on diasporic religions. In the last two decades, the concept of diaspora has been highly theorized, well beyond its traditional definition (Safran 1991; Brah 1996; Clifford 1997; Cohen 1997; Anthias 1998, 2001; Braziel and Mannur 2003; Hall 2003). Oftentimes, the term diaspora is used to refer simply to the mass migration of individuals from the countries they were born to their new host societies; however, in such conceptualizations, diaspora cannot be delineated from any other migratory experience. In fact, according to Moghissi et al (2009), modern conceptions of diaspora no longer have any "concern for the existence of

common features or contextual applicability” such as being an exile or suffering as a psychological outsider (3).

According to Moghissi et al. (2009), however, “there are some distinguishable, unifying characteristics that differentiate an expatriate group from a diasporic group, whose most important feature is its *collective consciousness* about the group members’ marginal location in the larger society in which they reside” (11). According to Habti and Koikkalainen (2014), a diasporic group, whose “importance is placed on recognizing hybridity and multiple identities” can help its members to “resist the nation-state, which is conceived as culturally homogenizing, hegemonic and discriminatory” (149). With regard to the existence of “Muslim diaspora”, then, Moghissi et al. (2009) define it in the following way:

The persistence of the dominant stereotype about Muslims – as an essentially different, unified, and devout religious group – has turned an imagined attribute into a social reality. The tragedy of 11 September 2001, the subsequent U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, the total devastation of Iraq after the similar U.S. invasion of that country, Hezbollah’s attack on Israel that led to the 2006 war in Lebanon, and the continued suffering of Palestinians under Israeli occupation, have all brought the vast communities of Islamic origin close and have increasingly politicized them. It is this *group-consciousness* that brings them together (11; my italics).

Accordingly, Moghissi et al. (2009), who make reference to the diversity and heterogeneity of the Muslim diaspora (i.e. differing religious interpretations, sectarianism, national divisions, language and ethnocultural differences, not to mention differing class, gender and generational differences, among other markers), claim that

regardless of their level of religious adherence to the Islamic faith, Muslims share a sense of isolation and exclusion from their host culture. By attaching themselves to an Islamic identity, Muslims are able to gain a sense of belonging and identification against the hegemony of the host society.

Moghissi et al.'s (2009) conceptualization of a Muslim diaspora, typified in a collective consciousness of exclusion, is expressed in findings on literature concerning Muslim immigrants in the West. In a study by Valentine et al. (2009) on Muslim Somali immigrants in Denmark and the UK, for example, the authors find that the Somali immigrants interviewed in both the UK and Denmark identified first and foremost as Muslim, though what it meant to be Muslim varied from migrant to migrant. The authors attributed this finding to lack of security as well as pressure to assimilate by the host society that the participants expressed post-migration. According to Valentine et al. (2009), while immigrants described experiences of racism and exclusion, "these negative events are countered by a broader perception of safety and trust that comes from being part of a strong and stable local Somali Muslim community" (245).

These findings are mirrored in an earlier study by Berns McGowan (1999) on Muslim Somalis who expressed that after their migration to Europe and North America, practicing Islam became an increasingly important focus of their lives. She claims their faith provided an important anchor within their broader experience of immigration (Berns McGowan 2009). Despite the nearly two decades that have passed since Berns McGowan's (1999) study of Somali Muslims, various studies since have reported similar findings. A study by Ghorashi (2003) on Iranian Muslim female migrants to the

Netherlands and United States, for example, also confirmed the existence of a Muslim collective conscious as a response to exclusion. Ghorashi (2003) writes:

Despite their attempts to become a part of this society and to learn the language very quickly, the women felt a kind of uprootedness in the later phase of their stay. The disappointment began when they wanted to be accepted and treated as equals but continued to be treated as strangers (170).

Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007) similarly posit that public condemnation of Islam in the Netherlands has led to an increase in the Islamic identification of Sunni Muslim Turks living there. They state, “the public condemnation of Islam and the calls for assimilation [have] increased the salience and importance of [a] Muslim identity” (20).

While most of the studies on Muslim immigrants in the West have been conducted in countries in Europe, there have been a few studies on Muslim migration and identity in Canada which have supported some of the findings from European studies. Moghissi et al. (2009), for example, discovered that Muslim immigrants in Canada do hold religion close to their identities. They found that Islam as an identity did not singularize or homogenize the experiences and identities of Muslim immigrants; however, despite how secular the immigrants in their study were, their identification with Islam was very strong. They suggest that many Muslim immigrants reported feeling excluded from Canadian social, economic, cultural and political life (Moghissi et al. 2009). Accordingly, Muslim immigrants turn to Islam and to the cultures of their home countries as a source of acceptance and reassurance (Moghissi et al. 2009). Interestingly, Moghissi et al. (2009) conclude their analysis of Muslims in Canada by suggesting that, when compared

to other countries, Canadian societal attitudes are actually quite welcoming to Muslims and often break down racist stereotypes.

Similarly, in Berns McGown's (1999) study of Somali Muslims, he also concluded that the Somalis living in Toronto displayed less anger and other negative emotions concerning their lives in their host societies, compared to the immigrants in the UK:

Clearly this is aided by Canada's consciousness of its newness as a nation [...] Canada is an entirely immigrant population, with the exception of its Aboriginal population [...] One of the side effects of Multiculturalism as official policy has been the recognition that an immigrant's head start of a couple of hundred years does not grant his descendants a greater legitimacy in the public or political order (188).

Modood (2007) echoes Berns McGown's (1999) findings in his study comparing Canadian and American Muslims. Specifically he points to Canada as an exemplary country, claiming that Canada has been successful insofar as it has been a place "where multiculturalism has been accepted and worked as a state project or as a national project" (Modood 2007, 147). Kazemipur (2014) makes the argument that the relationship between Muslims and Canada as a host society is entirely different from that between Muslims and other immigrant-receiving countries. Using nationwide surveys and interviews with Muslims in Canada, Kazemipur (2014) found that, relative to other countries, Canadian Muslims have a less difficult time with media and Canadian public institutions; however, they do still, to some degree, worry about their economic and social integration in Canada. He concludes that the positive Muslim immigrant experiences in Canada can be seen as "an indirect confirmation of the presence of some kind of Canadian exceptionalism" (Kazemipur 2014, 103).

Accordingly, to the extent that the bulk of research on Muslim immigrant belonging has been conducted outside of Canada, this paper aims to heighten our understanding of Muslims immigrants living in Canada. This paper intends to add to the discussion of Muslim immigrant belonging in the West, and specifically in Canada, by posing the following set of research questions: How does living in Canada affect the religious identification of Muslim immigrants and how does this compare to the way in which they identified with Islam in their home countries? To what degree does one's attachment to their religious identification compromise their ability to fully identify as Canadian as well? And lastly, are Muslims living in London, Ontario experiencing exclusion, and if so, do such acts induce opposition toward the state?

2.3 Methodology

I aim to answer these questions with a sub-set of data taken from a larger study of fifty first- and second-generation, self-identifying Muslims in Canada. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) provided funding for this study. Participants were recruited through advertisements in local mosques and through announcements made before and after Friday congregational prayers by Muslim community gatekeepers. The study consisted of interviews with Muslim immigrants from Muslim majority countries, as well as Canadian-born children of immigrant parents. The interviews were conducted over an eight-month period, beginning in October 2013 and concluding in June 2014.

For this paper, I have restricted the analysis to 20 first-generation Muslim participants, aged 18 and older who were born in a Muslim majority country and subsequently immigrated to Canada. The immigrants in this study were born in a variety of countries

stretching across the Muslim majority world, including Egypt, Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. The participants entered Canada at various ages, ranging from 15 years to 35 years old. The migrant entry status of each immigrant also varied considerably. Some arrived in Canada through family reunification programs, others entered on student or work visas. Few entered the country under Canada's business immigration program. Only one interviewee arrived in Canada as a refugee. The immigration experiences of the participants interviewed for this study also varied considerably. The political and economic climates of the migrants' host societies, for example, altered considerably the way in which these Muslims relayed their immigration stories. It is also important to note that there is variation in the length of time each immigrant has been living in Canada. Despite these variations, however, findings revealed that all immigrants interviewed expressed safety and pride in being Canadian.

The interview quotations in the analysis reflect the actual transcripts as closely as possible with a few minor editorial changes to make them more readable. Pseudonyms will be used throughout to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants. It should be stressed that the findings from this paper are not meant to be generalized to all first-generation Muslim immigrants living in London, Ontario or in any other city. Instead, this paper is meant to offer productive insight and interpretations, to hopefully stimulate further investigations and raise awareness of the challenges such participants may face.

All participants lived in London, a moderately sized city in Southwestern Ontario at the time of their interview, however many cited various other cities as their original place of settlement upon arrival in Canada. These participants identified as Muslim and came

from Muslim backgrounds and families. The classification of these participants as Muslim was a methodological choice on behalf of the author as well as participants' own identification with it. This decision is not meant to essentialize the diversity in the different degrees of Islamic practice among Muslims, or varying sects of Islam; however, because this study is concerned with the possibility for religious – specifically Islamic – identification as a hindrance to integration for first-generation Muslims, I found it necessary. The central aims of this research study were to investigate participants' identification with Islam, their “given” national identities (i.e. their national allegiances as immigrants), as well as their level of belonging as newcomers. Interviewees were asked about their unique immigration stories, to what extent they felt as though they belonged in Canada, and how easy or difficult it was to practice Islam in a non-Muslim country. In the following section the major findings revealed by the interview participants will be discussed.

2.4 Findings

2.4.1 Being Muslim

All the participants interviewed for this study self-identified as Muslim. However, among the Muslim participants there was significant variation and differentiation in terms of level and degree of religious practice, sect, ethnicity, country of origin and language. Accordingly, and in line with Moghissi et al. (2009), Muslim immigrants to Canada do not constitute a homogenous group, and the interview participants in this study are reflective of such heterogeneity. Like any group, their occupational status, class, years living in Canada, as well as their immigration entry status, even further differentiated the participants. Such heterogeneity, therefore, begs the question of whether or not it is

possible to study Muslim immigrants as a single group. However, in contrast to Valentine's (et al. 2009) study of second generation Muslims who viewed their immigrant Muslim parents' behaviours as regulated by their respective ethnic communities, the immigrant participants in this study reported being Muslim as their primary source of identification, suggesting that there exists, to some degree, a common consciousness of their "Muslim-ness". In many cases, in fact, identifying as Muslim served as an alternative to other forms of identification – mainly, ethnic and national belonging. Ahmad and Farhat, for example, discuss how since coming to Canada they identify less with the cultures and customs of their home countries and instead align themselves more heavily with their religion:

Middle East mentality is different from here. You'll be more kind of like hard headed, like there like yes or no. There's no grey. Or you're with us or against us. That's the mentality and this is actually, it's a mixture between certain beliefs and certain cultural beliefs... Now I'm more proud to be a religious person versus a Palestinian or Arab or Middle Eastern (Ahmad, male, Palestinian, 40).

Now I think it's more that I'm Muslim than I'm Pakistani. And it's to do with a lot of stuff like you see on TV and stuff. So it kind of it goes to show I guess. But I strongly identify myself as being Muslim but I'm kind of a little bit almost embarrassed about being Pakistani. Not embarrassed. Just how can I put it. Like where you know how can I answer for some of the things that my fellow countrymen do? On a daily basis? (Farhat, male, Pakistan, 33).

The above quotations demonstrate that the meaning of being Muslim for these immigrants have been transformed from a localized, culturally-specific version prior to migration (i.e. being Palestinian or being Pakistani), to a more homogenized globalized

tradition observed by other Muslims living in Canada, *despite* any differences in the way Islam is practiced or understood by different migrants (Gibb and Ilkan 1998).

This pan-Islamic identity is typified in the parenting patterns of the Muslim immigrants interviewed, many of whom had few expectations that their children will adopt the ethnocultural practices of their home countries, but instead expected their religious devotion. For example, the influx of Muslim immigrants in the West, and specifically to Canada, has practical consequences for the children of immigrants. The role of mosques and Muslim educational services provide, undoubtedly, a sense of community to newcomers who share common moral beliefs and practices. Participants expressed the strong influence of religious institutions. For example, approximately fifty percent revealed that they hoped to or did send their children to private Islamic schools to ensure the continuation of the Muslim tradition among their Canadian-born children. Again, when interviewees were asked about the importance of raising their children with strong Islamic values, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. For many, coming to Canada was an opportunity to better the lives of their children financially, but they also understood teaching their children about Islam as a non-material way of enhancing their lives.

It is very important to raise my daughter Muslim. It's probably my number one priority. Um I think that it's neck and neck with that and education. So um it's very, but it's what we talk about, it's what we think about, it's what we plan our future around (Farhat, male, Pakistan, 33).

Evidence of an overarching “Muslim” identity among immigrants was further confirmed when examining the social groupings and networks of the Muslims interviewed in this

study. For example, Dina and Tima demonstrated that despite ethnocultural variation amongst their friendship circles, the majority of them were still made up of Muslims.

Yah. We have, like I have a group. Like I have Pakistani friends, I have some Middle Eastern, because even in Newfoundland we had like four/five families like from Syria, Jordan and Palestine, so we have that connection. So yah I do have mixed groups. [*Interviewer: But are most of them are Muslim?*] Yes (Dima, female, Pakistan, 35).

Yup, I have all Muslim friends. Many friends. The duas (prayers) we teach others. And every time we have gathering, first we have to do read Quran or something and duaa. We do duaa first, then we start the party. Now one friend went for Umrah, she came back, so we are planning to do the party for her (Tima, female, Pakistan, 66).

Similarly, when questioned about expectations for marriage within one's cultural or ethnic group, Hussain and Tima, like many others, responded in the following ways:

Because if you really consider yourself as a Muslim... I don't think making differences between cultures is allowed firstly... if you're Muslim and I'm a Muslim. He (referring to a friend) says yah but it's different, it's different. So what are the differences? He says, well, the difference is in culture... Maybe he doesn't like you because you eat falafel all the time [laughs]. What if he doesn't like fava beans like you? What are you gonna say? He says well it's different. Yah it's different for you and for him. My kids all already know because they are older, and I say okay, I don't really mind who you marry as long as they are Muslim (Hussain, male, Iraq, 46).

Muslim! It doesn't matter from which country; as long as they are Muslim I am fine (Tima, female, Pakistan, 66).

In line with Berns McGowan's study on Somali Muslims (1999), amongst the Muslim immigrants interviewed for this study, religious faith provided an important sense of affirmation within their broader experiences of immigration and sometimes dislocation. The participants tended to orient themselves toward other Muslims in Canada over their respective ethnic or national in-groups. By developing a pan-Islamic identity, they were able to communicate with a wider community based on their shared religious traditions. Whether or not the respondents represented the existence of a Muslim diaspora, however, is not clear. The identification of "Muslim" was not necessarily laden with resentment toward Canada or feelings of exclusion or Otherness. While immigrants did recount some acts of discrimination targeted toward them, the interviewees were largely very proud and happy to be living in Canada.

2.4.2 The Challenges and Difficulties of Immigration

The Muslim immigrants who participated in this study spoke about experiences that were not dissimilar to the documented experiences of other, non-Muslim immigrants to Canada. As immigrants they described many of the difficulties and challenges that they faced as newcomers in an unknown place, and for many, as they encountered an entirely unknown culture and way of living. Regardless of whether or not the participants interviewed had relatives or friends in their host-societies, migrated alone or with their families, or what country of origin they came from, all expressed feelings of insecurity upon their arrival in Canada. Samir, an immigrant from a small rural village in Lebanon, described the inevitable feelings of initial displacement that immigrants experience upon their arrival to their new host countries:

Of course everybody when they move from one culture to another culture for [the] first time is gonna find it hard. If someone immigrated at two years old he won't find it hard because he will have grown up in it. But when I came I was eighteen years old. Yah the first couple of years I found it hard because I missed all the memories that I left back home. So I found it hard yah especially for the first year it was kinda hard. But as time goes by you get used to it. That's how it is (Samir, male, Lebanon, 53).

Ahmad, an immigrant from Jerusalem similarly discusses the culture shock he experienced upon his arrival to Canada:

It was really difficult... in terms of immigrating here, the cultural shock was really severe. Uh even interacting with other people, that's like you know afterwards I realize why other people, other communities they always stick to each other. Kind of secluding themselves, not because they want to but because it is easy for them to interact and talk in Italian or Greek or Chinese.... It's kind of demanding. You wanna, you wanna fit in but you don't know how. And even if you try you will be limiting in terms of lifestyle, let's say the religious obligation. So we find in the beginning, it's not you don't want to because you didn't learn yet how the ropes, or how really to fit in. And then after maybe ten years was okay (Ahmad, male, Palestinian, 40).

Ahmad alludes to potential religious lifestyle differences. Ahmad, as a Muslim from Jerusalem, was brought up with particular Muslim values and teachings that promoted, for example, refraining from eating pork, sexual abstinence before marriage and abstaining from the consumption of alcohol. When further probed about these “lifestyle” differences, specifically regarding the drinking of alcoholic beverages as a potential site for tension between Muslim immigrants like himself and the general Canadian populace, Ahmad replied: “Yeah just like I don't want to drink [alcohol] but there's another

thousand drinks I wanna drink, I just don't want to drink that because I have limitations, that's it!". Importantly, Ahmad acknowledges that being Muslim and practicing Islam did not interfere or limit his interaction with non-Muslim citizens. Samir and Ahmad's sentiments do, however, pose important questions – mainly, to what extent do the lifestyle limitations and the culture shock that Muslim immigrants experience on account of their beliefs constrain them from being fully accepted by the general populace, despite their ability to 'learn the ropes' of their host society?

In many cases the insecurities expressed by the immigrants in this study were rooted in struggles and challenges based in newcomer experiences with their host society. However, interestingly, nearly every immigrant in the study who cited challenges on account of their religious, ethnic or national affiliations also denied its salience, compounding their allegiance to Canada and the multicultural vision it propagates. Farhat, for example, describes in the excerpt below how despite experiencing particular challenges on account of being a new immigrant in Canada, Canada remains the best country to live in for an immigrant. Both he and Said downplay struggles by suggesting that they are "inevitable" in the migration process and native-born Canadians are not necessarily at fault:

But I do say the good people is more the majority than the racists. The racists are few of them, but those they're always gonna stay around... Canada did the best for the immigrants. Very fair to everybody [no matter where] you come from, because Canada is a multicultural country, so it is the only country I guess the immigrants come from all over the world. Canada is very good (Ibrahim, male, Lebanon, 58).

Well at first it was very hard because I had an accent like I said. I didn't understand the society, I really didn't understand the rules. The unspoken rules. And every society has it, whether its Pakistan or Canada, *so I can't blame the Canadians for that*. Because of that it was really hard for me to fit in. I assumed I would fit in a lot easier because I'd been exposed to so much Western culture back there. As I got older I understood the culture, I got the language down, I could mingle with the people (Farhat, male, Pakistan, 33).

To probe the degree to which potential acts of discrimination were being downplayed due to “appropriateness”, the interviewees were asked whether or not they felt as if they “fit in” in Canada or whether or not they felt rejected or excluded. In contrast to Moghissi et al. (2009), whose conceptualization of a Muslim diaspora involves having its roots in exclusion and Othering, the Muslims interviewed for this study felt as if they belonged in Canada more effortlessly than their respective countries of origin. Across the board, all participants referred to Canada as their home and in many cases, expressed comfort and safety when referencing life in Canada. Abbas (male, Lebanon, 61), for example, frankly states: “I certainly do fit here [Canada] better. I certainly do”.

My neighbours are very good with me. You cannot believe. Even they know I am Muslim. Sometimes I cover my hair I am standing outside and they know I am Muslim. They never ever you know interfere with me. But they're very good, they always help me. Help me, good people. Sometimes I cook the food and send them so they like it. They like my food also (Tima, female, Pakistan, 66).

The truth is I belong to Canada more. Because I lived in Canada two times more than I lived in Lebanon. Plus you have kids here growing up here... I feel I belong to Canada way more than Lebanon. For example, if you're gonna talk to the truth, let's see if I belong more to Lebanon. If I go back to Lebanon, I'm 50 years old, so I could go back by myself, but my kids cannot live there, they cannot

read or write. They can speak the language but cannot read or write, plus there's too much mess, year after year, and it's getting worst. They're going backwards. Here we go frontwards, over there they go backwards. So to me there's nothing for my children to hope for there. So I feel I way more belong to Canada then Lebanon. The reality is that's for everybody not only for me. So some people they deny that. Doesn't matter if they deny or accept it, but they have to accept it, they have to face what reality is. That's the reality whether they like it or not (Salah, male, Lebanon, 50).

In accordance with transnational theories of migration, the Muslim interviewees were more likely to identify with Islam and other Muslims than with their national (home and host), and ethnocultural groups. Importantly, however, the existence of a global community of Muslim immigrants was not necessarily induced by exclusion or in opposition to Western narratives of Muslims as “Other”, as Moghissi et al. (2009) suggest in their study of Canadian Muslims. While there was some awareness amongst the Muslim immigrants in this study of discriminatory or racist behaviour targeted toward them, their sentiments illustrate that their identification of Islam is much more complex than Moghissi et al. (2009) proclaim. In fact, the Muslim immigrants in the study were exceedingly proud to be Canadian. This finding illustrates that the dominant social narratives about what it means to be a Muslim (i.e. a homogenous and often dangerous group) do vary cross-nationally. That is, living in Canada has transformed and reworked the practices and identifications of Muslim immigrants quite positively.

2.4.3 Being a Canadian-Muslim: Belonging to the Nation

In contrast to traditional assimilatory theories, the Muslim immigrants in this study retained much of their religious identities (i.e. they all identified as being Muslim); however, they did not view being Muslim as making them less capable of being Canadian

or less likely to identify as Canadian. Interestingly, not one of the participants in this study cited being Canadian and being Muslim as oppositional. All understood Islam as a body of beliefs to be practiced in moderation and many more expressed that Islamic principles were actually quite nicely reflected in the very fabric of Canadian multicultural society.

Deeper discussion with the respondents in this study revealed a significant relationship between practicing and identifying with Islam and living in Canada. Respondents discussed how immigration to Canada allowed them to practice Islam in a way which was comfortable for them. In line with Berns McGowan's (1999), therefore, many of the Muslim immigrants interviewed revealed that prior to immigration, they took their religion for granted or disavowed it for being too political; however, following migration to the West, their religious identities became a more important focus of their lives and identities (97). The majority of the immigrants interviewed expressed a "freedom" associated with practicing Islam in Canada, compared to the restrictive practices of their home countries.

Allah has made religion that is so broad and there needs to be kind of tolerance for wherever you are on the spectrum. And you know we're constantly struggling to find that tolerance. And unfortunately that's nowhere to be found. It's nowhere to be found in the Islamic world... So at least here [Canada] you don't have that. So you're *free* to practice the way you want to practice. And you also have the means and resources to follow the people that you feel are closest to how you see yourself and religiosity. And also in terms of the new converts, the converts from here that are a-cultural, if there's such a word, you know you can actually see the difference because they actually practice religion the way religion should be practiced, without the cultural baggage. So I feel like there's more opportunity,

there's more tolerance, more *freedom* and more choice when it comes to religion and religious politics (Khadijah, female, Pakistan, 42).

And now coming to Canada, and especially, not in first couple of years, in the past 5 or 6 last years... our mind are blown away by the different opinions. But back in Pakistan, for me, it was different because whatever in Islamic world somebody else is saying is Haram (a sin): they [the people] are not on a righteous path, but we [scholars] are on the righteous path. And we should not listen to anybody who is from a different masjid (mosque) or different opinion. We were accustomed and trained to only one kind of thinking. I mean here at least we are able to, and I will say it's a blessing, have the *freedom* to search the internet with the advancement of media, although it is good and bad as well, but you can sort of decipher who is telling right and who is not making sense. But these things, listening to different people with different opinions, it has broadened our horizon I mean in the training of Islam, religion, it has gone I would say 180 degrees (Mustapha, male, Pakistan, 46).

Other participants went even further and reported that Canada as a country provided for them the opportunity to appreciate the importance of Islam in their lives and to take further interest in it. As Aboudie and Hanan's quotations below illustrate, the interviewees credit their immigration to Canada for providing them with the potential to get close to their religion.

More [political] affiliation there. Here it's like okay well, I'm doing it because of what it is. Because it makes me feel comfortable. So more attached to God and I feel really relaxed. There, you actually feel tense. You become religious and, oh they're gonna label me to this and that and I will become labeled... I think. I personally, I probably learned most of my religion in Canada (Aboudie, male, Lebanon, 68).

Well again as I said in Pakistan the religion was, I mean yes it's there, the masjid is there you would hear the athan (call to prayer) and all that and it's just like that the environment is like that that you are in it, but the seriousness about the religion came to me while when I came here. And I feel that if I won't establish the closeness to my religion now in my house while living here, then I don't know if my kids will follow. Like how much will they take it from me? (Hanan, female, Pakistan, 44).

The positive association between living in Canada and identifying as Muslim is rather surprising, as it goes against findings in nearly every non-Canadian study on Muslim immigrants. Studies such as Berns McGowan (1999) and Valentine et al. (2009) suggest that Muslims in Europe increasingly identify as “Muslim First” and foremost as a way to resist the nation-state. Such studies reveal that living in a country that does not necessarily accept immigrants as Muslim or as immigrants induces them to develop an oppositional identity altogether. Supported by other Canadian studies on Muslim immigrants (Kazemipur 2014; Berns McGowan 1999), the participants interviewed for this study express being both Muslim and Canadian: “I mean I feel that I am a Canadian but I am not as much say a Pakistani Muslim Canadian but I am a Muslim Canadian and I would want that identity” (Najat, female, Pakistan, 65).

For some of the Muslim immigrants interviewed, being Canadian and being Muslim were not only non-oppositional, but also synonymous with one another. For example, participants such as Salah and Abbas expressed how being a good Muslim meant living in accordance to both Canadian constitutional principles and practices or made appeals to humanism.

That is where I am an open minded, humane Muslim. Comes from my Islamic beliefs. Anything I do I go to my Islamic beliefs, and I don't see it that different from my Canadian standards. Because of the Canadian law I have the right to practice my faith. Also under Canadian law I cannot go hurt another person. I cannot even harass, I cannot do sexual harassment, I cannot kill. I cannot refuse I cannot have hate crimes, all the things my religion tells me as well (Salah, male, Lebanon, 50).

I like our religion tremendously... but I think religion goes hand in hand with you being a good citizen. I think being a good citizen is in my little justification in life um it is more important for me and for God and God will understand that if I'm a good citizen and I don't hurt anybody and I don't steal and don't wish anybody ill more important than being religion. I think God will understand, in my opinion notions or whatever, that's most important (Abbas, male, Lebanon, 61).

In this way, this study supports work by Kazemipur (2014), who posits that the relationship between Muslims and Canada as a host society is entirely different from the relationship between Muslims and other immigrant-receiving countries. He argues that the positive Muslim immigrant experiences in Canada can be seen as “an indirect confirmation of the presence of some kind of Canadian exceptionalism” (Kazemipur 2014, 103). Moghissi et al. (2009) also conclude their study of Muslim immigrants by stating that, compared to other European countries, Muslim immigrants in Canada report overall high levels of satisfaction. The interview data from the Muslim immigrant participants in this study further confirm the finding that Canadian Muslims are happy to be Canadian. Such findings, then, beg the question: why are Canadian Muslims more likely to embrace their new host society's national identity than immigrants in other parts of the Western world?

2.5 Discussion and Conclusion

The Muslim immigrants interviewed for this study reveal how Islam can become a primary marker of identification for immigrants once they leave their countries of origin for the participants in my study. To identify with Islam provided participants with the ability to transcend the cultural and ethnic demands of their home countries and practice Islam as they saw best suited to their individual lives. All participants cited that their ability to identify with Islam was a direct result of living in Canada, which they understood to be a country that afforded them the freedom to believe and practice in whatever way they wanted. It is important to stress, thus, that the Muslim interviewees in this study are reflective of the larger Muslim community in Canada insofar as they do not constitute a homogenous group. In fact, the Muslims varied in their religious involvement and practice; and despite this, all identified as “Muslim First” and foremost.

In contrast to studies of Muslim immigrants outside of Canada, the participants in this study saw themselves as both Muslim and Canadian, and did not perceive any tension or hostility between Islam and the values and principles upheld in Canada. This is an interesting finding as most non-Canadian studies, suggest that Muslim immigrants take on a stronger Islamic identity post-migration, but one that is not accompanied by an identification with their host society’s nationality. In fact, being Muslim is often adopted as an oppositional identity against, for example, what it means to be Danish, British or French.

While the qualitative data gathered for this study are limited insofar as they do not explain exactly *why* Muslim immigrants in Canada are more content than Muslim immigrants in other countries, there are a few potential explanations. To begin, Canada,

in contrast to some European countries, has an open citizenship policy that provides migrants with rights and freedoms that may not have been allotted to them in their home countries – including freedom of religious expression. The Muslim immigrant participants in this study repeatedly referenced the freedom they were attributed to practice Islam as they wished. And moreover, some respondents even contended that their close identification with Islam was a result of their migration to Canada, as it provided for them a space devoid of cultural, political and filial attachments that often got in the way of attaining true religious understanding in their home countries. In contrast to countries such as Denmark that explicitly pressure immigrants to conform and assimilate to particular lifestyles, Canadian immigration policies abstain (at least explicitly) from compulsory assimilation (Valentine et al. 2009). Across Europe, too much cultural diversification and strong transnational attachments between immigrants and their home countries have raised much anxiety as they are said to compromise immigrants' allegiance to their host societies (Koffman 2005). As a result, immigration policies in some European countries are “relatively hostile to its immigrants and ethnic minorities, tending to alienate and ghettoize them”, further enabling a culture of exclusivity and resentment (Berns McGowan, 1999: 189).

In Denmark, for example, all newly arrived refugees aged 18 and older must enroll in an integration program that trains newcomers in the ways of Danish culture and language (Valentine et al. 2009). Canada, in contrast, “has been relatively successful at creating the conditions that allow for the inclusion of all of its resident voices – including those of recent immigrants and minorities – in that process” (Berns McGowan, 199: 189). For example, granting immigrants legal citizenship, fostering an image of tolerance and

inclusivity, and cultivating a safe living environment for newcomers strengthens immigrants' allegiance to the nation state and allows them the opportunity to identify more heavily with their host society and its policies. The Muslim immigrants interviewed for this study repeatedly expressed the multicultural and accepting nature of Canada as a host society. Implicit in their sentiments was the absence of pressure to conform to a particular or defined national identity, because a Canadian national identity is itself extremely tenuous in nature. They can be Canadian, thus, because there is no defined or indoctrinated version of what being Canadian is – other than being multicultural and accepting.

In contrast, many other receiving countries have lengthy and complex relationships with the origin countries of their migrants. Muslim immigrants, as well as the societies receiving them, may approach one another with pre-existing and often adverse or hostile opinions. For example, Muslims from Algeria have long settled as immigrants within the borders of their former colonizers, France. French involvement in Algeria dates back to the early 1800s. Because of poor economic circumstances (in large part resulting from their former occupation by France), as well as a shared language due to the imposition of French in Algeria, Algerians make up approximately three percent of the French population (Silverstein 2004). However, due to a very strong national Algerian resistance during colonization, coupled with a brutal civil war beginning in the mid-1950s in which many people from France and Algeria died, the full integration of Algerians (both native born and foreign) in France has been difficult (Silverstein 2004). For example, in the 1990s when France faced particularly high unemployment rates and economic turmoil, immigration policies focused on social integration and exclusion as well as cementing

France's national identity. Much of this discussion focused on the "legitimacy of signs of Muslim difference – particularly group prayer, mosque building, and women's scarves – in the public sphere. These various anxieties have been the subject of endless polemics for French politics and lay persons alike, with immigration remaining a prominent platform issue" (Silverstein 2004: 4-5). Similar relationships can also be observed in the UK amongst the South Asian community (Saeed et al. 1999).

Immigrant admittance into Canada is based on a points system which focuses on fueling Canada's economic prosperity, and places "a high priority on people who have the skills and experience required to meet Canada's economic needs" (CIC 2012, para. 2). Canada's point system is quite complex as it generally requires applicants attempting to enter Canada to have a job offer or being likely to integrate into the Canadian workforce based on their previous work experience, language proficiency, education and age. The system is predicated on labour markets and national priorities and emphasizes the importance of high levels of human, social and cultural capital amongst migrants. As a result, immigrants are matched to particular industries and to varying geographical regions where their particular skills are in demand. In Canada, therefore, immigrants are viewed generally as valuable contributors to the overall economy and also tend to have high rates of employment (Gustin and Ziebarth 2010: 980). Importantly, it has been theorized by various scholars (Antecol et al. 2003; Thompson and Weinfel 1995; Entorf and Minoiu 2005; Hiebert 2006; Facchini and Mayda 2008) that Canada's point system approach to immigration mitigates cultural friction by attracting a broad range of immigrants from around the world. Canada's strategic economic migration policy fills gaps in Canadian labour markets which in turn contributes to a healthy economy, and

consequently positive views of immigrants. General acceptance of immigrants by its host society, as noted earlier, is also likely to generate positive experiences for immigrants, and thus a stronger identification with the host society. It could also be argued that because of the high levels of human, social and cultural capital that immigrants must possess to be admitted through Canada's point system, the type of immigrant entering Canada is also more prone to be open to adapting to their host society's way of life.

Accordingly, the interviews collected for this study symbolize a strong testament to the strength of Canadian immigrant policies, as nearly all participants in this study expressed being both Muslim and Canadian, and did not view those two identities as mutually exclusive. In line with studies on the globalization of religion, I argue that the participants in this study represent a transnational Muslim identity, which is enabled by Canada's policy of Freedom of Religion. A Muslim transnational identity is typified in a global community made up of Muslims that use their religious identities as a form of inclusivity and acceptance. This pan Islamic identity comes from common experiences. However, it is important to note that the common experiences shared by Muslims in this study were not typified in the collective consciousness of exclusivity for the majority population, as Moghissi et al. (2009) theorize in their conception of a Muslim diaspora. In fact, the Muslim immigrants in this study did not express any serious forms of exclusion. Instead, they often boasted about how safe they felt as Muslims living in Canada, and their freedom to practice as they wanted. Moghissi et al.'s (2009) conceptualization of Muslim diaspora is perhaps better suited to Muslims living in countries such as Denmark or the Netherlands (Valentine et al. 2009; Ghorashi 2003; Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007) who, based on aforementioned studies, were more likely to identify as Muslim because of the

perceived Othering by the host society. In contrast, the Muslim immigrants interviewed for this study employed their various identities (i.e. “Canadian” identity and “Muslim” identity) situationally. In this way they better represent the existence of a transnational Muslim identity based on common faith and migration experiences.

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Chapter 3

3 Constructing a Hybrid Identity: An Examination of Second-Generation Muslims Living in Canada

3.1 Introduction

You know everyone goes through an identity crisis or crises, and that's very important because it's very important in the cultivation of finding out who you are, and the very primary questions: 'Who am I?' 'What is reality?' 'What is real?' 'Why am I here?' -- all these questions everyone asks to one extent or another, and some people obsess over it, to greater or lesser degrees. All people, I believe (Ibrahim, male, 28).

A poll by Maclean's (2011) magazine revealed that over half of Canadians believed that an ideological rift exists between the Muslim world and the West that is simply irreconcilable. Fears of growing extremism in the West amongst Muslim youth, and the emergence of Western born *mujahideen* (holy fighters) has posed serious threats of national security for Canada and other Western nations, leading many to conclude that Islamic and Western values are simply incompatible. Paradoxically, today, more than fifteen million Muslims live in Western Europe and North America (Cesari 2004). Canadian immigration policies are increasingly admitting Muslims from almost every part of the Muslim world as migrants to settle in Canada (Statistics Canada 2013). While the religious composition of Canada remains majority Christian, between 1991 and 2001 the Muslim community in Canada nearly doubled in size (Bramadat 2005). Evidently, the proportion of the *children* of Muslim migrants has also substantially risen. These second-generation *Canadian* Muslims, however, find themselves having to define Islam and its practices for themselves in juxtaposition to the ethnocultural values that they have received from their parents, and the standards of the country in which they were born.

The religious identities of second-generation Muslims living in Canada, therefore, are necessarily entwined with issues of nationalism, belonging and citizenship that are too often ignored.

Accordingly, this study will present qualitative data on second-generation Muslims ($n = 30$), who were born and grew up in Canada. Against widespread depictions of young Canadian Muslims as “extremist” and “radical”, the data presented in this paper illustrate the intergenerational differences in the religious expression and involvement of Muslims living in Canada, and how Muslims construct their personal, cultural and Islamic identities as Canadians in unique and alternative ways. The complex responses expressed by the participants in the study serve to provide a motive to re-examine studies pertaining to the acculturation of immigrants and their offspring, as respondents spoke of multifaceted forms of adaptation. The findings reveal that second-generation Muslims expressed feeling neither “here nor there”— that is, neither fully conforming to the values and lifestyles of their places of birth (i.e. Canada), but also not entirely adapting to the norms and collective conscience of the culture they have inherited from their immigrant parents. Rather, the second-generation Muslims in this study readily constructed their religious identities in diverse ways, abandoning many of the traditions of their immigrant parents, and situated themselves as belonging outside of the rigidity of ethnocultural customs. And moreover, they described themselves as belonging to a space that merges

the teachings and principles of Islam with Canadian values of liberalism⁶ as a way of circumventing possible feelings of exclusion.

3.2 Literature Review

Muslims in Canada constitute the fastest growing population (Statistics Canada 2013). In 2011 there were approximately 1,053,945 Muslims living in Canada, making up two percent of the overall population (Statistics Canada 2013). This number represents more than a quadrupling of the population since 1991 (Bramadat 2005). The majority of the growth in the Muslim population in Canada has been a direct result of immigration. The migration of Muslims to Canada was influenced by Canada's changing immigration policies, in addition to the economic and political turmoil affecting many Muslims in their countries of origin (Castles and Miller 2009). Of the approximately million Muslims living in Canada, approximately 294,710 are from the second or third generation migrant communities (Statistics Canada 2013).

Young Muslims in Canada, and in the Western world more broadly, are at the nexus of what are being portrayed as antithetical systems – that is, between their lives at home as the children of Muslim immigrants and the wider Canadian society (Huntington 1997). These systems present two opposing or competing value systems, expectations and social customs and conventions. Considerable events, marked most notably by the attacks on

⁶ By Canadian values I am referring to Western ideals that were influenced by the Enlightenment era such as rationality, reason and democracy. I am not meaning to imply that Muslim or non-Western countries do not value similar values; but rather, I am implying the assumptions of mainstream media outlets and Orientalist discourses to test whether second-generation Muslims perceive themselves as 'other'.

the World Trade Centre on September 11th have led to a sense of panic amongst Muslims living in the West that has resulted in a societal dynamic of “integration” versus “seclusion” forcing Muslims to redefine their identities. Whereas previous generations of Muslim immigrants and their children pursued ideals of integration and assimilation into their host societies, researchers have observed that many young Muslims have begun asserting their distinctive Muslim identities by identifying with the global *Ummah* of Islam, an identity that is independent of their ethnocultural ancestry.

Growing populations of Muslims outside of Muslim majority countries, and the unparalleled increase of a second-generation Muslim population in the West has led to a rapid expansion in scholarship related to the emergence of an Islamic identity among Muslims living in the West (Bennet 2005; Cesari 2005; Grillo 2004; Werbner 2002; Baxter 2007; Dwyer 1999; Jacobson 1998; Gardner and Shuker 1994; Al-Ahsan 1992). Within this growing body of literature researchers have been exploring the ways in which Muslims born in non-Muslim countries embody fluid, situational and dynamic identities, ones in which ethnic boundaries, identities and cultures are negotiated, defined and produced through social interactions inside and outside of their respected ethnic communities (Dwaine 2006). Scholars have been exploring the ways in which appeals to an all-encompassing, all inclusive, Muslim identity provide resources to young Muslims that transcend ethnic and familial customs (Vertovec and Rogers 1998; Blain and Forbes 1999; Mandaville 2001; McDonough and Hoodfar 2005; Ramji 2008).

An early indication of religion – and specifically Islam – as a strong marker of identity is the work of Hutnik in the UK (1985). In his study of South Asian Muslims, Hutnik (1985) measured to what extent second-generation students with parents from India,

Pakistan and Bangladesh expressed being Muslim as their primary marker of identity. He found that 80 percent of South Asian Muslims listed Muslim identity as a very important identity item. Similar findings are reflected in a study by Bochner (1982) who also discovered that being Muslim or having an Islamic identity was the most important and strongest identification marker among South Asian Muslims. At least in the case of the UK, many other studies confirmed Islam as being an assertive identity marker. For example, the *Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities* (1994) found that 83 percent of Pakistanis expressed religion as a very important self-defining attribute. Saeed, Blain and Douglas (1999) later confirmed the findings of the FNSEM. When asked to write out statements that best described themselves, being Muslim (85 percent) was chosen nearly three times more often than anything else by second and third-generation Pakistani respondents. This is further demonstrated in the work of Dwyer (2000) who, drawing on interviews and ethnographic observations, found that individuals utilized an Islamic community that transcended culture, nationalism and tradition when it was most beneficial for them. Islamic dress (i.e. hijab or head scarf) in particular was seen as a symbol for young Muslim women to signify their religious identities (Dwyer 2000). When comparing how important religion is across all religious groups, Muslims rated the highest amongst those aged 16 years and older (O'Beirne 2004).

Although many of these studies were conducted before 2001, they reveal that, at least in some European countries, even prior to the events of 9/11, it was not uncommon to find immigrants and their offspring identifying as "Muslim First". This serves as a testament to the strong and penetrating influence that Islam as a faith group has on the lives of its adherents, and its potential to stunt the process of acculturation amongst the second

generation. In contrast to classic immigration countries such as Canada and the United States, Thomson and Crul (2007) found that strong national identities were obstacles to the construction of hybrid identities for the second-generation in Belgium and France. Living in traditionally white, Christian European countries, coupled with the perception of Islam as dangerous in public discourse, creates a conflict for Muslims that may incite them to identify as “Muslim First”. Such hypotheses are supported in a study of Muslim Turks and Moroccans in Belgium and Amsterdam (Fleischmann 2011). In this study Fleischmann (2011) observed a negative correlation between national identification and religious identification. She concluded that “there is tension between their subgroup identities and the national identity of their country of residence: the more they feel Muslim, the less they identify as Dutch or Swedish” (Fleischmann 2011: 152).

While the majority of studies on second-generation Muslims have been conducted in European countries, and in the UK, we have seen the emergence of research on the religious identification of second-generation Muslims in Canada. For example, Nagra (2011) examines identity formation of 50 Canadian Muslims aged 18 to 30 in Toronto and reveals that while claiming their Muslim identity, nearly all respondents also retained their Canadian identities in an attempt to resist the notion that they are somehow less Canadian. Nagra (2011) found that second-generation Canadian Muslims, rather than detach themselves from their national identities to be “Muslim First”, they instead redefined what it means to be to Canadian.

These conclusions are supported by an ethnographic account of second-generation Muslim girls in a Canadian Islamic school. In her study, Zine (2008) explored how the young women attending Islamic schools actively negotiated “two conflicting sets of

cultural expectations” – the expectations of their immigrant parents and ethno-religious place of learning, and the wider society to which they belonged (47-48). Similarly, in her study of second-generation Muslims growing up in Canada, Ramji (2008) concludes that compared to their first-generation, immigrant parents, this group of Muslims readily constructed their religious identities in diverse ways, abandoning the traditions of their immigrant parents. She argues that Muslim youth have the potential to coalesce into an identifiable and encompassing diaspora through the symbolic bonds that they share in the form of religious texts, practices and geographical spaces (i.e. mosques, *madrasas*, and burial grounds), regardless of their parents’ ethnic or national affiliation. This diasporic space which Ramji (2008) describes has been theorized extensively as a space that “allows for unanticipated forms of agency and resistance” (Mishra and Shirazi, 2010).

3.3 Conceptual Framework & Research Questions

A theoretical framework that conceptualizes diasporic, ethnocultural and religious identities as an ongoing process will inform this study. Several theorists have noted that the dichotomous model of identity used in literature, where self-identification is understood as an option between two different and often competing identities, is outdated and far too simplistic (Bhabha 2004; Brah 2001; Gilroy 2004; Hall 2003). Stuart Hall (2003), for example, conceptualizes identity as a “production which is never complete, always in process” (243). The development of diasporic communities can be understood within the context of a global cultural economy – “a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, where individuals are engaged in the construction of multiple “imagined worlds” around the globe which can challenge the definitions and practices of the political and economic elites” (Eade, 1994: 378; also see Appadurai 1990). According to Appadurai

(1990), “immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree” (297). As national belongings in the West are challenged by more local and global imaginings of community, the assertions of Canadian, English or American become more tenuous. The influx of immigrants to Western nations – Muslim and non-Muslim alike – are increasingly altering the social and cultural character of the communities in which they live, and call into question both the national discourse of Western nations as unified as well as the assumptions of eventual acculturation into one’s host society (Eade 1994).

The term “third space” (Bhabha 2004) describes situations in which individuals live, on a daily basis, within two cultures and must actively negotiate and bridge activities, values and beliefs between them. The third space is not, however, necessarily disadvantaging. According to Bhabha (2004) a third space is a liminal or in-between space, where translation and negotiation occur. It is a space critical of essentialist positions of identity. He suggests that this third space allows for unanticipated forms of agency and resistance, in addition to contestation (Bhabha 2004). The third space is a mode of articulation and a space that engenders new possibilities. Despite the exposure of the third space to ambiguities and contradictions, it provides a spatial politics of inclusion rather than exclusion that “initiates new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation” (Bhabha 1994: 1).

Homi Bhabha (2004) celebrates the in-between-ness epitomized in the third space in its production of hybrid identities. The hybrid identity is positioned within this third space in the conjunction of cultures. Bhabha’s (2004) development of hybridity originates from literary and cultural theory and describes the construction of culture and identity within

conditions of colonial antagonism and inequity. For Bhabha (2004) hybridity develops out of the process by which colonial authorities attempt to translate the identity of the colonized within a singular, universal framework, but fail, producing something familiar but also something new. Hybrid identities, thus, have the ability to transverse both cultures and to translate, mediate and negotiate within the dynamic of exclusion. It is important to note, however, that while several scholars have used the concept of hybridity, it is also a critical topic of contention. Scholars have argued that the “production of hybridity should be accounted for not by some kind of soft, consensual, postmodern social play, but rather by the works of power relations in society” (Dallaire and Dens 2005: 145). Accordingly, this study will draw upon such notions of plural identities to inform and understand the unique situations of Canadian second-generation Muslims.

Since the 1990s, researchers have been noting the increasing prominence of religion, in addition to ethnic and national affiliation, as a primary marker of identity. Yet, very little scholarly attention has been paid to conceptualization of religious identity as, first, the reason behind which members of second-generation migrant communities may resist the national identities of their birth countries; and second, as a possible outlet for which second-generation Muslims can negotiate their often conflicting social and cultural worlds. Accordingly, this project aims to bring to the forefront the benefits of understanding the ways in which Muslims see themselves as Muslims living in the West broadly, and in Canada specifically by asking the following set of research questions: (1) To what extent do Muslims born in Canada identify with Islam, identify with a Canadian national identity, and identity with their inherited ethnic identities? (2) How do notions of

nationalism and citizenship affect the religious identities of Muslims born in Canada? (3) And lastly, how do young Canadian Muslims negotiate their identities as Canadian *and* Muslim and to what extent does this negotiation become a repository for potential feelings of insecurity and frustration, or conversely, of acceptance?

3.4 Methodology

I aim to answer these questions with a sub-set of data taken from a larger study of 50 first- and second-generation, self-identifying Muslims in London, Ontario. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) provided funding for this study. Participants were recruited through advertisements in local mosques and Muslim Student Associations' student newspapers, and through announcements made before and after Friday congregational prayers by Muslim community gatekeepers. The study consisted of interviews of Muslim immigrants from Muslim majority countries, as well as Canadian-born children of Muslim immigrants. The interviews were conducted over an eight-month period, beginning in October 2013 and concluding in June 2014.

For this paper, I have restricted the analysis to 30 second-generation Muslim participants, aged 18 to 44 that had at least one immigrant parent and were either born in Canada or arrived in Canada before the age of ten. These participants identified as Muslim and came from Muslim backgrounds and families. The classification of these participants as Muslim was a methodological choice based on participants' own identification with it. This decision is not meant to essentialize the diversity of Islamic practice among Muslims, or varying sects of Islam; however, because this study is concerned with the possibility for religious – specifically Islamic – identification as a means to transcend cultural and national affiliations for second-generation Muslims, I found it necessary. The

central aims of this research study were to investigate participants' identification with Islam, to their ethnocultural ancestry, as well as their attachments to their Canadian identities. Interviewees were asked to what extent they felt as though they belonged in Canada and how easy or difficult it was to practice Islam in a non-Muslim country. They discussed how their own views and practices differed from their parents' generation, and how they situated themselves within Canada as the children of immigrants.

The interview quotations in the analysis reflect the actual transcripts as closely as possible with a few minor editorial changes to make them more readable. Pseudonyms will be used throughout to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants. Finally, it should be stressed that the findings from this paper are not meant to be generalized to all second-generation Muslims. Instead, this paper is meant to offer productive insight and interpretations, to hopefully stimulate further investigations and raise awareness of the challenges such participants may face.

3.5 Findings

3.5.1 A "Third Space": Empowerment from Belonging Neither Here Nor There

The majority of the second-generation Canadian Muslims in this study were brought up in homes with parents whose first language was not English, who ate the food of their parents' native countries, and ascribed to customs and conventions that were different than the wider Canadian community. Yet, outside of their homes, the culture of their parents was largely invisible and these participants led similar lives to Canadians with non-immigrant parents. Despite this fact, and despite being schooled through the Canadian public school system, the participants in this study still identified as being

different from people who had non-immigrant parents. These differences were often expressed in the form of race or ethnicity and frequently discussed in contrasted to the “white” majority:

I feel there's like more with being Arab than there is with being white. You can't really say anything, unless you know like where you're from. Like, 'I'm Portuguese' or something then you can. Just cause we're so multicultural (Hanan, female, 18).

I guess it's normal in the sense where it's just a family like any other family. But then there is some stuff where it's different like 'go to school, don't be bad'. I obviously know. It's not like white kids don't get that but they're not as strict. It's not like we were abused but it's just like strict. If you did something bad you know there is a consequence. It's not just go to your room or something. But other than that it's the same. Like you go home you see your mom and your dad. But other than that. And obviously the language. When I was younger my mom would speak in Arabic and I'd reply in English. I would understand it but now I can speak Arabic. So, but that's about it (Mohammad, male, 21).

The differences to which both Mohammad and Hanan allude are reflective of Zhou's (1999) observations that immigrant groups and their offspring set up boundaries to differentiate themselves from the wider society as a way of reaffirming their ethnic identities. Ethnic boundaries are fluid and situational and change depending on how individuals are positioned within the larger society. Illustrated by Mohammad's comments above, the second-generation respondents in this study demonstrated an understanding of their situations at home and outside the home as being different, yet both legitimate, requiring a need to navigate between these two worlds. Consistent with other findings on second-generation Muslims living in the West, the participants in this study also revealed feelings of belonging “neither here nor there” and the need to

negotiate the “in-between” space to which they felt they belonged (Samad 1996; Nagra 2011; Ramji 2008). Such feelings of “Otherness” stemmed from their inability to conform to what was expected by them, both from their parents, as well as the larger Canadian society (Said 1978). Return visits to their parent’s country of origin further complicated their sense of belonging.

And it's, when you go back home to Lebanon you think, I am not you. And when you come to Canada, you think, I am not you [laughs]. You don't know who the hell you are! But um but I think I have the best of both worlds (Dunya, female, 25).

The ongoing nature of acculturation meant that the participants were constantly dealing with two very distinct cultural forces, leaving their ethnic and national allegiances up in the air.

I can certainly relate to this notion of being caught between two worlds. Even to this day I see myself as not really being Canadian and not really being Pakistani. The biggest effect this has had is finding an identity without having a cultural nationality (Saeed, male, 28).

When you're there you want to come back here and when you're here, you want to go back there. So it's kind of just like, where do I really belong, do you know what I mean? It's weird to think of like I don't know. I call both Pakistan and Canada my home but I almost feel like I should be choosing and I don't know how to choose (Aneesa, female, 23).

When I go back to Libnan (Lebanon), just from the way I speak Arabic, they're just like you're not from here, are you. Yea and then if I'm here, you know, people are just like, you're different, you're Arab. So definitely, it's like this, you're caught in the middle between both worlds and none of them is accepting of you, no matter

where you go. And that's what I mean, we're this new generation of no home (Anwar, male, 22).

As the quotations by Saeed, Aneesa and Anwar above illustrate, many of the interviewees felt that visiting their parents' home countries resulted in feelings of uneasiness or not belonging, both physically and symbolically. These findings are in accordance with the work of Bhabha (2004), who describes this state as a third space involving identity negotiation, contestation and empowerment. For some respondents, these feelings would sometimes lead to resentment of their parents for their unwillingness to fully assimilate to Canadian culture. Dunya, a 25 year old with an immigrant father from Lebanon explains:

You would think that after living in the country for twenty five years he would have opened up, and adapted and understood the importance of being a part of the community that you're living in and not being different from it. For example, he'll like go out and cut the lawn and everything in his pajamas. And he'll think it's normal. And then he'll go like down the street and cut someone else's yard. He's so generous that way, but he's still in his pajamas. So the neighbours are like, hmm. And the way he drives, I can't go in a car with him because he will go 40 in a 60 zone or 80 in a 50 zone. Just doesn't understand the way things work. So because of that I'm always butting heads with him, because I want him to understand what it's like to be a part of this country, so that we cannot stand out. Because I feel like when I'm with him, we stand out.

Other respondents in the study also echoed the feelings of resentment Dunya expresses toward her immigrant parent. They described their parents' lack of trust in Canadian ways of engagement, and the subsequent "helicopter parenting" that resulted from it. Their parents' disapproval of drinking, being outside of the home too late and meeting up with friends they did not know made respondents feel and appear markedly different

from their non-Muslim peers. Interestingly, respondents did not convey feelings of resentment toward Canada or Canadians. In fact, they felt as if they were accepted as Canadian and all but two respondents denied any acts of discrimination targeted at them on account of their ethnic identity. In this way, the participants in this study are different from participants in other studies, particularly those in the European context, as it did not appear that they felt *excluded* or *unwanted* in Canada, but rather expressed a sense of dissimilarity from others that occasionally caused minor discomfort.

Accordingly, many of the respondents simultaneously felt as though having one or more immigrant parent made them unique as a result of the additional set of customs and conventions that shaped them and that they were able to access.

Just respect and like the manners that you get from like the Arab culture and like how you're, how you have to be so good to your elders, or your brother-in-law. Just your family, you have to be so nice, no matter what, no matter the situation. Whereas like in Canada, you don't really see that (Hanan, female, 18).

You're supposed to take care of your guests. But do you see those little details of how to take care of your guests, that's cultural (Zaheya, female, 22).

In fact, despite feelings of frustration and resentment toward their immigrant parents, most participants expressed access to more than one culture in positive ways. More than the manners and cultural conventions that the second-generation Muslims in this study adopted from their immigrant parents, nearly all respondents were happy with the religious teachings their parents brought with them from their Muslim majority countries of origins.

3.5.2 “Muslim First”

Living in a third space as a result of not belonging to either their parent’s ethnoculture or the wider Canadian “way of life”, there was a strong tendency for interviewees to rank their identities. Participants were quick and eager to identify themselves with an ‘Islamic’ identity which was overwhelmingly more important to their sense of self than any national or ethnic affiliation. Annas and Ibrahim shed light on the importance of religion in their lives, as the single most important way of self-characterization.

Yah, I have no allegiance, I don't care about nationality. I care about, yah, I don't... I appreciate culture. I love culture, oh my God. And I appreciate all this stuff. But personally I identify... I'm from Lebanon or from that geography, but it's Islam first. Well they're both [culture and nation] okay, but not at the expense of Islam (Annas, male, 44).

It's [Islam] the only thing that really matters. Religious or spiritual identity if you'll have it is, should be, the cardinal identity. All other identities being of secondary, tertiary importance, or being artificial and unimportant. Absolutely. Racial identity, nationalistic identity, cultural identity, um, identity with the type of music you like to listen to, the clothes you wear, the type of person... filial piety. In principle I would like Islam to absolutely dominate all facets of my relationship and interaction with my wife and children (Ibrahim, male, 28).

Nagra (2011) in her qualitative study of Muslims in Toronto also found that many of her respondents felt disconnected to their inherited ethnicities, and instead prioritized their Muslim identities. She suggests that Muslims are increasingly affirming their Muslim identities because it allows them to cope with heightened discrimination post 9/11. In this way, their identification with Islam could be considered reactionary and also oppositional, as the Muslims in her study increased their religious dress and practice to fit

into the 'us versus them' discourse that permeates our social reality. The participants in this study, however, saw these practices and rituals as a collective and empowering space, not as oppositional or reactionary.

Contrastingly, the *third space* discussed by the participants in this study, while instigated by ethnocultural marginalization, led them to identify with the Islamic *Ummah* or community, which in their minds was universal. These views are reflected in the statements below by Weam and Reem:

My dad was never really that religious, um but like he still from his siblings he was the more religious of his siblings because they were all very Westernized. But like he obviously wants [...] he considers himself very much Pakistani. And he'll always be like, oh you're in the MSA like who is the head of the MSA must be an Arab. He hates how Pakistanis are underestimated in the Muslim community so like he's very nationalistic and I see that in him more so. He's like you're Muslim, but you're Pakistani. He always reminds me of that. Whereas I identify more are being Muslim as well because that's something that I guess it's not even more that I don't have the attachment, it's more that I identify better with being a Muslim because there are a lot of times that I find that culture and religion sometimes conflict because we find that a lot of the culture for us has been taken from Indians which sometimes takes in Hindu religion as well (Reem, female, 21).

Hm, they are connected but obviously one has more of a stronger background, I think religion you can, any culture can go to religion and they'll have the same outcome, but cultures are so different that everyone can have their own book of culture. The religion can only, there's only one book. It's more universal (Weam, female, 26).

A strong indication of the primary Islamic identity of these respondents is the make-up of their social networks. Nearly every single participant expressed that the large majority of

their friends were also Muslim. However, not all of their friends were from the same ethnic or national in-group (i.e. Arab or South Asian).

That's what ties people together. Me and my friend were talking about it, like that's what, if I meet a Libyan person right now, and that just came from Libya, even though we have the Libyan background we won't connect as much as me... let's say, my friend is Somali, as me and a Somali person because we have our own culture. So like we, we'll connect more than our cousins back home because we literally have that basis, like religion and we understand, we have the same mindset and stuff (Kouthar, female, 18).

Others described how future marriage criteria would be based on a shared religious identity and shared religious practices, rather than tribal or national criteria. The demands of ethnic traditions and nation-states are thus transcended by an Islamic nation or *Ummah* whose unity rests on a common way of life guided by Islam and its principles.

3.5.3 Hybrid Identities

The findings thus presented are consistent with much of the literature on the second-generation migrant community, and on Muslim second-generation youth. The views expressed by the respondents in this study largely differ, however, from scholarship on the Muslim second-generation based out of some European countries, as shown in the work of Thomson and Crul (2007) or Ghorashi (2003) on the formation of a "Muslim First" identity among Muslim youth in Belgium and the Netherlands. While nearly all of the interviewees identified with being Muslim as their primary marker of identity, their sentiments and expressions suggested that this did not necessarily mean they abandoned the fundamentally liberal values espoused in Canada. Given the growing assumption by many Canadians that the tenets of Islam and Western ideals (i.e. freedom, equality,

democracy) are ideologically incompatible, participants were asked whether they thought living in Canada and being Muslim were contradictory or a source of struggle for them. They overwhelmingly responded that this was not the case. For example, Maghid discusses how being Muslim and Canadian have similar meanings for him and Magda describes how Western values can be identified within the Islamic tradition.

I think Islam if anything at all, it is the most compatible with Westernized thinking. More so than Christianity, more so than Judaism, I think it's the most. I think it's the way that you look at Islam. It talks about peace and justice and respect and treating everybody the same and having some sort of tolerance and a lot of those principles are more significantly portrayed through Islam than I think any other religion. I think that it's just people here have stopped caring about their religion mostly. So, they've decided that it's okay to pick and choose which principles to pull up... But at the same time like I can believe in Islam and I can value all of its tradition, and at the same time I can value all Westernized traditions but criticize it, criticize it without saying, oh okay that's not compatible. And I can also look at Islam and be part of Islam and be Muslim and criticize it. But then again not be like because you criticized it you're not Muslim. So I think you mesh. I think they're very compatible to answer your question, bluntly. I think they're very compatible (Maghid, male, 21).

You have a system in which if you look at true Islam and I'm not talking about any of the Islam that is practiced literally anywhere in the world today but you look at true Islam and the way that it was practiced during the Prophets time and you have the system of Shoura⁷ and that's a democratic notion. That right there proves that there is democracy when every person was asked their opinion... That's a democratic idea (Magda, female, 38).

⁷ Shoura – Arabic word for consultation or a consultative counsel.

In her statement, Magda raises an important point. She alludes to a version of Islam that is genuine, or a way that Islam ought to be practiced. Interestingly, many of the second-generation Muslims in this study reported feeling this way, and described how being born in Canada somehow made them *better* Muslims than those who were born in Muslim majority countries. That is, living in a free and democratic country, absent of tyrannical leaders and opposing power structures allowed them to practice an Islam that was untainted and pure. This version rejected cultural interpretations of Islam and instead emphasized “the significance of Islamic thought for all aspects of life” (Kibria 2007: 244). Bilal, a second year university student in Business describes this attitude in the following statement:

And now Islam in Canada is way more pure than Islam back home. And back home it’s all about groups. Like if you’re with HezobAllah, or you’re with Salaf or if you’re with Wahabi’s or if you’re with Fatah Islam. It’s like that’s not Islam. Like you think that’s Islam but it’s not (Bilal, male, 20).

Echoing Bilal’s sentiments, almost all respondents appeared to make a connection between practicing an “untainted”, “pure”⁸ version of Islam and living in Canada, as Canada’s equal and democratic structure allowed them the freedom to live religious lifestyles without political baggage. Therefore, being “Muslim First” did not necessarily lead to a weakened attachment to Canadian values. Most respondents highlighted Canada’s multicultural tradition, which entailed being respectful of other cultures and religions. Attachments to Canadian or Western values – for example, multiculturalism –

⁸ The use of the words “pure” and “untainted” in this context are not meant to convey a sense of moral superiority or imply that there exists a “pure” form of Islam. Rather, these terms are a direct reflection of the expressions used by respondent to identify the way in which their religious identification is less affected by ethnocultural influences.

was particularly evident when respondents were questioned about their support for the establishment of Shariah (Islamic law or jurisprudence) as a legal system of ruling for Muslims in the Muslim majority world. The large majority of respondents, while not denying the significance of Shariah to practicing Islam privately, preferred the Canadian legal system.

I think part of me want to say yes [to supporting Shariah] because I am a Muslim. But then the other part of me like if it is like that umm, stealing, I don't think that your hand should get cut off, that's not umm. But at the same time, I don't think we're interpreting that right cause like umm, I do know Islam is perfect and umm so but we are not (Amir, male, 19).

Umm so as soon as you allow a country to breed out of their constitution, of their laws or whatever and go into like, for example, like get their hands cut off, like every women like must wear the hijab kind of thing. That just like, it'll turn some people off in a way from Islam which is something that we don't want to do as Muslims. We want to bring everyone as much as we can to our religion and see the beauty behind it.... I don't want to be too extreme but as extreme as it is, if someone steals, their hands are to be cut off? (Ameen, male, 20).

The statements above illustrate the liberalization of Islam – that is, the interpretation of Islamic principles through a Canadian or Western lens – and they serve as a testament to the hybrid identities of the Muslims in this study. These participants uniquely identified as Muslim as their primary marker of identity; however, their Islam was coloured by their Western mindsets. Thus, despite Said's (1978) conceptualization of identity as involving and establishing opposites and 'Others' (and in particular the West against Islam), the second-generation participants interviewed denied the salience of a fixed dichotomy between Western values and Islam as a religious doctrine. Amir and Ameen in their

comments both identify with a version of Islam that highlights its beauty, despite both making reference to the cutting of ones' hands as an Islamic punishment for stealing. Many of the other respondents similarly ignored aspects of Islam that didn't fit into Canada's dominant culture, and consistently highlighted its beauty and tolerance for others. In this way their identities shifted, merged and transformed, challenging the idea of "a continuous, uninterrupted, unchanging, homogenous and stable" Canadian and Muslim identity (Brah 2001: 195).

3.6 Discussion & Conclusion

The findings from this study illustrate that the second-generation Muslims in this study share similar positions with all other second-generation migrants in the sense that they are forced to negotiate different identities and dissimilar and often conflicting worlds. In the case of the children of *Muslim* immigrants in this study, however, religion was used as a way to alleviate potential feelings of discomfort or uncertainty that could result from belonging "neither here nor there" The data suggest that respondents desired selective integration with mainstream Canadian society. Although they identified as "Muslim First", they picked and plucked specific aspects of Canadian culture to complement it, while rejecting others

The search for a pure or stable identity proved to be ineffective within this diasporic identity formation. The process of "cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Bhabha 1990: 211). The hybrid identities of these second-generation Muslims were markedly apparent in their primary identification with Islam but unwillingness to give up their Canadian sensibilities. The way they interpreted Islam was

coloured through a Western lens. The respondents celebrated notions of democracy, nationalism, liberalism, individualism, and humanism, ideologies often described in the media as ‘anti-Islamic’. In fact, they described those values as being able to freely practice their religion in the most ‘untainted’ way possible. Their hybrid identities, thus, question and transcend binary categories of ‘us versus them’. In attempts to uphold Islamic and Canadian values, the respondents redefined what it means to be Canadian and Muslim.

Finally, while only few respondents reported feeling discriminated against – and in fact most celebrated Canada’s multicultural policies – it is nonetheless important to situate second-generation Muslim’s identity formation in a post-9/11 context. With fears of growing Islamic extremism in the West, we must ask: what is the relationship between Islamophobia and religious extremist behaviour? At what point do Muslims abandon the potential hybridity in their identities and take on a strictly Islamic psychology? Questions such as these point to a limitation in this study: the inadequate information gathered regarding participant social class. For example, the participants interviewed tended to be highly educated and came from relatively economically integrated families. As such, the quotations and reflections presented in this study demonstrate a highly reflexive group of individuals. Based on these interviews I infer that the type of hybrid identity epitomized by the respondents in this study may be based on the possession of certain forms of capital (economic and cultural), and that radicalization would thus be less prevalent among individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Thus, the findings highlighted in this study likely differ from other studies of second generation belonging. For example, in Valentine et al.’s (2009) study in the UK and Denmark, the authors

found that the immigrants and their children living in those countries entered as dependents or refugees, resulting in their low social class positions. Moreover, the interviews also revealed possible tension between second-generation Muslims and their immigrant parents that needs to be further explored. Little research has been dedicated to understanding the relationship between Muslim immigrants and their children and the way in which they identify with Islam, with a nation, or with a particular culture.

3.7 References

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Chapter 4

4 Negotiating Gendered Norms: An Intergenerational Comparison of First- and Second-Generation Muslim, Canadian Women

4.1 Introduction

A growing literature on the identities of Muslim immigrants and their children has emerged and has demonstrated quite extensively that Muslims living in the West are likely to identify as Muslim before any other marker of identity (i.e. national, ethnic, etc.). Some studies on “Muslim First” identifications exhibit that being Muslim is an oppositional identity in response to discrimination and prejudice against Muslims by the host society (Kofman 2005; Lestaeghe 2000; Modood 2007; Valentine et al. 2009; Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007). Contrastingly, in Canada, studies have revealed that Muslims, both first- and second-generation, are redefining themselves as both Muslim and Canadian; rejecting claims that Islamic ideals and Western values are somehow incompatible (Nagra 2011; Zine 2008; Mishra and Faegheh 2010; Vertovec and Rogers 1998). While a recent plethora of literature has emerged since 9/11 on the identification of Muslims in the West, and particularly on their identification as “Muslim First”, very few studies have described what being “Muslim First” really entails or how the religious expression of Muslims may vary across generations. Even fewer have addressed the relevant issue of gender within Muslim communities, and how it impacts the ways in which Muslims, and specifically Muslim women, must negotiate and redefine their identities as Muslim Canadians. While gendered migration and settlement is an important issue to examine amongst all immigrant communities, it is particularly salient for Muslim

women whose religious identities are often openly visible through their veiling. Accordingly, in the following paper I examine the ways in which diasporic or hybrid identities of Muslim-Canadian or Muslim *and* Canadian are configured through gender across immigration status by focusing on the familial gender ideals and gender relations of first- and second-generation Muslim women living in Canada.

My findings reveal that the gendered expectations of Muslim women living in Canada differed across immigrant generational status. Immigrant Muslim women represented themselves as the guardians of cultural and religious integrity. Many of them adopted and reinforced a gendered expectation for their daughters as future mothers and wives. Second-generation Muslim women born in Canada, by contrast, renegotiated their gendered identities by combining parental and cultural⁹ assumptions regarding their gendered responsibilities with alternative influences such as attending university or working before marriage. In doing so, young second-generation Muslim respondents challenged the binary of “traditional” (immigrant) versus “progressive” (Canadian) values by creating alternative hybrid identities.

4.2 Gendered Migration

Studying the contribution of gender to immigrants’ experiences in their host societies offers serious insight into the challenges and integration processes of migrants and their families. Cross-cultural evidence indicates, for example, that gender is invested with

⁹ Culture “consists of... symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal... practices such as language, gossip, stories and rituals of daily life” (Swidler 1986: 273). Furthermore, within the confines of this study, culture is rooted in the Arabic word *izzat* which refers to the protection of one’s family honour.

substantial social meaning across varying cultures and societies (Stockard and Johnson 1992). Ongoing developments in feminist theory since the 1980s have contributed to a focus on gender as a core organizing principle that underlies migration and other related processes, including for example, adaptation to one's host society and contact with one's country of origin (Thadani and Todaro 1984; Boyd 1989; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000). Moreover, feminist developments emphasize the importance of *gendered* migration patterns, as opposed to patterns of movement varying by sex, which is understood as behaviour based on biology (Thadani and Todaro 1984; Boyd 1989; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000). Boyd (1994) conceptualises gender, particularly as it pertains to immigration, as socially constructed in the following way:

Gender is seen as a matrix of identities, behaviours, and power relationships that are constructed by the culture of a society in accordance with sex. This means that the context of gender – what constitutes the ideals, expectations, and behaviours or expressions of masculinity and femininity – will vary among societies (412).

Boyd's (1994) definition suggests that gender is not immutable, but rather, changes and can be reconstructed throughout time and place. Despite these theoretical nuances, in earlier accounts of migration literature, women "were essentially... left out of theoretical thinking about migration" (Brettell and Simon, 1986: 3). Boyd (1986) contends that by focusing mostly on the experiences of male immigrants, early research on international migration resulted in female immigrants' becoming either invisible or stereotyped.

Early literature on female migrants focused on issues related to female immigrants' entry status, their participation in the labour force of their host society, and the relationship between employment and family work. These earlier studies paved the way for a more in-

depth examination of female immigrants and their gendered migration experiences. For example, in early research by Boyd (1986) and also by Witterbrood and Robertson (1991), the researchers found that married female immigrants to Canada who entered as dependents (i.e. spousal visa or family unification) faced risks related to their entry status as dependents. They found that women with lower levels of education and poor labour market skills were particularly vulnerable. Even under more favourable circumstances where female immigrants entered their host societies with high levels of education, substantial incomes and labour market experience, they did not always experience comparable benefits post-immigration to men (Boyd 1986).

One notable study by Noh et al. (1992) examined the rates of depression and factors leading to depression among Korean immigrants in Toronto and concluded that women had a higher incidence of depression than men. The authors hypothesized that factors related to household power and decision-making, such as holding good employment, should enhance women's power in the family, resulting in less psychological distress. Interestingly, Noh et al. (1992) found that rates of depression among Korean immigrants were higher for all women, including those women who were employed. Thus, "women seemed to be greatly disadvantaged in capitalizing on the mental health benefit of social resources such as education, marriage, employment and income" (Noh et al. 1992: 580). Of most importance, however, is that Noh et al.'s (1992) study demonstrated the strong social-structural factors that may facilitate the personal well-being and integration of immigrants into their host societies. Noh et al. (1992) suggest that their findings on Korean immigrant women are related to their main role which primarily involved homemaking and parenting. Employment, they argued, may have been understood as a

stress trigger as it often conflicts with domestic and parenting responsibilities. Similarly, Dion and Dion (2001) suggest that greater rates of depression among working immigrant women may be attributable to the process of renegotiating their role within their larger family, specifically spousal roles, as a result of their changed circumstances in their new homes.

Role negotiation and gender-related issues pertaining to immigration were highlighted in a study by Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992) on Mexican immigrant women and men in the United States. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992) observed that the decision to migrate was generally made by the husband in a household, and in most cases resulted in husbands and their families being away from one another for great lengths of time (particularly for Mexican men who found employment as temporary seasonal agricultural workers in North America). The authors found that when couples with traditional gender roles were away from one another for long time periods, both partners took up the responsibilities traditionally assumed by the other spouse. Thus, husbands who resided away from their families (and often with other migrant men) found themselves learning domestic household skills they had previously not performed. Similarly, wives that remained behind at home continued caring domestically for their families, but also had to provide for them too. Importantly, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992) discovered that these women developed a strong sense of autonomy and satisfaction while their husbands were away, and once reunited with their husbands, traditional gender-related expectations had changed as women expected their husbands to be more involved in housework. Accordingly, once reunited, couples who were away from one another for a substantial length of time were less likely to occupy traditionally gender-based divisions of labour.

Hondagneu-Sotelo's study (1992) demonstrates the ways in which gender contributed to the migration process, and the changes in role-related behaviour during and post-migration. However, gender also contributes to the cultural adaptation and integration of immigrants once they have settled into their new host countries, including childrearing. Specifically, how does the gendering of migration and associated role negotiation implicate gender role norms for the children of immigrants who either grow up or are born in their host societies? Research on the children of immigrant parents demonstrate that the nature of their socialization is also gendered. For example, studies on immigrant families from various ethnocultural groups illustrate that there is a greater restrictiveness and surveillance of daughters' than sons' behaviours. These gendered differences were typified in the domain of peer relationships and in parental concerns about the practice of dating and unsupervised mixed-gendered interactions (Ghosh 1984; Pettys and Balgopal 1998; Wakil, Siddique and Wakil 1981). Dion and Dion (2001) argue the following: "if important values and behaviours in the parents' society of origin differ markedly from those perceived by parents to be prevalent in the receiving society, they may attempt to regulate their children's exposure to aspects of the receiving society that threaten important values" (516). Studies have indeed shown that there are higher expectations for daughters to embody traditional beliefs and behaviour, compared to those for sons (Dion and Dion 1993, 1996; Yung 1995; Williams et al. 2002; Sarroub 2001). According to Dion and Dion (2001) the values regarded most important to immigrants and potentially most threatening are often those pertaining to family relationships, family traditions and "values associated with domains in which women are central figures, such as child rearing and maintaining specifically cultural behaviours and practices" (517).

Despite these high expectations for the daughters of immigrants in the host society, there is evidence of differences in values between immigrant parents and their children, particularly pertaining to heterosexual interaction, romantic love partners/practices, and choice of marriage partner (Dion and Dion 1993, 1996; Yung 1995; Williams et al. 2002; Sarroub 2001). Research has shown that daughters from immigrant families might be more likely to reject traditional beliefs and values, yet do not want to be rejected from their families. For example, in a study by Lee and Cochran (1988), Chinese women reported feeling trapped between familial and cultural traditions, on the one hand, and a need for personal development and growth on the other. A similar study by Salgado de Snyder et al. (1990) found that among Hispanics, women reported greater stress than men when it came to cultural/family conflict. For other women, evidence has demonstrated that “differential gender-related socialization pressures may heighten the psychological salience of ethnocultural heritage for women compared to men from immigrant families” (518). For example, in a study by Dion and Dion (1999) of multiethnic university students, the authors found that women from immigrant families demonstrated a stronger desire to understand the meaning of ethnic traditions compared to their Canadian-born male counterparts. A similar account can be found in a study by Das Gupta (1997) where the daughter of an Indian immigrant chose to focus her university education on South Asian Studies, which was her way “of cherishing and learning more about her Indian heritage, which, she felt, was interpreted too narrowly by her community” (585).

Although the majority of studies on the gendered nature of immigration and the affiliated gender role negotiation of immigrants and their children focus on the ethnocultural impact of gender socialization, there are some studies that focus on the influence of

religious affiliation and gender role attitudes. A body of literature on Judeo-Christian influences finds a strong relationship between fundamentalist religious ideology and gender traditionalism (Bartkowski 2001; Bartkowski and Read 2003). Upholding family and gender relations are among the most important traditions for all major religious denominations. Studies pertaining to religion and gender often highlight how religion reinforces traditional gender expectations in order to maintain subcultural social attitudes. Research has demonstrated, for example, that Orthodox Jews and conservative American Protestant groups based in strong patriarchal structures, hold more traditional gender role attitudes than women who belong to more moderate denominations, such as Reform Judaism, or have no religious affiliation at all (Hardacre 1997; Peek et al. 1991). Less is known about the relationship between Islam and gender role attitudes (Read 2003). And even less is known about how the children of Muslim immigrants may reinforce or challenge gendered norms enforced by their immigrant parents (Read and Bartowski 2000). Accordingly, in the following section I will focus on the gendered nature of Islam, and in particular, the roles and norms upheld by Muslim women.

4.3 Women in Islam

Within the context of heightened attention toward Islam and Muslims in the West, a larger focus has been placed on Muslim women. Both at the local and global levels, questions regarding her immigration to and integration into the West, the contentious treatment of women in Afghanistan under oppressive Taliban rule, and of course any number of hijab/burqa/niqab bans across the Western world, epitomize the figure of the Muslim woman in the West. Islam, as a consequence, is portrayed as inherently patriarchal and violent, rendering the Muslim woman subordinate or subjugated (Jiwani

2008). This portrayal of the Muslim woman has become so pervasive that Mariam Cooke (2008) has argued for the adoption of the idiom *Muslimwoman*, as an attempt to evoke a singular identity: “*Muslimwoman* draws attention to the emergence of a new singular religious and gendered identification that overlays national, ethnic, cultural, historical, and even philosophical diversity” (Cooke 2008, 91). Bilge (2010) similarly argues that Muslim women have come to symbolize the “clash” between the West and Islam. This line of argument often follows the idea that “the barbarism of Islam is principally evident in the treatment of women” (Razack 2008, 84) and that Muslim women are in need of saving (Khan 2009, 138).

The fruition of the oppressed Muslim woman in the West, most notably in France, can be epitomized in the banning of the niqab/burqa (facial veil) in citizenship ceremonies; or in the representation of honour killings as backward, barbarous, patriarchal families killing progressive and Westernized women (Cooke 2008). Despite considering itself a model multicultural society, in Canada, the *Muslimwoman* is represented in the fear of Sharia (Islamic law/jurisprudence) in Ontario and Quebec because of its apparent negative impact on women’s lives. But perhaps more than with any other issue, the West has long been preoccupied with Muslim women and the veil. From the banning of hijab (headscarf) on soccer fields to restricting them in certain places of employment, the veil or headscarf has come to present the outwardly physical representation of Islamic patriarchy (Bakht 2008). Despite such assumptions however, few empirical studies actually document the effects of Islam on Muslim women’s attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

Although the act of veiling precedes the establishment of Islam, the veil today represents a universal symbol of women's oppression within a patriarchal religious culture (Read 2002, 2007). This belief may derive from the relatively low levels of educational attainment and low rates of labour force participation of Muslim women in the Arab world (Ahmed 1992; Williams and Vashi 2007). According to Islamic text and scripture, a woman is encouraged to veil as a way to deemphasize her physical beauty and attract less physical attention onto herself. In their study of the Quran (Islamic scripture), Islamic scholars note the infallibility of veiling based on various verses, such as:

O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies (i.e. screen themselves completely except the eyes or one eye to see the way). That will be better, that they should be known (as free women) so as not to be annoyed. And Allah (God) is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (Quran 33:59).

Proponents of hijab argue that it compels others, particularly men, to focus on the personality of a woman, rather than her physical beauty. Thus, Muslim women ostensibly wear hijab in an attempt to both appease the orders of their Lord, and also to detract attention away from their physical appearance.

However, studies of transnational Muslim women indicate that there is significant diversity and variability regarding the reasons why Muslim women wear the veil in many Western countries (Read and Bartowski 2000; Killian 2006). According to Read and Bartowski (2000), for example, some Muslim women in the West wear the veil as an oppositional tactic against the wishes of their fathers and husbands, and also in part to deal with the marginality they experience as outsiders in their perceivably discriminatory

society. In another study by Bartowski and Read (2003), the authors argue that women wore the veil in order to expand their opportunities within co-educational workplaces and occupations that might otherwise be considered inappropriate for non-veiled Muslim women (Bartowski and Read 2003). A study by Williams and Vashi (2007) on hijab and Muslim American women posits that hijab represents a marker of identity that epitomizes the negotiation of identity and gender roles for second-generation American-Muslim women. In their study, Williams and Vashi (2007) found that many Muslim women made a conscious decision to wear the hijab, though the reason for wearing hijab varied significantly for each respondent. For example, some women wore hijab as a way to oppose their assimilating Western parents while others wore it to oppose their highly cultural, non-religious parents:

They are creating a cultural space for the development of autonomous selves through the use of the potent religious symbol... they are able to carve out some autonomous cultural space with a public symbol that visibly repudiates the overly individualized culture of dominant American society and that gives them some room to feel at home and to prosper in both worlds (Williams and Vashi 2007, 285).

Williams and Vashi (2007) conclude in their study that regardless of the situation their Muslim female respondents found themselves in, they relied on the legitimacy of Islam, as opposed to the “polluting effects of [parental] culture” as an ongoing source of identification (286).

Despite the popular stereotype of Muslim women as Islamic traditionalists – veiled and secluded within the home – few empirical studies document the actual effects of Islam on Muslim women’s attitudes and behaviours. In a landmark study, Jen’nan Ghazal Read

(2003) examines the impact of religion on the gender role attitudes of Muslim and Christian Arab-American women. She suggests that “cultural stereotypes of Arab-American women tend to collapse religion and ethnicity into synonymous components of culture, portraying them as veiled Islamic traditionalists” (Read 2003, 2008; also see Shakir 1997; Suleiman 1999; Terry 1985). Read’s (2003) study, thus, sets out to examine the impact of Muslim affiliation and religiosity on women’s degree of gender traditionalism. Using national survey data in the United States from over 500 Arab-American women, Read (2003) finds that Muslim respondents are more gender traditional than their non-Muslim peers. However, upon a more in-depth examination, Read (2003) concludes that when controlling for ethnicity and level of religiosity, religious affiliation (i.e. ascribing to Islam or to Christianity) becomes insignificant. Once participation in ethnic organizations and belief in scriptural infallibility were controlled for, the influence of Islamic affiliation on gender traditional roles disappeared (Read 2003). This means that Islam as a religious denomination does not directly affect the gender ideologies of Muslim women. Rather, culture and religiosity (how religious the respondents claim to be) across all religious denominations are the most significant determinants of gender traditionalism.

Read’s findings that culture act as a significant factor in purporting gender traditional beliefs are further supported in a study by Evans and Bowlby (2000) on migrant Pakistani women’s experiences in Britain. The authors find that Pakistani Muslim women are constantly negotiating boundaries between their homes, communities and their places of employment. They argue that the ways in which Muslim women engaged in their paid work necessarily depended on their recognition of a larger South Asian Islamic culture.

They found that maintaining links with Muslim and Pakistani family and friends was very important to the respondents in their study. Making visits to Pakistan, Evans and Bowlby (2000) reveal, was particularly important in relation to the marriage of their children. Thus, Pakistani and Islamic culture were highly prioritized to ensure the socialization of children into these cultures. Accordingly, the willingness to enter paid work for some of the women in the study was curtailed by home and community-based activities. The place of paid work amongst British Pakistani women was contested, and the respondents espoused a number of competing ideas about what constituted appropriate work, dress and appearance. Importantly, these differing ideas, according to Evans and Bowlby (2000), were strongly related to the class position and life stage of the women interviewed. For example, Pakistani Muslim professionals did not always find working outside the home at odds with their identities as Muslim or Pakistani, whereas nonprofessional women only really engaged in paid labour as a financial necessity to support their families.

In line with studies by Dion and Dion (2001) and Salgado de Snyder et al. (1990) there has been some evidence to suggest that parental control of second-generation Muslim girls is much stronger than for boys (Naidoo 1984). In a study of young, second-generation British South Asian Muslim women, Dwyer (2000) suggests that young Muslim women in Britain rework their gender identities in relation to both familial/cultural gender expectations, as well as racialized and gendered stereotypes of a South Asian Muslim woman. Using qualitative interviews, Dwyer (2000) contends that identification with a wider “Muslim diaspora” (3) allowed individuals to renegotiate their gendered identities on a daily basis. For example, Dwyer posits that respondents in her

study cited Islamic authority to support freedom of choice with regards to marriage partners. She also finds that young Muslim women negotiated their gendered identities through their dress (i.e. creating new forms of style and dress) that combined traditional Islamic clothing with “English” apparel (Dwyer 2000, 481) in a hybrid fashion, establishing a reformed Muslim identity.

4.4 Conceptual Framework & Research Questions

The theoretical approach taken in this paper is one that understands identity as a contextual and relational position, rather than one that is fixed (Hall 1992b). According to Dwyer (2000) young Muslim women living in the West may be defined as members of a new diaspora that has been created out of postcolonial migrations. Drawing on Brah (1996) and Hall (1992a, 1992b) she suggests that diasporic identities cut across and displace national boundaries, leading to the creation of new forms of belonging. Diasporic identities, by redefining notions of home and belonging, challenge the notion of a fixed identity in relation to place (Dwyer 2000). For Hall, diasporic identifications are about living “in translation” (1992a 310). He argues that individuals “must learn to inhabit two identities, to speak two cultural languages, to translate and negotiate between them” (Hall 1992a, 310). Hybrid or identities “in translation” are said to be a result of the global scale of an increasing proportion of economic relations, and the existence of transnational labour market flow (Appadurai 1990; Bhabha 1990; Gilroy 1993). However, despite an appreciation of and attention to the multiple, contradictory and fluid nature of identity, much of the literature on diasporic identity neglects the issue of gender.

Accordingly, like Dwyer (2000), I suggest that diasporic identities are necessarily gendered and that, in turn, gendered assumptions and expectations of what it means to be a woman or a man shape the negotiation of diasporic identities. Gender relations are significant to social processes of identity construction. Brah (1996) has attempted to deal with issues of gender (as well as class) with regards to notions of diasporic identity and posits that individuals' multiple subjectivities are formed in the context of the social production of possible positions and expressions of identity, such as the public, political expression of group identity (Brah 1996). She suggests that gendered identities are performed and reformed through social discourses and relationships that individuals live out in their daily lives which are then used by employers and coworkers as the basis for significant social categories (Brah 1996). For example, in her 1994 work on South Asian women, Brah suggests that the labour market situation of Pakistani Muslim women may be simultaneously constructed and reconstructed through processes of economic restructuring at the global and regional levels; national and local social policies concerning immigration; gendered political and religious discourses; and by the actions of women acting collectively or individually. For many immigrant women, the experience of entering the labour market, for instance, has involved a gradual negotiation and transformation of their identities.

In this paper, I will apply a notion of identity as fluid, rather than fixed, and situational, rather than grounded in time or space, and also gendered. This approach contrasts with earlier studies on identity and migration which emphasized "cultural conflict" between various and "competing" identifications and loyalties (i.e. ethnic, national, religious) (CRC 1976). By employing such a notion of identity, this paper aims to contribute to the

ongoing discussion surrounding the attitudes and identifications of Muslim women living in the West, and specifically in Canada. While the bulk of studies on Muslim immigrant women and their children focus almost exclusively on veiling and the symbolic discourse that accompanies it, this study will contribute to the debate by understanding the veil as part of a larger discussion on the negotiation of gendered roles, beliefs and values. In this way it will focus on the religious lives and attitudes of first- and second-generation Muslim women living in Canada and how they may or may not reinforce, oppose, and/or renegotiate their roles as Muslim women. Accordingly, I put forth the following set of research questions: First, how do immigrant Muslim women define their roles as Muslim women living in Canada and how does migration and resettlement implicate gender role identification? And second, how do second-generation women negotiate their gender expectations, and how do they negotiate them specifically as the children of immigrants?

4.5 Methodology

I aim to answer these questions with a sub-set of data taken from a larger study of 50 first- and second-generation, self-identifying Muslims in London, Ontario. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) provided funding for this study. Participants were recruited through advertisements in local mosques and Muslim Student Associations' student newspapers, and through announcements made before and after Friday congregational prayers by Muslim community gatekeepers. The study consisted of interviews of Muslim immigrants from Muslim majority countries, as well as the children of Muslim immigrant parents who were born in Canada. The interviews were conducted over an eight-month period, beginning in October 2013 and concluding in June 2014. All participants lived in London, Ontario at the time of their

interview. The immigrants interviewed came to Canada from a variety of countries across the Middle East and North Africa. Second-generation respondents were all born in Canada or arrived before the age of ten. One or both of their parents were born outside of Canada.

All participants identified as Muslim and came from Muslim backgrounds and families. The classification of these participants as Muslim was a methodological choice on behalf of the author as well as participants' own identification with it. This decision is not meant to essentialize the diversity in the different degrees of Islamic practice among Muslims, or varying sects of Islam; however, because the overall study is concerned with the effects of religious – specifically Islamic – identification on the gendered identities and behaviours of first- and second-generation Muslim women, I found it necessary. The central aims of this research study were to investigate the generational differences in the way in which first- and second-generation Muslim women negotiate their gendered identities. As such, the female respondents discussed their views on gender roles, where they came from and their need to continuously negotiate those views in light of their position in the greater global society.

The interview quotations in the analysis reflect the actual transcripts as closely as possible with a few minor editorial changes to make them more readable. Pseudonyms will be used throughout to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants. Finally, it should be stressed that the findings from this paper are not meant to be generalized to all second-generation Muslims living in London, Ontario or in any other city. Instead, this paper is meant to offer productive insight and interpretations, to

hopefully stimulate further investigations and raise awareness of the challenges such participants may face.

4.6 Findings

4.6.1 Immigrant Muslim Women: Reinforcing Gender Traditions

The attitudes and opinions conveyed by the first-generation Muslim women interviewed for this study demonstrated a strong ideological attachment to traditional gender norm ideals typified in a normative, nuclear family with a working man and a domestic woman. Many of the responses reflected a strong ethnocultural affiliation to Islam and the often conservative landscapes of the home countries of the women interviewed. This finding is in line with other studies that highlight the ways in which migrant communities often attempt to maintain their cultural integrity, and specifically the role that women play in the maintenance and practice of cultural, religious or ethnic values (Anthias 2001; Dwyer 2000). The quotations below by Dina and Feda highlight the strength of their gendered ideological beliefs and illustrate the ways in which immigrant Muslim women defer to and are obedient to their husbands, whether it be regarding domestic work, their husband's temperament, or even their religiosity.

I haven't worked, so I cannot relate to that path and I know how challenging it is... after I moved from Pakistan to Canada, I had children and stayed home with them. And I would say that my husband was, I would say a better follower (of religion). He probably had more knowledge than I would say I did in general when we got married, and Alhumdullilah (thank God) he didn't force me but like he guided me in the right way (Dina, Pakistan, 35).

Back home because a woman in the old days would wouldn't be too educated, she would stay home and cook and clean while her husband went out to work. But

now everyone is learning and going out (learning and working). If a woman is sitting at home and not working, she should work and clean and everything. If she is working, she should get help. To be honest, I lived with my husband and he never told me what to do. But if he was upset and wanted something, I would just keep quiet (Feda, Pakistan, 73).

Despite their strong attachment to Islam and their respective cultures, however, the immigrant women in this study were diverse in their levels of religious involvement and their overall strength of religious belief. Similar to Read (2003) and Evans and Bowlby (2000), the responses espoused by the women in this study demonstrate that while Islam is an important marker of identity, the strength of their religious commitment (i.e. level of religiosity) as well as their ethnic or cultural communities mostly influenced their gender attitudes, not Islam as a religious denomination in and of itself. Selwa in the quotation below sheds light on how she came to wear the Islamic veil. She explains how her decision to wear the hijab was based on a comment made by a male Muslim co-worker, rather than through a spiritual connection to God or Islamic scripture:

When I started the hijab, you know, I think I was the first one from our sisters and my sister-in law I think. And I was working at the hospital, it was, how you say, I always thought, how you say, when I go to the Hajj (religious pilgrimage) I will start wearing the hijab. And you know in the Khaleej you know Iran, Kuwait area, it was advertised, Iran how they wear their clothes. And I wasn't ashamed of my religion. You know, you know Ramadan, sometimes I go and pray, so one guy he came to me and he said to me, how come you're not wearing like those ladies are if you're a Muslim? It's unbelievable... but I came home and I can't sleep. I can't sleep! So the second day I came and I wear it and I went to work (Selwa, Lebanon, 70).

Selwa's quotation above, thus, demonstrates the power of culture and community in decision-making processes, insofar as she expresses her decision to wear the hijab as a reaction to the comments of another Muslim. While not explicit in her remark, Selwa, like many of the other first-generation Muslim respondents, reacted very strongly to gestures by others that she understood to be a form of shaming or embarrassment. The appropriate way to conduct oneself, and also the way to avoid feelings of shame and embarrassment, was to conform to the pressures of those around you, and in Selwa's case, those pressures were typified in the Muslim co-worker's comments. The power of shaming was similarly expressed by Hanan and her comments regarding marriage in Pakistan:

When I was in school in Pakistan... it was a British school, I met a lot of non-Pakistani men that were from other parts of the world but were you know Muslim still and the like. But I wouldn't have married someone from another race, because I knew that that wouldn't be acceptable. I would dishonour my family and likely be shunned. That was definitely driven by my culture (Hanan, female, Pakistan, 44).

While Hanan was not in any way against marrying a Pakistani man, her quotation illustrates that even the thought of not marrying a Pakistani without societal rejection would be inconceivable.

The degree to which the respondents ascribed to traditional gender norms did vary according to level of religiosity as well as strength of cultural and ethnic ties, and these factors were often further influenced by how long immigrant respondents had lived in Canada. Women who had been settled in Canada longer, for example, and who had gone to post-secondary school or worked were often less steadfast about traditional gender

ideologies. In fact, while Dina quoted above earlier admitted to having never worked in Canada, the majority of the women interviewed for this study did enter the Canadian labour market at some point in their resettlement process. Fedra, for example, relays how after settling in London, Ontario, she picked up many part-time, low paying jobs in order to assist with household expenses such as rent and groceries. Interestingly, some of the women who found themselves entering the labour market post-migration did not recognize their own contradictory attitudes about a traditional woman tending to the home. I argue that the dismissal of their own work as somehow contrary to their belief in traditional gender norms (typified in woman as homemaker) is part of the role negotiation that immigrant women engaged in. Other women, however, verbally expressed their hesitation to engage in paid labour:

I did not want to work but I knew I had to because my husband's paycheck was making it so we could you know live comfortable I guess... but I knew if I didn't work my kids would have to collect loans for school when they went to university so I started working so I could help save for that. It was hard but I worked from home so that I didn't have to be away from them during the day (Summayah, Palestine, 45).

This finding is reflective of Hondagneu-Sotelo's (1992) study on Mexican immigrant women who found themselves negotiating their roles when separated from their husbands due to migration. In this way, the attitudes and opinions conveyed by many of the female respondents mirrored other studies on immigrant women insofar as they highlighted the inevitable disturbance of traditional gender norm ideals generated out of migrating.

Yet, despite their role negotiation during the migrant resettlement process, and their adoption of working roles, nearly every woman interviewed still purported a belief in

traditional gender norms. These attitudes were further typified in the fact that most of the jobs occupied by the respondents were in positions that had flexible enough hours for their children. Although today we may no longer consider working outside of the home at odds with traditional gender norm ideals, a 2009 article by The Guardian considers why Muslim women from Bangladesh and Pakistan are some of the least employed women in the UK. Using data from the Quilliam Foundation, the author reports that among the women interviewed, fifty-seven percent expressed wanting a paid job. Interestingly, however, their reasons for wanting to work were strictly economical, stressing the point that they were not interested in a career. Not one respondent cited religion as the reason for not working; instead, the article reports that the overwhelming answer to why these Muslim women did not work was that they had to bring up their children and that placing children in a daycare or other child care facilities was frowned upon within their families and communities. The Guardian article speaks to findings from Noh et al.'s (1992) study on Korean immigrants suggesting that working Korean immigrant women reported high levels of stress and depression when they found themselves away from their domestic and parenting duties. Having not worked in their younger years Tima, in her quotation below, describes the difficulty in having to work jobs to provide for her children's education funds while separated from her husband during migration.

Yah it's hard. It's hard to do it. It depends on your headmaster (husband) and what you have at home. I was separated from my husband... but I thought I have to give my kids a good education. At that time my daughters were in maybe third year university and the boys were in first year university. I give them good education. I worked hard. Maybe in 2000 I started working in clothing store in Westmount mall. I worked there five-six years. After that I worked in Canadian Tire also but it was very hard (Tima, Pakistan, 66).

Summayah (Palestine, 45) similarly, in an attempt to lessen the financial struggle resulting from her husband's layoff, launched a paralegal services company from her living room, so as to continue her household duties while earning an income. Despite an overall lack of desire to be career driven women, the respondents interviewed did emphasize the importance of education, as exemplified by Tima. Many respondents did receive educations in their home countries, though once they moved to Canada they were unable to work in jobs within their educational fields. However, even amongst women who had little formal education before migrating, all female respondents did express a strong desire to see their children, and specifically daughters, attend post-secondary institutions, even if their degrees did not translate into future work. For many mothers, education contributed to the overall *izzat* of the family – that is, immigrant parents took pride, within the confines of their communities, in the education of their children.

Like my first daughter she got university, she was the second person in the university a girl from the Lebanese (community). The second girl to graduate. And my second daughter she did too... and everyone would say wow she's doing a PhD. So Alhumduillilah (thank God) after that many other girls started coming to university too (Selwa, Lebanon, 70).

Notably, Selwa's comment that other women within her ethnocultural community began attending university after her daughters did further reflects the communal motivations for engaging in certain behaviours among the immigrant cohort. Other women also described how having an education served to protect women from having to rely on an inadequate husband, particularly in the event of a divorce. However, no immigrant respondents discussed education as a means to a fruitful career. Whereas mothers found *izzat* in their daughters' education; for their sons, some immigrant women hinted that they found *izzat*

in their career choices and in being able to provide for their families (i.e. in being a doctor or a lawyer).

When probed further about where their particular gendered ideals originated from, most respondents admitted that traditional gender roles have historically always been the norm, and that they are simply obeying precedent.

My mom would always say, you do this and your brothers should do this. I don't think it's just Muslims that did this. Back then I think everyone did this, even women in the West. Women were just trained to do these things. It's just a natural, subhanAllah (God is Great) instinct I think for women always want to nurture their families (Mariam, Iraq, 38).

I believe in you know a man working and you know providing for his wife and children. I think they come from our parents, and our parents' parents and it was just more cultural that oh you're a Pakistani and you should do this, this and all that (Dina, Pakistan, 35).

While the quotations by Mariam and Dina above illustrate a seemingly simple explanation for why Muslim immigrant women reinforce traditional gender norms, they also highlight the ways in which gendered identities are performed and reformed through the conservative ethnocultural discourses that permeate the lives of migrants. As such, the respondents interviewed presented themselves as caretakers of cultural and religious norms and practices, attempting to preserve the sanctity of traditional gender ideologies that have been passed along throughout generations of their ancestral histories. Interestingly, Mariam posits that even non-Muslim women born in the Western world upheld similar values; however, her comment suggests that unlike non-Muslim women, Muslim women continue to carry forward those traditions. As both immigrants and

women, many respondents admitted to reinforcing and preserving gender traditional roles in order to set boundaries and expectations for their children – and moreover, to set an example for what they wished would be reproduced for their grandchildren as well.

4.6.2 Reproducing Gender Norms: Accounts from First- and Second-Generation Muslim Women

The migrant Muslim respondents in this study spoke about the necessity to instill in their children the important values and behaviours they adopted from their parents in their home countries. As in the research by Dion and Dion (2001), much of these values and behaviours were gendered. Mirroring previous studies on immigrant gendered socialization, the Muslim immigrant mothers interviewed demonstrated a higher expectation for their daughters than for their sons to follow ethnocultural and religious norms pertaining to gender (Ghosh 1984; Pettys and Balgopal 1998; Wakil, Siddique and Wakil 1981). In fact, female first-generation respondents rarely discussed the expectations they held for their sons, save for their desire to see them become abiding Muslims. For example, when asked whether or not instilling Islamic principles into their children at a young age was important, Abir replies by focusing almost solely on her daughter:

The point would be to instill a love of Islam or the Deen (religion) in the heart and mind of the child. The daughter or the son. And I pray that my daughter would be a good girl... and obedient and dutiful to her family and to God. That's... That is what a woman is supposed to be. And I pray to God every day that when she gets older she would be a very caring and nurturing mother and wife because I think that is what will make her happiest (Abir, Egypt, 34).

Abir in the above quotation demonstrates the active attempt at indoctrinating young Muslim women into nurturing and stereotypically feminine roles (i.e. wife and mother). She also alludes to the notion of a “good girl” as one that practices obedience and pledges duty to her family and God. The interviews also revealed that like other studies, heightened restrictiveness for second-generation Muslim daughters was particularly pronounced in the domains of dating, mixed-sex interactions and dress. This is highlighted in the reflections by Khadijah regarding her daughter’s upbringing:

I just thought my daughter would turn out like me. Monkey see monkey do. But I think... I don’t know I wanted my daughter to be better. I raised her to be a good girl... I didn’t want my daughter to have a boyfriend... that was a big deal. I didn’t necessarily teach her a lot of religion, or how to cook and clean really, but the way she dressed and acted outside the home in front of others was very important to us. I didn’t want to hear from someone in the community that she was dressing or acting like white girls (Khadijah, Pakistan, 42).

Like Abir, Khadijah also makes reference to the notion of a “good girl” which is epitomized in the *izzat* of the family or her ability to follow familial customs and traditions such as not having a boyfriend and dressing properly to avoid community gossip. Interestingly, Khadijah’s reflections about her daughter also illustrate a clear boundary or reference for behaviour specifically pertaining to her comment about “dressing or acting like white girls”. As mentioned earlier, Dion and Dion (2001) argue that when the values and beliefs of immigrants are being threatened in their new host society, they will readily regulate their children’s exposure to that society in order to protect them from it. Accordingly, by defining the notion of a “good girl” against the image of a “white girl” Khadijah’s comments represent a fear that emanated from all the

female immigrant respondents in this study regarding the potential erosion of traditional beliefs (both cultural and religious) and the assimilation of their children into the larger Western society.

Similar responses were prevalent amongst the second-generation Muslim women interviewed in this study as they admittedly recognized gendered parental expectations to follow traditional lifestyles.

It was important to my mother that my sister and I represent the family well. She always wanted people to say that bint (daughter of) so-and-so is so good and... and part of it was to make her and my dad look good but a big part of it was that she thought more guys would be attracted to us and be interested and courting us or whatever. And we fought about it all the time but she just didn't get that our generation didn't want to meet guys because the community thought we were good or whatever. My sister met her husband at university and I would also like to meet a guy on my own (Amal, 24).

I was always that kid that never got to go on overnight class trips because it was ayb (inappropriate) to sleep away from home especially where there are like guys and stuff. I would always beg my parents to be able to go but they would just be like no, we are Muslim that is not the way we do things. My mom was so annoying she'd always be like "when you're a mom you'll understand. You will be the same as me" and I always laugh and mumble "hell no" (Dalal, 26)

The comments by Amal and Dalal above highlight the way in which expectations by immigrant parents reinforce gender roles and emphasize the ways in which young women are expected to uphold their family's religious and cultural integrity. As these quotations by Dalal and Amal suggest, however, many of the second-generation Muslim women expressed an explicit rejection of these gendered parental expectations. Others, such as

Kouthar and Samar, express some pride in grasping certain cultural and religious competencies.

I was 12 (when I wore hijab). It's funny, my dad was talking to me about hijab. We were in Libya visiting for a year and he knew we were coming back to Canada but I didn't know. I think he was trying to encourage me to wear it before coming back to Canada... People just don't understand it. People are confused and they ask me why and I'm like, "I don't know, my dad just tells me". They're probably like, "her dad's strict and stuff". But now I look back on it and I am glad I did it and it really boosted my confidence (Kouthar, 18).

When I was younger I sometimes mistook the fact that my parents were stricter with me than with my older brother as them somehow liking him more. But when I got older I noticed all my Arab friends had similar experiences. Obviously I'd get really angry and stuff because I felt like they favoured him because he got to stay out so much later than me and went to parties with my parents knowing and everything. The idea that he be a good boy wasn't important like it was for me to be a good girl. But looking back I am actually so happy that they were strict with me because I think it made me take more pride in being Muslim and being able to say I stuck to those values my entire life (Samar, 27).

The quotations above demonstrate an acknowledgement that there is an expectation that young women should reproduce a gendered parental culture to uphold family honour and moreover, that these young women occupied a symbolic space as the guardians of their family. This is particularly evidenced in Samar eventual acceptance of the varying treatment between her and her brother. For Kouthar, this was manifest in the monitoring of her attire according to her father's wishes, and in particular in her veiling. Importantly, however, the variation in the attitudes and behaviours of second-generation Muslim

women, in contrast with their immigrant parents, illustrates how they challenge a fixed notion of identity that is grounded in their everyday lives as Muslim Canadian women.

4.6.3 Second-Generation Muslim Women: Hybrid Femininity

The previous section aimed to demonstrate the way young women's identities are shaped by familial expectations and notions of "appropriate" femininity which ultimately define Muslim women as guardians of religious and cultural integrity. Having outlined some of the ways in which gendered discourses structure the negotiation of identity for Muslim women, I now consider the possibilities for young, second-generation women to draw upon alternative identifications. First, I examine the possibilities for "hybrid" identities to transcend binary oppositions, and then I consider the ways in which Muslim identifications may offer a reworking of gender identities for second-generation Muslim women.

The second-generation Muslim women in this study embody what Hall (1992a) defines as living "in translation" insofar as they "inhabit two identities... speak two cultural languages... [and must] negotiate between them" (310). As native-born Canadians, but simultaneously the children of immigrants, the respondents demonstrated the fluid and hybrid nature of identity. In this way they redefine notions of home and belonging, typified in Reem's quotation below:

Sometimes there'll be certain things where you feel like you are surrounded by so many people that barely understand your values. That you start to feel so disconnected. You start to go toward one area like your old family friends and then you alienate yourself from them, and then you find other people around you still don't understand you. It is really tough for me to find people like me... like

people with my values. My white friends don't get it but neither do some of my South Asian friends either so I am constantly just maneuvering through that (Reem, 21).

In addition to occupying an “in between” space, as women, respondents expressed the heightened pressures of behaving in a particular manner that was in line with parental and community expectations. However, despite such pressures, the second-generation Muslim women demonstrated their positionality as “in translation” by constantly renegotiating gendered expectations from their parents and from their larger ethnocultural communities, both as Canadian born natives and in light of their religious beliefs. The possibility for new hybrid identities by way of constant negotiation and re-negotiation was best epitomized in discussions pertaining to respondents' dress, and regarding romantic relationships

Dress was one of the most important means through which young Muslim women negotiated their gendered identities. In accordance with the plethora of studies on hijab and veiling, motives for wearing hijab varied considerably amongst the respondents. Of the second-generation respondents, approximately half wore hijab. Amongst those that wore hijab, over half discussed their constant struggle with it and many had even repeatedly removed it and re-wore it many times throughout their lives. One way in which dress, and specifically hijab, offered a means for negotiating gendered expectations was in its ability to challenge meanings associated with “English” and “Islamic” or “cultural” clothing. Similar to findings by Williams and Vashi (2007), and Dwyer (2000), the second-generation women in this study created for themselves a space of their own through which they were able to develop their “autonomous selves through

the use of... potent religious symbol[s]" (285). For example, women wearing hijab also dressed in blue jeans and other "Western" types of clothing. In fact, even the way in which veiled respondents wore the hijab differed, with two respondents exposing their necks and ears, and another uncovering an inch or so of her hair. Perhaps the best example of Islamic and Western fashion fusion was typified in the career pursuits of Weam who was studying fashion at her local college. She spoke of her vision of designing high-end Islamic clothing so that veiled women were able to promote modesty without compromising fashion. Weam also remarks that,

...it doesn't say anywhere in the religion that you've got to wear Asian clothes or anything, it just says you've got to be covered. Like wearing a long shirt, like Westernised clothes which cover you up, there's nothing wrong with wearing that (Weam, 26).

Like Weam, other young women expressed the ability to challenge binaries between Islamic or cultural clothing, and Western clothing by, for example, wearing long skirts or other appropriate forms of modest clothing.

For other respondents, creating a hybrid identity through dress was less about subverting cultural expectations of how to dress, but were more about challenging the attitudes of their families or stereotypes that women who are veiled are also oppressed. Reem, for example, wore hijab against the wishes of her father and unveiled mother. And Sabrine below describes how her less religious and more culturally oriented family did not encourage her to wear the hijab, but rather she wore it out of her own volition, stressing the importance of having a sincere connection to the idea of veiling before actually putting one on.

My mother always talked about religion but like my mother doesn't wear a hijab. My father wasn't that religious. But I remember when I started taking the hijab he said if you are taking the hijab... because I had tried it like in grade 7 and I didn't... the kids weren't very nice to me... so when I did decide to wear the hijab I remember my father saying if you do decide to wear it it is a full time life commitment and I think that was his way of trying to deter me from wearing it (Reem, 21).

...the way I came to hijab. Like I wore it on my own like it wasn't introduced because it was just my culture, my family was more cultural, so I was like "Oh I am going to wear the hijab". And I wore it really young. But I, like for me, the way that I see raising my family, like I do want to give them, not that I want to say I want to give the child the option of choosing like a religion but I would say like I do want them to grow up with Islam and I want to do my part as a parent to give them everything that Islam has to offer. But for hijab, for example, I don't want to force it on a child but I do want to make it a really significant deal and I want them to have a sincere connection before wearing it (Sabrine, 28).

Hybrid dress that was both fashionably "Western" and also conformed to Islamic codes of modesty was particularly important for those respondents who explored a new Muslim identity. This identification draws on globalized imaginations of a transnational Muslim community or *Ummah* that connect Muslims in Canada with other Muslims all around the world. According to Lewis (1994) young Muslims are increasingly emphasizing a self-consciously Islamic identification that is often oppositional to their parental culture, which they suggest is often seeped in superstitions and traditions. Thus, for some of the respondents in this study, an Islamic identity as an alternative gender identity offered greater opportunities for women. These possibilities were best typified in the post-secondary educational pursuits and romantic preferences of the respondents.

All respondents expressed an expectation to get married and to raise children of their own. While such expectations were seemingly traditional, the second-generation respondents prefaced their desire for marriage and family with hopes of first completing their education and establishing a career in their fields. While not outside the expectations of their parents or their communities, their plans for marriage were negotiated as they consciously chose to delay it. When asked about plans for marrying, for example, Kouthar quoted a revelation from the Quran:

The Quran says “Ikrah!” which means “read” and I think the entire chapter it comes from really encourages us to learn and educate ourselves and I really do think that is so important (Kouthar, 18).

Among the married respondents, receiving a proper education was also imperative. All married respondents had completed university and worked before and after marriage. Magda and Zahra for example, defied communal expectations of who and when to marry.

We were... yah... you don't want to deal with my mom if we didn't do what she wanted us to do. But it's so cultural. I was over 30 when I got married. I got my Masters in Library Science. I was, I actually didn't, I don't want to say this, but I didn't want to get married, but then I found my husband and you know couldn't imagine my life without him (Magda, 38).

Like even when I got married to my husband. So weird saying my husband. He's Yemeni. So, my dad, he's very cultural, like that's one of the barriers. He's like Libyan, he has to be Libyan. So that's one of the things, he has to be a Libyan. Whereas my thinking and the culture that we have here in Canada is that he's Muslim... so what? (Zahra, 26).

As evidenced by the quotations above, in fitting with their “Muslim First” identification, there was also a strong justification to negotiate parental gendered expectations, as

exemplified in Zahra's preference for a Muslim husband over a Libyan-Muslim husband and also in Kouthar's remarks about the importance of education in Islam. By invoking Islamic authority, these women were able to have greater freedoms to pursue higher education and to be fully involved in the choice of their marriage partner.

A conscious Islamic identity, however, was not embraced by all of the second-generation female participants. Some expressed a respect for Islam but chose not to practice as strictly as their parents. For instance, a few respondents discussed having non-Muslim boyfriends against the wishes of their parents or without their approval. For these respondents, embodying a hybrid identity was in part a way to subvert gendered parental assumptions, but also a way of emphasizing cultural diversity and challenging stereotypes of the *Muslimwoman* (Cooke 2008) as a singular identity rooted in subjugation and oppression.

For my dad marrying someone Muslim is really important. He doesn't care as much if he's Pakistani, but Muslim definitely. But to me neither matters, just because you know and obviously if I found a Muslim guy that I liked of course I wouldn't have a problem with that but I don't know. I feel Muslims especially our age you know like younger girls and guys kind of have to change themselves to allow other kinds of values to come in. There's a lot of progressive Muslims, you know what I mean? There's a lot of progressive mosques that allow women to lead prayer, which don't put women in the back of the mosque, you know, it allows homosexuals to get married. That's the kind of Muslim that I would like to identify as and that I think more people should especially since we aren't living in Pakistan! (Aneesa, 24).

While sentiments such as Aneesa's above were less common among the other female respondents, she does highlight the wide range of attitudes and beliefs that exist within

the second-generation cohort, and most importantly, the variability in their identifications. Despite this, for many participants, connections to a wider Muslim community (progressive or traditional) was important, even if they viewed themselves as not religious. For example, among the respondents who were not veiled was an expressed appreciation for what the hijab symbolized, despite their choice to not wear one. Whereas Reem above made the choice to wear the hijab regardless of parental pressures not to do so, Aneesa below describes why she chose *not* to wear the hijab, despite having a mother and grandmother that do.

I understand that it (hijab) comes down to modesty. And obviously if my (potential future) daughter decided to wear the hijab or anything I would support her because I really believe in choice. But for me personally, I have read the Quran and the verses that are supposed to be like about um wearing headscarf and everything... and I just don't see it. I think it promotes modesty but to actually cover your hair is debatable. And I don't know if you ever read like Islamic feminists like Amina Wadud but they talk a lot about it (Aneesa, 24).

Aneesa's remarks illustrate the wide variation in Islamic doctrinal belief. Aneesa justified her choice to remain unveiled in accordance to a particular interpretation or reading of Islamic text. This was a very common practice among respondents interviewed and demonstrates ways in which these women consolidated their many fluid, and sometimes contentious, identities. Accordingly, the negotiation of gendered identities amongst the second-generation participants interviewed occurred in various ways within different contexts. The women prioritized different aspects of their compound identities depending on different circumstances. At times they drew on their parental and cultural inheritance, other times they relied on their Canadian or Islamic identities to build connections within

their respective communities. In doing so, they negotiated hybrid identities that emphasized a fusion of influences that challenged the common discourse surrounding what it means to be a Muslim woman. Like the expressions of the immigrant Muslim respondents, the gendered identities of second-generation Muslim women were also performed in the context of their multiple subjectivities, which are continuously formed and reformed through the discourses and relationships lived out in their daily lives. As the children of immigrants, the ethnocultural and religious discourses, the relationship they have with their parents and larger family, and the relationships formed with the greater Canadian society, involve a gradual and constant negotiation and transformation of their identities (Brah 1996).

4.7 Discussion & Conclusion

The first- and second-generation Muslim women in this study challenge the common portrayal of the Muslim woman, or *Muslimwoman* (Cooke 2008), as subjugated and oppressed. The thoughts and opinions expressed by the female respondents illustrates the variation in the experiences of Muslim women. In fact, the personal accounts of the respondents demonstrate the immense pressures and responsibilities that Muslim women, both immigrant and native-born Canadians, face in their daily lives. For instance, responses from the first-generation cohort revealed a strong belief in traditional gender roles, yet many admitted to having to work to provide an adequate life for their children. Accordingly, many immigrant women did engage in a double duty, taking responsibility for housework, child rearing and also paid work outside the home. Moreover, discussions from both immigrant and second-generation women exposed the enormous pressures that Muslim women face as guardians of familial integrity. First, for immigrant women, there

is a heavy onus to ensure that traditional ideals of what it means to be a good girl and a good wife are passed down along to their daughters. Amongst the second-generation women interviewed was an acknowledgment and recognition of parental and communal pressures to abide by. As Dion and Dion (2001) posit, immigrants often attempt to protect their values and beliefs against the impending threats of their host societies.

Significantly, the second-generation women interviewed in this study did not necessarily go against their parental expectations to be “good girls” but were definitely cognizant of those pressures. Some women were glad for parental encouragement to, for example, wear hijab; most, however, renegotiated the gendered norms inherited by their parents. On one level, as Canadians, these women did not testify to being held accountable by the ethnocultural pressures and demands that their parents brought with them from their home countries. As such, much of their gender identification was epitomized in a fusion between Islamic and Canadian values. Additionally, because of the unique space these women occupied – as being “in translation” (Hall 1992a) – many of the second-generation participants in this study rejected the cultural baggage of their parental ancestry, and even the norms and culture of the wider Canadian society, and identified more strongly as “Muslim First” . Other second-generation respondents displayed a shift toward a more secularized gendered identity and purported more open and liberal interpretations of veiling and dating practices. In this way the findings in this study differed from studies by Dion and Dion (1999), Das Gupta (1997) and Lee and Cochran (1988) on second-generation women that concluded that many young women actively sought out to understand the meaning of their ethnic traditions.

The gendered identities of second-generation Muslim participants, thus, differed from their immigrant parents and their expectations. Their choices regarding personal dress, including veiling, as well as their behaviours regarding marriage and courting were not based on ethnocultural or parental expectations, but rather on their interpretation of religious text and opinion. Significantly, the creation of “new” Muslim identities, shaped by wider globalized discourses that draw on an alternative Islamic diaspora, was understood by some participants as liberating insofar as they viewed Islam as encompassing the potential to unshackle young women from the constant pressures of being a “good girl”, dressing properly, marrying within the confines of one’s tribe and so on. However, it is equally important to note that even though many of the second-generation Muslim women in this study articulated a conscious Islamic identity that offered opportunities outside of parental and communal gendered expectations, the adoption of an Islamic identity does not necessarily equate freedom from *any* gendered expectations, and can thus also be seen as limiting in many ways.

Interestingly, the gendered expectations of Muslim women was further elucidated by the lack of responses by male participants on the issue of gender identity and negotiation. The absence of responses by male participants regarding the gendered experiences of Muslims speaks to the very nature and salience of gendered identities among my Muslim participants. I argue, thus, that, despite being literally absent from the data, the “male voice” is actually reflected in its very absence. The invisible cloak of privilege was evident among male participants as issues such as dress and proper behaviour outside of the home was never brought up among male participants, first- and second-generation participants alike. Subscribing to an alternative Islamic identity to transverse gendered

expectations, thus, did not appear to be tool utilized by male participants, further reinforcing the strong gendered expectations that female participants faced.

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Chapter 5

5 Conclusion

I began this dissertation project describing how instances of Othering in my early life in elementary school and later in high school, have led me to question my identity as a Muslim living in Canada. Having now concluded my doctoral research I realize that nearly fifteen years later questions pertaining to the identification of Muslims are still incredibly pertinent. More than that, through my interactions with first- and second-generation Muslims living in Canada, and through my own contemplation and reflection, I have come to understand the futility of searching for a single identity to define me or other Muslims like me. Rather, I discovered through interviews that we are, at times, Canadian, and at other times we are Muslim – that is, we draw on our various identifications when necessary and when most beneficial to us.

While my dissertation is not the first empirically based study to closely examine notions of identity and belonging among Muslims living in Canada, it is unique insofar as it is the only study thus far to explore these topics across generational status. We have extensive research on immigrant integration as well as on studies focusing on the assimilation of the children of immigrants; however, very few studies seek to understand the relationship – including the tensions, pressures, or support – between first-generation immigrants and second-generation children.

To this end, my dissertation explores a number of issues that are important to the experiences of Muslims, beginning with my first manuscript entitled Canadian and Muslim: An Examination of First-Generation Canadians Muslims living in Canada. This

study explores whether Muslim immigrants living in Canada constitute a Muslim diaspora (Moghissi et al. 2009) rooted in a collective consciousness of exclusion from their host society, a finding prominent in many studies on Muslims in Denmark and the UK (Valentine et al.), the Netherlands (Ghorashi 2003; Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007) and Belgium and France (Thomson and Crul 2007). The study demonstrated that while there was significant variation in the level and degree of religious practice among the participants interviewed, the immigrant respondents reported being Muslim as their primary marker of identity. Responses suggested that identifying as Muslim served as an alternative to other identifications, such as ethnic or national identities. In an attempt to probe whether or not the identification of “Muslim First” was induced by exclusion from the greater Canadian populace, I asked respondents about instances of racism or exclusion since their migration to Canada. And while the immigrant participants did express the struggles and challenges they experienced as newcomers during their initial arrival in Canada, which included “culture shock” and language barriers, the majority of respondents denied the salience of racism and discrimination (particularly based on their religion affiliation). Instead, for the immigrant respondents, *Muslim* and *Canadian* were complimentary identities, both rooted in ideals of treating others well and upholding the law. Notions such as treating your neighbours well and not stealing were cited repeatedly by respondents as being both Islamic and lawful.

Importantly, respondents described how Canada helped to foster a relationship with Islam that could not have been achieved in their home countries; they overwhelmingly expressed the freedom Canada afforded them in practicing their religion, particularly in light of the restrictive religious practices enforced in their home countries. Accordingly,

my findings are decidedly positive. My data highlight, to some degree, the success of Canada's multicultural policies. Penninx and Garces-Mascenaras (2014) theorize that immigrant integration is achieved by attempts made by individual migrants, as well as the openness of the society to accept them. The positive expressions and responses from the respondents in this study, as well as their willingness to identify as Muslim and as Canadian (and their negation of those identities as oppositional) demonstrates that Canada's immigration and multicultural policies have been effective in providing them with an open and accepting society.

Manuscript two, entitled Constructing a Hybrid Identity: An Examination of Second-Generation Muslims living in Canada, demonstrates the unique position that second-generation Muslims occupy as both the children of immigrants, as well as native-born Muslim Canadians. The second-generation participants in this study expressed the constant need to have to navigate between two worlds, and articulated feelings of belonging 'neither here nor there'. For example, many respondents relayed how they could not relate to the cultural tendencies of their immigrant parents, or to the country from which their parents originated. Simultaneously, because of the inevitable inheritance of parts of their parental ethnoculture, they also identified as separate from individuals with non-immigrant parents. Many respondents discussed how having to maneuver through two distinct cultural forces left them absent of any real national or ethnic allegiances.

Accordingly, drawing upon Bhabha's (2004) work, I suggest that second-generation participants inhabit a third space characterized as a space between two different and often competing worlds; a space that allows for identity negotiation, contestation and also

empowerment. Importantly, living within a third space was not necessarily regressive to the respondents' integration. Many reported their unique positions as "in translation" (Hall 1992: 310) in positive terms insofar as they were able to engage with two different worlds and gather knowledge and practices from varying cultures. Despite this, I discovered that as a way to alleviate discomfort or uncertainty resulting from their lack of connection with their parental ethnoculture or with the larger Canadian society, the second-generation participants reported identifying with Islam and the notion of an imagined Muslim community or *Ummah*. In fact, the interview data revealed that the participants were quick and eager to identify with an Islamic identity which was overwhelmingly more important to their sense of self than any national or ethnic affiliations. While all second-generation respondents identified as "Muslim First" and foremost, discussions with participants suggested that a "Muslim First" identity did not detract from their commitment to Canadian principles such as governmental rule by democracy, and tolerance and acceptance of all citizens regardless of race, gender and religion.

Similar to the immigrant participants from manuscript one of this study, the second-generation respondents also discussed how living in Canada allowed them to freely practice Islam however they wanted. Specifically, they discussed how living in Canada afforded them the luxury of practicing a pure and untainted version of Islam, one that was absent of political or sectarian baggage. Also, like the immigrants interviewed, the second-generation respondents discussed how Western values and Islamic traditions share much in common, despite assumptions that the two are ideologically incompatible. For example, many respondents discussed the volatility and impracticality of Shariah

(Islamic) governance and the importance of interfaith appreciation. Out of their third space occupancy, the second-generation Muslim participants in this study developed what Homi Bhabha (2004) defines as a hybrid identity, insofar as the respondents demonstrated a propensity to interpret Islamic principles through a Canadian or Western lens, and thus, fused together their various identities.

The embodiment of hybrid identities is further explored in my third manuscript, Negotiating Gendered Norms: An Intergenerational Examination of First- and Second-Generation Muslim Women living in Canada, which compares first- and second-generation Muslim women. Interview data demonstrated the generational differences, and to some degree, tension, in the gendered identities of immigrants versus native-born Canadian Muslim women. My findings demonstrated that immigrant Muslim women were highly constrained by their migrant (and ethnic) communities regarding what constituted appropriate behaviour. Rather than ascribe to religious teachings regarding gendered behaviour, the immigrant respondents interviewed often made decisions, such as wearing hijab, based on communal pressures and expectations. Regarding the socialization of their children, the immigrant participants expressed a strong desire to see their daughters adhere to traditional gender norms rooted in patriarchal authority and domestic duties (Anthias 2001; Dwyer 2000).

Although the second-generation Muslim respondents revealed their cognizance of parental pressures and did not actively reject them, they did negotiate them in light of their Canadian upbringing. Drawing on the work of Brah (1996) who suggests that gendered norms are often reconstructed through social discourses and relationships that women live out in their daily lives, the second-generation female participants spoke about

parental pressures to be the guardians of familial integrity. This included behaving like a “good girl” and to avoid unsupervised dating. Amongst the second-generation respondents, some conformed to parental pressures of how to properly behave as women; the majority of others, however, expressed resilience against gendered expectations from their ethnocultural backgrounds and instead renegotiated ideas about who and when to marry (i.e. marrying outside of their ethnic communities) and how to dress appropriately (i.e. choosing to wear hijab in some cases, and in others choosing to reject it).

The negotiation of gendered norms by second-generation respondents highlighted the hybridity of their identities as they often fused the expectations of their parents with anticipations from the wider Canadian society. Examples of this were best epitomized in the way in which young Muslim women dressed, often blending together the veil and other modest clothing with fashion forward Western attire. Despite interpretations of the *Muslimwoman* (2008) as oppressed and subjugated, the second-generation Muslim respondents I interviewed challenged binaries between Islamic/ethnic clothing and Western attire by renegotiating their identities as fixed, static entities. My findings are supported by other studies on Muslim women and veiling that suggest that Muslim women often adopt the veil as means of self-empowerment (Bartowski and Read 2003; Williams and Vashi 2007). It is important to note, however, that while the renegotiation of parental and ethnocultural expectations by the second generation is important, those renegotiations are often still rooted within patriarchal relations to some degree. For instance, for many respondents, identifying with an alternative Islamic identity allowed them to reject their inherited parental cultures; however, many Islamic principles

concerning women and their roles are not absent of patriarchal notions of how women ought to behave.

5.1 The Bigger Picture

The three manuscripts presented in this doctoral dissertation present a unique illustration of the experiences and identifications of first- and second-generation Muslims living in Canada. One key contribution of my dissertation has been the way it highlights how religion, and specifically in this case Islam, has the potential to mobilize individuals across borders, and also across generations. The study of globalized religion suggests that faith-based groups build international and transnational connections that transcend national boundaries. The identification of nearly all of my participants as “Muslim First”, regardless of their level of religiosity, confirms these suggestions.

Taken together and as a whole, the three manuscripts presented in this doctoral dissertation raise a number of questions pertaining to the intergenerational similarities and differences between first- and second-generation Muslims, and importantly, the sometimes subtle but often blaring paradoxes generated out of those similarities and differences. In fact, my dissertation is the first of its kind to qualitatively document the expressions, experiences and identifications of Canadian Muslims in a medium-sized city in Canada across generational status. By sampling both first- and second-generation Muslims, my aim was to highlight the diversity in the interpretation and practice of Islam among its adherents both within each generational category, but also between them.

For example, as was previously mentioned, findings based on interviews revealed that both first- and second-generation participants overwhelmingly identified as “Muslim

First”, although second-generation participants felt that their parents continued to be guided by the ethnocultural conventions of their home countries. This reflects findings from other studies about the intergenerational relationships between Muslim immigrants and their children (Ramji 2008; Zine 2008; Valentine et al. 2009). Valentine et al.’s (2009) study of second-generation Muslims, for instance, found that young Muslim youth described their immigrant Muslim parents’ behaviours as regulated by their respective ethnic communities, rather than by religious doctrines. Zine (2008) and Ramji (2008) similarly report that second-generation Muslims in Canada constructed their religious identities *against* the ethno-centered traditions of their immigrant parents. Findings from these studies were further supported by the responses of second-generation respondents presented in manuscript two and three of this study wherein many participants suggested that their parents’ behaviour was predominantly regulated by pressures from their respective ethnic communities, rather than by scripture. In fact, there was an underlying understanding that the identification of second-generation respondents as “Muslim First” actually developed out of an inability to relate to *neither* their parental culture nor the larger Canadian society, but rather to an Islamic *Ummah*, outside of those two worlds.

This paradox is perhaps best typified in manuscript three where young Muslim women discussed the gendered expectations of their mothers to behave appropriately and to protect the sanctity of the family. As a response, many second-generation participants identified with an alternative Muslim identity that did away with any cultural and ethnic pressures that were not rooted in religion. And though in some cases the gendered expectations of immigrant mothers were in accordance with certain Islamic principles, when asked where such gendered ideals originated from, most immigrant respondents

alluded to tradition, suggesting that regulated gendered behaviour has existed in the past and will continue to exist for all of time. Moreover, the gendered behaviour of immigrant women was also regulated by their respective communities, suggesting that despite identifying as “Muslim First” they remained attached to ethnocultural ideologies and behaviours.

Strong attachments to immigrants’ ethnic communities post-migration is well documented in the literature. For example, substantial research has demonstrated that immigrants in advanced societies tend to live in spatially concentrated areas based on their ethnic identities (Portes and Jensen 1987; Logan, Zhang and Alba 2002; Edin et. al 2003; Xie and Gough 2011). Such ethnic enclaves are typically marked by their ability to provide market resources to new immigrants. However, research also demonstrates that some ethnic groups willingly establish enclaves or communities, self-defined by ethnicity, to enhance social and cultural developments within that community (Zhou 1992; Marcuse 1997). While there was no evidence that the participants in this study physically congregated into ethnic enclaves or communities per se, such literature highlights the strong propensity for immigrants to retain ethnic and cultural ties post-migration.

Identifying as “Muslim First” yet simultaneously not identifying with one another raises serious questions pertaining to the legitimacy of a “Muslim First” identity among *both* first- and second-generation Muslims. Why, for example, do Muslim immigrants claim to ascribe to a pan-Islamic identity when it appears as though they are more strongly bound by their ethnocultural communities? Cesari (2005) suggests that on both an individual level, as well as on an institutional level, ethnicity and Islam tend to be conflated. In

supporting her claim she argues that, ethnicity “refers most often to a way of defining oneself, and of being defined by the other, based on a single defining trait” such as ‘Muslim’ (Cesari 2005 para. 11). For this reason, Cesari (2005) argues it is important to differentiate between ethnic *culture* and ethnic *belonging*:

The former refers to the perpetuation and/or recreation of various cultural practices: language, sex and gender relations, cuisine, etc. The latter, on the other hand, refers to identification – often very loose or removed – with a particular ethnic origin, but without this identification necessarily entailing any particularly customs or types of behaviour... Doubtless many members of the younger generation... find it difficult to maintain the same kind of communitarian allegiances held by the first generations of immigrants. These early allegiances were largely based on regional, village, or ethnic ties. For second-generation immigrants, however, they most often take the form of an emotional attachment to a particular origin—even if this origin is more mythic than actual (Cesari 2005 para. 11).

Accordingly, I argue that identifying as “Muslim First” for immigrants does not necessarily entail identifying with Islam doctrinally, but rather, identifying as Muslim ethnically – that is, Islam and being Muslim for immigrants is part and parcel of the larger ethnic *culture* that immigrants inherited from their home countries. That is to say, to identify as “Muslim First” is part of the ethnocultural expectation of immigrants from Muslim majority countries.

Along a similar vein, another reason that the immigrant participants in this study may have identified as “Muslim First” emerges out of their discussion of their unlimited freedom in Canada. Participants stressed that Canada afforded Muslim immigrants the ability to reinterpret Islam outside of their ethnocultural spaces and outside of the

political landscapes of “HezobAllah, or [if] you’re with Salaf or if you’re with Wahabi’s or if you’re with Fatah Islam” (Bilal, male, second-generation, 20). In their home countries, the social and cultural mores were heavily defined by the principals of Islam. In Canada, however, the cultural and social mores were regarded as neutral by participants (in fact, Canada having a neutral culture was discussed by second-generation participants as well). Migration enabled immigrants in Canada to reflect and contemplate about Islam and its teachings. That is why, for example, some immigrant respondents were able to transform their relationship with Islam post-migration. And it is precisely this perception of freedom espoused by the immigrants in this study that denies Moghissi et al. (2014) their conceptualization of a Muslim diaspora rooted in exclusion. Despite the absence of exclusion expressed by participants, the Muslims interviewed did, to some degree, constitute a diaspora in its most basic form. As Brubaker (2005) suggests, a diaspora emphasizes boundary maintenance and a desire to re-create a sense of culture in a migrant’s new host society. The participants’ overwhelming identification as “Muslim First” and their desire to practice Islam in Canada and outside of the Muslim majority world, is to some extent testament to the existence of a Muslim diaspora. Rather than be rooted in exclusion, however, the participants demonstrated the existence of an overarching homogenized Islamic identity that provided symbolic unification which transcended ethnocultural bonds. This was particularly prevalent among second-generation immigrants.

Accordingly, if we conceptualize the notion of freedom *relatively*, rather than universally, then Canada in its permittance of religious practice is understood as far freer than their countries of origin (the Muslim majority countries that most of the immigrants in this

study originated from have been effected by war, poverty and considerable acts of violence on behalf of Islamic extremists). Thus, while both first- and second-generation Muslims in this study identified as “Muslim First”, the “versions” of their identifications differed. For immigrant participants, the degree to which they identified with a Muslim *Ummah* was contextual – it largely depended on their ethnocultural attachments. The conflation of Islam and culture (ethnocultural attachments) amongst immigrant participants does suggest that Islam is to some degree “tainted” by the ethnocultural tendencies of immigrants – a charge overwhelmingly levelled against them by second-generation participants. For second-generation participants, identifying with Islam was synonymous with adopting a universal identity. In fact, nearly all second-generation respondents discussed the way in which identifying as Muslim usurped all other identifications because of its potential to transcend national, ethnic, racial, tribal, and class based identifications. Importantly, no respondent cited being Muslim as a hindrance to being Canadian.

Classical assimilationists argue that immigrants are pulled in the direction of their host society’s culture, but are drawn back by the culture of their origin. Diverse immigrant groups from underprivileged backgrounds are expected to eventually abandon their old ways of life and completely ‘melt’ into the mainstream through residential integration and occupational achievement in a sequence of succeeding generations (Massey et al. 1993). A number of interaction effects between internal group characteristics (i.e. religion, ‘race,’ ethnicity) and external institutional factors (i.e. occupation) contribute to the pace of assimilation. The failure of classical assimilationist perspectives, however, to understand the relationship between internal and external institutional factors in affecting

immigration as related (i.e. religion, 'race' and ethnicity affect immigrants' chances of receiving good employment) reveals its inadequacy for understanding immigrant incorporation. This limitation is particularly salient given that participants in this study identified so strongly as Muslim and Canadian, questioning whether or not the full abandonment of "old ways of life" is necessary for integration.

A movement away from classical assimilation approaches proposes that there may be several trajectories to acculturation and that eventual upward mobility for migrants and their children is no longer a foregone conclusion. Proponents of segmented assimilation theory, for example, argue that among immigrants and their children, severe social and economic barriers can cause downward mobility and produce oppositional forms of culture, exposing some to adversarial subcultures in inner cities, poverty and assimilation into an underclass culture (Portes and Zhou 1993). Similar to Bhabha's (2004), conceptualization of "third space", Portes and Zhou (1993) suggest that second-generation immigrants often lack any substantial orientation to the dominant culture, or their ethnic cultures, and therefore to resolve conflicts between their two cultures, they may choose to withdraw and seek refuge in another. Migration theorists posit that the segmented assimilation of the second-generation emerges as a reaction to discrimination, marginalization and poor socioeconomic circumstances. A study by Bankston and Zhou (1997) for example, found that some low income Vietnamese Americans in New Orleans tended to identify closely with African Americans, another marginalized group in the city.

While segmented assimilation is understood as a hindrance to the proper assimilation of immigrants, and thus as disadvantaging, Bhabha (2004), however, maintains that second-

generation immigrants who do not wholly assimilate or adopt the values of their native-born societies exercise a greater degree of objectivity, and therefore, of empowerment. Contrastingly, Bhabha (2004) celebrates the “in-between” position of second-generation immigrants. The third space and its production of hybrid identities produces new forms of identities that subvert and challenge imposed, hegemonic identities. Its potential lies within its ability to “see” from different perspectives and to understand from different viewpoints.

Whereas traditional models of assimilation assumed that integration occurred as a by-product of upward mobility, or that membership in an ethnic enclave may hinder assimilation vis-à-vis a lack of movement into the mainstream society, by utilizing Bhabha’s conceptualization of hybrid identities I am proposing the inclusion of *identity* as an important indicator of integration and sense of belonging, in addition to mobility (or lack thereof,. While I acknowledge the importance of class position in the integration of immigrants into their new host societies, rather than focus *solely* on socio-economic factors, a hybrid identity model allows for an examination of socio-cultural factors as expressions of identity because identity is so closely related to roles and social location within society. Accordingly, I argue that for the second-generation Muslims in my study, belonging to a third space provided them with unanticipated forms of agency, and a capacity for objectivity that allowed them to identify with a genuine Islam (Bhabha 2004). This is an important finding particularly in light of Said’s (1978) dichotomization between the West and the East. While Said (1978) posits that the West conceptualizes Islamic culture and Muslims as static in both time and place, thus establishing Islamic civilizations as ‘Other’ or opposite, the Muslim, Canadian participants in this study did

not testify to such a dichotomy. Although second-generation participants did express feeling stuck between two ethnocultural worlds, none seemed to view Canadian values and Islamic values as at odds; and more importantly, perhaps, none defined their Canadian identities *against* their Islamic identities, signifying a hybridity of identities instead.

Moreover, while the second-generation participants regarded their parents as cultural rather than religious, they saw themselves as identifying with a less contaminated form of Islam and referred to their identification with the religion as somehow more “pure” than their parents’. It was within this third space that second-generation Muslims were able to identify and negotiate the cultural, rather than religious, parental expectations for their behaviour. The resistance against a “tainted”¹⁰ version of Islam was typified clearly in manuscript three, for example, in the *choices* of some second-generation women to wear or not wear hijab despite parental pressures; or in Zahra’s (age 26) decision to marry a Yemeni man, against the wishes of her Libyan father.

Importantly, however, despite second-generation respondents’ adoption of a more “pure” identification with Islam than their parents, the very nature of their hybridity suggests that they too approach Islam with their own sets of preconceived cultural practices and idioms. Though not steeped in the culture of a Muslim majority country, the second-generation Muslims do heavily identify with Canadian values and customs as well, fusing

¹⁰ The use of the words “pure” and “untainted” in this context are not meant to convey a sense of moral superiority or imply that there exists a “pure” form of Islam. Rather, these terms are a direct reflection of the expressions used by respondent to identify the way in which their religious identification is less affected by ethnocultural influences.

their ideas about democracy and liberalism with the practices and beliefs of their faith, making them perhaps more like their parents than they initially anticipated.

5.2 Limitations & Future Research

I have attempted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the diverse experiences of first- and second-generation Muslims; however, there are a number of important issues left for future research. Thus, I would like to stress the importance of noting the observable limitations of this study. Kazemipur (2014) in his research on Muslims living in Canada highlights the large concern that Muslim Canadians have regarding their financial stability. Canadian immigration policies, epitomized by the point system, often accept immigrants with high levels of education and significant sources of income. Immigrants, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, often leave their countries in hopes of finding better opportunities for themselves and for their families. Moreover, because of the recruitment strategies utilized in this study, the bulk of the second-generation respondents were in university or were recent graduates. As such, my study's sample consisted primarily of individuals from middle-class backgrounds, and thus could not address how social class may impact the identity formation of Muslims. For example, it is highly plausible that Muslims working in lower-class jobs, such as taxi drivers or convenience store clerks, may face more harassment than a doctor or an engineer, which in turn would impact their perception of Canada as an inclusive nation, as well as their sense of belonging. And while the main objective of my study was not to discern the effect of class on the experiences of Muslim integration, belonging and identity, it became quite evident that the socio-economic status of Muslims is an important issue that

requires serious attention. Particularly, how social class may protect some Muslims or make others more vulnerable to discrimination is an important issue for future research.

Recruitment of a wide variety and representative sample of Muslims was also a limitation of this study. First, as a young Muslim, female interviewer, I hypothesize that many ideologically conservative Muslim men would feel uncomfortable being interviewed by me, and thus, I was unable to fully observe the sentiments of individuals who may be unhappy residents of Canada, or who believe that their religious principles are at odds with Canada's. In a similar vein, I worried throughout the interview process that many of the responses from participants were coloured by the fact that I am a Muslim woman that visibly represents her religious beliefs vis-à-vis the hijab. Respondents' perception of me as potentially "religious" may have tinted their genuine views about particular issues concerning religion. Similarly, my position as a Muslim woman and as the daughter of an immigrant with my own subjective experiences may have coloured my interpretation of the findings presented. While I attempted to maintain my objectivity at all times, as a partial insider of the Muslim community in London, my own reflections at times would inevitably seep into discussions with respondents. Finally, recruitment was limited by place insofar as all respondents lived in London, Ontario. Despite its growing diversity, London has a relatively old and assimilated immigrant population. Perceptions of discrimination and belonging, I hypothesize, were strongly influenced by the "type" of immigrant interviewed in this study. Thus, it is important to stress again that findings from this study should not be generalized or reflect the experiences of all Muslims across all cities in Canada.

Such recruitment limitations point to yet another drawback and suggestion for future research – mainly, more studies need to establish how Muslim racialized groups from the first- and second-generation perceive and experience multiculturalism. It is highly conceivable, for example, that a Pakistani or Black Muslim would experience more discrimination than a Lebanese, Syrian or Bosnian Muslim. And moreover, that those instances of racism (or lack thereof) would in turn affect the sense of belonging and identity formation of those Muslims. Nonetheless, the ways in which racialized first- and second-generation Muslims identify was outside the scope of this study.

5.3 Recommendations

The complex responses expressed by the participants in this study serve to provide a motive to re-examine studies pertaining to the acculturation of immigrants and their offspring, as respondents spoke of multifaceted forms of adaptation. The largely positive findings presented in my dissertation does not take away from the potential improvements that could be made by Canadian policy makers. While my findings reveal that Canadian multicultural and immigration policies have been successful in making immigrant and second-generation Muslims in London, Ontario feel proud to be Canadian, I think it is important to stress the difference between policies and public opinion. When I asked my respondents about perceived racism and discrimination based on their religious affiliation as Muslims, the majority defended Canada as a welcoming and open society. However, some respondents did hint at a difference between Canada as a state and individual Canadians which they claimed did not reflect Canadian values of tolerance and openness.

Thus, despite formal policies against racism and discrimination, we must be realistic to growing Islamophobia. Perhaps the most salient evidence of potential risings in Islamophobia is the still very raw residue of the massacre of six Muslim Canadians at a Quebec mosque during prayer in February of this year. Echoing my concerns, the *Globe and Mail* published a story on February 20th, 2017 suggesting that despite broad approval from Canadians for its refugee policy, a sizable minority of Canadians feel the country is taking on too many asylum seekers. Utilizing data from the Angus Reid Institute (ARI) the survey finds “public opinion is onside with the government’s approach and response on domestic refugee policy, but is showing signs Ottawa may be testing the limits of how many migrants Canadians are willing to accept” (*Globe and Mail* 2017, para. 5). Undoubtedly, growing Islamophobia would have dangerous consequences for Muslims living in Canada (re: Quebec shooting), but also for the potential self-fulfilling prophecy of radical Islamic behaviour that might result from growing Islamophobic tendencies.

Findings from this study reveal that Muslims in London, Ontario are most likely to identify as “Muslim First”. While identifying with a larger Islamic *Ummah* of Muslims proved to be exceedingly beneficial for Muslims in this study, it does point to a potential issue. For example, many immigrant respondents expressed having some Muslim friends, and nearly all of the second-generation respondents admitted to having a fully Muslim social network. Identifying as “Muslim First”, thus, on the one hand alleviates feelings of homelessness; on the other hand, however, identifying as “Muslim First” can also exclude Muslims in Canada from the greater population. Kazemipur (2014), in his study, reveals that the level of interaction between native-born, non-Muslim Canadians and Muslims is the lowest among all immigrant groups in Canada. In the absence of social

connectedness to the larger, majority population, extremist elements can draw on a population for recruitment and find supporters much more easily. Moreover, limited interaction can foster a greater fear of Muslims on behalf of the larger general society. Perhaps Ahmad, an immigrant from Palestine, expresses it best when he makes to me a request for what he would like to see come out of a doctoral thesis such as this one:

Educating the general population is really important to us as Muslims living in the West. I mean that's it. My request, I will just refine my request (when asked if he had any additional comments) is to have better representation in the media, that's it. Because I mean they can't help us if they don't know who we are. We will be strangers all the time and we will be, like I mean just when you are in your neighbourhood and then even if you want to help your neighbour if he doesn't know you, he'll reject your help because he doesn't know you. He will be skeptical. But if you see him all the time and converse and say, hi, how are you? And you know you go around and then if they ask you for help and you want to offer your help and help! And I'll just carry whatever with you. But it's just the same in the street, somebody doesn't know you but you can't help them because they're scared. They ask, why do they want to help me? So it's just kind of a psychological thing and that's why I don't want this paranoia or phobia... we have something good (referencing Canada's multicultural policies) let's make it better. I mean if we start here (Canada) maybe it's going to spread to Europe, to France, or to Spain or you know where people are having less or that are less fortunate than us. I mean whatever little bit helps.

Policies that continue to promote inclusiveness make extremist behaviour much less likely to gain support. If Muslims continue to feel like they belong, they will continue to care about what is happening in the country.

My findings also illustrated that Muslims, both first- and second-generations, see Canada as a place to freely practice their faith without the baggage of their home countries or their familial and ethnic backgrounds. To the extent that they can practice their faith freely without any pressures, Muslims become more integrated and can continue to develop a positive attitude and view of Canadian society, and thus it is important that Canadian policies continue to support freedom of religious expression. Additionally, and to Ahmad's point, in order to dismantle assumptions about Muslims in the West as extremist, it is vital to ensure that mainstream Canadian society is well educated about what Muslims actually believe. It is important that the majority of Canadians at an individual level, as well as Canada as a larger governmental entity, understand that Muslim communities are *not* homogenous entities, but rather, are just as diverse as the rest of the Canadian population. Dispelling conceptions of Muslims as dangerous and single-minded individuals is important, particularly in light of my findings that the Muslims in my study see themselves as patriotic Canadians.

5.4 References

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Appendices

Letter of Information

My name is Aisha Birani and I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at Western University, working under the supervision of Professor Wolfgang Lehmann. You are being invited to participate in a research study looking at the generational differences in the way in which Muslims self-identity as Muslim in London, Ontario. This letter is yours to keep and provides you with the information you require to make an informed decision regarding your participation.

You are eligible to participate in this study if you self-identify as Muslim and are either 1) born and raised in Canada or, 2) migrated to Canada from a Muslim majority country after the age of 10 and, 3) if you are over the age of 18. I will ask participants about their connections to Islamic, ethnic and national networks and integration and their complex relationship and identification with their Islamic, ethnic and national identities. If you agree to participate, you can take part either in an individual interview or in a group interview.

Although you may not directly benefit from participating in this study, your participation may help us develop new knowledge that may benefit the way in which Muslims – of both first- and second-generation status – identify as Muslim and Canadian, during a time where being both Muslim and Canadian has become increasingly difficult. If at any time you have further questions about the content of this study, please contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann.

Interviews and focus groups will take place at a time and location convenient to you. If you wish to participate in an individual interview, it can take place at your home. If you prefer, we can also meet somewhere else of your choice. Interviews and focus groups will be audio taped with your permission and last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The audio tapes will also be transcribed. In individual interview, you may refuse to be recorded or may request to stop being recorded at any time during the interview process, and still remain in the study. If you choose to participate in a focus group and refuse to be recorded, however, you cannot participate in the study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. There are no known risks to participation in this study. Nobody outside the research team will have access to the data gathered during this study. All information will be either stored in a password protected computer or kept locked/secured in my office at Western University. Your confidentiality will be respected. I will be using pseudonyms in the transcript of the interview, as well as in all reports and other publications generated from the data. Furthermore, the audio tapes will be destroyed upon the completion of the project, and the transcripts will be destroyed after two years. If the results of the study are published, your name will not be used and no information that discloses your identity will be released or published.

If you agree to participate in this research project and accept the conditions outlined above, please sign the attached form and return it back directly to me before the interview.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research subject you may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, Western University.
Thank you for your cooperation.

Aisha Birani

Interview Guides

Opening statements

Interviews will start with the personal introduction of the research support staff and with brief information about the study. Then, the letter of information and consent form will be provided to the participants. They will be reminded that there is no best answer for the interview questions and that participation in the interview is voluntary which means that they can withdraw from the process at any time or refuse to answer questions. They will also be reminded that their anonymity and confidentiality will be protected at all times. This study is interested in their experiences from their own point of view.

Questions (First-Generation) *I would like to begin by asking you some basic information about yourself.*

1. How long have you been in Canada?
2. And you are from, _____, correct?
3. Tell me about your reasons for coming to Canada.

Probes: What was your entry status? How old were you? Did you come alone?

4. What did you find most difficult to leave behind?

Probes: If married, where is your spouse from?

Now I want to ask you some questions about life in your country of origin.

5. Describe your life/daily routine in your country of origin to me.

Probes: What was your occupation in your country of origin? Were you politically involved?

6. Describe to me the politics surrounding religion in your country of origin?
7. Describe to me your level of religious involvement in your country of origin.
8. Your country of origin sounds very beautiful. Have you had a chance to visit since you've moved here?

Probe: How often?/why not?

I would now like to ask you about your experiences since your migration to Canada?

9. Tell me about your experience as an immigrant living in Canada.

Probes: Did you receive assistance when you got here?

10. You described earlier that you (were/were not) involved in the politics of your country of origin. Describe to me how this has or has not changed since moving to Canada.

Probes: Are you apart of any national political associations?

11. How do you think the time living in your country of origin shaped the way that you practice Islam here in Canada?

Probes: Are most of your friends/networks Muslim?

12. As a Canadian citizen with roots in your predominantly Muslim country of origin, explain to me how important it is for you and your family to retain your religious identities as Muslims.

Probes: Is it important that your children are raised with Islamic customs and practices?

This concludes our interview. Is there anything more you want to add? Thank you for your time.

Questions (Second-Generation)]

I would like to begin by asking you some basic information about yourself.

1. What is your age?

2. What is your highest level of education?

(If attended university/college) What was your focus/major in school?

3. What is your current marital status?

Probes: Is your spouse Canadian like yourself? How many children do you have? How old are they?

Now I'd like to discuss your experiences as a child of one or more immigrant parents.

4. Describe to me what life was like growing up with (an) immigrant parent(s).

Probes: Are both of your parents immigrants, or just one? Where are they/he/she from?

4. Describe to me your particular relationship with your immigrant parent(s).

5. As someone who is Canadian born, tell me about your connections to your parent(s) country of origin?

Probes: Have you ever visited your mother/father's country of origin? Do you consider your mother/father's country of origin home?

6. Being born in Canada but also the son/daughter of someone who born somewhere else makes you unique in a lot of ways. Can you describe to me how being connected to two different countries and cultures has affected you.

Probes: What are some of the problems you have encountered?

I'd like now to turn the discussion to your identification with Islam.

7. As a Canadian with connections to a predominantly Muslim country (your parent(s) country of origin), explain to me how important it is for you and your family to retain your religious identities as Muslims.

Probes: Is it important that your children (present or future) are raised with Islamic customs and practices? Are most of your networks made up of other Muslims?

8. As a Canadian, how do you think being raised by parents who are from a different country, particularly a Muslim-majority country, shaped the way that you practice Islam here in Canada?

Probes: do you find it difficult to practice Islam and be Canadian?

9. Many newspaper and scholarly journals have been making claims that Islam and Western ideals are incompatible. As someone who is both Muslim and lives in Canada, how do you feel about these statements?

This is the end of our interview. Is there anything more you want to add? Thank you for your time.



Use of Human Participants - Ethics Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann
File Number: 104163
Review Level: Full Board
Approved Local Adult Participants: 80
Approved Local Minor Participants: 0
Protocol Title: Toward an Inclusive Islamic Identity?: A Comparison of First- and Second-Generation Muslims in Canada
Department & Institution: Social Science\Sociology,Western University
Sponsor:
Ethics Approval Date: September 23, 2013 **Expiry Date:** January 31, 2015

Documents Reviewed & Approved & Documents Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Other	Works Cited	2013/08/07
Advertisement	Flyer	2013/08/07
Advertisement	Business Card	2013/08/07
Other	Interview Guide	2013/08/07
Western University Protocol		2013/08/07
Amendment	Proposal Revisions and Responses to Recommendations	2013/09/18
Revised Letter of Information & Consent	Interview Consent Form REVISED	2013/09/18
Letter of Information & Consent	Letter of Information REVISED	2013/09/18
Recruitment Items	Email for Gatekeepers REVISED	2013/09/18
Recruitment Items	Script for In-Person Announcements REVISED	2013/09/18

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the approval date noted above.

This approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the NMREB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

Members of the NMREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the NMREB.

The Chair of the NMREB is [REDACTED] The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

[REDACTED]
Signature

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
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This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

Curriculum Vitae

AISHA BIRANI

EMPLOYMENT**University of Western Ontario, London ON.**

Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology	2010–2015
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EDUCATION**University of Western Ontario, London, ON.**

<i>Ph.D. Sociology</i>	2011-2017
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<i>M.A. Sociology</i>	2010-2011
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Research Paper: “Ethnicity as Social Capital: An Examination of First-Generation, Asian-Canadians in University.”

Advisor: Wolfgang Lehmann

<i>B.A. Sociology & English Literature and Language</i>	2006-2010
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Social inequality; Sociology of Education; Social Theory; Ethnicity; Islam and Muslims in the West; Immigration; Migrant Settlement; Intergenerational Relationships; Second-Generation; Hybrid Identities; Ethnic Relations

TEACHING INTERESTS

Social Inequality; Immigration; Ethnicity; Second Generation Muslims; Islam; Minority Groups; Identity

PUBLICATIONS

Birani, Aisha. 2013. “Fanon, the Arab Spring and the Myth of Liberation.” *New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry*, 6(1-2): 1-9.

Birani, Aisha and Wolfgang Lehmann. 2013. “Ethnicity as Social Capital: An Examination of First-Generation, Asian-Canadians in University.” *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 23(24): 281-297.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

Birani, Aisha. Religion, Activism and Political Change: The Impact of Religiosity on Political Participation in Egypt and Turkey.

Birani, Aisha. Toward an Inclusive Islamic Identity? A Comparison of First- and Second-Generation Muslims in Canada.

OTHER RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann, Professor of Sociology	2011-2012
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Utilized interview data from a four-year longitudinal study of first-generation university undergraduates to understand the effects of ethnicity as a form of social capital for these students.

PRESENTATIONS

Toward an Inclusive Islamic Identity? Preliminary Findings Comparing First- and Second-Generation Muslims in Canada. Canadian Sociological Association Conference, St. Catherines, ON. (2014)

Toward an Inclusive Islamic Identity? Preliminary Findings. Mobility and Immobility: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Migration and Settlement, London, ON. (2014)

Religion, Activism and Political Change: The Impact of Religiosity on Political Participation in Egypt and Turkey. Canadian Sociological Association Conference, Victoria, BC. (2014)

Religion, Activism and Political Change: The Impact of Religiosity on Political Participation in Egypt and Turkey. ENGAGE: Understanding the Changing Social World, Waterloo, ON. (2013)

Ethnicity as Social Capital: An Examination of First-Generation, Asian Canadians at University. Canadian Sociological Association Conference, Waterloo, ON. (2012)

Ethnicity as Social Capital: Findings from Interviews with First Generation, Ethnic Minorities in University. ENGAGE: Contemporary Communities, Guelph, ON. (2012)

The Arab Spring and the Myth of Liberation. Faultlines of Revolution! The Fourth Annual Conference in Critical Social Research, Ottawa, ON. (2012)

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) 2014

Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) 2013; 2014 (*declined*)

Ellen Nilsen Award 2012
University of Western Ontario

Graduate Research Scholarship 2010-2015
University of Western Ontario

Nomination for Teaching Assistant of the Year 2010-2011
University of Western Ontario

Gold Metal for English Language and Literature 2009-2010
University of Western Ontario

SUPPLEMENTARY TRAINING

University of Granada: Critical Islamic Studies. Granada, Spain 2012

University of Western Ontario: Winter Conference on Teaching 2012

University of Western Ontario: Graduate Student Conference on Teaching (TA Day) 2010

TEACHING

Guest Lecturer, University of Western Ontario, “Ethno-Cultural Controversies” Nov. 2015
London, ON

Guest Lecturer, University of Western Ontario, “Religious Controversies” Oct. 2015

Guest Lecturer, University of Western Ontario, “Gender Controversies” Oct. 2015
London, ON

Tutorial Instructor for Controversies in Sociology (Western University) 2013-2015

Guest Lecturer, University of Western Ontario, “Ethno-Cultural Controversies” Nov. 2013
London, ON

Tutorial Instructor for Introduction to Sociology (Kings University College) 2012-2013

Tutorial Instructor for Survey of Sociological Theory (Western University) 2011-2013
Taught four classes a general introduction of the major topics in Sociology

Tutorial Instructor for Introduction to Sociology (Western University) 2010-2011
Taught four classes a general introduction of the major topics in Sociology

MEMBERSHIPS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Professional Memberships 2015
Canadian Sociological Association

Migration and Ethnic Relations Student Executive Committee 2014-2015
Department of Sociology Representative
University of Western Ontario

Organizer of Department of Sociology Graduate Research Day 2012-2013
University of Western Ontario

International Peer Guide 2012
University of Western Ontario

Graduate Committee 2011-2012
Student Representative
University of Western Ontario

Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) 2010-2011
Department of Sociology Representative
University of Western Ontario

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English (native), Arabic (proficient)