Exploring a potential connection between religious bullying and religious literacy in Modesto and Montreal public schools

Wing Yu Alice Chan

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

Faculty of Education, McGill University

Montreal, Canada

February 2019

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dedication

With deepest gratitude to Joseph, my Mother, and Father, and most of all God who blessed me

with their support and the privilege to experience this journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Acronyms

ERC   *Ethics and Religious Culture* course
MCS   Modesto City Schools District
MÉES   Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur
MELS   Ministère de Loisirs et Sports, the previous name of MÉES
WGWR   The 9th Grade *World Geography and World Religions* course in Modesto City Schools

Glossary of Terms

Allophone   terminology used in Quebec to describe an individual whose mother tongue is not French or English
Church   a Christian site of worship
Gurdwara   a Sikh site of worship
Hijab   one particular manner to wear a Muslim headscarf, where a woman's hair and neck are covered by a veil or headscarf and her full face is shown
Kwanzaa   a week-long African-American and Pan-African holiday to reinforce African values and concepts among the African diaspora
Mandir   a Hindu site of worship
Masjid   a Muslim site of worship; is another word to describe a mosque
Mosque   a Muslim site of worship; is another word to describe a masjid
Niqab   one particular manner to wear a Muslim headscarf, where a woman is fully covered by a veil and only her eyes are visible

List of Figures

List of Tables

Acknowledgements

Now I know that regardless of the questions you ask and the answers you receive, no one can fully prepare you for the demands of a doctoral journey. For this reason and countless more, I am immensely grateful for the community that shaped my life in the past six years and helped me through to the end.

Despite their incredibly busy schedules, my research committee consistently and fervently supported me through every stage of this study. Dr. Ratna Ghosh's scholastic expertise guided me through life as an academic via countless research, writing, community, and presentation opportunities. Dr. James Fraser's wealth of contextual and historical knowledge helped me navigate through the previously foreign American context, and opened up opportunities in the US through his attentiveness and support despite the distance. Dr. Kevin McDonough's perceptive nature continuously challenged my thinking and writing, helping me grow in ways that is and will be an immense asset for years to come. Each of their promptings, in their individual style, was instrumental in the completion of this dissertation. I am, and will be forever, grateful for their time, guidance, care, thoughtfulness, support, and critique.

At different points of my journey, Dr. Emile Lester, Dr. Mary Maguire, Dr. Michael Waggoner, Dr. Robert Jackson, and Dr. Ruth Hayhoe were also incredibly supportive and encouraging academics in their own way. Dr. Maguire was integral in the formation of my research design and was a vital voice in helping me shape the methodology in order to recognize the voices and perspectives of students.

In Modesto, I am indebted to Yvonne and Ray Taylor. Their tremendously generous hospitality, thoughtfulness and support in connecting me with valuable contacts and future participants in the area, and attentive ear and emotional support was, and is, a dream come true for any graduate student. I can never repay them and simply say, thank you in its fullest sense. I am also deeply thankful to Ashod, Chad Brown, Dan Galt, Don Aspito and Eddie, Imam, Pastor Michael Schiefelbein, Pastor Erin Matteson, Mark Haskett, Parneel, Pradesh, Richard Anderson, Rabbi Shalom Bochner, Sherry McIntyre, Sue Zwahlen, and members of the Stanislaus Humanist group. Underlying all of these relationships is the introduction from Dr. Emile Lester to Yvonne Taylor, and Dr. Dale Pederson, who supported me locally and helped me secure funding for travel. One began the snowballing of my Modesto experience, and the other facilitated its progress.

In Montreal, I am grateful for the support from Adriano D'Angelo, YM President Bruno Morais, Centre for Inquiry Montreal, Pastor Chris Shipster, Dr. Claire Brown, Rabbi Ellen Greenspan, President Glowa, Isabel Correa, Janell Jensen Gehmlich, Dr. Jasvir Kaur Grewal, Pastor Ken Godon, Bishop Lahache, Rabbi Lisa Gruschow, Manjit Singh, the McGill University Indian Student Association, and the McGill University Muslim Student Association. As an outsider to

discerning voice now guides me. My Mother remains an ever present support whether it is days, weeks, or months between our conversations. She has always been a model of a strong, independent, practical, loving, and life-long learner throughout my life. Words do not do justice for the love and guidance that both my parents have given me.

Beyond these instrumental people in my journey was my husband, Joseph, who always stimulates me intellectually and provides limitless emotional, psychological, spiritual, and financial support – *we did it!* Thank you for *everything*.

Several chapters in this thesis draw on publications produced during the writing process:

Chan, W. Y. A. & Collet, B. (Forthcoming 2019). The 'R-word' today: Understanding religion in secular and religious formal and non-formal educational spaces. *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2018.*

Parker, C., Tiflati, H., Chan, W. Y. A**.** (Accepted). Going beyond campus to strengthen the campus: Confronting hate, extremism, and antisemitism through restorative justice and peacebuilding education. In Stead, V. (Ed.), *Confronting Anti-Semitism on Campus.*

Balaji, M., Chan, W. Y. A., Arshanapally, S, Khanna, R., Pallod, K. (Forthcoming). *Classroom Subjected 2: Creating Safer Learning Environments for Hindu American Students*. Hindu American Foundation.

Chan, W. Y. A. (2019). Intragenerational and intergenerational religious bullying in schools and society: Québec as a case study. In Arweck, E. & Shipley, H. (Eds.), *Young People and the Diversity of (Non)Religious Identities in International Perspective*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Springer.

Chan, W. Y. A., Mistry, H., Zaver, A., Reid, E. & Jafralie, S. (2019). Recognition of context and experience: A civic-based Canadian conception of religious literacy. *Journal of Beliefs and Values.* DOI: 10.1080/13617672.2019.1587902

Chan, W. Y. A., Akanmori, H., Parker, C. (2019). Addressing Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Indigenous peoples through religious literacy and spirituality: Unexpected pathways to peace education. *Forum for International Research in Education*. *5*(1). Retrieved from https://journals.tdl.org/fire/index.php/FIRE/article/view/135. Chan, W. Y. A. (2019). A review of ERC teacher training programs across nine Quebec universities: A snapshot 10 years after 2008. *Religion & Education*. https://doi.org/10.1080/15507394.2018.1553469

Abdou, E. D. & Chan, W. Y. A. (2017). Analyzing constructions of polytheistic and monotheistic religious traditions: A critical multicultural approach to textbooks in Quebec. *Multicultural Perspectives, 19*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2016.1263961

Chan, W. Y. A. (2017). Modesto's 'hidden gem' is part of a solution to religious bullying. [Local newsletter]. *Stanislaus Connections. XXV*(10). Retrieved from http://www.stanislausconnections.org/connections%20JUNE17.pdf

Chan, W. Y. A**.** (2017). The US curriculum's big change: Religious studies. [Online Magazine]. *Impakter*. Retrieved from http://impakter.com/the-us-curriculums-big-change-religious-studies/.

Ghosh, R. & Chan, W. Y. A. (2017). The role of religious education in countering religious extremism in diverse and interconnected societies. In Sivasubramaniam, M. & Hayhoe, R. (Eds.), *Religion and Education: Comparative and International Perspectives*. Oxford, UK: Symposium Books.

Chan, W. Y. A. (2016). Educating against religious bullying: Considering one root to the issue of religious extremism. [Blog]. *Religious Education and Security*. Retrieved from http://blogs.mcgill.ca/religiouseducationandsecurity/2016/02/12/educating-against-religious-bullying-considering-one-root-to-the-issue-of-religious-extremism/

Ghosh, R., Chan, W. Y. A., Manuel, A., & Dilimulati, M. (2016). Can education counter violent religious extremism? *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal. 23*(2): 117-133. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2016.1165713

Abstract

Bullying is a well-researched phenomenon but bias-based bullying, such as bullying regarding sexual orientation, race, and gender, are only beginning to receive more attention. Religious bullying, which occurs to individuals based on religious and non-religious bias, is one form of bias-based bullying that has not been researched in-depth academically. Hence, from my observations of religious bullying in one public school environment, I explored the potential connection between religious bullying and religious literacy to consider how teachers could use religious literacy as a means to address religious bullying during the school hour. Through a Critical Communicative Methodology, this study surveyed 106 students and interviewed 32 participants altogether in Modesto, California and Montreal, Quebec, due to the mandatory religious literacy courses in secondary schools in each of these cities. Findings show that the connection between religious bullying and religious literacy can be positive and negative depending on the curriculum, teacher attitude, teacher training, and administrative support. The social-ecological framework helps us understand that the lived environment in and outside of the school is equally important in its influence of religious literacy and religious bullying. Thus, even where a religious literacy course exists, the lived environment can influence teacher or student bias towards religious bullying, regardless of the school curriculum on religious literacy.

Résumé

L'intimidation est un phénomène bien documenté, mais l'intimidation sur la base des préjugés (l'orientation sexuelle, la race et le sexe) commence depuis peu à faire l'objet d'une attention accrue. L'intimidation religieuse, qui touche des personnes sur la base de préjugés religieux et non religieux, est une forme d'intimidation par préjugés qui n'a pas encore fait l'objet de recherches approfondies sur le plan académique. Par conséquent, à partir de mes observations sur le harcèlement religieux dans une école publique, j'ai exploré le lien potentiel entre le harcèlement religieux et la littératie religieuse afin d'expliquer comment les enseignants pourraient utiliser la littératie religieuse comme moyen de lutte contre le harcèlement religieux pendant les heures de cours. Grâce à une méthodologie de communication critique, cette étude a été menée auprès de 106 élèves et de 32 participants à Modesto (Californie) et à Montréal (Québec), en raison des cours de littératie religieuse obligatoires dispensés dans les écoles secondaires de chacune de ces villes. Les résultats montrent que le lien entre l'intimidation religieuse et la littératie religieuse peut être positif ou négatif en fonction du programme, de l'attitude de l'enseignant, de sa formation et du soutien administratif. Le cadre socio-écologique nous aide à comprendre que l'environnement vécu à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de l'école joue un rôle tout aussi important dans l'influence de la littératie religieuse et de l'intimidation religieuse. Ainsi, même là où un cours de la littératie religieuse existe, l'environnement vécu peut influencer la tendance de l'enseignant ou de l'élève à l'intimidation religieuse, indépendamment du programme scolaire en littératie religieuse.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In the mid-2000s, I was a recent university graduate who enjoyed the challenges and innovations in my work environment at a global technology and services corporation. In light of the openness to technological advances from the organization and the pioneering ideas it produced, I was surprised to observe the misrecognitions of diversity that gradually crept into the workspace. Among culturally diverse colleagues in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), confusion arose one December when a tree was erected and decorated with Christian symbols, a menorah to celebrate Hanukkah, and a Kwanzaa flag to celebrate Kwanzaa. As a Christian, this mix of religious symbols confused me; none of the symbols were represented in their appropriate context or manner. Why did this assemblage group symbols from differing beliefs? This display placed many symbols out of context. It did not represent my beliefs, and it misrecognized other employees' beliefs too. That same year, an employee responded to a "happy holidays" corporate wide email via reply-all to voice his anger towards the overgeneralization of all the holidays[1]. With a Diversity Department in place, I was baffled that this situation would arise at all as I had expected them to be informed about such concerns beforehand and would act to prevent them from arising. These incidents proved that even as adults, many individuals working in multi-religious environments and those expected to inform conversation about multi-religious backgrounds were still unaware of how to engage with one another. Instead of recognition, misrecognition and a lack of recognition arose and led to misunderstanding, discomfort, and conflicts. Religion became even more prominent in my life and the public sphere when I began to teach in public middle schools in Mississauga, Ontario.

---

[1] The company email was sent to thousands of employees across Canada. I was not familiar with this particular employee so I do not recall the specific reason for his disdain and did not ask him personally.

A few years later, as I came to understand my love for teaching and youth, I embarked on a new journey by completing my Masters of Teaching degree and becoming an Ontario Certified Teacher. The research component of my MT program trained me to simultaneously observe and question aspects of my public school[2] classroom and society. In society, I noted that media sources reported, "Tempers flare over prayer in schools" (CBC News, 2011), "Persichilli: It's time to talk about religion in our schools" (The Toronto Star, 2011), and "Part 3: Canada's changing faith"[3] (The Globe and Mail, 2010). This public conversation arose in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) where 82 per cent of individuals under 15 years of age self-identified with a religious affiliation (Statistics Canada, 2001)[4]. In 2011, while data was not collected for individuals, 78.89% of GTA households self-affiliated with a religion (Statistics Canada, 2013).[5] My experience among adults in the workspace and these news reports raised several questions in my mind. One being, what is the basis of this tension? If individuals live among multi-religious communities, are they not engaging with one another (as I did in my own schooling and community)? And, why are schools and workplaces not talking about religion already when it was an aspect of the local lived experience in the religious diversity of the GTA, school districts always promoted the teaching of the whole student to create an inclusive environment, and corporations promoted the inclusion of religious identities and expressions through corporate culture? It seemed like there was a

---

[2] Although public funding is given to Catholic and religiously unaffiliated public schools in Ontario, all references made to "public schools" in my paper refer to those that are religiously unaffiliated.

[3] These articles can be referenced, respectively, at https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/tempers-flare-over-prayer-in-schools-1.1104775, https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2011/07/09/persichilli_its_time_to_talk_about_religion_in_our_schools.html, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/time-to-lead/part-3-canadas-changing-faith/article4191837/.

[4] This percentage represents 755, 390 of 918,980 individuals within the Census metropolitan area of Toronto, which consists of 23 cities that neighbour Toronto proper. The specific cities are listed here https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=535.

[5] This data set is for the Census metropolitan area of Toronto.

disconnect between the image an organization aimed to portray, what the organizations promoted formally in district documentation and corporate publications, and how these aims were actualized in reality.

In my personal life, my father unexpectedly passed away in February 2011. As I was struggling with these questions, my Christian faith played a profound role in my life. While I did not relate to societal images and conceptions of heaven or hell and they were beyond my realm of consideration, I was overcome with an intense and immense sense of peace (that I am still unable to clearly interpret to this date) and a confident understanding that my father was in a restful place somehow. With my father's early passing at the age of 59, many people, including my students and colleagues at school were incredibly compassionate about my well-being when I returned to teach after a two-week break. In response to their stirring generosity and sincerity, I yearned to be utterly honest with them and explain that I was at tremendous peace despite the sadness that naturally arose. However, while I was able to explain the role of my faith with friends outside of the school environment, I was unclear if I should carry such a conversation with my students and colleagues in a public school setting. If so, then how? Should religion be discussed in a secular GTA school environment at all? My concerns about religion in the public sphere reached an apex when I saw and heard of students struggling with the issues pertaining to their religious identities as well.

In one instance, a group of Muslim girls segregated another Muslim girl because they belonged to different Islamic sects; they all wore the *hijab* but their religious practices differed. This led the segregated student to become even more isolated, shy, and quiet in class than she was before. In another situation, an ethnically South Asian student approached me to explain that a new student who had emigrated from a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country was bullying

him. Although this student did not specify why he felt he was being bullied, at surface level, many teachers attributed the Arab student's angst to parental behaviour. However, given the cultural and contextual environment of the bully, I suspected that the cultural slurs made towards the non-Arab student may have been also based on the cultural, religious, and perhaps economic differences he saw between them as many South Asians in GCC countries are of a differing culture, religion, and economic status than Arabs in the society. As South Asians often immigrate to GCC countries to work in or are sought for manual labour jobs, many South Asians in those countries are of a different class, religion, ethnicity, and culture, and discriminated against as a result (Human Rights Watch, 2013). In this respect, the Arab student may have presumed many aspects (such as religious identity) of the ethnically South Asian student based on the colour of his skin, despite the student's familial origin from a Caribbean island. This convergence of identities, and assumptions about each aspect of identity placed on an individual reflects the need to discuss intersectionality in incidents of bullying, which is discussed in Chapter III. During this time, I was also a youth counselor for high school students at my church. In this role, I heard other stories of student struggles as Christian youth were teased about their religious identities, with no teacher intervention or response.

Privy to these varying perspectives from my corporate space among adults, my personal experience as a religiously affiliated individual, and as a teacher and counselor among middle school and high school students, I was curious about the limited presence of religious discussion in the public school classroom and the public Greater Toronto Area environment. This propelled me into my Masters research where, among the five teachers I interviewed from various religious and non-religious backgrounds, I found that most of the religiously affiliated public school teachers were uncomfortable and uncertain about how to broach the discussion of religion in their

classrooms, despite the current federal, provincial, and local documents that support its inclusion in Ontario[6]. Rather, the non-religious teacher felt most confident in discussing religion in her classroom. Thus, from these varying perspectives and findings, I began my doctoral research to delve deeper into this discussion as a teacher-researcher with an aim to learn more about religious bullying to help colleagues and myself support our students in the public school environment.

In this dissertation, titled "Exploring a potential connection between religious bullying and religious literacy in Modesto and Montreal public schools," I asked, "Religious bullying: Can religious literacy courses address this phenomenon?" As such, I examined the phenomenon of religious bullying and if religious literacy in the public school environment is a potential means to address it. In doing so, I sought to find a solution for the public school teacher that did not require additional workload or time in their school day.

In the following sections, I elaborate on the purpose of my study in this respect. Then, I explain my ontological and epistemological approaches to this study overall, and suggest the contributions and implications that this study can offer to the current studies on bullying and the larger society. To conclude, this chapter presents a roadmap of the overall dissertation.

---

[6] The documents include the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedom* (1982), the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (1996) and Ontario's *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (2009). Locally, they include the Toronto District School Board's Policy P037: Equity Foundation (1999) and "Guidelines and Procedure for the Accommodation of Religious Requirements, Practices, and Observances" (2010), the York Region District School Board's reference to the guidelines of the *Equity and Inclusive Education* in Ontario Schools (2009) within their website (http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/page.cfm?id=IRC000001), the Durham District School Board's "Guidelines and Procedures for the Accommodation of Religious Requirements Practices, and Observances" (2010), and the Peel District School Board's Policy #54 regarding Equity and Inclusive Education (2010), its *Faith Forward* project (2009), and district documents such as "Manifesting Encouraging and Respectful Environments" (2000) and "The Future We Want: building an inclusive curriculum" (2000).

1.1. The purpose of my study and the research question

While bullying is a common concern in schools and various forms of bullying exist, teachers often overlook and misunderstand religious bullying (Craig & Edge, 2012; Chan, 2012). In my own classroom experience, I may have misunderstood or been irresponsive to the religious bullying incident between my Arab student and the one he perceived to be Hindu because he appeared to be South Asian, and my colleagues may have done likewise. Upon this reflection, my study had four objectives.

Firstly, to understand religious bullying. What is it? Why is it not well-known? Chapter V of this dissertation explores this objective. To clarify this focus on "religious bullying" opposed to "faith-based" bullying, I recognize that some reports refer to religious bullying as faith-based bullying. However, I refrain from using the word *faith* as it is largely a Christian or Western approach to belief that may not be conceptually appropriate to describe different traditions, such as Buddhism, which are currently referred to as religions by many. Instead, I use the term "religious" in my study in relation to "religion."

As this study is contextualized in the US and Canada, and neither constitution nor Supreme Court offer a clear definition of religion[7], this dissertation uses the understanding of religion by Coward, Slater, and Chagnon (2009):

> Religion (from the Latin, religio, "respect for what is sacred") may be defined as the relationship between human beings and their transcendent source of value. In practice it may involve various forms of communication with a higher power, such as prayers, rituals at critical stages in life, meditation or "possession" by spiritual agencies. Religions, though differing greatly, usually share most of the following characteristics: a sense of the holy or the sacred (often manifested in the form of gods, or a personal god); a system of beliefs; a community of believers or participants; ritual (which may include

---

[7] See https://www.freedomforuminstitute.org/about/faq/has-the-u-s-supreme-court-defined-religion/ and http://www.slaw.ca/2010/04/15/defining-religion-under-the-charter%E2%80%95church-of-the-universe-case/.

standard forms of invocation, sacraments or rites of initiation); and a moral code.

Despite this encompassing definition of religion, I recognize that the terminology of "religion" is problematic as some traditions do not consist of a set system of beliefs such as Hinduism and other eastern traditions do not fall into the westernized notion of "religion" (Cantwell Smith, 1978). The eastern traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shintoism are arguably more philosophies of life than a religion, as described by Coward, Slater, and Chagnon. However, despite recognizing the ongoing conversation about the definition of religion, I did not want to let it distract from the purpose of my study and wanted to seek a means to incorporate the multi-belief perspectives that I encountered. Thus, my study used the terminology of "religious bullying" based on my findings regarding this form of bullying overall, as it includes bullying across and within religious groups, and between those that are religiously affiliated and religiously unaffiliated. In using the word "religion," various traditions still fit into these parameters, such as the non-religious. These findings are elaborated upon in Chapter V.

Secondly, another objective was to raise awareness of religious bullying. Through discussion about religious bullying with participants and their communities, it was hoped that individuals who have experienced it could perhaps share their narratives with others; thereby increasing the familiarity and comfort to respond to such incidents, as well as understanding the implications of such incidents.

Thirdly, to find solutions that may prevent or respond to religious bullying. As a public school teacher with limited free time to offer extracurricular activities and to engage students within school hours, I wanted to explore how and what existing school curriculum could support us in addressing religious bullying. As knowledge about individuals of differing sexual

orientations is used to address bullying based on sexual-orientation[8], I wondered if an educational program related to religious understanding could inform teachers about religious and non-religious identities, and equip and enable us to address religious bullying as well. This led me to learn about the oldest two mandatory religious literacy courses in North American public secondary schools – the *Ethics and Religious Culture* (ERC) K-12 courses in Quebec, Canada and the Grade Nine *World Geography & World Religions* course (WGWR) in Modesto City's School District (MCS), Modesto, California – and consider if these courses could offer a preventative or responsive solution. In finding solutions to prevent or respond to religious bullying, this study does not provide a history of religious bullying or history of religious individuals in each context. Rather, Chapter II discusses the history of each context and the development of the religious literacy courses in Montreal and Modesto. As historical developments influence contemporary contexts, this chapter is an important foundation to the study as it focused on contextual concerns that inform an understanding of religious bullying and how teachers teach religious literacy and how students and parents understand it.

Fourthly, after these three objectives were met, I aimed to inform students, teachers, parents, school administrators and community leaders about the connection between religious bullying and religious literacy in the event that they exist, which they do. Thus, my overall research question asked: *Can religious literacy courses effectively address religious bullying?* From there and in connection to each of my objectives, I asked the following sub-questions:

1) What is religious bullying?

---

[8] Examples of this in Ontario include an Additional Qualification course for teachers specifically related to teaching LGBTQ students (https://etfo-aq.ca/courses/teaching-lgbtq-students/) and considerations of this existed prior 2008, noted here https://www.oct.ca/-/media/PDF/Additional%20Qualification%20Consultation%20on%20Teaching%20LGBTQ/aq_consultation_e.pdf.

2) To what extent does religious bullying occur at the public school level in Montreal and/or Modesto?

3) Do the ERC and/or WGWR foster inclusive classrooms and school environments that encourage students to discuss religion and/or address religious bullying with mutual respect, empathy for others, and self-reflection?

To answer these specific questions and study the potential connection between religious literacy and religious bullying in public schools from student, teacher, principal, and parent perspectives, I compared the participants' perspectives contextualized in *Ethics and Religious Culture* (ERC) K-12 courses in Quebec, Canada and the Grade Nine *World Geography & World Religions* course (WGWR) in Modesto City's School District (MCS), Modesto, California. Although the ERC is province-wide, my study focused on the experiences of students in Montreal's French and English, private and public schools. In California, my study included perspectives from students who lived in and around Modesto, California but my analysis of the connection between religious literacy and religious bullying, especially with reference to the third research question focused on students from the Modesto City Schools district specifically. To explore these questions relating to religious and non-religious identity and the teaching about religious and non-religious identities in public education, I grounded my study in an ontology and epistemology of critical realism (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998; Bhaskar, 1998a, 1998b; Collier, 1994).

1.2. Dissertation roadmap

To document and explain the approaches and findings from this study, Chapter II opens the conversation by situating this discussion on religious bullying and religious literacy in the contexts of Quebec and Modesto, California as they have the two oldest North American public school systems with a mandatory religious literacy course required for graduation. As two contexts

with a religious undercurrent in their public school systems (see Boudreau, 2011 and Fraser, 1999),

the discussion begins with the early establishment of schooling in Quebec in 1635 and in California

in 1769. Through a survey of the development of each school system amidst socio-political growth

and tensions from the past until 2018, the chapter presents three specific themes. Firstly, that the

education systems are a product of a desire to maintain a specific and local identity. Secondly, that

the control over public education was and remains fraught between a number of parties. Thirdly,

that education about religious individuals and worldviews is informed by the local understanding

of interculturalism and multiculturalism, perhaps distinct to each location.

Chapter III discusses the theoretical basis for the recognition of religious identities and

religious literacy in North America to broaden Chapter II's contextual conversation to one that

considers the discussion of religious identities in secular milieus. Aligning with Bronfenbrenner's

social-ecological framework (1979), referenced by the majority of scholars in bullying research as

an approach to understand an individual's development based on their social environment, I

consider the theories that relate to a macro and micro level discussion about the recognition of

religious identities and religious literacy. At the highest level, I review how rights and freedoms

of individuals are promoted based on one's religious and non-religious identity via a number of

United Nations' (UN) declarations and conventions. Then, with respect to secular democratic

nations, I present a triangulation of Taylor's open secularism (2007), Eck's pluralism (2006, 2013),

and Ghosh's critical multiculturalism (2011). In this triangulation, the first theory describes the

necessary inclusion of religions and religious matters in a public sphere, the second theory suggests

a means to promote an openly secular sphere, and the third theory considers the tensions currently

in the sphere that need to be recognized in order to encourage the semblance of open secularism

that Taylor describes. Following this is a sub-section on Habermas' thoughts on faith and reason that calls the religious and secular groups to equal demands.

Complementing this full discussion is a pairing of theories at a more meso and micro level through Fraser's participatory parity (2007) and Callan's empathetic identification (1997, 2000). Similar to the previous triangulation, the two theories in the meso and micro level complement and build on one another's approaches. The first theory from Fraser is a response to the dysfunctional aspects in a democracy, and the second theory presents the characteristics needed for an individual to develop and foster an inclusive democracy that engages with one another with an understanding of the political inequalities and inequities in society, and promotes open secularism. Together, they aim to develop and respond to the fluctuations in a democracy that aims to be inclusive and critically aware. This conversation continues by considering intersectionality at the individual level as this framework discusses how the social norms based on power dynamics cross-cut at the macro-, exo-, and meso- levels of society as they are displayed and manifested in an individual's daily life. This is important in a conversation on religious bullying as certain religions or beliefs may be poorly regarded in certain societies, and because other bias-based bullying, such as racial or gender based bullying, can compound the effects of a bullying incident. In these circumstances, a solution to bias-based bullying suggests that religious literacy is only part of a potential solution, as many forms of bias need to be addressed beyond religious bias.

Chapter IV builds on the theoretical review in Chapter III with a conceptual analysis of four different conceptions of religious literacy, that of Diane Moore, Stephen Prothero, Robert Jackson, and Siebren Miedema. In line with the critical realist approach, I analysed each of their conceptions while considering the institutional and social influences of each scholar as well. For example, the conceptions from Moore, Senior Lecturer on Religious Studies and Education at

Harvard Divinity School, and Prothero, Professor of Religion at Boston University, reflect their situated context in the US and their background in Religious Studies. On the other hand, conceptions from Jackson, Professor Emeritus in the Warwick Religious Education Research Unit at Warwick University, and Miedema, Professor in Educational Foundations and Religious Education at VU University Amsterdam, reflect the years of established religious education in the UK and the Netherlands, respectively, in addition to their backgrounds as professors in education. In reviewing the conceptions and positionality, this chapter notes that their conceptions, situated in their specific milieus, present minimal, if any, consideration for non-religious groups and Indigenous spirituality. It concludes by considering the educational implications the four conceptions present as a potential means to foster empathetic attitudes and mutual respect that may address religious bullying in North American public schools.

Chapter V reviews the current understanding of religious bullying by introducing the details about bullying overall. This literature review offers contemporary data on the state of bullying in the US and Canada and explains why it is of concern in the short and long term, as the effects of bullying can be inter- and intragenerational, and potentially lead one towards violent extremism. In conjunction, details about religious bullying, albeit scant, are shared from reports from US-based Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim non-profit organizations, as well as one Canada-based Sikh organization. As this study considers another approach to assist teachers in responding to religious bullying, this chapter concludes by considering the current responses to bullying at the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-levels of society first. This conclusion marks the end of the first half of the dissertation that introduces the theoretical and conceptual analyses and literature review that embodied the foundation of my study. The latter half of the dissertation elaborates on the process of my study.

Chapter VI describes my research design using the Critical Communicative Methodology (CCM), the methods and analysis prescribed to the methodology, and the pragmatic mixed methods transformational design that I attempted to use. This is followed by a description of the initial research design I had planned with an explanation of how social tensions in Modesto required me to adapt my research design, which I believe was ultimately for the better. The remainder of the chapter interweaves an elaboration on the fluidity and unexpected changes that arose through Phase 1 (September 2016 to January 2017) to Phase 3 (April to November 2017) of my study alongside socio-political events in Modesto and Montreal. This chapter presents a clear reminder that bullying, regardless of its content basis, can be informed by new or previously existing attitudes, behaviours, and values that percolate throughout all levels of one's social-ecological framework.

Chapter VII summarizes the data gathered from Modesto and thoughts from my participants in the two co-analysis meeting I arranged with them, where I co-analyzed the data with them in accordance with the CCM approach to analyzing that includes participants and recognizes their expertise in their own lived experience and as members of the specific milieu. As the co-analysis raised and considered the themes at the societal, family, school, and student level, and abstractly as a phenomenon of religious bullying and religious literacy, data answered my three research sub-questions. To trace this discussion then, the chapter begins by presenting a condensed description of the data within each theme before presenting the answers to the three research sub-questions for the Modesto context in particular. Chapter VIII summarizes the same information within the context of Montreal in the same format, albeit without the theme of family, as this was not discussed in detail in Montreal.

Chapter IX culminates this dissertation as it includes my individual secondary analysis, after the two co-analysis meetings with my participants. As such, I discuss the key and common findings from both contexts that address the three research sub-questions and inform the overarching research question of: *Religious bullying: Can religious literacy courses address this phenomenon?* I share a description of religious bullying as it occurs when a religious or non-religious person degrades another person (often intentionally) emotionally, mentally, or physically based on the bullied individual's perceived or actual religious or non-religious identity, and/or based on the beliefs affiliated with that aspect of an individual's identity. Based on the largely qualitative basis of my findings, I explain that my findings do not inform us about the extent of religious bullying at public schools in Montreal and Modesto but that it does clarify that the connection between religious bullying and religious literacy can be positive or negative depending on teacher attitude, curriculum, and teacher training. Specifically, my findings have shown that the WGWR can foster an inclusive classroom and school environment that encourages students to discuss religion and/or address religious bullying through mutual respect, empathy for others, and self-reflection. The details in relation to the ERC were less conclusive. In consideration of varying types of religious literacy then, this chapter concludes by focusing on the greater potential to develop a positive connection between religious bullying and religious literacy based on programs that would include dialogue, analytical thinking, and encountering different individuals per the guidelines of the Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954).

To conclude this dissertation, Chapter X circles back to the beginning of this dissertation that began with my experience in my GTA middle school classroom, informed by my personal experience and observations in the workplace. Although my study was focused on Modesto and Montreal, the findings from this study are then related to the current state of affairs for students

and adults in the GTA, where religious discrimination remains high, and may be increasing in some neighbourhoods. As such, this study makes several contributions and has implications for schools in Modesto, Montreal, the GTA, and for stakeholders in this conversation regardless of context.

1.3. Contributions and implications of the study

This study develops the theoretical foundations of religious bullying and religious literacy. As a pioneering study that focused on religious bullying, this study furthers the academic and non-academic conversation and knowledge on bias-based bullying.

With respect to religious literacy, this study also contributes to the research on the WGWR and ERC courses and further informs non-academic community members of the conversation and knowledge about each course; especially as many participants in Stanislaus County were not familiar with the WGWR course prior my conversation with them. In considering religious bullying and religious literacy, this study is the first to explore not only the potential connections of ERC and WGWR, but also with religious literacy overall. As such, the findings have implications for both these courses as well as for religious literacy, which is discussed in detail in Chapters IX and X. Regardless of context, this study contributes to the understanding of a significant phenomenon for students, teachers, administrators, parents, community leaders, policy makers, and researchers. This contribution is discussed in the conclusion.

Today, religious bullying, as with all forms of bullying, remains a societal issue. Thus, a means to address this issue also needs to be a societal solution that incorporates all of these stakeholders. For, while a religious literacy course can contribute to the solution, a religious course itself is insufficient, such as a policy that legislates certain actions is inept in fostering attitudinal changes. To prevent and respond to religious bullying, religious literacy courses need review from

several angles: the content of the course, the course objectives, and the skillset and preparedness of the teacher, the community dynamics, and, possibly at what age the students are exposed to religious literacy. This dissertation elaborates on all these points in the following chapters and articulates how the contributions have been made and will continue to be made in the years to come.

CHAPTER II: CONTEXTS

This chapter reviews the contextual history of Montreal, Quebec, and Modesto, California to consider the historical tensions in Montreal and Modesto regarding religious identity and education. In doing so, it provides a contextual background to understand the participant perspectives about religious bullying and the current religious literacy courses in each city. To do so, the chapter includes salient perspectives within the lived environment outside of schools, which prompt the ebb and flow of cultural shifts, and how they relate to beliefs and attitudes that can lead to religious bullying within the school. Details on the development of educational structures and local policies in Montreal and Modesto illustrate how institutionalized systems and courses inform the foundations of current religious literacy courses and student understanding as well. For Montreal, details are included to show how complicated and ingrained tensions are across belief groups, and how tensions are felt in society (which influences religious bullying) even if individuals cannot articulate why they are uncomfortable or feel marginalized, as conversations with some participants seemed to suggest. Thus, through a discussion of societal cultures, educational reforms, and state or provincial policies, this chapter provides an overarching foundation for a discussion on religious bullying, as all forms of bullying, including religious bullying are a societal issue that are influenced by and permeate into society and cannot be decontextualized.

Quebec and Modesto, California host the two oldest North American public secondary school systems where a religious literacy course is required for graduation, that of the *Ethics and Religious Culture* course from Grade 1 to Secondary V across the province of Quebec and the Ninth Grade *World Geography and World Religions* course in the Modesto City Schools District of Modesto, California. This chapter discusses the contexts of Quebec and California to explain how its past and present historical trajectories influence the two forms of religious literacy courses

today, particularly in Quebec's understanding of interculturalism and California's approach to multiculturalism. Although both contexts are secular today, with pockets that are fiercely secular in varying ways where one staunchly advocates for the separation of church and state and the other promotes the omission of religion in the public sphere, Quebec and California have a historical undercurrent of religious influence within their public school systems (see Boudreau, 2011 and Fraser, 1999, respectively). To understand the historical bearings of the courses, Section 2.1 of this chapter reviews the history of religious education in Quebec while Section 2.2 presents the history of the influence of religion in public education in the US as it traveled from the New England states to California. In reviewing these trajectories, Section 2.3 elaborates on these historical bearings in relation to the conceptions of interculturalism and multiculturalism that exist in both contexts today and how the conceptions influence the contemporary forms of religious literacy in each milieu.

Three specific themes emerge in this discussion. Firstly, the importance of identity and the understanding of a unified society based on it, where many French Catholic settlers wished to protect their conception of an ethnic, linguistic, and religious identity and the prominent settlers of America wished to renounce their historical European identity and affiliation by establishing a new identity grounded in a common educational foundation. Hence, an aspect of and tensions about religious identities have always been, and continue to be, woven into the fabric of Quebec and California's history. This theme informs a discussion on religious tensions, discrimination, and bullying in the contexts today. Secondly, the control of education, vied for by religious and political leaders in historic Quebec compared to the struggle for public and parental control of education over that of the state in California. This theme informs the development of religious literacy courses in each context. Thirdly, the establishment of secularism as understood by the

conception of interculturalism in Quebec today, and the separation of church and state in the US and its approach to multiculturalism This theme outlines how a discussion of religious bullying and religious literacy is considered and discussed or not, in both contexts.

The discussion in each of these themes shifted significantly in both contexts during the 1960s. In Quebec, the Quiet Revolution marked this period and altered the dominance of religious stakeholders and the public conception of religion. Data reflects this as 48% of Quebecois who were 15 years and older in 1986 attended religious services at least once a month compared to 17% of the same age group in 2012. In addition, in 1971, the religious unaffiliated comprised 1% of the Quebec population, compared to 12% in 2011 (Pew Research Center, 2013). In California, the 1965 US Immigration and Nationality Act, aimed to dismantle the historic preference towards Northern and Western European immigrants, propelled many individuals from Asia, Africa, and Latin America to immigrate. For, while the percentage of foreign-born residents in California progressively decreased from 1870 to 1960 under the historic laws that preferred Northern and Western European immigrants, the percentage of foreign-born residents has continuously increased after the enactment of the 1965 US Immigration and Nationality Act. From 1970 to 2016, the population of foreign-born residents in California grew from 9% to 27% of the state population (Public Policy Institute of California, 2018)[9], a percentage that almost doubled the national percentage of foreign-born residents in 2016.

Today, Quebec and California possess similarities in their present-day secular stances on education, but they differed in their historical journeys as Quebec had a 365 year relationship with confessional religious education (from 1635 to 2000) compared to California's 65 year relationship

---

[9] This data reflects the 75% of documented residents as of 2016 (Public Policy Institute of California, 2018). More details about the Pacific Coast immigration timeline is available here: https://www.nps.gov/subjects/pacificcoastimmigration/timeline.htm

under Spanish and Mexican governance (from 1769 to 1834). Both contexts have a colonial history but French and English colonial practices influenced Quebec institutional structures and values and Spanish colonialism did likewise in California. Each colonizing nation established its colonies in different ways and their settlement approach undoubtedly influenced the societies of Quebec and California. Much can be shared about the rich historical contexts and social influences that shape the history of public education and values in both locales, but this chapter reviews the history of education in relation to the teaching of and about religion in public education in Quebec from 1635 to 2018 and California from 1769 to 2018 in particular. These details then inform perspectives about religious bullying.

2.1. History of Quebec education system and the *Ethics & Religious Culture* course

Religious education has been a core component of education in the territory of modern-day Quebec since the seventeenth century. Although Quebec City was founded in 1608 and settlers struggled to survive amidst the harsh winters and foreign disease, the French Jesuit priests were quick to establish 47 petites écoles and a college for boys in the territory of New France by 1635. Shortly after, French Ursuline nuns arrived in 1639 to establish schools and educate girls on Biblical Studies, domestic skills, needlework, and etiquette (Axelrod, 1997). The New World was a climatically hostile expanse but the Jesuit priests were commissioned to convert the Native population, while the Ursuline nuns were tasked to care for the spiritual and educational needs of the colonists. By 1760, priests and nuns of the Jesuit, Recollect, Sulpician, Ursuline, Grey Nun, and the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame orders were well established in their work and were responsible for the formal education of children. Thus, all aspects of education in New France were solely purposed for the training of future priests and nuns among the Native population and

new settlers who were lay people establishing the development of the colony (Magnuson, 1980), and Catholic education and formal education were inseparable as parents sent their children to formal education with the hope of religious instruction that would develop Catholics who were loyal to France (Axelrod, 1997). This connection between religious orders' understanding of the role of education as a means to promote the Catholic identity of a cohesive society and parents' acquiescence to the orders' influential role in the rearing of their children's religious development became the foundation for discussions on Quebec education for centuries to follow. However, many events challenged this firm structure as well, which have informed Quebec society and education today.

In 1760, the English defeat of the French in the territory of modern day Canada initiated a spiralling struggle for power between the English Protestant groups and the French Catholic leaders. Religious and social-class tensions limited consensus over educational initiatives across the territory, and ethnic and linguistic tensions existed in the land of modern day Quebec specifically. From 1760 to the 1840s, the French Catholic Church fought vigorously to protect its own cultural identity (Boudreau, 1999) – a linguistic, religious, and ethnic connection tied to their educational programs. In 1763, the English Royal proclamation aimed to assimilate everyone in New France, which aimed to Anglicize and Protestantize everyone; this failed largely due to the persistent objection of the Catholic Church and the Quebec Act of 1774 that enabled the Church to maintain the continuation of Catholic religion and French language in Quebec (Magnuson, 1980).

In 1789, fifteen years later, Chief Justice William Smith responded by proposing a secular school system in Quebec (from elementary to university level) that included both lay and religious leaders and teachers thereby welcoming all inhabitants of Quebec to attend (Magnuson, 1980).

While Smith's proposal was rejected, the Education Act of 1801 created the first public education system across the colony of Lower Canada that included the southern region of current day Quebec. As this Act aimed to expand access to schooling, the Catholic Church again inferred it as a ploy to assimilate its population into a Protestant, English-speaking culture. However, while these "Royal" (or state run) schools did progress Protestant demands greatly, they also maintained Catholic identities in French neighbourhoods (Axelrod, 1997).

Subsequently, another substantial change arose in 1829 when the Syndics Act permitted locally elected trustees to manage government schools, which relinquished the previously held administrative roles of parish priests. Catholic priests greatly disliked this transfer of responsibility but the new administrative structure gained community support as it rendered education more accessible, quadrupling the number of schools in Quebec to 1282 schools within four years (from 1828 to 1832). However, the institutional structure of the Quebec French educational system had already left a mark on the society, as secondary schooling was only accessible to wealthy males who were then classically schooled in priesthood or law. For, as Magnuson (1980) remarked, all Catholic societies in the 19th century were, "lukewarm to the idea of education for all," (p. 36) and Quebec was no exception as it continued to educate those who were able to access education. This was in direct opposition to others, like Smith in Canada and Jefferson in the US, who desired to expand access to education as they saw it as a means to foster social cohesion rather than exclusion. As such, the desire for social cohesion beyond religious lines and control was in motion, but the established system in secondary schooling continued to benefit individuals who were Catholic with specific economic means; religious education remained important and supported the beliefs of Catholics in society.

Furthermore, the classical training for some and the lack of secondary education for many in the French Catholic school systems left a substantial portion of the French population struggling for jobs compared to graduates from the English schools who were prepared for jobs that are more practical. This economic tension contributed to a French revolt against British rule (Axelrod, 1997) which fueled the rebellion of 1837-1838 and led Britain to commission the Durham report.

In his review of the state of education in colonial Canada, Lord Durham found that Upper Canada (modern day Southern Ontario) was much more progressive in its institutional developments, and that Lower Canada (modern day Quebec) was the only North American territory to lack a public, common education system. To Durham, Lower Canada was poorly governed because its people were not educated. To increase accessibility to schooling then, Arthur Buller, a co-author of the Durham Report, recommended a non-sectarian common elementary school for the Protestant and Catholic students in Quebec, "instead of letting French and English children learn their lessons and play their games apart" (Durham Report, p. 234), echoing sentiments for a secular system that Smith raised fifty years earlier. Yet, as before, vocal French Canadians of that time rejected this idea and again felt threatened by the potential idea of assimilation. As a result, the proposal was never accepted. Nevertheless, in the 1830s, Quebecois Louis-Joseph Papineau also advocated for the separation of church and state, and for secular education in Quebec (Magnuson, 1980). However, like other similar initiatives, this proposal was rejected as well.

During this period, religious education engendered similar sentiments in both English Protestant residents of Lower Canada (Quebec) and the French Catholic population despite their many differences. Many English Protestants who had fled the US into Canada during the American Revolution were eager to have Church administered education as well (Axelrod, 1997). However,

while both Catholic and Protestant education were core components of formal education in Quebec, both groups approached education differently due to doctrinal differences. Catholic education was grounded on doctrines that "man was ultimately dependent on the priesthood for spiritual guidance," (Magnuson, 1980, p.10) whereas Protestant education, more prominent in English colonies, believed that individuals were to read Biblical scriptures themselves, thus requiring popular education to gain literacy skills in order to do so (Magnuson, 1980). This difference in the priest-led versus self-led approach to religious education was quite noticeable among the French Catholic education system as it drastically changed from the 1840s to the early 1900s (Boudreau, 1999). (This distinction also marks the difference between the development of education in colonial French Canada and the early American colonies that were influenced by English Protestant roots that will be discussed in Section 2.2.)

In the 1840s, France sent ten new male and nine new female teaching orders to Quebec. This new arrival alongside local affairs helped the Catholic education system flourish (Magnuson, 1980). Perhaps in reaction to their arrival, discussion arose among local leaders in 1841 regarding ways to structure the public school system in Quebec, where Charles Mondelet, a Montreal lawyer, suggested a division of schools on a linguistic basis rather than a religious one. As this partition was declined, centralized and local authorities were given responsibility of education, thereby establishing the Department of Public Instruction and local school boards, which were responsible for curriculum development. By this time, all schools were either Protestant or Catholic in affiliation so both school systems were pleased with the results as local administration enabled the safeguarding of their establishments (Magnuson, 1980), and thereby their distinct communal identities. As such, Catholicism and Protestantism had their religious identities supported,

protected, and promoted through the school system and their respective religious education programs, becoming the two prioritized belief groups through institutionalization.

To protect themselves further, the Protestants in Quebec requested the inclusion of Section 93 in the 1867 British North American (BNA) Act – the documentation confirming and articulating the details about the newly established Confederation of Canada. In Section 93, the Quebec Protestant community stipulated the need for education to fall under provincial jurisdiction, because, like the French who saw themselves as a minority in all of Canada, the Protestant community saw themselves as a minority in Quebec and felt the need to protect their own cultural identity as well (Magnuson, 1980). The issue over religious rights and control over education was so important that Section 93 of the BNA Act details not only provincial control of education but also the possibility of restoring the privileges of a denomination over education if they felt threatened (Axelrod, 1997). As this afforded the protection and sectarian control of Protestant and Catholic schools by their distinct clergy, the educational system became an avenue whereby the Protestant and Catholic Churches maintained a stronghold. For the Catholic Church, this rein extended into political and economic spheres of the society as it "instructed its members what to believe, what to read and how to vote…no organization or newspaper under an ecclesiastical ban could long endure" (Magnuson, 1980, p. 41).

By the late 1800s, there were two separate school systems each self-governed with its distinct philosophies and school communities; Catholic taxpayers only contributed towards Catholic schools, and the Protestant taxpayers supported Protestant schools (Magnuson, 1980), enabling each community to maintain and further the specific section of Quebec society that they self-identified with. "Separation and denominationalism had won out over unification and secularism as guiding principles of Quebec education, thus contributing to making French and

English Canadians strangers in their own province" (Magnuson, 1980, p. 50). As each denominational group predominantly lived within their own spheres, the education system reflected this as each school affiliated with either the Catholic or the Protestant denomination. By 1916, this institutional distinction illustrated that much of the Quebec schooling systems only promoted the aims of the social and religious elite who overwhelmingly made up the school boards, evident by the fact that Jewish students – half of the population in the Protestant School Board – had to attend either Catholic or Protestant schools (Axelrod, 1997). As such, the educational institutions marked the control by the two majority groups of Quebec onto the rest of Quebec society, a means of control that aimed to sustain and protect only their identity above others. Review of the current religious literacy education textbooks show that this protection and prioritization of Catholicism and Protestantism remains today (Abdou & Chan, 2017; Hirsch & McAndrew, 2014; Oueslati, McAndrew, and Helly, 2011) and speaks to the influential role that historical structures can have on the religious diversity in Quebec today.

This means of control was reflected in the Catholic school system during the first half of the 1900s, as it was denominational with clergymen in every level of the educational system and a parish priest who oversaw local school matters and was responsible for the moral and religious well-being of the local school. Catholic teachers staffed most schools as well. In contrast, the Protestant system was less denominational, included some clergymen, and staffed most schools with lay teachers. Although it included Scripture reading, Bible study, praying and singing of hymns, the Protestant schools were interdenominational in nature and focused more on teaching morals due to the Jewish half of the student body with teachers modeling the Christian doctrines through example (Magnuson, 1980). This difference in teaching across the denominational schools raised great concerns by 1946-1958, when Catholic Quebec had the highest student dropout rate

in Canada while Protestant Quebec had the lowest. Magnuson (1980) argues that Catholic Quebec was so concerned with preserving its identity through education, that it lacked a necessary focus on academic progress for its students. The control of the Catholic Church in all aspects of Quebec society, the hierarchical position Catholic religious education held compared to other disciplines, and the dropout rate in Catholic schools led to a drastic transition from church to state authority. This transition formulated into the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s that rejected the denominational value system and institutions that long-prevailed and managed Quebec (Magnuson, 1980). Balancing the rejection of the denominational system, in spite of the history of religious education in Quebec, informed the development and curriculum of the current religious literacy course in Quebec, as well as how religious beliefs and individuals are discussed in Quebec society today.

During the Quiet Revolution, the educational system transitioned into Quebec's governmental control as Quebecois believed that the government could provide for the educational needs of all its citizens, and that the educational system would be essential in improving the political, economic, and social development of the local society (Magnuson, 1980). Beginning in 1961, the Quebec Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education was tasked to examine the state of all public and private education from kindergarten and onwards. Often referred to as the Parent Commission as it was led by Monsignor Alphonse-Marie Parent, Vice-rector of Université Laval, the Commission reported that the Quebec educational system was inadequate for the modern industrialized state with 1500 Catholic school boards and nine Protestant school boards, where many maintained their own standards, curriculum, and textbooks, and a focus on classical teachings. Alongside several recommendations, it instructed for the secularization of school boards by creating neutral or non-confessional schools alongside the existing Catholic and Protestant schools; the Parent Commission recognized the increasing number of parents who opposed

denominational education. Despite this opposition, a non-sectarian school board did not come into fruition but the role of the Catholic and Protestant clergy in public education did diminish (Magnuson, 1980).

Shortly after, in 1964, Bill 60, An Act to Establish the Ministry of Education and the Superior Council of Education, was adopted in Quebec for the creation of a provincial Ministry of Education and two separate Catholic and Protestant Committee within the Superior Council of Education. This transition of management did secularize the school boards somewhat. Due to opposition from the Catholic Church, a caveat was written in Bill 60 to allow individuals and private groups the right to establish and maintain private denominational schools. Additionally, the Franco-Quebec Entente of 1965 solidified close ties between France and Quebec and facilitated numerous Quebec students, teachers, and government workers to attend schools in France, who have also brought back aspects of the centralized and French secular educational system to Quebec ever since (Magnuson, 1980), further changing notions of educational control and conceptions of secularism in schools. The Entente has raised complications in particular as French understandings of secularism through *laïcité*, refrains public expression of religious belief, whereas other understandings of secularism, as that in other parts of Canada and North America, welcome the expression of religious belief in public space. This conflicting understanding of secularism exists in Quebec (Meintel, 2015) and colours the discussion on a secular state, the teaching about religion, and the expression of religious beliefs.

Likewise, following these historical changes, there was a great push by the provincial government to protect the French language and the Francophone population in the 1970s. During this time, the Quebec government established Bill 101 requiring all social, economic, cultural, and administrative interactions be conducted in French. This decade transitioned the focus from

religious differences to linguistic differences. Thus, as the schools became more secularized, a Moral and Religious Education (MRE) option was created for parents who wanted non-denominational instruction for their children, alongside the traditional Catholic Religious Education (CRE) and Protestant Religious Education (PRE). Teachers were also permitted to refrain from religious teaching at this time (Boudreau, 2011). This secularization culminated in the 1990s.

In 1997, the provincial government requested the cancellation of Section 93 of the BNA Act that guaranteed the right to confessional education in the province. Subsequently, the Minister of Education ordered a review of the relevancy of religious education in public education, and offered guidelines about religious education and strategies to implement them. This Proulx Report offered 14 detailed recommendations that were all implemented in the years to come[10]. Primarily, they called for the de-confessionalization of the school boards in order to support all students (as they found the established system discriminatory), that the teaching of Catholicism and Protestantism be taught from a cultural perspective, that training for teachers be implemented to support this cultural approach of teaching about religion, and that other policies and laws be adapted to cohere with these changes (Gouvernement du Quebec, 1999). Similarly, the Education Minister who oversaw many of the changes of the Proulx Report, Pauline Marois, encouraged the government to base all changes on "social (from the perspective of an open, pluralistic society); cultural (from an educational, cultural and historical perspective); legal (ensuring respect for basic human rights, especially the right to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion); and pedagogical (in order to adopt a gradual approach consistent with the evolution of mindsets and environments)" goals in order to prepare youth for a pluralistic society and find meaning in life

---

[10] Visit http://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/bs40899 for the full list of recommendations.

(Boudreau, 2011, p. 219). These developments raised numerous public debates (Gouvernement du Quebec, 1999), as much of the population (where 90% or 100% of the people in certain regions of Quebec identified as being Catholic) felt that their identity was attacked as Catholic and Protestant teachings were removed from schools. While some Catholic parents wanted to offer minority rights, they did not want to do so at their own expense (Boudreau, 2011), illustrating the tensions regarding religious diversity, a belief of individual and collective identity, and foundational purposes of Quebec education during 1990s. Despite their concerns, in 1999, linguistic school boards replaced all Catholic and Protestant school boards in an effort to address the recommendations in the Proulx report. Thus, in 2000, the 365-year overlap of denominational and formal education ended as all Catholic and Protestant public school boards were abolished. All schools that previously had a Catholic or Protestant chaplain were appointed a non-denominational spiritual animator or counsellor. The Protestant or Catholic Committees that supported the school boards were removed and replaced by a non-religious advisory committee as well. The only remaining aspect of the old system was the MRE, CRE, and PRE options at each school (Boudreau, 2011), and confessional religious literacy that prioritized Catholicism and Protestantism remained a component of the educational system despite the religious diversity in parts of Quebec, and especially Montreal.

To address this remnant of the old system, the government introduced Bill 95 in 2005, "An act to amend various legislative provisions of a denominational nature in the education field." This bill permitted the government to amend the provincial charter of rights and freedoms where religious education in public schools was guaranteed for all families within three years (Assemblée nationale du Québec, 2005). In this strict period, they consulted approximately 70 educators, nearly 350 stakeholders from the school system and affiliated organizations, and 26 religious groups and

movements to develop a new course to replace the Moral Religious Education (MRE), Catholic Religious Education (CRE), and Protestant and Religious Education (PRE) courses (MEES, 2016). Thus, in 2008, the current *Ethics and Religious Culture* (ERC) course was established.

The ERC is a required course for students in every grade level, except for Grade 9 (or Secondary 3 in Quebec). The course aims to foster personal development through the objectives of: 1) the pursuit of the common good, and 2) the recognition of the other. The curriculum itself is divided into two competencies that students are evaluated on: 1) the ability to reflect on ethical questions, and 2) the ability to demonstrate an understanding of the phenomenon of religion, while the acquisition of dialogue skills is embedded into both competencies. In the second competency, educators are required to teach about the religious cultures of Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, and Native spiritualties in every school year, while Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and non-religious beliefs are required teaching within every school cycle, equivalent to the grouping of two to three grade levels (MÉES, 2016). While many traditions are included, Catholicism and Protestantism remain the primary traditions that are taught annually. Judaism and Native spiritualities are also given a prioritized position in the curriculum; however, textbook content does not reflect this emphasis (Abdou & Chan, 2017; Hirsh & McAndrew, 2014). This institutionalized hierarchy in the curriculum then, continues to reflect the religious hierarchy in the historical foundation of Quebec. Thus, the tensions of society are embedded into the religious literacy course and thereby the lived experiences of students as individuals who live in the society and are taught within a framework of this hierarchy, which fosters a degree of exclusion that may encourage religious bullying to occur.

In light of the plethora of changes in the Quebec educational system despite its strong roots in confessional education, the public and educators have received this course with mixed reviews.

Legal cases, such as *S.L. v. Commission scolaire des Chênes* in 2012 and *Loyola High School v. Quebec* in 2015 reflect this tension and highlights the discomfort some parents have about the transition into secularized teaching about religions as well as the complexity religiously-based private schools have towards the demands of the course, respectively.

Due to the rich history of Quebec, the ERC is unique in Canada and North America as it is the only religious literacy course that is required in public and private schools across all grades, regardless of the religious affiliation of the school. Contrasting this historical perspective is the history of religion and education in California.

2.2. History of California education system and the Modesto City School's Ninth Grade *World Geography and World Religions* course

Although similarities exist, the history of religion and schooling in California differs from that of Quebec in many ways. While Quebec established one of the first school systems in Canada, California established its educational system much later in comparison. While the Catholic clergy and nuns largely managed and supervised Quebec schools for centuries, the federal and state governments managed California (and American) schools early on. Additionally, while Quebec held strongly to its French and Catholic cultural and religious identity, Americans who initially modeled their schools after English schools hoped to distinguish the schools from their English and European history (Fraser, 2014). To understand these differences and the foundation of schooling in California, one must understand California's colonial history and details about schooling in the Eastern states.

In 1602, Spain seized the coast of California but did not colonize it until 1769. Until then, Spain was preoccupied with imperialist goals in Europe; consequently, California and Mexico were solely a stopover for merchants en route to the Philippines (Falk, 1968). During Spanish rule,

Catholic missionaries established missions with schools as part of the mission complex, but most Spanish settlers focused on gaining land and spent little time in formal schooling. The best students were prepared for priesthood or sent to more established schools in Mexico, while untrained educators taught in local schools, such as literate Spanish soldiers. Additionally, the priests were getting little financial support from Spain or Mexico City to establish institutional structures (Falk, 1968). Thus, school was not a priority for these early settlers. As a result, minimal infrastructure for education was established before California became an American state in 1850. In this sense, the education system was not considered an avenue for social cohesion and religious education and identity were not a primary concern in California, as it was in Quebec since inception.

From 1822 to 1846, California fell under Mexican rule, and was a penal colony, which raised contempt from the local Californian government towards the Mexican government (Falk, 1968). Riots arose between Californians and Mexicans, thereby threatening the missions, rancheros, and haciendas further. Come 1834, the Mexican government secularized the California missions altogether, removing the Franciscans of their control on lands and the products that were produced or grown on their land (Falk, 1968), suggesting a form of educational system that was secularized over a century before it was secularized in Quebec. However, while this revolt and transition of power arose in California, education was of prime focus along parts of the Eastern Coast (particularly New England and the Middle states), which was largely influenced by European history.

In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia was enacted, enabling European countries to declare an established religious affiliation in each nation. This influenced the newly immigrated Europeans in the US to do likewise as they steered away from the homogeneous constraint they previously experienced. As a result, each of the thirteen colonies declared a different faith while the chosen

religion was uniform throughout each colony (Fraser, 2014). However, this declaration raised

concerns as the settlers to North America, who sought religious freedom, disagreed upon which

framework to follow when the US became a nation. As a result, to ensure each new state could

continue practicing religion according to their specific preference, the First Amendment of the US

Constitution (1791) was written to include the free establishment and exercise of religion at the

federal level. The consideration for religious freedom trickled into states and into their educational

systems between the 1770s and 1830s.

In 1779, Thomas Jefferson's "Bill for the more general diffusion of knowledge" argued

that schooling should be afforded to all citizens as: 1) he considered education a necessary

precursor to encourage the promotion and maintenance of democracy (although slaves and women

were not included in his conception of "all citizens"); and, 2) he believed that education could

foster new leaders from the poor of the Commonwealth (Fraser, 2014). Per the US Constitution,

Jefferson also believed that religious institutions were welcome to determine their own religious

practices in their own institutions, while, in comparison, the schools were to be common for all

(Fraser, 2014). Jefferson, like Smith in Quebec, felt that religion was a divisive force in education

and tried to offer schooling that welcomed all. With this approach, the US achieved the most

established form of church and state separation in the history of the world in the 1770s (Fraser,

1999).

As schooling for the new nation progressed from 1770 to 1820 along the Eastern coast

(Fraser, 2014), the Spaniards colonized California from 1769 to 1822 on the Western coast. A

second regime change occurred in 1821 when Mexico gained independence from Spain and

California became Mexican territory from 1822 to 1846. This Mexican period coincided with the

common school movement in some parts of the United States (1820-1860) – that ensured a

standardized form of education across all schools – occurring throughout the established states in the Northeast and Midwest (Fraser, 2014). A common school, proposed Horace Mann, would be the binding agent to gather all citizens together and foster an American culture, a new initiative to address peaceably the several divergent Christian sects that arrived from Europe.

As the secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education from 1836 to 1848, Mann aimed to offer common elementary schools in order to develop citizens at a young age, compared to adults who were harder to influence (Fraser, 2014). His conception of the common school was founded on the ideal of a common Protestantism that was acceptable to all sects. This common school would inform students about religions and offer free choice for them to choose their religion, if any; thus, religious education was to be "general and of a tolerant nature" (Fraser, 2016, p. 24). In Mann's common schools, the Bible could be read but the interpretation was left to "the pulpits, the Sunday schools, the bible classes, the catechisms, of all the denominations, to be employed according to the preferences of individual parents" (Mann's *Twelfth Report,* quoted in Fraser, 2016, p. 25). At this time, Protestants felt that education and Protestantism were allies, thereby leading many of them to see the common school as a means to counter the increase in Catholic immigrants (Fraser, 2014). This mirrored the efforts of Catholic groups in Quebec as a dominant religious group was promoted in society and influenced educational curriculum, thereby creating a hierarchy in society among religious groups, and institutionalizing a power imbalance towards the less dominant.

Despite the support he received, many disagreed with Mann, notably those of other Christian sects and those who were "freethinkers or anti-religious" (Fraser, 1999), including 31 Boston schoolmasters who questioned the removal of corporal punishment (Harris, 1896, p. 141) and others who argued that education is a local matter, not to be centralized under federal or state

governance. New York City's Catholic Bishop at the time, John Hughes, found the proposal, like Mann's, to be an attack on Catholicism in general and that the offering failed to be non-sectarian education but a pan-Protestant form of education instead. Another concern was the proposal of a common school library where each school would be supplied by board-selected books, which concerned parents who dreaded the possibility of the board instilling its beliefs and values on their children through literature. Overall, many feared that Mann was trying to create moral citizens and felt that the responsibility of doing so was that of every parent (Fraser, 2014), a concern that also existed in Quebec. However, undeterred by these objections, the common school movement progressed across the Eastern states and the Mid-West, alluding to Mann's namesake as the father of the American public education system (Falk, 1968; Fraser, 2014).

The school movement gradually progressed to the West from 1835 to 1860 by influential figures such as Lyman Beecher (1775-1863) in the Mid-West, Calvin Stowe (1802-1886) in Ohio, Samuel Lewis (1799-1854) in Ohio, Henry Barnard (1811-1900) in Connecticut, John D. Pierce (1797-1882) in Michigan, and Caleb Mills (1806-1879) in Indiana, to list a few. By 1848, the American Home Missionary Society, the Episcopal and Catholic churches, the Mormons, the Baptists, and other denominations, had surged into the Californias (comprised of Upper and Lower California) and in the Republic of Mexico to establish public schools as they had seen or done in New England or the Mid-West. Their arrival had three effects on Californians: they created an interest in education; they established the first city districts in California; and they instituted "a well-defined separation of church and state in educational matters" to assuage the conflicting denominational and anti-ecclesiastical viewpoints that existed in the region (Falk, 1968, p. 63). This was an immense development as, even in 1850, "most of the children of the 92,527 California citizens were not bothered with the dread of school restrictions and schools tasks. Most of them

were out of school altogether" (Falk, 1968, p. 15). Those that attended school before 1850 attended private schools. Most people were fixated on the California Gold Rush of 1848-1855 instead. These perspectives feature groups that exist in California today – those who argue for the exclusion of religion from public education, those who advocate for teaching about religion, and those who do not engage in the conversation because they are fixated on other aspects of society. Together, these groups continue to fuel the conversation about the existence and form of religious literacy in public education and the discussion of religious expression and beliefs in the public sphere.

In 1849, the California Constitution was penned and California became the 31st American state in 1850. This Constitution was enacted to quickly establish the state; thus, it included very little on state and educational finance. Hence, while 1850-1880 became the era of imitation when California aimed to create schools and instructional programs that mirrored the well-established and renowned programs in New England and the Mid-West, the first few years were mired by discussions on school financing (Falk, 1968).

To ease the development of an educational system, the state chose to support schools that were already established by religious and private individuals. Hence, many of the first teachers were "men of the cloth, women of the veil, or persons of missionary propensities" (Falk, 1968, p. 172) and religious identity and belief grounded early education in California. They arrived in California from all denominations and although many were well educated as graduates from high school, academies, normal schools, or New England colleges and universities, many were hired based on the perception of being a moral individual as a curriculum of morals and manners only required teachers with an aptitude of moral character. All private, religious, and sectarian schools were funded based on student attendance. However, the California school law of 1852 stipulated that no school could receive public funds unless it was free of denominational and sectarian bias,

interest, or control, and that the use of denominational and sectarian books was prohibited from common schools. This contradiction between adopting the established schools and the new laws raised several debates. Nevertheless, the debate concluded in 1855 with an agreement to fund public schools only. Moreover, state laws and constitutional provisions have prohibited the distribution of public funds towards private, religious, sectarian, or denominational purposes (Falk, 1968)[11].

After these interruptions, the California school system gained stability from 1854 to 1855. At that time, John Swett – the fourth State Superintendent, a previous teacher and principal, and considered the father of the California school system – focused on improving teacher education, the examination of teachers, and the financial support for teachers in the 1850s and 1860s. Swett persistently argued that courses and programs were only as good as the teachers and textbooks the board of education could hire and were willing to pay for, but his greatest contribution was the establishment of free state-supported education for all students. His progress was stunted due to the election of another Superintendent, possibly because Swett was a Unitarian and considered an "infidel" by locals, and the emergence of the American Civil War from 1861 to 1865 that further delayed the development of the California school system until 1879 (Falk, 1968). Hidden within these conversations was a hierarchy of beliefs, as Swett was considered an "infidel" despite his work in state-supported education; a hierarchy of and within Protestantism that still exists in parts of California and influences the discussion of religious literacy and religious identities today.

In 1879, the Second Constitution of California was enacted due to several shortcomings and pressures. Shortcomings included a lack of structure and detail in the first Constitution and a desire to improve it, a lack of funding for public education, and an unequal representation from

---

[11] This prohibition of public funds into private and sectarian schooling remains today. Details are noted here on page 29: https://www2.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/regprivschl/regprivschl.pdf

the mining and trading North versus the agricultural South. Social pressures at the time that pushed for improvements included the California Teachers' Association "impatient with inadequate state support of the schools and with the slow progress of the school system" (Falk, 1968, p. 31). Regarding religious representation, the 1879 Constitution clarified that no public money or public school was to be used for any sectarian purpose.

For decades to come, the Californian educational system continued to develop and maintain its defined separation of church and state in public education. Legal cases across the US also confirmed the distinction and the tensions within the conversation of religious teaching and expression in public education, such as *The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes* in 1925, and *People of Illinois ex rel. Vashti McCollum v. Board of Education of School District (No. 71, Champaign County, Illinois)* in 1947, where the decision was challenged again locally in New York via *Zorach v. Clauson* in 1952, and *Engle v. Vitale* in 1962. In 1963, there was also *School Dist. of Abington Tp. v. Schempp,* (374 U.S. 203)[12]. Respectively, these rulings on the teaching of evolution in public schools and state-funded public schools that offered release time for religious and moral instruction – a period of time that permits students to receive religious education during school hours but not on school property – and the prohibition of school prayer led by school officials in New York State raised legal conclusions regarding non-sectarian teaching in public schools and the separation of church and state. The last ruling concluded that public schools cannot encourage confessional readings of the Bible and recitations of the Lord's Prayer under the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. Not all of these cases impact California as a whole, but some have influenced Californian perspectives and moved California law to adapt their practices, such as *Engle v. Vitale* that is specific to New York State but has influenced California law to offer a

---

[12] https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/374/203/

silent time for student and educators to pray, meditate, or stand in silence without coercion and according to their person preference[13]. However, controversies over these concerns still percolate fiercely in the American context today.

To date, religious funding or confessional religious instruction is prohibited in American schools in order to maintain separation of church and state. Thus, components of religious education in the 6th and 7th grade California State Content Standards for History-Social Studies curriculum and the World Religion elective course offered in secondary schools are all non-denominational in nature. The 9th grade *World Geography and World Religions* (WGWR) course in Modesto City's School District in Modesto, California is an exception in this discussion. It stands as the oldest long-standing religious education course in the US that is required for graduation while remaining non-confessional and adhering to the California Education Code (1970) that bars school facilities from fostering religion or offering religious instruction.

Established in the year 2000, the design of the Modesto *World Geography and World Religions* (WGWR) course coincided with a communal and school district desire to recognize the rights and identities of all students, as severe cases of harassment and bullying towards gay students arose in the Modesto City Schools in the late 1990s. To set a standard for student safety and develop a safe schools project, Jim Enochs, the Superintendent at the time, sought to promote the rights, respect, and responsibility of all students. Through this endeavour, Enochs invited Dr. Charles Haynes, the then vice president of the Religious Freedom Center and a senior scholar at the First Amendment Center, to moderate the tension that rose among parents who did not want discussion or promotion of homosexuality in schools and parents who did. Through the help of Haynes, a committee of 114 people came to a consensus to protect the rights, respect, and

---

[13] More details about this is available here https://statelaws.findlaw.com/california-law/california-prayer-in-public-schools-laws.html.

responsibility of all students that was detailed in a one-page document, which now hangs as a poster in Modesto City's School classrooms (YT interview, January 30, 2015).

Concurrently, Enochs approached ten teachers to see how they could help bolster the social sciences curriculum and create a course that would address the contemporary needs of students by utilizing additional class hours that were available in their weekly schedule. Upon reflection on their students' junior high education, the teachers realized that their students needed more knowledge about world geography and world religions, and thereby developed the local course as an introduction to both disciplines (YT interview, 2015). Thus, while the bullying of gay students did not lead to the creation of the course, discussions about the need to respect the rights of others did arise at the same time. Attentively, Yvonne Taylor, a notable teacher within this group, described it as, "the perfect storm. It all just came together" (YT interview, 2015).

Perhaps with the local discussions regarding bullying in mind, local teachers designed the WGWR to firmly recognize and discuss the multi-religious aspects of society and the civil need to respect individuals of varying religions. In the 18-week course, students are taught nine weeks of content on geography and nine weeks about world religions. In the latter nine weeks, students begin with two weeks of instruction on the First Amendment, Roger Williams, and the concept of religious liberty and separation of church. During this time, teachers foster an understanding of rights, respect, and responsibility premised on the First Amendment. In doing so, the notion that, "A right for one is a right for everyone" is reinforced (YT interview, 2015). Following this, students receive a chronological introduction to the seven major world religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The teaching of the world religions is carefully organized to ensure every religion is offered the same attention as the others as teachers standardize the lessons directly from the content within their textbook. To ensure

neutrality, some teachers read directly from the textbook as their passion and enthusiasm for the subject matter is articulated in their body language and verbal expression (Wertheimer, 2015).

From this basis, the course aims to instill the nine characteristics of courage, honesty, loyalty, respect, responsibility, civility, compassion, initiative and perseverance, and teaches students ways to communicate without offending peers in conjunction with introductory knowledge of what individuals in the community may believe. An opt-out option is available. However, only self-professed atheist students chose to opt-out in the first few years of the course (YT interview, 2015).

This course has received popular interest, noted in research by Dr. Emile Lester (2011, and Lester and Roberts, 2006), Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at the University of Mary Washington, and several national news outlets, including CBS (2008)[14]. In 2014, the California Assembly Committee on Education recognized the achievements of the course in educating students and adopted Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 154 which recommends, "That this course be considered for adoption by other school districts in the state" (California Assembly Committee on Education, ACR 154, 2014). In response to the religiously bullied Sikh students and the over 300,000 Sikhs residing in California, the Recommendation declares that:

> The World Geography-World Religion class has been very successful in helping Sikh pupils feel more accepted and in helping pupils understand their First Amendment rights, understand and practice the character traits of respect and responsibility, become informed about the religious diversity in their community and the world, and obtain greater understanding about the six major world religions.

Despite this benefit and the empirical contributions of the course, researchers have also found shortcomings of the course (Lester & Roberts, 2006; Lester, 2011; Wertheimer, 2015), such as the

---

[14] The CBS news segment is available here: https://www.cbsnews.com/news/teaching-not-preaching-in-ca-bible-belt/

lack of professional development for teachers and minimized opportunities for dialogue, structured to protect the teachers from controversial responses from students and community members (Sophie interview, January 11, 2017). Likewise, the ERC has received support and optimism for its thematic approach to teach about ethics and religious culture across all grade levels (Leroux, 2007; Taylor, in Michaud, 2013; Tiflati, 2015). Yet, it is also criticized for teaching both disciplines in one course, and violating conceptions of secularity as religious culture is seen as a matter of private conscience that should remain out of public spheres (Baillargeon, 2016; Baril & Baillargeon, 2016). However, as the two oldest mandatory religious literacy courses in North American public schools, the *Ethics and Religious Culture* course and the *World Geography and World Religions* course are exemplary in offering a non-sectarian course in their contemporary secular settings.[15]

2.3 Contemporary review of both contexts

Upon review of their historical trajectories, one can observe the similarities and differences in the interplay between religion and education in Quebec and California across the three themes that were discussed - the importance of identity and the understanding of a unified society based on it, the control of education, and the establishment of secularism. These themes affect religious expression and discussion of religious identities, and thereby religious bullying, in Quebec and California today.

---

[15] As the Modesto City Schools District did not give me permission to conduct my research in their schools, I did not have access to the World Geography and World Religion curricula and did not complete a review or analysis of it. As a result, this study reviewed the general connection between religious literacy and religious bullying overall, without considering the specific details about the religious literacy courses in Modesto and Montreal. I have written articles separately about the Montreal religious literacy courses – the Ethics and Religious Culture courses. Those publications are listed on page vii and viii of this dissertation.

Fundamentally, the general educational system in both contexts was established with religious aims to maintain or promote a new common identity (a Catholic one in New France and California via the missions schools), while the new settlers to each territory strived for survival. While Catholic missionaries were sent to both colonies to establish a Catholic religious educational system, the infrastructure in Quebec was much more substantial and maintained. This led to the dominance of the Quebec Catholic Church for centuries that was woven into the social fabric of the boroughs and neighbourhoods across the island of Montreal that were segregated by religious, linguistic, ethnic, and racial groups. Neighbourhoods such as Griffintown, historically an English speaking Irish-Catholic neighbourhood, modern-day Westmount and the Golden Square Mile, predominantly inhabited by English and Scottish Protestants in the past, and the establishment of Protestant churches south of the rail tracks in Point-Saint-Charles while the French and English Catholics erected their churches north of the tracks[16], illustrated this divide. Jewish communities lived in Mile End, for example, while Black communities of various languages and beliefs lived in Little Burgundy. The separation and segregation of lived spaces based on religious affiliation relate to the demarcation and tensions between belief groups in Montreal today, as groups that dominated their specific neighbourhoods in the past are now forced to engage more directly and vie for a protection of public expression and legitimacy.

Conversely, California fully endorsed a secular public school system upon inception of a formal educational system. The social fabric in Modesto in particular was founded on economic aims as the town was established in 1870 based on its geographic location in the middle of an intended new railroad route between Sacramento and Los Angeles. As part of the Central Valley, Modesto was and remains known for its agricultural production, as California is the leading US

---

[16] More details about the history of Point-Saint-Charles is available here: http://www.shpsc.org/fr/node/42.

state in cash farm receipts[17]. As a "sleeper" city, where individuals live due to more affordable housing opposed to their place of work, many of its 323,012 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016) travel to work in San Francisco[18] and nearby cities daily. This economic foundation and secular attitude set a social culture distinctly different from that of Montreal and Quebec from the beginning. As the institutional structure and historical foundation of the state was not tied to any particular religious group, this may have contributed to California's explicit recognition of religious bullying and Modesto's WGWR course in 2014.

Although both societies are secular, they have each tried to maintain a form of education about religion for varying reasons. Today, the manifestation of these historical and practical reasons is framed by a conceptual basis in interculturalism and multiculturalism in Quebec and California, respectively, which further inform the contextual approaches to the *ERC* and *WGWR* courses.

2.3.1. Interculturalism and contemporary Quebec

Even though both religious literacy courses are secular and focus on teaching about religion, both are heavily influenced by their historical contexts. The *ERC* in particular candidly prioritizes the teaching about Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, and Native spirituality above all other world religions due to the cultural history of Quebec, as these four beliefs are required curriculum every school year while other beliefs are required at least once in every cycle, e.g. two years of schooling. This stipulation encapsulates the Quebec conception of *interculturalism,*

---

[17] https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Statistics/
[18] Details about Modesto residents commuting to San Francisco are noted here:
https://sf.curbed.com/2018/4/25/17280190/cars-traffic-commuter-commute-san-francisco-bay-area

practiced only in Quebec, and surmised by sociologist Gérard Bouchard and philosopher Charles

Taylor as an approach to:

> …seek to reconcile ethnocultural diversity with the continuity of the French-speaking
> core and the preservation of the social link. It thus affords security to Quebecers of
> French-Canadian origin and to ethnocultural minorities and protects the rights of all in
> keeping with the liberal tradition. By instituting French as the common public
> language, it establishes a framework in society for communication and exchanges. It
> has the virtue of being flexible and receptive to negotiation, adaptation and innovation
> (2008, p. 39).

In their report titled, *Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation* (2008), commonly referred to

as the Bouchard-Taylor Report, Bouchard and Taylor offered eleven detailed explanations[19] for

this approach. They clarified that the primary purpose of interculturalism is to recognize Quebec

as a nation, and to protect and disseminate the French language and identity within Quebec while

welcoming and acknowledging the changes that will occur for new populations entering the

province. They summarized the eleven points into five:

> 1) (Interculturalism) institutes French as the common language of intercultural
> relations; b) Cultivates a pluralistic orientation that is highly sensitive to the protection
> of rights; c) Preserves the creative tension between diversity and the continuity of the
> French-speaking core and the social link; d) Places special emphasis on integration;
> and e) Advocates interaction" (p 41).

Given the historical identity and the need to preserve French identity – understood based on its

linguistic, religious, and cultural basis – Bouchard and Taylor detailed the rationale for this form

of interculturalism in Quebec. As a unique nation in North America, the Quebec intercultural

approach's primacy of the French identity is perceived as a means to protect the Quebec identity

within its own terms; an approach that is in response to the Canadian *Multiculturalism Act* (1985)[20]

---

[19] https://www.mce.gouv.qc.ca/publications/CCPARDC/rapport-final-integral-en.pdf (p. 263-272)
[20] https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-18.7/page-1.html

that welcomes and protects all ethnic, religious, and linguistic individuals that enter and reside in Canada. However, as the landscape of Quebec changes, so does the "flexible" conception of interculturalism.

In 2012, Taylor continued to seek a clarification of the nuances in the Quebec experience. Moreover, Taylor notes that "the difference (between Canadian multiculturalism and Quebec intercultural policies) lies less in the concrete policies than in the (historical) stories" (2012, p. 4). He remarks:

> Now these 'stories' have a peculiar status. They purport to be about what is happening, but at another level they are setting out what ought to be happening, and on another level again, they are highlighting one take on the extremely complex congeries of things which are in fact going on. (2012, p. 6)

Accordingly, the shared stories are given a status that are both a goal and, in some circumstances, a lived experience. These complexities are reflected in the ERC curriculum, how teachers teach the content, and how the public receive the existence of the course itself. Beyond offering a concrete outline of interculturalism, the Bouchard-Taylor report (2008) was also pivotal as the scholars were tasked to understand the sentiments of the Quebec population towards differences in identity, religions, and culture within the province, clarify public confusion over perceived accommodations made based on these differences, and create a framework and offer guidelines on future accommodation requests. From their review, the two scholars offered eight recommendations around five specific themes for the province, which have implications on religious accommodation across the province to date. This includes: 1) the need for a policy statement on interculturalism and open secularism; 2) the need to offer ways for new immigrants to integrate in the Quebec society for their economic and linguistic well-being; 3) the need to train government staff (e.g. teachers, clinicians, etc.) in their role of socialization; 4) the need for private and public agencies to be trained in harmonization practices that ensures that accommodations are

made with the intention of protecting or restoring a right; and 5) the need to combat inequality and discrimination towards many in society, such as women, ethnic minorities, and those who experience racial or religious discrimination. These implications on religious accommodation have direct impact on religious expression and how religious bullying should be addressed.

The ideology and conception of interculturalism, alongside the prescribed guidelines by Bouchard and Taylor have grounded much of the discussion on religious identities and religious education in Quebec in the past decade. However, the discussion continues to shift as demographics change and global affairs permeate into Quebec. In February 2017, Taylor posted an article in *La Presse* to retract his approval to prohibit government employees from wearing religious symbols, which was a component in his 2008 report. He stated that the society has changed and the need for minimizing visible differences for the purpose of harmonization was no longer necessary. Shortly after, Bouchard published an article in *Le Devoir* stating his continued support for the details in the 2008 report. Evidently, the ideological, historical, and demographic state of Quebec will continue to influence academic and public rhetoric and understanding of religious identities and religious education for years. While many individuals in Quebec are not familiar with the conception of interculturalism, such policies influence their education, including the ERC curriculum, and inclusive and discriminatory interactions with religious individuals, such as their understanding of and response to religious bullying.

2.3.2. Multiculturalism and contemporary California
The U.S. does not have a specific federal or state-level policy on multiculturalism. In its discussions of tolerance and protection, the Bill of Rights offers a general approach to multiculturalism that describes the equal freedom and protection of Americans without a specific

discussion of a liberal, conservative, radical, or critical form of multiculturalism. However, while formal multicultural education does not exist in California law[21], the local approach to and conception of multiculturalism influences public discussion and its consideration to the teaching about religion and development of religious literacy courses because of its localized structure. This local approach to multiculturalism is important as it also colours the conversation about religious bullying in a way that differs from the intercultural structure in Quebec. In California in particular, the Californian Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) recommends curricula, policies, and activities to the State Board of Education (SBE), which in turn supports the California Department of Education (CDE) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs). This structure of educational governance differs from Quebec as Canadian provinces have jurisdiction over education and curriculum, rather than a local school board or district. Albeit this decentralized framework, discussions on multicultural education has been of great focus in the past few years and continues.

In May 2014, Assembly Bill 1750[22] proposed a requirement for the IQC to offer ethnic studies and multicultural education recommendations, policies, and activities in Californian high schools, which can greatly influence the education and societal values of Californian students. In accordance with AB 1750, the SBE aimed to develop an elective 9th Grade ethnic studies course by 2015. It anticipated that:

> In Ethnic Studies, students examine the process of racial and ethnic formation of ethnic minorities in a variety of contexts: political, legal, social, historical, economic, and cultural. The course concentrates, to great extent, on the experiences of various ethnic minorities in the United States and the ways in which their experiences were impacted by the issues of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and the interaction among different ethnic groups. Students will also address how individuals within specific ethnic groups think and feel about themselves and their group as it can be represented by literature, memoirs, art, and music. (AB 1750, p. C)

---

[21] https://www.queensu.ca/mcp/immigrant-minorities/evidence/united-states
[22] http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB1750

In 2016, Assembly Bill 2016[23] updated an approval to have this course developed by 2019 under a committee of teachers, professors, community members and students who are successfully offering such a course in certain Californian LEAs at this time (Hwang Lynch, 2016). In an attempt to prepare students for California's changing demographic, this proposal was updated again in May 2018 under Assembly Bill 2772[24] that proposes a mandatory course on ethnic studies that will be either one-semester or full-year in duration, depending on the preference of LEAs. As such, multiculturalism is discussed in California, but its focus is on ethnic diversity rather than religious diversity and religious discrimination is a small part of the overarching conversation on diversity.

The structure of Local Education Agencies (LEAs), which are commonly school districts in the U.S., allow school districts to organize and structure multicultural education based on local needs and fashions, such as the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department in the Los Angeles Union District School Board [25] that is largely focused on linguistic aspects of multiculturalism. In doing so, a specific statewide ideology or approach to multiculturalism is unclear. However, while this may appear problematic as a contributing factor towards a disjointed approach and communal understanding, this precise localized structure permitted the development and the freedom to locally adjust and improve the Modesto *World Geography and World Religions* course as well. This may also be a factor as to why it was easier for my participants to speak with me about religious bullying despite the fact that I was an outsider to their belief community and to Modesto.

Following the Californian Legislative Counsel's Assembly of Concurrent Resolution 154 and its suggestion that "Modesto City Schools is perhaps the only school district in the state that

---

[23] https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB2016
[24] http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB2772
[25] http://lausd.schoolwires.net/mmed

requires all pupils to learn about and understand world religions," the CDE updated its World Religions elective curriculum in 2016 to include content and structure from the Modesto course. Namely, it has included content from the first two weeks of the World Religions component where students learn about the First Amendment, Roger Williams, and the promotion of rights, respect, and responsibilities (see Chapter 14 in CDE, 2016[26]). As such, certain courses and LEAs do offer aspects of a multicultural approach, albeit in regional contexts. Additionally, in June 2017, the National Council for the Social Studies updated its College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards to include supplementary resources on Religious Studies[27] for teachers nationally, thereby offering local use of the material by LEAs and other regional groups nation-wide.

Although my participants did not use the terminology of interculturalism or multiculturalism in our conversations, the attitudes, beliefs, and values inherent in these specific concepts in Montreal and Modesto informed our conversation. Additionally, while religious diversity was a small proportion of the full discussion on multiculturalism in California, Modesto participants expressed their perspectives about religious literacy and religious bullying in a concerned tone. However, Montreal participants who observed or experienced religious bullying or discrimination expressed their concern in a defensive tone towards an antagonistic society that appeared to impose a particular attitude, belief, or value whether it was religious or not. As a result, although the history of both Quebec and California have changed greatly and both are secular societies, the education and lived experience of individuals are still effected by the policies and practices of the past and present even though the specific policy may not be articulated by the

---

[26] http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/hs/cf/sbedrafthssfw.asp
[27] https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/2017/Jun/c3-framework-for-social-studies-rev0617.pdf (p. 92-97)

individuals themselves.

Summary

This chapter chronologically discussed the social, cultural, political, and economic influences that shaped the Quebec and California educational system, and their current approach and frameworks to teaching about religion in public education. Firstly, it showed that education was a means to solidify the identity of a unified society in both contexts. In Quebec, the education system aimed to align with France and French identity (of being Catholic and French speaking), while the education system in the US (starting from the East Coast) wanted to create a distinct identity from its European past. Secondly, it discussed how control over public education was vied by religious leaders, the state, and parents. In Quebec, denominational conflicts primarily between the Catholic and Protestant religious and political leaders persisted for over 365 years in response to social, political, and religious tensions that peaked during the Quiet Revolution and rippled in the decades afterwards, culminating in the reconfiguration of the denomination-based school boards to a linguistic basis in 2000. In California, teachers of various denominations across the U.S. arrived in California and supported a church-state separation educational system in an effort to avoid a similar tension they had seen in the Eastern coast and Mid-West. Thirdly, this chapter illustrated the trajectory towards the contemporary approaches to secularism in each context and the influence of interculturalism on the *Ethics and Religious Culture course* and multiculturalism on the *World Geography and World Religions* course. My understanding of these frameworks of secularism, my own conception of secularism, and how they ground my study and overall approach to the ERC and WGWR is discussed in the following chapter. As Montreal and Modesto have differing histories and approaches to education, the following chapter provides a framework to understand religious literacy and religious bullying within both contexts.

CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL BASIS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES AND RELIGIOUS LITERACY IN NORTH AMERICA

This chapter reviews my theoretical framework that offers a foundation for the discussions in the next two chapters and addresses the contentious nature of religious discussion in the North American public sphere. In it, I argue for the relevancy of recognizing religious identities and religious literacy overall as it remains a contested issue in US and Canada. Additionally, as bullying of any form is a societal concern, a solution for religious bullying requires consideration of the many parts of one's social environment or social-ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As a result, my theoretical framework is structured by the multiple levels of society in one's social-ecology and will be discussed from the macro to the micro level in order to guide my consideration of religious literacy as a potentially social solution to the social problem of religious bullying. This framework omits a discussion on conceptions of identity, which was largely missing from my data collection as participants focused on concerns and perspectives about national politics, local community, family and school life instead[28].

3.1. Bronfenbrenner's theory of social ecology

Social-ecology, per Bronfenbrenner (1979), postulates that biological, psychological, and social factors in one's social environment inform individual development, where public policy can influence or determine how these factors are lived and understood. Thus, human development is influenced by one's social-ecology. The individual and external components of the social-ecology are composed of four interlaying systems. Firstly, a *microsystem,* containing one's immediate

---

[28] My participants' focus on social-ecology may have been a result of the time period of my study, which began at the end of Donald Trump's election campaign for presidency and when sentiments of the proposed Quebec Charter of Values was still raw in people's minds.

settings like the school or the home. Secondly, a *mesosystem,* consisting of a part of the community one engages with where relationships from the microsystem exist. Thirdly, an *exosystem,* an extended aspect of the community that one does not directly enter yet maintains influence over one's immediate community. Governmental bodies and policies can exist in the exosystem and inform the meso- and microsystem. The interrelationship between these three systems exists within a fourth, a *macrosystem* that encompasses the ideology, structure, and culture that dictates the functioning of its nested systems, which can exist in a local, regional, national, or international level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Events at the microsystem, e.g. in the school and home, are the most influential in development because of an individual's direct engagement with others and factors in the immediate settings, compared to the community or governmental bodies in the meso- and exo- systems that individuals may not engage with or in regularly. By advancing the skills, knowledge and attitudes in the foundational microsystem, recognition for religious beliefs and identities may be cultivated in the meso-, exo-, and macro- systems across the *chronosystem,* what Bronfenbrenner has coined in reference to the simultaneous existence of each of these prior levels across time (Figure 1). Thus, following the work of Espelage and Swearer (2010), researchers of bullying, it was salient for me to consider this multi-system social-ecological framework in my review of societal dynamics, which is needed to foster space for the recognition of religious identities, as religious bullying is a societal issue and the teaching about religion is promoted for social cohesion and understanding.
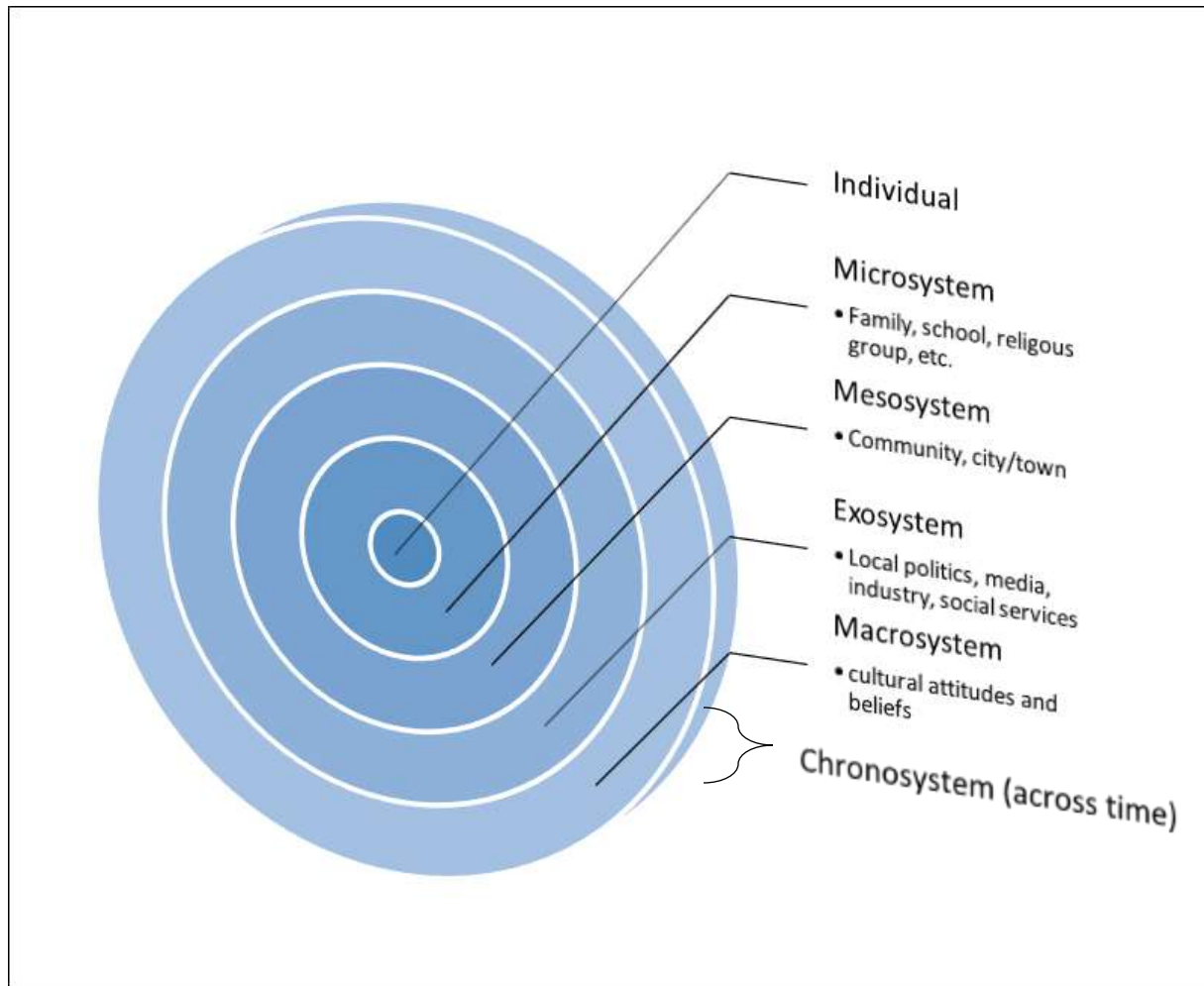
Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's Social-Ecological Framework (1979)

I adapt this social-ecological model to lay a foundation for a discussion on why teaching about religion and recognition of religious and non-religious identities is important in the public sphere by using different theoretical frameworks in this chapter. Each framework corresponds to a level within Bronfenbrenner's social-ecology. The next chapter uses this overall framework to review conceptions of religious literacy. The chapter after discusses religious bullying within the social-ecology as well. Thus, with respect to the theoretical framework that argues for the teaching about religion and the recognition of religious and non-religious identities, my study framed each system in the following manner for the Quebec and Californian contexts. Firstly, the *United Nations*' (UN) declarations and conventions are the overarching public policies that inform the

macrosystem of secular democracies, like that of Canada and the United States, which influence how the teaching about religion and the religious and non-religious individuals are understood in the interlaying systems. Secondly, a triangulation of Taylor's open secularism (2007), Eck's pluralism (2006, 2013), and Ghosh's critical multiculturalism (2013) inform my perspective in the conditions of a necessary exo-system. This theoretical discussion is illustrated by fundamental ideals of the United States and Canadian constitutional documents that largely place a demand on secular societies. This focus will be balanced with a sub-section on Habermas's communicative action theory that calls for the secular and religious community to both make adjustments in order to engage effectively in dialogue in a democratic society, whereas accommodations are often asked of the secular community in particular. This sub-section also relates directly to the Critical Communicative Methodology that I use in my study, which was developed in light of Habermas' theory of communicative action.

Thirdly, Fraser's participatory parity (2007) and Callan's empathetic identification (1997, 2000) are discussed as they shape a recognition of religious identities in the meso- and microsystems. These theories correspond to the meso- and microsystems because they discuss individual responses to the theoretical foundations in the exo-triangulation of Taylor, Eck, and Ghosh. To deepen the discussion, a sub-section on intersectionality at the individual level (that is informed from power dynamics in the many systems) examines the complexity in recognizing religious identities in schools and society.

Together, the UN declarations and conventions and the theoretical frameworks are important in illustrating the connections between the individual and society and the implications religious literacy and religious bullying hold for every facet of the community. The following three sections explain each level in detail.

3.2. Macrosystem: United Nations' declarations and conventions

In our multi-faceted, diverse, and complex world, the only legitimized globally binding documents across societies of different beliefs and structures are the *United Nations'* conventions and declarations. The documents validate the fundamental beliefs of most global citizens and create a common value system for discussions on international and individual differences. As such, they offer common values and attitudes across the two contexts of the US and Canada, and thereby a common foundation for this discussion. At the same time, the declarations work as policies that encourage respect of differences based on the reality that each human individual is equally valuable even as each person is uniquely different from one another. Moreover, the legitimacy of these overarching principles is needed to broach the topic of religion as an identity marker. As a global policy, it has the potential to influence nations, just as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has influenced Canadian policy, and can influence individual life and development[29]. Thus, this section reviews global and national principles that are instituted to protect these differences and religion as an aspect of identity in particular. The high-level discussion about differences in general will narrow progressively into a focus on religious identity and religion in the public sphere.

For the purpose of this discussion, I focus specifically on the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948)[30], the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* (1959)[31] and its successor the *United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990)[32], and the *United Nation's*

---

[29] Details for this policy recognition in Canada can be found here: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1309374407406/1309374458958
[30] http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/
[31] https://www.unicef.org/malaysia/1959-Declaration-of-the-Rights-of-the-Child.pdf
[32] https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981)[33].

With a paramount focus in the rights, freedoms, and equality of all humans, regardless of creed, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical ability, language, nationality, property, or birth, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) is the founding document that establishes the principles of democracy in our modern world. While the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* (1975), and the American *First Amendment* within the *Bill of Rights* (1791) also clearly articulate these common rights, freedoms, and equality for all its citizens, I focus on the *UN's* declarations and conventions as these documents offer a common set of values and mores despite the variances that exist in individual constitutions. Thus, the UN documents offer a necessary international common standard in this discussion regarding different religious identities, perspectives, and practices.

The documents also offer a standard regarding conflict between the right of the parent, the school, and the child. Some parents demand direct parental control over school content and values for their own accord, (Gutmman & Ben-Porath, 2015). While I agree that parental rights must be respected, the rights of the child require ample attention as well. To clarify this common discussion between educators and parents, I refer to the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990) where parental concerns are heavily embedded in the document, but as seen in Article 14, Section I, the well-being of the child precedes the interests of the parent. Article 14:

> 1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
> 2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.

---

[33] http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/36/a36r055.htm

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

With respect to our discussion on religious literacy in public education, we can see that Section I of this article also outlines children's agency in the selection of their religious beliefs. The agency of the child and student in a public school setting is salient in consideration of teachers, community adults, and other societal individuals in youths' mesosystem that discriminate or bully a youth based on their assumed or actual religious affiliation, which will be discussed further in Chapter V (on religious bullying) and VII (my presentation of data.)

In conformity, the *United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief* (1981) further establishes this level of respect, equality, and agency for all persons. The Declaration signifies that "religion or belief, for anyone who professes either, is one of the fundamental elements in his conception of life and that freedom of religion or belief should be fully respected and guaranteed." This declaration unifies all religious and non-religious perspectives while respecting them as well.

However, the United Nations and its declarations and conventions are also critiqued for its weaknesses (Deaton, 2011a, 2011b). As the documents are not legally binding, they have been accused of being counter-productive and guilty of cultural imperialism by imposing Western values. This includes concern over arranged marriages through Article 16 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) that mandates that "marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses" (Deaton, 2011b, p. 1116; Deaton, 2011a).

Some say UDHR is altogether too idealistic and utopian with charges like Article 24 mandating paid holidays for employees. Yet others say that it is "corrosively impotent" and unable to change or protect the rights of those who are oppressed or marginalized. Deaton (2011b) argues

while these are valid criticisms against the UDHR, the UDHR has also fulfilled its goals in creating a common standard to promote peace, stability, and freedom and encourage nations to improve their government and citizens' well-being. Other supporters have also lauded its use in placing pressure on private and public institutions in order to protect the rights of marginalized groups (Denton, 2011a). Despite its misgivings, the UDHR has "framed international politics since its inception. Thus, its impact on issues of global justice has been sweeping and undeniable." (Denson, 2011b, p.1115). Hence, despite the idealism inherent in the UDHR and other UN documents, I look to them as guiding principles for this discussion and for North American public school systems tasked to protect the identities and rights of all its students. Furthermore, the core values of reciprocity and respect in the specific aforementioned declarations and conventions parallel the theoretical frameworks in the following two sections.

3.3. Exo-triangulation: Taylor, Eck, and Ghosh

The exosystem consists of spheres of society that influence one's daily interactions with aspects that do not explicitly interfere with one's meso- or microsystem. Paramount in this discussion of religious identities and expression is the understanding of the secular society in the exosystem of one's social-ecology, as individuals and societies that include religion in the public sphere or exclude it understand the word "secular" differently. These differing understandings of "secular" can then cause misunderstandings or implementation of incongruent policies and practices in a common lived space in daily life.

The French *laïcité* – with ideas of "self-sufficiency and exclusion of religion" – born out of the Third Republic believed that the states' responsibility was to offer and teach a supreme morality far superior than all religions, with the basis of morality in freedom (Taylor, 2009). During the Third Republic, the French motto of *liberté, égalité, et fraternité* was also made

prominent. With regard to religion, it declared that religious freedom is permitted to all those who believe or choose not to believe; that all believers or non-believers are equal in dignity where neither is privileged over the other; and, that all groups regardless of faith or belief will be afforded agency in a society. While modern day French secularism in the form of *laïcité* tries to achieve this motto through pure reason absent from any claims related to religions, Taylor (2009) argues that it fails to do so by attempting to create a timeless principle based on pure reason alone, which cannot adequately address political issues as topical matters naturally evolve over time. In doing so, *laïcité* inevitably violates the third principle of *fraternité* as religious groups are silenced in France and other contexts that adopt French *laïcité*.

Today, conceptions of secular vary and are being transformed around the world, where one conception evolves out of various conceptions of secular, such as *laïcité*, which evolved in the past from the 17th century to modern day (Taylor, 2009; Stackhouse, 2011). These differing conceptions exist in Quebec today through the Franco-Quebec Entente and influence of culture, policy, and ideology from France. While this is specific to Quebec, a conception of closed secularism exists across the US and Canada, which advocates for the omission of religious expression and belief from public space. Conversely, many parts of the US and Canada promote a secular society that includes the diverse religious identities of all citizens within the public sphere, what Taylor (2007) refers to as open secularism. My study grounds itself in Taylor's open-secularism as it reflects the existing legislative approach in Canada and the US.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) confirms Canada's multicultural stance on equity and justice by stipulating four fundamental freedoms for all Canadian citizens: 1) Freedom of conscience and religion; 2) Freedom of thought belief, opinion, and expression; 3) Freedom of peaceful Assembly; and 4) Freedom of Association. The US *First Amendment* (1791)

supports multicultural ideals in its five freedoms of: 1) Freedom of Religion, which includes the free establishment of religion and exercise of one's religion; 2) Freedom of Speech; 3) Freedom of Press; 4) Freedom of Assembly; and, 5) Freedom of Petition. Ultimately, multiculturalism at the national levels mandates equal freedoms for all citizens to express, practice, and establish different aspects of their identities, including religious and non-religious identities in concert with Taylor's open secularism. This value and demand for inclusiveness within public society is paramount to the Canadian and American contexts, where the first freedom in both institutions correspond to one's religious or non-religious affiliation, the historical influence from the Catholic and Protestant Church and ideas of church versus non-church prevail, and where Christianity still maintains prominence over other beliefs.

In conjunction with open secularism's inclusion of all religious identities, is the need for recognition. In "The Politics of Recognition," Taylor (1992) explains how one's understanding is dependent on how others recognize, misrecognize, or do not recognize another based on their characteristics of race, gender, sexual orientation, language, and religion, among others. The latter two forms of the lack of recognition are exceptionally problematic as they are a form of oppression that can "imprison someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (p. 25) that can lead to harm. Misrecognition or a lack of recognition is problematic in terms of religion, as religion is uniquely the most contentious aspect of identity today (Kymlicka, 2010) and a fundamental aspect of most cultures (Fraser, 1999).

Complementing Taylor's overarching understanding of open-secularism is the explicit stipulation for active engagement and dialogue with individuals of varying characteristics in Eck's conception of pluralism (2006, 2013) – an engagement that is implied in Taylor's work but not stated explicitly. While the public synonymously uses "pluralism" with "diversity," as pluralism

is generally understood to refer to a society of different people based on race, religion, language, etc., Eck (n.d., 2006) differentiates pluralism and diversity under five explicit requirements in her conception of pluralism.

Firstly, pluralism is *a situation* that exists. It is more than diversity, but the "energetic engagement with diversity." She confirms that "diversity is a given, but pluralism is not a given; it is an achievement" attained only when engagement within the diversity exists. Secondly, pluralism is *an attitude*. It goes beyond mere tolerance and is "the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference." Although Eck recognizes the need for tolerance as a public virtue, she also challenges the proponents of tolerance to see its inability to remove stereotypes and the "half-truths, the fears that underlie old patterns of division and violence." While I would add the concept of respect to this argument, her description actually goes beyond what tolerance and respect indicates. While one can tolerate or respect another's beliefs, one may not necessarily take the initiative to seek and understand another's differences; her attitude of pluralism also requires an action, as Eck's pluralism encourages active engagement in thought and action with individuals who are different through encounter.

Thirdly, pluralism is *a way of thinking* as Eck's particular conception of pluralism requires an "encounter of commitments," whereby one can engage in different conceptions and ideas while still being committed to and maintaining one's own differences and religious identity. Fourthly, pluralism is *a goal* that has a basis in the First Amendment. From her contextual basis in the US, she notes that, while the US was not uniform in its religious commitments upon its establishment, it strived for a common civil goal. Through *E Pluribus Unum*, "out of many, one," Eck argues for the need to be "one" unified in a civic goal, in light of the differences that exist "out of many." Lastly, Eck's conception of pluralism *requires action* and "is based on (a form of) dialogue" that

mandates communication with the self and others; reflexiveness is needed while consensus among all interacting parties is not (Eck, n.d., 2006).

Concerning religious identity, Eck's pluralism advances the flourishing of multi-faiths, which is the inclusion of all faiths, and inter-faith discussion, where the "inter" of inter-faith signifies a dialogue among faith groups (Weller, 2009). Together, multi-faith and inter-faith actualize Eck's pluralism, and vice versa. Pluralism includes the perspectives and agency of those who are religious with those who are non-religious, 'nones', and non-religious but spiritual.

To extend Eck's promotion of engagement with diversity in thought and action, Ghosh's approach to multiculturalism highlights the inherent power dynamics within social interactions, and thereby the need to recognize the inequalities and inequities in these relationships. In articulating the nuances in multiculturalism, Ghosh's critical multiculturalism finds other conceptions of multiculturalism inadequate as critical multiculturalism, which is inclusive, argues that legislation for multiculturalism and inclusiveness is insufficient. In her observation, legislation such as the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) initiated pivotal legislative changes across democracies and was a catalyst towards the decolonization of states; however, it failed to change individual sentiments towards others based on class, gender, ethnic, or religious differences (Ghosh, 2011). Legislation simply restrained societal actions without transforming individual attitudes or decreasing persistent inequalities; inclusive education in inclusive democracies required more than mere tolerance for others based on legislation (Ghosh, 2011; 2013). Rather, inclusion required and continues to require extending beyond equality to offer conditions of justice and care for others (Ghosh, 2013).

Thus, Ghosh advocates for critical multicultural education that teaches students about politicized differences, such as sex, religion, and mental and physical abilities in others; a

significant requisite in Canada and the U.S. as Christianity maintains prominence over other beliefs in public purview. In effect, this challenges the structures that can promote religious bullying and calls for a religious literacy program that discusses the nuances within belief traditions. It challenges students to consider and interpret their own identity and perceptions through self-reflection and possibly self-correction (Ghosh, 2013), also in line with the promotion of student agency in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.* Moreover, this understanding must be internalized and not through legislative directives, as regulations are insufficient in directing personal change (Ghosh, 2013), an internal change that Eck also advocates. Like Taylor, Ghosh values inclusion but insists on the need to critically recognize and review the power imbalances that exist within differences[34]. In this respect, Eck's conception is very similar to Ghosh's critical multiculturalism with respect to its focus on reflexiveness while differing in its promotion to communicate with others. Together, their call for encounter in thought and action challenges the norms or social hierarchy that maintains circumstances for religious bullying to occur.

As Taylor stipulates the need for recognition of religious individuals via open-secularism, Ghosh articulates the power dynamics that exist in such societies through her theoretical

---

[34] Although my study is grounded in critical multiculturalism, I recognize that many scholars question the validity of multiculturalism. For example, historian Arthur Schlesinger (1992) critiqued multiculturalism in the US, stating that it emphasized too much on the distinctiveness of each cultural group, often framed within political correctness, and neglected a focus on the common national principles of the US that historically bound the nation, such as democracy and equality. While Schlesinger recognized the history of marginalized groups in the US, particularly due to racism, he observed the promotion of far reaching initiatives that he felt would threaten the social fabric, such as the establishment of Afrocentric or bilingual education. Such approaches to multiculturalism legitimized a degree of ethnocentrism that concerned Schlesinger. From a different perspective, sociologist Steve Vertovec (2007) also challenges the relevancy of multiculturalism in contemporary society and calls for super-diversity instead, where the nuances within a specific group are considered in further detail. In Vertovec's British context, he feels that multiculturalism is dated as individuals from the same ethnic group, for example, are members of British society from various circumstances and need to be considered as differing groups in policy and research. Despite these valid concerns from Schlesinger and Vertovec, my study looks to Ghosh's critical multiculturalism and Eck's pluralism as they do not promote a degree of ethnocentrism and consider the nuances and power dynamics inherent across and within specific cultural groups.

framework of critical multiculturalism. To participate in such an environment, Eck's conception of pluralism demands one's internal and external engagement with others of difference required of all democratic citizens. Thus, despite their many commonalities, the triangulation of Taylor's secular, Eck's pluralism, and Ghosh's critical multiculturalism fuel the exosystem needed to stimulate the attitudes for religious literacy and actively engage all individuals in society to uphold the principles of the *UN* documents so that religious bullying does not occur. However, each of these theories places a greater explicit emphasis on secular members of society and omits a similar emphasis on how religious communities can also engage actively in a secular society. While these theories may have been written with an implicit expectation from all religious and non-religious members of society, the following sub-section articulates my attempt to balance the engagement of secular and religious communities in my study.

3.3.1. Habermas on faith and reason

While section 3.3 focuses largely on the secular sphere and how it should make room for religious identities and religious discussion in the public, Habermas' writings in *An awareness of what is missing* (2010) pose equal demands on secular and religious groups explicitly. This demand on both groups is important, as religious literacy is the teaching about beliefs in a non-confessional sense that ideally includes religious, spiritual, and non-religious beliefs, as I discuss in the next chapter, and as religious bullying occurs to both religious and non-religious individuals. This common demand on discussing concerns from an accessible and translatable understanding is important in my study overall.

In 1984, his *Theory of Communicative Action* touted that dialogue and consensus were a sufficient means to reach an agreed upon action in public discourse, but that religion could disrupt

this consensus as religion has its own agenda to promote its own well-being[35]. At that time, Habermas encouraged religious citizens to live more in mind with the liberal state rather than from a basis of potentially, "one-sided (moral) judgements." Reder and Schmidt (2010) referred to this bias against religion as Habermas' "religion-skeptical point of view" (p. 4). However, in the mid-1990s, Habermas began to consider the relationship between faith and reason in detail, which led to his speech in 2001, titled, "Faith and knowledge." In it, he stated that the religion and secular world live in a reciprocal relationship as the religious basis (that justified moral questions for some) entered and influenced the dynamic of public discourse (Reder and Schmidt, 2010, p. 6). Therefore, to Habermas, this religious basis also potentially contributed to the development of reason in public society overall.

In 2010, he articulated this relationship between faith and reason more carefully by saying that reason is important but that it cannot address social issues on its own. Reason needed to engage with religion as the latter had influenced the development of society and thereby the development of public reason itself. Thus, one could not remove religion from a discussion on reason, even in a discussion on, what Habermas termed, 'practical reason' and 'enlightened reason'. "Practical reason provides justifications for the universalistic and egalitarian concepts of morality and law which shape the freedom of the individual and interpersonal relations in a normatively plausible way" (Habermas, 2010, p. 18). However, Habermas posits that practical reason is an insufficient basis for an individual, as any threat to one's group would not lead one to respond in solidarity with others, even when the threat can be addressed in a collective effort. Enlightened reason that omits religious morality, similarly diminishes an understanding of the collective moral whole, referenced by Habermas in his German-European context in relation to the "Kingdom of God on

---

[35] Habermas' discussion focused more on religion as a whole in comparison to secular society rather than discussing individual religions and their specific religion to society.

earth" as it offers "collectively binding ideals" (p. 19). Thus, "practical reason fails to fulfill its own vocation when it no longer has sufficient strength to awaken, and to keep awake, in the minds of secular subjects, an awareness of the violations of solidarity throughout the world, an awareness of what is missing, of what cries out to heaven" (p. 19). This awareness of what is missing speaks to a weakness he perceives in practical and enlightened reason that focuses too much on the individual and is motivated to act on the efficient and most effective means to protect oneself without regard or sense of one's collective group. To Habermas, religion imbues a perspective on the aspect of comradery and the unity of mankind that a discussion on reason alone cannot include.

While Habermas' specific ideas on the relationship between faith and reason can be discussed at great length, this paper aims to only highlight his consideration to combine both faith and reason in social discourse due to the historical and contemporary influence they have on one another. This interrelationship is in concert with conceptions of religious literacy that will be discussed in the next chapter. The relationship and the need to include both perspectives in social discourse also relates to the Critical Communicative Methodology for this study that is premised on Habermas' theory of communicative action.

In respect of the validity in the varying religious and secular voices in my study and in society, this study is mindful of the two recommendations that Habermas presented to the religious leaders and secular state:

> Instead of grudging accommodation to externally imposed constraints, the content of religion must open itself up to the normatively grounded expectation that it should recognize for reasons of its own the neutrality of the state towards worldviews, the equal freedom of all religious communities, and the independence of the institutionalize sciences. This is a momentous step. For it is not just a matter of renouncing political force and religious indoctrination as means of imposing religious truths; it is also a matter of religious consciousness becoming reflexive when confronted with the necessity of relating its articles of faith to competing systems of belief and to the scientific monopoly on the production of factual knowledge.

> Conversely, however, the secular state, which, with its contractual legal legitimation, functions as an intellectual formation and not merely as an empirical power, must also face the question of whether it is imposing asymmetrical obligations on its religious citizens. For the liberal state guarantees the equal freedom to exercise religion not only as a means of upholding law and order but also for the normative reason of protecting the freedom of belief and conscience of everyone. Thus it may not demand anything of its religious citizens which cannot be reconciled with a life that is led authentically 'from faith.' (p. 21)"

As Habermas emphasized the need to offer freedom of expression and inquiry from both groups, he also encouraged reflexiveness and accommodation for one another from both parties. Additionally, he calls people to make religious content accessible to the secular sphere, and that a "liberal state must also expect its secular citizens, in exercising their role as citizens, not to treat religious expressions as simply irrational" (p. 22). Thus, unlike the common discussion in secular spheres and present in the Bouchard-Taylor report where demands are made towards the secular sphere to respect the needs of religious communities, Habermas calls for accessible communication from both religious and secular parties as they communicate publicly. This relatively equal footing is vital so one party does not feel vulnerable and subject to the requests of another, such as the power imbalance inherent in religious bullying. This footing opens up the conversation of religious bullying that includes religious and non-religious individuals as well. Yet, the triangulation of Taylor, Ghosh, and Eck, with specific details outlined by Habermas, discusses how the values in the macrosystem can be manifested in the exosystem by governing bodies. The following section corresponds to a triangulation in the meso- and microsystem and further develops an understanding of these ideas for one's local community, school, and home.

3.4. Meso and Microsystems and lived experiences: Fraser and Callan

As Taylor's open-secularism, Eck's pluralism, and Ghosh's critical multiculturalism open the space for public discourse and critical engagement with religious discussion individually and with others, Habermas calls for equal engagement and accessible language so that religious and

non-religious groups can engage easily with one another. These perspectives discuss social aims for the exo-, meso-, and micro systems and inform frameworks that guide local government policy, the community, and home and school space, thereby promoting the inclusion of religious and non-religious individuals in the public space that contradict acts of religious bullying. To actualize this social setting in one's lived experience, Fraser (1990, 2007) calls for a critical expansion on Habermas's conception of the public sphere as his conception was of a liberal public sphere that promoted the bourgeois who held majority voices in a democracy and omitted the lived experiences of marginalized groups, such as women. Fraser discusses the need to disassemble unjust institutionalized obstacles that refrain citizens from socially participating at par with other citizens. To dismantle such barriers, one must first recognize the differences and diversity in society to evaluate the justice and injustice that exist for all people and groups. This demand for social participation is established in the UN declarations and the societal power dynamics are discerned in Ghosh's critical multicultural framework as well. She posits the need for participatory parity that invites social participation from all individuals on the basis that participation warranted to all is a just act. Through participatory parity, Fraser calls individuals to welcome others as full partners in social interaction. With respect to religious literacy and religious bullying, Fraser's approach suggests the dismantling of traditional systems that maintained the dominant status of certain groups in education and social hierarchy.

To advance Fraser's concern in the mesosystem and microsystem, Callan's notion of empathetic identification recognizes others' unequal social, political, or historical circumstances and strives to avoid them (Callan, 1997, 2000). Callan writes:

> For if I am to weigh your claims as a matter of fairness rather than a rhetorically camouflaged expression of sheer selfishness, I must provisionally suspend the thought that you are simply wrong and enter imaginatively into the moral perspective you occupy (Callan, 1997, p. 26).

This supports Williams' idea of "the effort at identification" where giving respect to another means "he should not be regarded as the surface to which a certain label can be applied, but one should try to see the world (including the label) from his point of view" (Bernard Williams, 1979, p. 117). For many, that label, be it religious or otherwise, greatly informs one's moral outlook and so requires one to think from another's perspective. Callan's notion suggests a specific approach to actualize critical multiculturalism's call for self-reflection. Callan and William's recognition of another's moral perspective implies moral autonomy for all citizens, in relation to the autonomy promoted by the UN declarations and conventions. This interpersonal engagement with the other evokes the interaction in attitude and thought with another individual and oneself that Eck's pluralism raises. Additionally, Callan's invitation for empathetic identification of another individual's moral perspective harkens to Habermas' call for religious groups to be reflexive when encountering groups of a competing faith system and for secular societies to not demand anything on their religious citizens that may not be reconcilable with their religious life. This accessible approach is crucial in fostering religious literacy that includes religious, spiritual, and non-religious traditions, and the empathetic engagement is pivotal in spaces that aim to minimize incidents of religious bullying.

Together, the two conceptions regarding an individual's characteristics build on one another: Fraser's participatory parity encourages the disassembling of unjust obstacles to respond to current injustices and Callan's empathetic identification strives to avoid the further promotion of unequal circumstances. In conjunction, they promote forms of social cohesion in one's daily-lived milieus and perspectives that are needed to foster relationships in one's community. Respectively, each framework speaks to a theoretical basis for the status of a mesosystem and microsystem, a means to address the current power imbalance in the systems, and a means to

prevent the power imbalance in the future. In doing so, each framework also relates directly to Taylor's description of the state, Ghosh's recognition of social powers within multiculturalism, and Eck's call for an active engagement in pluralism, as they all discuss the present and future aspects of the exosystem. In unison, the theories offer a solid framework to consider the societal environment and one's individual conduct. It illustrates also how the relationship between the exo-system and the meso- and micro-system is porous and how the interactions in one can percolate into another.

While my study could not ignore this relationship, I focused primarily on the interactions in the mesosystem and microsystem to consider the environments of students, teachers, and parents. I understood that, while teachers must recognize the identities of students and offer religious accommodations, they also need to foster the skills of participatory parity and empathetic identification. Only through fostering characteristics such as empathy, dialogue, reflexivity, moral autonomy, and mutual respect, can students understand others and develop personal change from within to offer justice and care to others (Callan, 1997; Jackson, 1997, etc.). In doing so, respect for one another's identities and beliefs will not only stem from teachers but also from students. However, recognizing the identities of individual students and peers (for youth and adults alike) were not so simple and direct, given the intersectionality and diversity in individuals' identity.

3.4.1. Intersectionality at the individual level

While multiculturalism at the societal level is still of importance, especially in Canada, discussion on intersectionality at the individual level is growing in recognition. As a framework to understand and analyze the complexities in the world, people, and human experiences, including their own, Hill Collins and Bilge (2016) contend that intersectionality is:

The events and conditions of social and political life and the self (that) can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytical tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves (p. 12).

In recognizing the ebbs and flows of various influential factors in one's personal and social life, intersectionality can enable students to recognize the many facets that compose their identity and that of others. In doing so, they are equipped with the framework to understand the facets of others and, in the case of a religious identity and culture, students are able to see that a religious affiliation is not an all-encompassing feature of their peers. As students elaborate on this understanding, they can then see the social, cultural, political, and economic factors that interplay in society and inform who they are and their power, or lack of power, in shaping society in return. This framework then becomes a tool to understand the world, people, and human experiences as well as analyze the power dynamics in each sphere of society that can challenge one's personal development. In consideration of one's social ecology, intersectionality becomes a tool to understand the political influences and power dynamics in the marco-, exo-, and mesosystems that influence the interactions, attitudes, beliefs, and values that are experienced directly in the microsystem. With respect to religious bullying, intersectionality is a framework for students to understand and analyze one another's potentially exclusionary experiences as a result of their religious identity and its intersection with other aspects of identity. For example, understanding the compounded intersection of belief and gender for hijabi Muslim girls compared to the intersection of belief and gender for Muslim boys can help students understand that Muslim girls may be more effected by religious bullying if, for example, they wear the hijab, as boys may not exhibit visible expressions of their belief. With respect to religious literacy, intersectionality can highlight the interaction that

beliefs have to other aspects of society and one's identity. Specifically, the framework enables one

to tweeze the following six aspects of intersectionality in society and at the individual level:

1. Social inequality – It exists for multiple groups due to more than one social factor, e.g. a combination of race, class, and gender. The combination of factors differs across groups who face social inequality.
2. Power – It can be understood in respect to relationships.
   a. Power can be understood based on the relationship of intersections: Power is formed by the intersection of many factors and understood in relation to other factors. E.g., the power in the intersection of one's sexual orientation and class can be understood in comparison to another intersection based on sexual orientation and race. One construct is given meaning and power because of the other.
   b. Power can be understood based on its relationship across domains of power: The same intersection of factors can hold different manifestations of power depending on its situ in a structural, disciplinary, cultural, or interpersonal domain. Each domain relates to one another in society but analyzing each one enables one to discern the dynamics of power in the larger society.
3. Relationality – Intersectionality examines the connections and relationship of power between different aspects of identity rather than consider them in opposition to one another. This is considered through approaches of coalition, dialogue, conversation, interaction, and transaction.
4. Social context – Power is contextual and certain intersections of identity markers are more significant than others. This depends on the intellectual, political, economic, cultural, and social history of a location as social inequality, relationality, and power relations need to be considered based on one's social context.
5. Complexity – Intersectional analysis is complex because it combines the ideas of inequality, power, relationality, and social contextualization.
6. Social justice – Working with intersectionality does not require one to address social justice issues; however, the awareness of intersectionality invariably leads one to work towards social justice. These individuals are often critical and unaccepting of the status quo.

This overarching framework expands on the previous theoretical frameworks that inform students

of the power relations that exist in every aspect of one's identity as it also considers the interplay

within the society itself. In consideration of human experiences, intersectionality offers a

theoretical basis to understand the complexities within religious groups and the inter-religious

bullying that I read or learned about during my data collection, and even heard about in my

previous teaching experience. In overlapping ways, the ability to discern critical multiculturalism

and intersectionality as a reality and a tool for analysis enables students and teachers to understand the complexities of this world and individuals within it, and myself in my data analysis. Furthermore, intersectionality embodies many aspects of the two key approaches to religious literacy today, that of Moore and Jackson that will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Summary

Within multiculturalism, many characteristics exist. Each aspect is a significant factor in one's identity as it allows one to understand themselves and their fundamental defining character as a person. Among these differences, religion is a unique characteristic as it is the most contentious aspect of identity today (Kymlicka, 2010), a fundamental aspect of most cultures (Fraser, 1999), and an aspect of identity that is of greatest interest to the Canadian government and its contemporary policies on multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 2015). Today, most North American schools, school boards and districts, provinces and states do not address the religious identity of their students despite the rights and principles established in the *UN* documents. Thus, as with other misunderstood or unaddressed aspects of diversity, a student's religious identity has made them target to harmful acts and words.

To understand the societal dynamics regarding religious groups and individuals, this chapter was framed by Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological framework that considers the influence of the macro-, exo-, meso-, and microsystem of one's social environment across time. This highlighted society's influence in one's development but was done so to correspond to bullying research that popularly references the social-ecological framework to understand bullying incidences overall.

In parallel with this the social-ecological framework, the UN declarations grounded the overall foundation of my discussion and understanding at the macro-level. The triangulation of Taylor's open-secularism, Eck's pluralism, and Ghosh's critical multiculturalism fostered the social environment needed to promote religious literacy in the exosystem, which was balanced with a discussion on Habermas' even-handed demands for religious and secular groups. Fraser's participatory parity and Callan's empathetic identification then elaborated on these macro- and exosystem principles and bearings for the meso- and micro levels. To conclude, I introduced intersectionality as a theoretical framework to describe the variety of power dynamics and relations at the individual level, which is informed by dynamics at the societal level. This interplay between religious and secular groups and the individuals within each of these groups across all levels and spheres (e.g. social, political, economic, cultural) of society show that a solution for religious bullying needs to consider the policies, values, attitudes, and beliefs within each of these social-ecological systems. As a result, an effective religious literacy program needs to work within the framework discussed in this chapter to promote recognition of religious and non-religious identities. An analysis of four conceptions of religious literacy continues this discussion in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV: RELIGIOUS LITERACY

In the previous chapter, my theoretical framework established a case for religious literacy and the inclusion of religious identities in the public sphere. It discussed approaches to recognizing religious and non-religious identity groups across the social-ecological systems and the theoretical foundations that are needed for a form of religious literacy that can address conditions for religious bullying, which can be promoted across these systems. From this theoretical framework, this chapter discusses religious literacy as a concept, a core component of my study, by analyzing four conceptions of religious literacy. The four scholars of Prothero, Moore, Jackson, and Miedema developed each conception in contexts where religion has formed the secular conversation as well.

This discussion of the conceptions of religious literacy is important in my study because I was not able to evaluate the Quebec's *Ethics and Religious Culture* (ERC) or the Modesto City School's *World Geography and World Religions* (WGWR). The Modesto City Schools did not give me approval to conduct my research in their schools and thus did not give me access to WGWR course material. To keep the data collection methods equal in the two contexts, I did not conduct my research in Montreal schools either. As a result, I could not explore the connection between religious literacy and religious bullying from these specific religious literacy courses. Instead, I discussed religious literacy overall as a concept in relation to the religious literacy courses that students took in each context. Hence, this chapter summarizes the conception of religious literacy that informed my research as it was structured by the theoretical framework in the previous chapter. To begin, I consider the understanding of and ability to analyze the topical knowledge about religion as a form of literacy overall.

Religious literacy is rooted in the premise that literacy is not simply the technical agendas, purposes, and interests represented in texts and topical areas (Street, 2003; Stevens & Bean, 2007); various forms of literacy exist including sport literacy, financial literacy, media literacy, and art

literacy. Religious illiteracy, in contrast, is posited by Moore (2007) and Prothero (2007) to be a lack of specific content knowledge about religion and is the impetus in their support of religious literacy. This chapter will present Prothero, Moore, Jackson and Miedema's approaches and conclude by discussing the educational implications of the four conceptions.

While other theorists offer conceptions of religious literacy, these four theorists were chosen due to their prominence in religious literacy and religious education discourse. Prothero and Moore are discussed first as they are both situated in America, followed by Jackson and Miedema who are both located in Europe. Contrasting one another, Prothero and Moore both write in response to the religious ignorance they observe, while Jackson and Miedema are writing to improve religious education (RE) that has existed in England and the Netherlands, respectively, for decades while RE does not exist in the US. Additionally, Moore and Prothero conceptualize religious literacy from a religious studies approach, whereas Jackson and Miedema from an education and philosophy of education approach. Concerning citizenship education, all four theorists offer similar perspectives; however, Jackson and Miedema's are complementary, because they have both been influenced by the *Toledo Guidelines* (2007), guidelines for all European educators teaching about religion and beliefs.

Together, they all advocate for democratic action and critical religious literacy, and suggest specific tools of inquiry, dialogue, and critique; however, they differ in their underlying normative arguments, ideologies, and pedagogical approaches. Moore emphasizes the cultural interdisciplinary lens one needs to study religion within a non-RE class. Prothero's distinction lies in his advocacy for a Christian literacy class for the US. Jackson's focus is on an individual's awareness of interpretation biases within the self and others, and in curriculum, and how this influence's ones understanding of specific and whole religious narratives in a RE class. Miedema's

difference lies in his desire to combine religious and/or worldview education, as he refers to it, with citizenship education. Despite the differences in each conception, they cohesively eschew the notion of the teaching *of* religion in public institutions, where confessional curriculum aims to promote faith in a particular religion and teachers who are expected to be members of the religious community teach one about a religion as a follower of the religion. Yet, each scholar promotes a variance in ways to teach *about* religion, a content-based approach that focuses on a non-confessional teaching of the descriptive and historical aspects of a religion, and the teaching *from* religion, where students are instructed to make sense of the world on their own based on learning from religious beliefs, symbols, or practices. This latter form of RE aims to foster empathy and respect for people of other worldviews as well as understanding aspects of the worldview itself (Hull, n.d.), as per Callan's empathetic identification in the previous chapter. The following reviews the normativity and ideology embedded in each conception.

4.1. Conceptions from Prothero, Moore, Jackson, and Miedema

4.1.1. Stephen Prothero, Professor of Religion, Boston University
    Unlike the other three theorists, much of the public are familiar with Prothero's conceptions. In his New York Time's bestseller *Religious literacy: What every American needs to know – and doesn't* (2007), Prothero recognizes the plethora of religious literacies that exist and invites the public to do the same. To him, religious literacy implies that one is fully versed and skilled in understanding and incorporating an understanding about these religions into their daily lives. He identifies several religious literacies: literacy for a specific religion overall, such as Protestant literacy, Islamic literacy, and Buddhist literacy, where one understands the history, scriptures, beliefs, key figures, customs, and symbols of a specific religion; ritual literacy, such as

understanding the Hindu practice of *pujah* and how Catholics cross themselves; confessional literacy, such as knowing the details affirmed during the Muslim *Shahadah* or the Jewish ceremonies of *Yom Kippur*; denominational literacy, such as knowing the differences between Mormons, Baptist Christians, and Lutheran Christians; and narrative literacy, by understanding the details within the narratives of religious figures such as the Buddha and Guru Nanak. As Prothero is a religious studies professor, this distinction between the understanding of text, practice, narrative, and denominations, among others, reveals his education and lens within the context of religious studies.

Prothero states that his aims are civic and secular, and that the primary purpose of religious literacy in the US should be to teach Biblical literacy and literacy about the world religions in order for people to participate meaningfully from various angles in America's religiously inflected public debates. As an American who describes himself as being 'religiously confused' (p. 15), he promotes Biblical literacy the most, due to the nation's deep historical roots in Christianity and the influence of Christianity in events such as the American Revolution and the Civil War, and because the majority of religious individuals in the US are Christians. Hence, he promotes religious studies education in all secondary and post-secondary institutions. From his perspective, religion should be the fourth "R" along with arithmetic, reading, and writing, and no citizen is fully educated without the knowledge of religion. Therefore, to Prothero, religious literacies are the key component to cultural literacy and understanding the cultural backgrounds of Americans. As such, his conception of religious illiteracy is defined as a lack of knowledge about Christianity and other world religions. This prioritization of Christianity contradicts Fraser's aim for participatory parity that includes marginalized voices, as such, Prothero's conception is inadequate and does not fulfill the demands of the theoretical framework from Chapter III.

The last 86 pages of his book suggests a more inclusive multicultural approach as he offers a glossary of religious terms and practices that reveal his ideology and values towards the role of religion in public cultural life, but his insistence on the primacy of Biblical literacy does not support the equal inclusion of other world religions in public life. Thus, while Prothero's conception is practical, readily available and welcomed by the public, he offers a functionalist religious literacy that requires further development for a long lasting societal change, based on the theoretical framework of my study. His glossary is a valuable resource that all who value religious literacy should acknowledge; however, his conception presents a form of functionalist religious literacy, which offers an introductory level approach to understanding religion and "is unlikely to lead to any deep cognitive or institutional change by faith-based and secular institutions" (Baker, 2009, p.116). This approach presents religious literacy as fact based knowledge that does not consider the analytic knowledge that other scholars promote, and limits his hopes to foster religiously and culturally literate citizens in the long term. While Prothero's conception dissects a study of traditions by ritual, scripture, and denomination, his conception of religious literacy would not foster a program that sufficiently addresses the social concern of religious bullying. On the contrary, other forms of religious literacy "(expresses) engagement with the others at the level of values and visions, and seeks understanding of the motivation of others" (Baker, 2009, p.116). Moore's conception offers this alternative approach to religious literacy and incorporates the social context needed in a discussion of religious bullying as well.

4.1.2. Diane Moore, Sr. Lecturer on Religious Studies & Education, Harvard Divinity School

Moore (2006) describes religious literacy as the ability to discern and analyze the convergence of religious, social, political, and cultural spheres. Specifically, a religiously literate person will possess:

> 1) a basic understanding of the history, central texts, beliefs, practices and contemporary manifestations of several of the world's religious traditions as they arose out of and continue to be shaped by particular social, historical and cultural contexts; and 2) the ability to discern and explore the religious dimensions of political, social and cultural expressions across time and place (para. 3).

To impart this form of religious literacy, Moore proposes a cultural studies approach to infuse the teaching *about* religious content across all disciplines, such as the inclusion of Islamic contributions to architecture and algebra in mathematics and art. Her secular approach closely follows the guidelines for teaching *about* religion from The First Amendment Center's *A Teacher's Guide to Religion in the Public Schools* (1999), and is evident in these corresponding guidelines:

- The school's approach to religion is academic, not devotional.
- The school may expose students to a diversity of religious views, but may not impose any particular view.
- The school educates about all religions, it does not promote or denigrate religion.
- The school informs students about various beliefs; it does not seek to conform students to any particular belief. To this point, Moore says that this shows a neutral and objective academic view, while acknowledging that education is not neutral.

While this approach reveals her pluralistic lens and critical multicultural educational approach, her cultural studies approach is explicitly grounded in cultural studies that combine sociology, social theory, literary theory, film/video studies, creative and fine arts, and cultural anthropology. Through these lenses, Moore's approach enables one to consider the various aspects of culture and how it changes over time and is influenced by many facets of society, such as religion. As a result, Moore's (2007) approach is distinct from the other religious literacy theorists as she explicitly

emphasizes religion's influence in all aspects of history and that it is "deeply imbedded in all dimensions of human experience" (p. 79). As human experience incorporates several facets of societal life, she insists on an interdisciplinary examination of religion as one discipline would not encapsulate this fundamental reality of religion's pervasiveness throughout history. This approach corresponds to the social-ecological framework and the understanding of the porous interaction between different spheres of society that influence one another.

The cultural approach enables one to critique power relations in religious contexts because of its basis in sociology, social theory, and cultural anthropology. It acknowledges the political non-neutral nature of education and the biased perspective of the interpreter of religious content as well. Through the approach, Moore also encourages using a method of inquiry and self-criticism akin to that of critical multiculturalism but not to the degree that Jackson does, which will be discussed later. This focus on method, interdisciplinary content, and lens reflects her values and pedagogical approach. Additionally, her conception of religious illiteracy reveals her religious studies background that informs her approach.

Educated within the religious studies discipline and based at Harvard Divinity School, Moore's approach to religious literacy reveals a religious studies approach. While a theological approach to studying religions include conversion, confessionalism, and missiology, the distinctly different religious studies approach aims to understand religion and religious groups in their own terms with a neutral scientific study towards religion, and fairness in their representation of each one (Markham, 2011). The aim for traditions to be understood through self-expression and agency in religious studies are prominent in her definition of religious illiteracy, which she defines as a lack of understanding regarding:

> 1) The basic tenets of the world's religious traditions and other religious expressions not categorized by tradition;

2) The diversity of expressions and beliefs within and between traditions and representations; and,
3) The profound role that religion plays in human social, cultural, and political life historically and today.

<div align="right">(American Academy of Religion, 2010, p. 4)</div>

In this, she details the nuances between the religion as a whole and its individual sects and adherents, like Jackson (1997). Additionally, Moore (2007) explicitly articulates that she is influenced by Guttman's deliberative democracy, (1996, 2014) as religious literacy is essential for an effective and increasingly pluralistic democracy, as well as Friere's promotion of critical thinking and dialogue, as she believes that "the study of religion can serve to enhance rather than thwart critical thinking and cultural imagination regarding human agency and capacity" (p. 5). To this effect, although her conception and pedagogical approach to religious literacy explicitly focus on the process and method of inquiry, and the knowledge about religious content, practices, and influence in society, it also implicitly promotes open-secularism akin to my theoretical framework.

Moreover, Moore (2007) speaks of promoting moral agency through instilling: 1) critical thinking skills (in order to analyze and avoid repeating historical atrocities that used religion as justification, e.g. slavery), 2) self-confidence (by offering student voice and agency through dialogical participation in class), and, 3) humility. This promotes a child's moral agency demanded by the *UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child* and is very similar to Callan's empathetic identification, which requires humility and reflection. Furthermore, her aim is for all students to foster fulfilling lives through education, where they are encouraged to be creative, imaginative, explorative, and empowered through opportunities for self-determination that can be offered through religious literacy specifically – principles echoed by Jackson and Miedema. Embedded in this approach is the need for educators and scholars to represent confessional perspectives accurately and respectfully but to also challenge exclusivist or normative faith claims. In doing so,

Moore's approach relates strongly with Taylor's open-secularism, Eck's pluralism, Ghosh's critical multiculturalism, Habermas's dialogue between faith and reason, Fraser's participatory parity, Callan's empathetic identification, and how these theories in one's social-ecology can impact Hill-Collins and Bilge's intersectionality. Thus, Moore's conception of religious literacy and cultural studies approach to learning religious literacy can be an effective approach to address religious bullying. Furthermore, Moore's conception of religious literacy and cultural studies approach (2007) was developed in response to the prejudice and antagonism that is promoted by religious illiteracy (Moore, 2006).

In countering prejudice and antagonism, Moore's conception looks to peace studies theorist Johan Galtung's (1990) three-pronged typology of violence that consists of direct, structural, and cultural violence. Direct violence considers the forms of violence that can threaten one's life or effect one's ability to fulfill human needs. This includes killing, bullying, sexual assault, and emotional manipulation. Structural violence represents the institutional bearings that promote unequal or inequitable access to resources and prohibit the ability for individuals to fulfill human needs. These structures can be reinforced politically, legally, or economically to marginalize individuals and groups. Cultural violence refers to the social norms that maintain direct and structural violence and make them appear tolerable. As each typology of violence informs another, and has been influenced negatively by religion in the past, Moore sees that religious literacy can also pose the opportunity for peace in each of the typologies as well. However, she notes that:

> Exposing students to a more informed and sophisticated understanding of religion will not, in itself, end discrimination or unintended harm perpetuated through ignorance. It will, however, help diminish discriminatory practices while also providing information to help educators proactively shape their educational environments so that all students feel a sense of belonging (2007, p. 33).

This sense of belonging is essential in addressing the direct violence of religious bullying. Moreover, while the three forms of violence do not correspond directly with the systems within Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological framework, it relates to the framework as the forms of violence exist across different levels of society and interactions exists between each level. Thus, Moore's conception of religious literacy aligns with my theoretical framework.

4.1.3. Robert Jackson, Professor Emeritus, Warwick Religious Education Research Unit

Diverging from Prothero and Moore's articulate conceptions of religious literacy and illiteracy are the European conceptions of religious literacy in the form of religious education (RE), such as that from Jackson and Miedema. As mandatory RE has existed in English and Dutch contexts for decades, Jackson and Miedema's approach focus on enhancing the current RE in order to address weaknesses that have been found or to adapt to social changes[36]. As a result, neither European scholar offers an explicit definition for religious literacy nor religious illiteracy, as any form of literacy attained would exist along an established spectrum of literacy.

This is evident in Jackson's book, *Rethinking religious education and plurality* (2004), where he does not offer his own conception of religious literacy explicitly. Rather, he states that the aims of RE should be "to help children and young people to find their own positions within the key debates about religious plurality" (p. 87), likened to teaching *from* religion. This suggests that, unlike Moore and Prothero, his conception of religious literacy includes an outright focus on the personal aspect of religious literacy in the midst of religion in the social realm. Additionally, he posits that public domains and institutions should foster an interaction and communication between these private aspects as all participants must feel a sense of belonging to the society

---

[36] Their conceptions and approach are also of interest in a context like Quebec where religious literacy programs have existed for centuries as well.

regardless of their religious, ethnic, or cultural identity. Therefore, Jackson's RE and religious literacy is purposed for social cohesion, which makes it a strong contender for creating an inclusive, pluralistic, and multicultural classroom needed to prevent religious bullying.

In bridging the personal and public domains, Jackson (2012) asserts that a secular approach should be instituted in all RE, and that a secularist approach that presents religious claims as false or meaningless is problematic, especially as a secularist approach would counter his goal of social cohesion and religious understanding altogether. Instead, Jackson emphasizes the need to present religious claims in a manner that would allow students to interpret and consider it themselves. This interpretive approach has been greatly influenced by Jackson's personal experience with parents of differing faiths, and as a high school teacher, religious studies professor, and his studies on Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim students in England. Each experience helped him understand the importance of the personal narrative and that the specific perspectives, beliefs, and practices in students and adults' religious communities influenced their lived experiences (Jackson, 1997, 2004, 2012).

Initially, Jackson (1997) leveraged England's traditional phenomenological approach to teaching RE that recognized the need to consider a faith experience empathetically from others' viewpoints, which required one to analyze and reserve their personal notions to transcend being merely informed. However, he found that phenomenology refrained him from gathering the interpretation and meaning from participants, which made it impossible to empathize and consider their perspective. Moreover, it was ill suited as he learnt from William Cantwell Smith (1978) that religions were being understood and represented solely from a Westernized lens.

As a result, he extended the strengths of phenomenology into an interpretive approach, which leveraged many reflexive principles of Geertz's ethnographic approach. In consideration of

Geertz's ideas and his critics, Jackson (1997) formed his own interpretive social and cultural anthropological approach that infused a hermeneutical process to look at the interplay between theory and methodology. As a result, Jackson's approach, commonly referenced as his interpretive approach, considers the parts and the wholes, i.e. the individuals within the context of their affiliated groups or religious traditions, while encouraging a critique of an interpreter's lens. Overall, his approach aims for representation, interpretation, and reflection through:

1. *Student self-awareness*, i.e. self-reflexivity. Of course, one cannot be fully self-reflexive but an awareness of one's worldview shaped by ones multi-identities is crucial.
2. *Empathy*, which is important but problematic because people often assume they have empathized when they have not. The ability to achieve full empathy is debatable for Jackson but he believes it is a crucial element to correctly fulfil the interpretive approach, which consists of good technique and sensitivity.
3. *Edification, as a product of the interpretive approach* where students learn about themselves and attain a better understanding of the cultures around them, i.e. they learn *from* religion and *about* religion. From this, Jackson hopes for students to foster good relationships with those of differing religions and culture around them.

These goals acknowledge the 'parts' and carefully considers their representations; something also highly emphasized in Moore's conception. Thus, in recognizing the 'parts', one considers representation carefully by (1997, p.108-110):

1. *Reconsidering the character of 'religions', in the light of work from religious studies, anthropology and social psychology, and taking account of the experience of field work.* Because of this, Jackson's teaching material avoids explicitly naming standard religions and focuses on individual student narratives and perspectives instead.
2. *Recognizing 'religions' and 'cultures' as dynamic and changing, with a content and scope which is negotiated and sometimes contested, and which may be delineated differently by different insiders and outsiders.* Like Moore, Jackson avoids presenting religions and cultures as phenomena fixed in time. He considers the perspectives of the tradition, membership group, and individual.
3. *Avoiding or exercising great caution in projecting assumptions from one religious tradition on to other religious traditions.* To this, he avoids religious comparisons based on themes, a common Western practice, and astutely chooses to present each tradition based on its own categories and divisions. In doing so, students are

presented with an additional means to 'insider' knowledge and understanding through its own language and perspectives.

Overall, based on these three aspects of representation, the interpretive approach encourages:

1. ***Teachers and students to understand a religion from the three levels*** of tradition, membership group, and the individual, and
2. ***Compare and contrast*** the overlapping similarities and differences among insiders and outsiders of a tradition through a dialogical approach.

This dialogical approach is pivotal to Jackson's interpretive approach and is crucial in fostering understanding between the three levels of individual, group, and tradition. Despite not detailing a specific dialogical approach to take, Jackson's overall approach seems sociological as he encourages one to engage in another's perspective in order to understand the other's subjective motives and actions, especially as a means to understand something that may seem irrational at first (Dillon, 2011), akin to Callan's empathetic identification. This focus exceeds a form of functionalist religious literacy, as he promotes three forms of dialogical approaches that emphasize reflexivity and action through the values of democracy, social justice, and human rights (2004), namely the approaches stipulated by Heid Leganger-Krosgstad in Norway, Wolfram Weisse in Germany, and Julia Iprave in England.

Each dialogical approach is valuable for different contexts as the Norwegian approach promotes students' independent reflection and dialogue that varies across three key age groups, the German approach engages in a philosophical discussion about religion, and the British approach used dialogue as a means for students to voice their own notions about religious beliefs separate from that of their parents'. Each approach clearly emphasizes the principles demanded in the overall framework discussed in Chapter III. Leganger-Krosgstad creates a secular and plural society, Weissen fosters critical multiculturalism and empathetic identification, and Ipgrave's approach highlights participatory parity. This non-prescriptive approach to selecting a form of

dialogue that is context specific allows educators to consider one's students, community, and social ecology, an important consideration as religious bullying differs based on context. This emphasis on context-appropriate dialogue is also a component of Moore's conception.

Additionally, in consideration of parental concerns about religious education in public schools, Jackson insists that one should heed student and parent perspectives on religious issues. As schools are not consistently welcoming spaces, Jackson recognizes that religious families choose to send their children to religious schools as parents often feel that their concerns are neglected. For schools to actualize an interpretive approach successfully, Jackson (1997) contends that school administration and policy makers must maximize the communication and trust between parents, faith groups, and religious educators. It appears that Jackson's approach and consideration for the three levels can only be achieved if parents are included in the conversation. As such, for Jackson, RE extends beyond a didactic role into a course with great personal and social application and incorporates all aspects of my theoretical framework. From this perspective, the personal concern of religious bullying can be understood alongside a form of religious literacy that discusses the nuanced influence of religion in society.

Like Moore, Jackson (2012) sees that religion does play a role in the arts, humanities, and science education, and that it plays an even greater role in its contribution to citizenship, social cohesion, and cultural understanding where arguments about personal development related to identity, values education, and growth towards autonomy stand. To this effect, he differs from Miedema who believes religious and worldview citizenship education should be combined. On the contrary, Jackson believes that RE and citizenship education (hereafter CE) are distinct in England, and that RE can support intercultural education, CE, and values education as the skills gained from dialogical, interpretive and religious literacy approaches foster good citizenship. RE and CE share

overlapping goals for social participation and social justice so they can inform one another but one does not replace the other, especially as CE is not value free (Jackson, 2004). Rather, he suggests for CE to be interdisciplinary in scope and for CE educators to be religiously literate and engage religion as an aspect of citizenship.

4.1.4. Siebren Miedema, Professor in Educational Foundations and Religious Education, VU University Amsterdam

Like Jackson, Miedema does not share a definition for religious literacy but his conception of it is revealed in his normative and pedagogical approach to RE. Greatly influenced by his childhood in the Netherlands, his education in the disciplines of philosophy of education and philosophy of religion and ethics, and John Dewey, Jürgen Habermas, and Charles Taylor, Miedema's conceptions reveal strong traces of a pragmatic approach that responds to the social demands of society and the development of the individual, and traces to my theoretical framework.

Miedema grew up in a Dutch Reformed family and community setting in northern Netherlands (2013). At the time, each religious sect and group had its own set of social institutions, and created what Miedema refers to as the pillarized Dutch society. This separated private life, which religion was deemed to belong to, from a seemingly mono-cultural public life in the 1950s, thereby creating distinct siloes within the society. As a result, Miedema (2013) says, "there was no encounter, no dialogue, and no possibility for a growing understanding of each other. Our worlds were completely separated" (p. 236). Ideas and values were not exchanged. While he joined his peers in teasing those who were religiously different in his childhood, his first encounter with 'others' was in the final years of secondary school when the Dutch Protestant schools opened admittance to everyone so long as they respected the beliefs of the school. This experience changed his perspective towards others completely and he began to realize that differences could enrich

social cohesion and social space. Additionally, this personal experience of religiously bullying others brings the personal identity into Miedema's conception and approach to religious literacy.

Given his context, Miedema's conception is also framed by the Dutch word *Bildung* used to describe personhood education (2012) or religious edification (2014), what Miedema says should be the focus of all schools. Thus, he believes that, "all domains of human potentiality and ability (be it cognitive, creative, moral, religious, expressive, etc.), that is, the development of the whole person, should be taken into account by the schools" (2012, p. 2). In light of this, he shares that he continuously reflects on the following theoretical, empirical, and historical question (2014):

> What has been or is the impact of the contribution of schools in terms of the selected subject-matter and/or the arrangement of pedagogical relations and situations by the professional on the personal identity formation, including the religious/worldview identity or personhood formation of the students? (p. 363)

This focus on the student's personal formation remains a defining factor in Miedema's conceptions. Together, Miedema's personal experience and Dutch culture have led him to be a consistent and vocal advocate for multi-religious, inter-religious, and inter-worldview pedagogy that specifically encourages students to learn, work, and play together with people of varying differences at an early age. These values and ideology reflect a form of teaching *from* religion and elaborate upon ideas from Dewey, McLaughlin, and Taylor.

John Dewey's (1962) pedagogy of experience and philosophy of religion that distinguishes between the religious, the religious experience, and the religious attitude is heavily incorporated into Miedema's approach as he promotes students' agency to experience, analyze, and understand religious content, experience, and attitudes. In this approach, the presentation of religious content must be conducted in an 'open' manner that is non-dogmatic and non-compelling so students and teachers can consider it as potentially transformative material for themselves in accordance to Dewey's pedagogy of experience, Jackson's interpretive approach, and the UN principles that

establish a child's self-determination. Reaffirming this idea, Miedema includes McLaughlin's distinction between maximal and minimal interpretation in his approach.

For Terrence McLaughlin (1992), the minimal interpretation holds the non-Deweyan approach of the direct transfer of knowledge to a student, which maintains the status quo and inhibits critical reflection and understanding. Conversely, maximal interpretation involves active learning, inclusion, interaction, is values-based, and is process-led, allowing students to develop and voice their own opinions and engage in discourse. This maximal interpretation reinforces Miedema's insistence on *Bildung* in order to foster students' personhood development.

For Miedema, Dewey's pedagogy of experiential learning in the perspective of McLaughlin's maximal interpretation is shaped within Taylor's (2007) third form of secularity, which exists when:

> A move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace. (. . .) Secularity in this sense is a matter of the whole context of understanding (i.e. matters explicitly formulated by almost everyone, such as the plurality of options, and some which form the implicit, largely unfocussed background of this experience and this search) in which our moral, spiritual or religious experience and search takes place. (p. 3, parenthesized text from Miedema, 2011)

This third form of secularity is Taylor's open-secularism that differs from the first form of secularity where religion historically played a pervasive role throughout society and the second form where society is completely void of religion in its public spaces (Taylor, 2007). Through Taylor's third form of secularity, Miedema has embraced Eck's pluralism and participatory parity by infusing all religions and worldviews into his CE as he understands that personhood development via moral, spiritual, or religious means occurs in everyone.

From these influences, it is evident that Miedema's aims are secular and that his multi-religious and interreligious pedagogy encourages all students to interpret, wonder, and question

the possibilities of religion for themselves. Thus, instead of learning *about* religions, which religious studies scholars like Moore and Prothero purport, Miedema in his philosophical stance, advocate for a learning *from* religions and/or worldviews in order to allow students to form their own worldview. To Miedema, a worldview is one's philosophy of life, as he adheres to Dekker and Sotffels' (2001) conception of worldview as, "a more or less coherent and consistent whole of convictions and attitudes in respect with human life" (p. 33 quoted in Miedema, 2012, p. 3). Hence, for those who are religious, he understands that one's religion can be equivalent to one's worldview that is why he believes religious and worldview education should be a combined discipline in the school context in this secular age. Thus, he combines citizenship education to religious and worldview education because he sees a strong link between them in the development of personhood through *Bildung*.

Of course, critics to RE, and CE combined with RE abound. Allowing students to form their own worldview, especially a religious one, is problematic for many parents. However, this sentiment contradicts with the principles of the *UN Rights of the Child* that maintains that a child's individual religious choice precedes the opinions a parent can impose onto their child. Others, such as Chater and Erricker (2013), find RE problematic overall. In England, they find that English RE is a top-down approach and they realize few teachers and students question the values they are asked to exude. Their writing invites people to consider the power dynamics within RE and its "globally manufactured values," and why this imposition of values is commonly unnoticed and so readily embraced. To this, Jackson would most likely agree and reiterate his promotion of students and teachers' personal interpretation. Miedema would most likely agree too, especially as he advocates for critical thinking to foster personhood development among students.

As an additional response, I believe Jackson and Miedema would question RE teacher training in England and the Netherlands, as interpretation and self-development are at the core of their approaches. With respect to "globally manufactured values," I believe Miedema would state that the development of global common values is necessary, as he grew up only in a monocultural society that was instated without dialogue of ideas and values. To me, it is imperative to question the values one is presented with; however, globally manufactured values may not necessarily be problematic. Certain manufactured values, such as the *UN Declaration of Human Rights,* are pertinent and created because of historical woes. Occasionally, globally manufactured values may be necessary as they are established for a specific purpose and need. With respect to religious bullying, the teaching about religious bullying in a religious literacy course under the framework of manufactured values would be warranted should individuals be degraded based on their worldview.

For Miedema, a pedagogy of religious citizenship, as he calls it, is possible, exists, and is non-negotiable. He does not offer a specific approach himself but he strongly promotes one that has been created among three schools in the Bijlmer neighbourhood in the Netherlands. This "Bijlmer approach" is based on a teacher's pedagogical approach of 'guided openness' which includes: the knowledge of religious content and practices, the ability to socially infuse religious literacy and recognize others' similarities and differences, the encouragement of students' personal exploration of ideas and the possibility of a personal change towards others' or their own worldview, and knowledge construction that occurs as a result of continuous dialogical encounters. These dialogical encounters recognize the vital role teachers play in dialogues but emphasize a focus on student needs because of the Bijlmer neighbourhood's multicultural milieu that consists of seventy differing nationalities and over twenty denominational backgrounds. Termed the

"Bijlmer conversation," this dialogue has a pedagogical approach of 'learning in difference' grounded in the belief that peace education contributes to good citizenship. Its conversations consistently acknowledge that "religion is seen as something you have to know about and you can learn from…diversity in religious and secular worldviews is regarded as a given, as a societal fact and as a challenge rather than a problem" (Miedema, 2012, p. 5). Created by a state, Christian, and Muslim school, this is a model approach to Miedema's religious and/or worldview citizenship education as students have reported that it offers them the opportunity to understand themselves as well as others (Miedema, 2012).

Despite the opposition from some scholars and parents, Miedema and ter Avest (2011), having both grown up in the Dutch context, are greatly informed by their childhood, academic, and adult experiences and insist on educating for the head and heart of students themselves and in relation to others. Like Jackson, the personal and societal life are intertwined for Miedema and ter Avest, which makes Miedema's religious citizenship pedagogy compelling as a viable option to addressing religious bullying.

This section has reviewed the normative and pedagogical approaches of four of the most influential conceptions of religious literacy today, namely that of Moore, Prothero, Jackson, and Miedema. Situated in the American context, Prothero is more cautious in his approach to religious literacy and advocates for a Biblical literacy approach. As ignorance towards religious literacy exists despite religiously charged public debates, he proposes a form of functionalist religious literacy that is based on knowledge. Moore's cultural studies approach to learning *about* religion aims to address social harm caused by religious illiteracy but underemphasizes the impact on the individual. On the other hand, Jackson and Miedema, situated in the European context where RE has existed for decades, are able to push the role of religious literacy in addressing personal as well

as societal demands. Jackson connects the personal and communal by endorsing the interpretation of the 'parts' and the 'whole', while Miedema enhances this idea further by fulfilling *Bildung* in religious and/or worldview citizenship education. In unison, the scholars strongly support an understanding of the role of religion in public life, its variances within and across religious groups, and the need to critique interpretations of religious content. However, their main pedagogical focus differs. Nonetheless, the conceptions have focused explicitly on those who are religiously affiliated. However, demographic realities and the triangulated framework of Taylor's open-secularism, Eck's pluralism, and Ghosh's critical multiculturalism, Habermas's demands on faith and reason, Fraser's participatory parity, and Callan's empathetic identification call for the necessary inclusion of those who are religiously unaffiliated as well; important as incidents of religious bullying can involve those who are non-religious.

4.2. Non-religious groups

4.2.1. The "Nones" and non-religious but spiritual

Based on definitions from several scholars, the Pew Research Group (2012) describes "nones" as people who indicate in surveys that they have no religion or do not belong to any particular religion. Noted in the Pew study, some of the nones do believe in God or a divine being while others in the group do not. In North America, those who identify as nones, or non-religious but spiritual have increased within the last decade. A 2012 population survey from the US Census Bureau found that adults who are unaffiliated to any religious group increased from just over 15% to just under 20% from 2007 to 2012. This group includes the nones, the non-religious but spiritual, atheists, and agnostics.

Also in 2012, the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, found that from those who are religiously unaffiliated, 68% said they believe in God, 58% of them feel a deep

connection with nature and the earth, 37% of them consider themselves spiritual but not religious, and 21% prayed every day. Additionally, many felt that religious institutions benefitted community needs and strengthened societal bonds but few were seeking a religion for themselves. Overwhelmingly, many felt that "religious organizations are too concerned with money and power, too focused on rules and too involved in politics" (Pew Forum, 2012, Footnote 3). More recently, based on a telephone survey among 50,000 Americans, Pew (2014) found that 22% of all Americans are religiously unaffiliated and make up the majority in certain states, such as California where 27% of survey participants self-identified as being religiously unaffiliated compared to 20% who self-identified as Hispanic Catholics.

Canada has even greater changes in all categories (Pew Research Center, 2013). In reviewing Statistic Canada's Canadian census from 1971 to 2001 and the 2011 National Household Survey, Pew found that the number of Canadians who identify as religiously unaffiliated has increased from 4% to 24% in 40 years. At the same time, those who identify as Protestants have decreased from 41% to 27%, and Catholics have decreased from 47% to 39%, while those who identify with other religions have increased from 4% to 11%. Compared to the US, Canadians who identify as religiously unaffiliated have grown 600% while the Americans who identify as religiously unaffiliated have grown 400%. Therefore, a conception of religious literacy in the US and Canada, and a discussion of religious bullying needs to include the non-religious.

However, given this demographic reality, many secularists advocate for the removal of religion in any public education (Futrell, 2015). Hargreaves (1994), for example, wishes to abolish all RE from secular schools as he believes its existence is simply to educate religious values, beliefs, and mores. Instead, he proposes religious issues to stay within the confines of the home and faith communities because it is no longer relevant to the majority of people in public spaces.

However, he simultaneously acknowledges that religion plays a vitally important role in connecting the state to the individual. To me, it seems like Hargreaves is simply trying to adapt RE for new demographic changes. Should this be correct, I caution against Hargreaves approach to RE. Echoing the concerns of Waddington et al (2012), religious literacy education should be focused on purposes of social cohesion and not to follow the demands of the majority, as heeding simply to majority demands would not include the demands of participatory parity. Rather, religious literacy education should not be abolished but should be adapted to include the non-religious and meet concerns among secularists, such as:

- Relishing free inquiry and critical scrutiny, with appreciation of public education and the right of children to develop their worldviews free of any kind of indoctrination or coercion.

- Regard for civil liberties, human rights, human reason, scientific rationality, and secular democracy, with distrust of propositions and assertions that are lacking in empirical evidence.

- Strong concern regarding the cultural privilege of religion, religious symbols, and religious organizations in law and custom, and opposition to melding patriotism and religion (Futrell, 2015, p. 2).

These concerns seem to be framed by the conception of secular that separate the religious from non-religious, but Taylor's open-secularism, Eck's pluralism, and Ghosh's critical multiculturalism encompass a critical discussion of all things temporal that the secularists are seeking. Also, based on their general belief stated above, some secularists may be open to the inclusion of religious literacy education in schools in order to allow students to critique and autonomously choose their own belief, whether it be based on a religion or not (e.g. Hamilton, 2014). For, premised on these common secularist beliefs, if public education excluded the option of religious discussion, it could be likened to indoctrinating students to be secularists and privileging those who are non-religious. Rather, to inform students better, I argue that religious

literacy education in North America today must be adapted to include educational content about the nones, atheists, agnostics, and those who are non-religious but spiritual along with those who are religious. Only then are we truly adhering to participatory parity and practicing empathetic identification towards all.

4.2.2. Indigenous spirituality

Also lacking in the four conceptions of religious literacy is the recognition of Indigenous spirituality. It can be categorized as "non-religious but spiritual," but given North America's history with Indigenous populations and Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (TRC, 2015), it is paramount for a conception of religious literacy in this study, one that aims to foster inclusion, dialogue, and understanding at the individual and societal level, to also consider Indigenous spirituality. Moreover, education is referenced 28 times in the TRC report's 94-calls-for-action and Justice Murray Sinclair, the Chair of the Commission, noted that the education system caused the problem and yet, is pivotal in reconciliation as well ("Will truth," 2015.)

While addressing this historical and political commitment, this conflation of Indigenous spirituality in a conception of religious literacy may appear inappropriate given the history of the Christian religious leaders who aimed to indoctrinate and eliminate the Indigenous culture, language, identity, and spirituality of the Indigenous peoples in Canada in the past. However, I opine that addressing this historical tension and injustice explicitly is salient in North America today and creates an opportunity to discuss and engage with the power dynamics of critical multiculturalism and intersectionality that exists in North America. This discussion would also bear the equal demands that Habermas poses for the secular and religious groups in public discourse. Furthermore, the Aboriginal population in Canada grew 42.5% from 2006 to 2016,

"more than four times the growth rate of the non-Aboriginal population over the same period" (Statistics Canada, 2018). Specifically, the First Nations population rose 39.3%, the Métis population increased by 51.2%, and the Inuit grew by 29.1%. Statistics Canada (2018) estimates that the Aboriginal population will continue to grow in the coming years. This largely relates to increased life expectancy, high fertility rates, and the fact that more individuals are self-identifying as members of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities – the three official groups who comprise Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

Thus, religious literacy education in North America today cannot be relegated solely to discussions about religion. In tune with Erricker and Erricker (2000) and in recognition of those who are non-religious, I posit that religious literacy education should include a more spiritual aspect, what Taylor refers to as "beyond" human life to incorporate all worldviews in order to foster greater understanding, critique, and interpretation. To this, Rodger (2000) explains that:

> Spirituality is not specifically a religious phenomenon. It is rooted in a fundamentally and characteristically human capacity for being aware of the world through relating to it in a particular way. By extension, the term is used to cover the forms in which this awareness is given expression and the means by which it is fostered. The term "spiritual" refers also to those aspects of reality which human beings believe themselves to be aware of in spiritual experience. (p. 4)

For to some like Baker (2009), spiritual capital, or the "human capacity for being aware of the world," as Rodger states, exists in everyone whether people define themselves as religious or spiritual. Hence, including both spirituality and religious beliefs in religious literacy education makes it more explicitly relevant to all.

Notably, although the interpretive approach did not discuss inclusion of non-religious worldviews, Jackson authored a European Council-funded report that does promote the teaching and inclusion of all worldviews across Europe. Almost an extension of his writings on the

interpretive approach, *Signposts: Policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious worldviews in intercultural education (2014)*, offers strategies, anecdotes, and guidance for policy makers, teachers, and teacher trainers in their practice of intercultural education. The document clearly indicates the need to include voices and perspectives of religiously unaffiliated beliefs and individuals in the classroom as well. Similarly, while Moore, Prothero, and Miedema have not articulated this group as a component within their conception of or approach to religious literacy, I do believe that, given the changes in the North American and European demographic and the basis of their conceptions themselves, their current conceptions and approaches would incorporate an aspect of religiously unaffiliated worldviews.

4.3. Educational implications of the four conceptions

Each conception has strengths that can be incorporated into a new religious literacy approach that is relevant for the North American society, so long as it includes discussion of the non-religious. Should the strengths of the four conceptions be combined, it would foster a form of religious literacy education that would be mandatory for all secondary and post-secondary students per Prothero and Jackson, but would start at a much earlier age to foster long-term personhood development through religious and/or worldview citizenship education per Miedema. According to Moore, the content would be shared with an interdisciplinary lens and emphasize a critique of power relations inherent in the context and perspectives that are presented. An emphasis would be placed on including the role of religion across disciplines so not to marginalize it and relegate its relevance in one specific course as well. In this manner, interdisciplinary training that includes religious literacy would be offered to all teachers, not simply religious educators.

For students and teachers, this new approach would incorporate Jackson's three levels and Miedema's *Bildung* that would mean (a) the inclusion of personal interpretation and development

to foster reflexivity, and (b) co-creation of understanding and meaning through dialogical encounters, (c) which would then translate into societal participation. As all four conceptions advocate for dialogue, any of the promoted dialogical methods could be applied depending on the specific context. Specific to the Bijlmer approach, this dialogue would extend beyond the public school classroom to discussions among state and denominational schools also.

Together, and with the inclusion of spirituality in the discussion, the strengths of the four conceptions address the demands of my theoretical framework as well as growing student concerns. Thus, an amalgamated approach from the conceptions of Moore, Prothero, Jackson, and Miedema, on religious literacy includes a critical understanding of:

1. The role of religious and non-religious traditions in social, political, and economic contexts in history and today,
2. The complexities within and across religious and non-religious traditions,
3. The basic beliefs and practices of the major world religious and non-religious traditions, and,
4. The cultural and spiritual meaning of religious and non-religious worldviews for people.

This adaptation aims for individuals to learn about and from religions to understand differing worldviews, in order to foster personal reflection, inquiry, and development for citizenship. It holds strong implications for the North American public school system and its mindset towards religious literacy education. Of specific interest to my research is the implication this new and combined approach may have on religious bullying.

4.4. The new approach's education implications for citizenship education and religious bullying

In Europe, the European Commission appointed the study of "Religion in Education: A contribution to Dialogue or a factor of Conflict in transforming societies of European Countries"

(REDCo) in 2008. In hopes of determining how religions and values could contribute to dialogue or tension in Europe, scholars in the project, which included Jackson and Miedema, were invited to review the potentials and limitations of RE within selected European countries. Among 17 key findings, their study showed that:

- The majority of students appreciated the religious heterogeneity in their societies, although a range of prejudices was expressed.
- Irrespective of their religious positions, a majority of students are interested in learning about religions in school.
- Those who learn about religious diversity in school are more willing to enter into conversations about religions and worldviews with students from other backgrounds than those who do not have this opportunity for learning.

Each of these findings is pertinent for the promotion of and continuation of religious literacy. The first point reveals that students are aware of the religious diversity around them. The second point confirms students' inquisitive nature towards religion. The third point illustrates that religious literacy can promote pluralism and other aspects inherent in my theoretical framework. Furthermore, this last point assuages my concern about religious bullying and illustrates the potential for religious literacy to foster the understanding and respect needed to minimize religious bullying that I found in my study. For North American students and teachers, this final point is an encouragement to participate in their own personhood development, as a combined approach to religious literacy would prescribe. As a result, perhaps teachers would recognize religious bullying more readily. In doing so, teachers would have a powerful role to play. Not only would they foster respectful interaction among youth but they could do so among their adult peers as well.

As Jackson's three level model of individual, group, and religious tradition narrative suggests, a student is greatly influenced by their surroundings. Given Jackson's awareness and inclusion of parents, this new approach would support Weissbourd's (2013) concerns about the moral development of children today. In his video "Raising Caring, Respectful, and Courageous

Children and Preventing Cruelty and Bullying," the Harvard lecturer points out that parents' main concern today is the happiness and achievement of their children. Should the priorities focus on children's level of care and kindness towards others, and this level of care expands to strangers and acquaintances, Weissbourd argues that children would be more caring and respectful agents. Utmost in his argument is the need for parents to model this aspect of care to others. To address this concern, my suggested religious literacy approach with the combined ideas from Moore, Prothero, Jackson, and Miedema would allow teachers to model this aspect and play a pivotal role in communicating this to parents during teacher-parent interviews and to their adult peers in the community.

Teaching empathy and respect prevents bullying (Harvard Askwith Forum, 2013) as bullying is widely accepted as a relationship problem that is influenced by many levels of society (Espelage & Swearer, 2010; Pepler & Craig, 2000). However, this needs to be taught corporately by teachers, parents, and community members. My suggested new approach of religious literacy education can offer an opportunity to foster this, especially as it envelops the values, principles, and demands of Taylor's secular, Eck's pluralism, Ghosh's critical multiculturalism, participatory parity, and empathetic identification.

Summary

This chapter examined four conceptions of religious literacy in relation to the theoretical framework that was discussed in Chapter III, specifically, Moore, Prothero, Jackson, and Miedema's conceptions of religious literacy as they are viable options to address concerns about religious changes and ignorance in North America and my concerns of religious bullying. However, two of them do not explicitly include the perspectives from those who are non-

religious. Only when the strengths of the four conceptions are combined can long-term empathetic attitudes and mutual respect be fostered. Together, the strengths of their approaches can develop students' reflexivity and critique that can form an understanding of a personal worldview, thereby allowing them to empathetically identify with the formation process of another's worldview. As a result, religious literacy education can be a viable option in addressing religious ignorance and foster empathetic identification among students and the greater society. Students need several options to respond to religious bullying if it occurs (Harvard Askwith Forum, 2013), and critical thinking and dialogue instilled in religious literacy appears to be a considerable option in preventing it from occurring in the first place (King, 2011). The next chapter elucidates details about religious bullying to inform this larger discussion.

CHAPTER V: RELIGIOUS BULLYING

This chapter continues the conversation in Chapter IV, which analyzed four conceptions of religious literacy – a core component of my study. It examines the other core component in my study – the phenomenon of religious bullying. In this chapter, I present how religious bullying is conceptualized in this study as a specific form of bias-based bullying and why it is important to understand and address beyond the more general phenomenon of bullying. As my study aimed to better understand religious bullying (the first objective of my study) and find ways to prevent it from occurring (the third objective of my study), this chapter discusses current responses to bullying and religious bullying in the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems of society. This elaboration is presented to consider whether or not religious literacy is a potential measure to address religious bullying overall, as discussed in Chapters VII and VIII.

5.1. What is bullying?

In recent years, rates of bullying in Canada and the US continue to be well above the average rate of 11% among 41-high-income countries (Brazier, 2017, Wolff, 2017). Since UNICEF began to monitor rates of bullying in Canada in 2007, Canada's ranking among the 41 countries has worsened, where it ranked 27th in the country standings overall as it has the fifth highest rate of bullying among students aged 11-15 who reported having experienced bullying at school two or more times a month. Comparable data for the US was not available in the UNICEF report (Brazier, 2017). However, data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States between 2009 and 2015 illustrate that the percentage of high school students from grades nine to 12 who reported being bullied on school property remained consistent, fluctuating between 19.6 to 20.2% across the four years of reporting [37] (National Centre for Education

---

[37] Data was reported in 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015.

Statistics, 2017a). For the following 2015 to 2016 school year, data show that students who reported being bullied at least once a week was highest among middle school students (22%), followed by high school students (15%), those who attended schools with a combination of all grade levels (11%), and elementary school students (8%) (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2017b). As such, both countries are noted globally for exceptionally high rates of bullying despite the higher level of education and access to resources that youth may have compared to other nations internationally. We need to understand what is bullying and ask, how do we address it? By identifying what bullying entails, researchers are then able to address the high rates of bullying that remains in the US and Canada.[38] The Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network (PREVNet) identifies bullying as a repeated and targeted aggression towards another that can be manifested directly or indirectly physically, verbally, socially, or online as cyberbullying, based on a racial, religious, sexual, and disability-based bias ("Types of bullying", n.d.). Comprised of a network of Canadian academic researchers, government and non-profit organizations who conduct research and share resources on bullying prevention, PREVNet posits that bullying is primarily a "destructive relationship problem" that occurs when one party creates an imbalance of power towards another party. This use of power and aggression leads one to feel "increasingly powerless and unable to defend themselves from this abuse" (Craig & Pepler, 2007, p. 86).

---

[38] At the PREVNet 2017 conference, the high rate of bullying in Canada was discussed but no specific conclusion was noted to explain the statistical data. Some may consider that more awareness about bullying has led to more students who report bullying incidents, and some may consider that the parameters and definitions of "bullying" in the reports may differ from country to country leading to varying or inaccurate representations. The differing definitions of bullying across countries make it hard to study bullying overall. For this reason, I look to a specific definition of bullying in Canada, that of PREVNet, which can also inform the incidents in the US.

Whether an incident is manifested directly, such as hitting, or indirectly, such as gossiping or exclusion, bullying can be a form of relational, reputational, or psychological aggression (Mishna & Wert, 2015). As a relational aggression, individuals may choose to break the confidence of a peer, speak negatively within earshot about the individual being bullied, or be excluded or ignored. As a reputational aggression, an individual may aim to increase their social standing by spreading rumours, gossiping, or manipulating a friendship. As a psychological aggression, an individual may harm another's self-esteem by mocking a personal trait or characteristic, such as their personality or a marker of their identity. However, studies have found that teachers often overlook or ignore indirect bullying, relational bullying, homophobic bullying, and cyberbullying, as they may see that some are "harmless" or "minor" offenses, or they are unsure of how to respond to them (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; Craig, Bell, and Leschied, 2011; Mishna, 2004; Mishna & Van Wert, 2015, p. 4-5).

In all types of bullying circumstances, participants of a bullying occurrence include those who are the bully, those who are victims of bullying, those who are both the bully and a victim of bullying, and those who witness the bullying (see Olweus, 1993; Jimerson, Swearer and Espelage, 2010). Thus, as a relationship problem, the aim is for adults, educators, and parents in society to foster healthy relationships between all participants of a bullying occurrence to address the concerns that led to an incident, and to foster healthy relationships overall as a means to minimize the chance of an occurrence from happening (Craig & Pepler, 2007).

Additionally, Malette (2017) argues for the need to clarify the distinctions between bullying and other forms of school violence, such as scape-goating, peer-to-peer honour contests, inter-group fights, and retaliation violence, so that policies in response to school conflict can minimize the effects of each form of violence. Where peer-to-peer honour contests and inter-group

fights occur among groups of relatively equal social status, scape-goating is an opportunity for one group of individuals to defend and strengthen their community against a perceived "other" regardless of social standing. Retaliatory violence occurs when a weaker individual responds to the aggression they incur from a stronger individual. Thus, bullying stands in contrast to these forms of violence as it includes the degradation of a party's self-esteem, as scape-goating places blame on another without necessarily degrading another party and retaliation, although between individuals of differing powers, does not necessarily require the degradation of one of the parties either. Likewise, teasing is often confused with bullying. While positive teasing exists when the parties involved are playfully joking and a strengthened relationship results from the teasing, negative teasing can weaken a relationship by alienating, criticizing, or embarrassing an individual ("The difference between", n.d.). As teasing can transition into bullying, many students and teachers are unable to differentiate between the two, which poses detrimental harm for students who experience bullying, including religious bullying which is commonly less understood and recognized, or overlooked by teachers (Craig & Edge, 2012; Chan, 2012). My study reviewed bullying, aggression, teasing, scape-goating, and retaliation as these are common phrases used in the school yard, where my study began, although similar experiences among adults are described with different terminology.

5.2. What is religious bullying?

From my literature review and experiences that participants shared with me, I learned that religious bullying occurs when a religious or religiously unaffiliated party in an incident chooses to intentionally degrade another party based on their actual or perceived religious or religiously unaffiliated identity or because of their specific religious or non-religious beliefs. Like other forms of bullying, this can occur through physical, psychological, or verbal means in-person and/or

online (Kirman, 2004; "Types of bullying," n.d., "Considerations for Specific," n.d.). Studies and reports on religious bullying and my own research have shown that religious bullying can occur across belief groups, among members of the same belief group, and from those who are religiously unaffiliated towards those who have a religious affiliation and vice versa. Thus, religious bullying occurs across all groups whether the individual who bullies or is bullied are religious or non-religious (Beatbullying, 2008; Hamblim, 2013; Wessler & Andrande, 2006; Sikh Coalition, 2014, etc.). Additionally, while researchers studying bullying debate about the exact nature of bullying to be a one-time or repeated offence (e.g. Mishna & Van Wert, 2015; Olweus, 1993; "What is bullying," n.d.), my literature review, and study have shown that an offence does not need to be repeated to be considered bullying. An incident could happen once with a marked potential for reoccurrence[39]. This is a particular bias-based form of bullying, which I argue needs a particular focus to address the bias inherent in the bullying, similar to the bias towards LGBTQ, racial, ethnic, and gender differences that lead to individuals being bullied and need to be addressed as well.

In North America, approximately eight to 15% of students experience religious bullying (Craig & Edge, 2012; Harris Interactive, 2005). Reports have documented religious bullying towards specific religious groups in the US within recent years that occur based on religious dress, biases, and misconceptions against certain beliefs. Within the Sikh community, a study by the Sikh Coalition (2014) across California, Indiana, Massachusetts, and Washington, with data from 500 student surveys, focus groups with over 700 students, and interviews with 50 students, found that turbaned Sikh students in the US were bullied at more than double the national rate. In California

---

[39] During the World Anti-Bullying Forum in Stockholm, Sweden in May 2017, I attended a multidisciplinary keynote panel where Olweus, Espelage, and other internationally reknowned scholars on bullying discussed, "What is bullying? How can we understand and explain bullying?" (May 9, 2017). The panel aimed to consider a multidisciplinary understanding of bullying and concluded with no consensus on a single definition of bullying, especially in relation to its nature as a repetitive or single occurrence. http://www.wabf2017.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/WABF17-program-eng6.pdf

in particular, data from the Sikh Coalition showed that 74% of turbaned Sikh students in the San Francisco Bay Area experienced bullying and harassment due to their religion – referred to as bias-based bullying in their studies. Between 2012 and 2013, data gathered in Fresno and the surrounding areas found that 54% of the Sikh students experienced bullying or harassment during that period, and 67% of turbaned Sikh youth experienced bullying or harassment. These findings surprised the Coalition as the Sikh community has substantial representation in California and over 100 years of history within the Central Valley. Yet, slurs that were used in the early 20th century to describe any one from India continued to be used against students in the region during the time of data collection. One student shared:

> I think the biggest problem about these people is they're too ignorant to understand the difference[s] between Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism ... Where I was growing up [before], there was a big Sikh community, but people still didn't understand. Even though ... probably like 15 - 20% of the people that went to my school were Indian, Punjabi, Sikh ... bullying still happened and people didn't stop (p. 16).

Due to racial similarities, Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim students were assumed to be one cohesive group and all the students were bullied for their affiliation to a minority religion.

In another report from the Muslim community, the California chapter of the Council for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CA) surveyed 621 students statewide between 11 and 18 years of age in public and non-Muslim private schools and found that 55% of surveyed students had experienced religious bullying – a rate that doubles the US national rate of bullying (2015). They also found that bullying experiences varied among students; where some students experienced religious bullying in many ways, verbal bullying was the most prevalent, and boys more than girls were bullied due to their religious affiliation. Among *hijabi* girls, 29% reported being "offensively touched" by another student (p. 4). The report also offers several anecdotal quotes pertaining to negative responses and experiences students have received from teachers, on responses to

accommodation requests, on wearing a *hijab*, on social ostracism, on being called a terrorist, and on increased scrutiny on the anniversary of September 11. This experience of Muslim girls in particular speaks to the relevancy of understanding intersectionality, noted in my theoretical framework, and the compounded marginalization that can exist for girls opposed to boys.

Within the Hindu community, the Hindu American Foundation also noted religious bullying among 335 middle and high school students they surveyed in 2015 (Balaji, Khanna, Dinakar, Voruganti, and Pallod, 2016). From this group, 33.3% of students had experienced religious bullying and 50% felt awkward or isolated because of their religious identity. In some anecdotes, students shared that they chose to hide their religious identity to prevent or stop bullying. Studies reviewed in the report (Joshi, 2006; Riggio, 2012) documented feelings of in-group/out-group that have left some students feeling inferior, especially as some classmates and teachers "often encouraged them to convert out of a desire to 'save their souls'" (Peterson, 2001 in Balaji et al., 2016, p. 3). Further complicating this is a racialization of religion for Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh students of South Asian descent as students are pushed to negotiate their multiple identities grounded in religion, race, ethnic background, and perhaps country of origin (Shankar & Srikanth, 1998; Joshi, 2006 in Balaji et al., 2016).

The reported data from 2012 to 2015 show that bullying toward Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu students is more prevalent than the national average rate of bullying, where one in three Sikh and Hindu students in the US have been bullied for their beliefs and one in two Muslim students in California have been bullied. Additionally, each report shares at least one incident of a student having been called a terrorist. More recently, data collected among 2,389 individuals by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding in January 2017 showed that 42% of Muslim parents, 23% of Jewish parents, and 10% of parents among the public reported their school-age children

being bullied for their religion (Mogahed & Chouhoud, 2017). From this group, the Muslims respondents reported that 25% of bullying stems from teachers or school officials.

Apart from the statistical prevalence of religious bullying in the US, a more recent study on Hindu-based bullying from the Hindu American Foundation (Balaji, Chan, Arshanapally, Khanna, and Pallod, Forthcoming) highlighted many aspects of social and interpersonal intersectionality in the findings. When asked to offer a definition of religious bullying, a number of students perceived that religious bullying can be bullying experienced from a majority religion towards a minority religion, e.g. the Christian majority in a context towards a Hindu minority. In this discussion, some students also conflated their Hindu and Indian identity. When asked if they had been bullied for being Hindu, some students described bullying incidents between their ethnic and religious identity interchangeably. One mentioned that although they were not bullied, stereotypes about India and Indians also overlapped with the way people viewed Hinduism. Another student conflated being Hindu and a Hindu Nationalist in his context within the US. Altogether, these details illustrate the complexities about religious bullying that involve the power dynamics in society between the majority-minority status of religious groups, within religious groups (through a discussion of being Hindu and a Hindu nationalist, for example), and between individual understandings of oneself as some students conflated being Hindu and Indian while non-Indian Hindu students in the study (like a few from the Caribbean Islands, for example) were also bullied for being Hindu. The conflation of being Hindu and Indian shows a further complication of students who misunderstand the diversity among Indians, as many are atheists, Buddhists, Christians, or Muslims. Analyzing these details in complex bullying incidents is important as it can lead educators to directly discuss and unpack the bias students may hold that is rooted in a religious or ethnic bias, or misunderstanding; when the bias is not addressed directly,

127

there is opportunity for biases to be maintained in society. As these intricacies relate to the intersectionality in the religious bullying incident I observed in my own classroom, as well as experiences that my study participants shared with me, Chapter VII and VIII of this dissertation will present an expanded consideration of these details.

While no reports on religious bullying exist in Quebec or across Canada, studies have documented the phenomenon of religious bullying among Canadian students in the past (Abella, Goodman, and Sharp, 1997; Beyer & Ramji, 2013; Khaf, 1998). To my knowledge, the World Sikh Organization of Canada conducted the only studies about religious bullying in 2011 and 2016 about Sikh students in the Peel District School Board in Ontario, Canada. In 2016, 27% of the 332 surveyed students reported having been bullied before for their Sikh identity. From this group, 34% who wore at least one visible article of the Sikh faith said they had been bullied and 11% of students who did not wear any article of faith reported being bullied for their Sikh identity. Among the students who had been bullied, 57% reported incidents to school officials but 40% of this group felt that their concerns were unaddressed compared to 51% who felt that their concerns were addressed (World Sikh Organization of Canada, 2016). As these reports are very localized, it is difficult to understand the rate of religious bullying in other parts of Canada.

However, recent reports on hate crimes and animosity based on religious differences can offer a glimpse into the prevalence of religious bullying in Canada, and Quebec in particular. For example, from 2013 to 2014, hate crimes in Quebec based on religion rose from 48 to 93 incidents (Ministère de la sécurité publique, 2016) where crimes towards Muslims increased from 20 to 35 incidents (a 175% increase), crimes towards Jewish people rose from 12 to 23 (a 190% increase), and religious crimes where the religion was not identified rose from seven to 28 (a 400% increase).

Following this period, Muslim students expressed facing the most hostile climate they had experienced since 9/11 (Perreault & Stevenson, 2015). While these sentiments and incidents cannot be correlated directly to the proposed Charter of Values by the Parti Quebecois in 2013[40], the Charter did raise tumultuous concerns across the greater Montreal community and several Montreal school boards, whereby the English Montreal School Board claimed that the "secular charter endorse(d) bullying" ("EMSB says secular," 2014). Hence, despite a lack of documentation on religious bullying in Quebec, the potential existence of such a phenomenon should not be dismissed, especially given the effects of religious bullying. More recently, 47% of hate crimes across the province (130 of 272 incidents) were based on religion in 2015 (Ministère de la sécurité publique, 2017), and police officers have reported that religious-based hate crimes have increased approximately 200% in Montreal and Quebec City from 2016 to 2017, although government publications have yet to document such detail (Duval, 2018; Loewen, 2017).

5.3. The effects of bullying and inter- and intragenerational religious bullying

Bullying is detrimental to individuals' physical, emotional, and social development and overall well-being. It can lead to lower self-esteem, poor mental health, depression, social anxiety, sluggishness, difficulty sleeping, poor appetite, increased likelihood of suffering self-injury or that perpetrated by others, inattentiveness, poor academic performance, truancy, alcohol consumption, drug use, and suicidal ideation (DeLara, 2016; Nansel et al., 2004; Pan & Spittal, 2013; Totten &

---

[40] The proposed Charter of Values, named the *Charter Affirming the Values of State Secularism and Religious Neutrality and of Equality Between Women and Men, and Providing a Framework for Accommodation Requests*, was an attempt to separate the church and state completely through five stipulations. One stipulation prohibited all public servants from wearing religious symbols while in public service, including their hijab, turban, kippah, cross, and niqab. All five stipulations are listed here: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/5-things-quebec-s-values-charter-would-do-and-5-it-wouldn-t-1.1699316

Quigley, 2003, etc.). These outcomes reveal that bullying can influence individuals and permeate peer groups, communities, and countries (Nansel et al., 2004). As such, bullying is a public health and mental health concern, especially as studies have shown that short-term and long-term effects of bullying persist, such as intragenerational bullying that occurs among some individuals as they continued their bullying behaviour from youth into adulthood (Craig & Edge, 2012; Cram, 2001; De Lara, 2016; Farrington, 1993). Depending on the individual, religious bullying in particular can be more detrimental than other bias-based bullying as belief and values of a religion are a fundamental aspect of most cultures (Fraser 1999), and thereby a core component of one's identity for some individuals.

In a longitudinal study that followed 411 males from the age of eight to 32, Farrington (1993) found that intragenerational bullying existed when male youth who bullied at age 14, continued to bully at ages 18 and 32. Male participants in his study self-reported bullying offenses, which their teachers and parents observed as well. In the same vein, Cram (2001) explored the effect of childhood bullying incidents among adults. In his study, Cram found five common themes about the experiences of adults who bully and were bullied, and those who witnessed bullying:

1. *The desire to seek revenge.* Adults bullied in their childhood were prone to respond negatively in word or deed to those that resembled or reminded them of their bullying experiences. Most interviewees wanted to seek revenge in one way or another.
2. *Deep feelings of repulsion, fear, and hate.* Adults who had been bullied expressed intense distaste for their bully.
3. *The hurt child who was bullied, was part of the unhealed, hurting adult.* The bullied child was still an active part of the adults Cram interviewed.
4. *Adults felt guilty because of childhood behaviour.* Those who bullied others in their childhood harboured the guilt of harming another.
5. *Those who witnessed bullying occurrences are as deeply affected as those who are directly bullied.* Adults who witnessed bullying incidents were affected for not acting upon their moral convictions because they were, "immobilized by fear."

Cram's (2001) findings reveal that intragenerational trends are expressed differently among those who bully, were bullied, or were witnesses of bullying, as some adults respond inwardly and others

outwardly. For example, a participant in the study reported aggressiveness towards strangers due to his childhood experiences (p. 334). Another participant shared that she was tormented by the guilt of having witnessed a bullying incident in childhood and not having responded accordingly (p. 331). As youth, these adults experienced, instigated, or witnessed acts of bullying. As adults, they continued to live with the consequences of such bullying incidents.

Moreover, beyond the guilt and aggression that was expressed by Cram's participants, Lereya, Copeland, Costello, and Wolke (2015) note that those who had been bullied as children by their peers were much more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, and self-harming behaviors when they were adults than those who had been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused as and by adults. In their study of over 4,000 people in England and over 1,000 in North Carolina, their findings held true after controlling for several factors such as family social-economic status, family instability, and gender. DeLara (2016) has also observed this trend in her interviews with over 800 adults who were bullied in childhood. Through her observation, she expresses "a resounding yes" (p. 93) to the occurrence of intragenerational bullying as many adults she spoke with struggled with the effects of bullying, such as difficulty in decision-making.

While intragenerational bullying exists, studies also show the presence of intergenerational bullying. For example, Farrington's study (1993) showed that bullies at age 14 tended to have children who became bullies too (p. 411). In relation to this finding, Nickerson, Mele, and Osborne-Oliver (2010) found that an individual's likelihood to bully is related to the level of affection and discipline his or her parents convey, as well as the history of bullying among an individual's parents. In accordance, Cram (2001) and Rigby (1994) found that negative emotional support in families was the strongest indicator of an adolescent's likelihood to engage in bullying behaviour. Similarly, Demaray and Malecki (2003) found that despite potentially high levels of

social support from peers and classmates, individuals who are both bullies and victims of bullying perceived the lowest level of parental support compared to students who bullied or were bullied. These studies illustrate the saliency of parent-child relationships for many who become bullies, and that there is a propensity for an individual to bully others if their parents were bullies themselves.

However, in contrast to these findings, Taki (2010) found that bullying occurs among all children, that bully and victim status can change over time and that no data currently shows that bullying is perpetrated consistently by the same individuals. While Taki's findings from two replications of a longitudinal study in Japan appear to contradict some findings in this chapter, Taki's argument reminds us that trends in bullying are context-based. The contextualization of these trends can be based on the influential nature of an individual's social-ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As DeLara notes (2016), every member of an ecology contributes to bullying whether actively or passively with full knowledge or inadvertently. Thus, the development of bullying must be understood to cease the phenomenon at its root.

Given current global affairs with a concern on religious extremism, religious bullying raises urgent concern as the effects of religious bullying can lead one to religio-political affiliation (Keddie, 1998; Moghaddam, 2005) and create the factors that can lead one towards violent extremism. Matching the effects of bullying, the factors that push one towards religious extremism include a threat to individual and collective identity (Bhui, Dino, and Jones, 2012; Seul, 1999), marginalization from mainstream society (Bhui, Dino, and Jones, 2012; Keddie, 1993), and hatred of and a desire to seek revenge against a group (Linden & Klandermans, 2006). Thus, while trends in bullying are contextual, the effects of religious bullying in one context can lead to macro level ramifications in another context due to violent extremism.

In 2006, the Toronto 18 (consisting of 14 adults and four youth) planned a series of attacks in Southern Ontario that did not transpire, including the detonation of bombs to the Canadian Parliament, the Canadian Broadcasting Company head office, the Canadian Security Intelligence Services, and the beheading of Canadian politicians (Teotonio, 2010). In his psychiatric evaluation, one of the two leaders of this group who were arrested, mentioned that he had witnessed the bullying of Muslim girls in his Mississauga high school (Gojer, 2010). More recently, in 2017, Alexandre Bissonnette killed six Muslims in Sainte-Foy on the outskirts of Quebec City during Friday prayer at their mosque. During his court appeal, a high school teacher testified that Bissonnette was consistently bullied and had been ever since elementary school (Feith, 2018). A psychologist report published while Bissonnette was in custody shared that he had been suicidal and "had crafted a list of names of people he imagined would judge him after his death — all names of young people who committed suicide due to bullying" (Feith, 2018). While a multiplicity of factors can lead one towards violent extremism, these examples warrant further attention to the theoretical link between bullying, religious bullying and violent extremism of all kinds based on the various effects of marginalization that can lead one towards violent extremism. The next section reviews current responses to the effects of bullying in many different spheres of society.

5.4. Current responses to bullying

As discussed in Chapter III, the individual and external components of the social-ecology are composed of a *microsystem* containing one's immediate settings like the school or the home; a *mesosystem* consisting of a part of the community one engages with; and an *exosystem,* an extended aspect of the community that one does not directly enter yet maintains influence over one's immediate community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The interrelationship between these three systems exists within a *macrosystem* that encompasses the ideology, structure, and culture that

dictate the functioning of the systems. Events in the micro-level are the most influential so a solution to bullying must begin there, e.g. in the school and home. Responses to bullying in other systems are discussed as well in the following sub-sections.

5.4.1. Micro-response in the home and school: The reluctance to report religious bullying

Currently, there are two main responses to bullying at the micro-level. Firstly, the California Department of Education and Quebec's MÉES expect a school educator who observes or is aware of an incident to respond to the incident based on the policies at their school, state, or province, whether that is to inform a school administrator or parent, or report an incident to the police. Secondly, a student who experiences or witnesses bullying is expected to report an incident.

In educational institutions, most North American school boards or districts and state or provincial policies require each school to have an anti-bullying policy or awareness during the school year. In Quebec, *Bill 56: An Act to prevent and stop bullying and violence in schools* (Assemblée nationale, 2012) states that each school must comply with the four components of the Act: mobilization, communication, legislation, and action. As such, schools are required to outline a clear definition of bullying[41], ensure that the responsibilities of all individuals who should respond to bullying in the school (including the students) are outlined, review and approve the procedures for reporting and documenting a bullying incident, and determine "specific disciplinary sanctions." Additionally, each provincial school board must gather details about the nature of the complaints at each school and annually report "the corrective measures taken and the proportion

---

[41] In Quebec's *Education Act* (1998, 2012, Article 13) and *Act Respecting Private Education* (1992, 2012, Article 9), bullying is defined as, "any repeated direct or indirect behaviour, comment, act or gesture, whether deliberate or not, including in cyberspace, which occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance between the persons concerned and which causes distress and injures, hurts, oppresses, intimidates or ostracizes" (http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/current-initiatives/bullying-and-violence-in-the-schools/).

of these measures for which a complaint was filed with the student ombudsman.[42]" While

stipulations to prevent and respond to bullying were already in the Quebec *Education Act* in 1992,

the updated Bill 56 proposes a concerted approach for more members of the school community to

understand bullying and address it.

Similarly, the California Department of Education (CDE) updated the *Education Act* to

include an amendment to *The Safe Place to Learn Act* (Section 243) per Bill 9 (2012), known as

Seth's Law, named after a 13-year-old student who committed suicide after being bullied at

school[43]. To protect students' equal rights and opportunities regardless of their identity, the CDE

was expected to develop policies that are adopted by the local educational agencies (LEAs) that

are monitored, reviewed, and assessed regularly by the CDE. In all circumstances, the CDE

expects educators to intervene in bullying incidents where possible, and report incidents to the

principal within a defined period that will undergo a specific process of receiving and investigating

complaints. Afterwards, the reported data would be posted online along with resources to help the

public address bullying[44].

Unlike Bill 56 (2012) in Quebec, Bill 9 (2012) in California explicitly lists a concern for

bias-related discrimination, harassment, or bullying pertaining to, "the actual or perceived

characteristics set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code and Section 220, and disability,

gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual

orientation, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived

---

[42] More details are listed at http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-56-39-2.html and http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/current-initiatives/bullying-and-violence-in-the-schools/bill-56/.

[43] See https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cp/uc/ab9letter09042012.asp for

[44] Bill 9 is available here: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_0001-0050/ab_9_bill_20111009_chaptered.html.

characteristics" (Section 234.1(a))[45]. However, Section 243, which Bill 9 amended, was again

updated per Assembly Bill 2845 in 2016 so that it recognized religious bullying especially.

In response to the reports by CAIR-CA, the Sikh Coalition, and HAF that documented the

bullying towards Muslim, Sikh, and students of South Asian descent, the harm students therefore

incurred academically and mentally, and the White House Asian American and Pacific Islander

Bullying Prevention Task Force[46], the CDE amended Section 243.1(d.1) to read:

> Provided, incident to the publicizing described in subdivision (c), to certificated
> schoolsite employees who serve pupils in any of grades 7 to 12, inclusive, who
> are employed by the local educational agency, information on existing schoolsite
> and community resources related to the support of lesbian, gay, bisexual,
> transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) pupils, or related to the support of pupils
> who may face bias or bullying on the basis of religious affiliation, or perceived
> religious affiliation.

As religious bullying based on affiliation or perceived affiliation is highlighted here, Section 234.5

(2016) is also amended:

> 234.5. (a) The Superintendent shall post, and annually update, on the department's
> Internet Web site and provide to each school district a list of statewide resources,
> including community-based organizations, that provide support to youth, and their
> families, who have been subjected to school-based discrimination, harassment,
> intimidation, or bullying, including school-based discrimination, harassment,
> intimidation, or bullying on the basis of religious affiliation, nationality, race, or
> ethnicity, or perceived religious affiliation, nationality, race, or ethnicity.

As such, Assembly Bill 2845[47] is the first bill to enact amendments that address religious bullying

in all its forms, including Islamophobia. Therefore, the requirement for educators to respond to

---

[45] Bill 9 is available here: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_0001-0050/ab_9_bill_20111009_chaptered.html.
[46] More details about the White House Asian American and Pacific Islander Bullying Prevention Task Force is available here: https://sites.ed.gov/aapi/aapi-bullying/.
[47] The full Assembly Bill 2845 is posted here: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB2845.

bullying incidents of all kinds in Quebec and California are very clear. In situations where an educator is not present, students are expected to report bullying; however, numerous studies have shown that students are reluctant to report bullying (e.g. Rigby & Johnson, 2016; Mishna & Van Wert, 2015).

The Sikh Coalition, the CAIR-CA, and the HAF reports also documented this reluctance regarding religious bullying. In particular, the CAIR-CA (2015) report noted the following reasons (p. 7, 10, 14, 19):

1. **Fear**: "I was scared that the school would not agree with me"; "It'll make things worse."
2. **Embarrassment**: "I felt embarrassed telling"; "I was scared and embarrassed"; "I don't want anyone to know."
3. **Thinking it was a joke**: "I didn't think it was a big deal"; "It was just a joke"; "It was a joke, but had some connotation of racial profiling."
4. **Thinking it won't help**: "It's not like it's going to solve anything"; "I felt like they wouldn't care"; "They don't care, they just make it worse, and they don't understand me nor connect"; "Insults towards me, as a Muslim, and towards my religion are given jokingly therefore making it difficult to present it as a serious case of bullying"; "Because it is pointless, since it will just happen again and again."
5. **Distrust of adults**: "Because I don't feel comfortable w/an administrator and I don't have a good relationship with my parents"; "I don't think my [teachers and administrators] respect me"; "At the time, I didn't want my teacher to get mad at me. Plus I didn't want to make it into a bigger issue."
6. **Fear of being called a tattletale**: "Because students are going to call me a snitch"; "Because I didn't want them to think I'm a tattletale"; "I didn't want them to get involved because the oppressor would learn that I told on him."
7. **Fear of bringing more attention to the problem**: "I wouldn't tell the school because all of a sudden everyone would know the problem"; "I don't respond sometimes because I don't want them to make a 'BIG DEAL OF IT' and I don't want them to think differently"; "Because I was afraid of drawing attention and increasing the problem"; "Then everybody is going to make even more fun of you because you just told on them."

These reasons correspond to the details shared by students in the other two reports as well.

In the Sikh Coalition report (2014), 51% of Californian Sikh students believed that the school officials did not respond adequately to bullying incidents. These students stated that it was,

"the lack of responsiveness from teachers that often leads to underreporting of these incidents in their schools" (p. 16). In the CAIR-CA report (2015), 27% of Muslim girls reported discrimination from their teacher. In general, the students CAIR-CA spoke with wanted improved relationships between students and teachers as students reported a decreased level of comfort in class, where 76% of students in 2014 felt safe discussing Islam and other countries inhabited by Muslims compared to the 80% that felt safe in 2012.

In the HAF report (2016), 25% of Hindu respondents said that their teacher had singled them out when Hinduism was discussed in class. Additionally, 12.5% of respondents said that their teachers made sarcastic remarks about Hinduism in class. Moreover, approximately 6% of students said that their teachers considered Hinduism an ancient religion and that it was no longer practiced, exhibiting a lack of religious literacy. From those surveyed, 60% of students also shared that lessons on Hinduism focused on caste and included claims about the religion and Indian social practice that had been previously debunked. This was expressed by nearly 25% of students who engaged in class discussions where it was taught that, "most Hindus do not believe in dating and will get an arrange marriage" (p. 6).

In such environments where educators are expected to respond to bullying, including religious bullying online or in-person, but educators are misinformed or hold stereotypes about different religions and practices, it is difficult for bullying incidents to be recognized and reported by school staff. At the same time, in such environments where educators do not recognize or understand the religious aspect of their students' identity, it is also difficult for students to report bullying to adults at school. With this in mind, many community groups and organizations are offering programs and policies to address bullying outside of school as well.

5.4.2. Meso-responses in the community: Communal strategies policies

Community groups have taken on the responsibility to engage parents, schools, and the public in their effort to raise awareness about religious bullying and to combat it. In their reports, the Sikh Coalition (2014) and CAIR-CA (2015) call for the government, teacher, school administrators, textbook publishers, and the media to act. CAIR-CA calls for more parent support too and for parents to recognize the signs of bullying and harassment and for parents to, "know and immediately assert their children's right to learn in a bias-free environment" (p. 5). Together, their recommendations suggest[48]:

1. "The US Congress **pass the Safe Schools Improvement Act**. The Act would require that schools enact anti-bullying policies and collect data on school bullying for diagnostic purposes. It is also critical that such data collection specifically include data on the rates at which Sikh children are bullied" (Sikh Coalition, 2014, p. 4-5). While this is helpful to understand the potential prevalence of bullying, this is an established practice in Modesto City Schools but religious bullying still occurs there.

2. **Amend "Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to add religion as a protected class** so that the Department of Education can hold schools accountable for failing to prevent bullying and harassment" (Sikh Coalition, 2014, p. 6). Since the Sikh Coalition report in 2014, the CDE has done this in California via Assembly Bill 2845 (2016) and there is a federal reporting resource available online[49] but the problem remains for students to be willing to report.

3. The Department of Education "should **track and monitor bias-based bullying against Sikh children"** (Sikh Coalition, 2014, p. 6). As mentioned, this is an established practice in Modesto City Schools; however, this is hard to achieve if students do not report.

4. **Teach about religious beliefs and practices accurately** (Sikh Coalition, 2014, p. 7). The Sikh Coalition also added that information on religious bullying should be included in curricula and materials, which relates to my doctoral research.

5. **Include accurate and current information on Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus in textbooks** that do not represent negative stereotypes, which can minimize the awkwardness and isolation some students feel when discussions about their religions arise in class. This was identified as a key influential cause of religious bullying, where the improvements to textbook content is a prime concern for the HAF.

---

[48] These recommendations were noted in all three reports, but the specific quotes are from the Sikh Coalition report as it presented the most specific suggestions for reform.

[49] Resources on bullying are available here: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyres.asp.

Distinct from CAIR-CA and the Sikh Coalition, the HAF had a greater focus on ensuring an inclusive learning environment for the students as well. Specifically, the HAF recommended that students be given opportunities to, "feel empowered to share aspects of their identity while respecting the First Amendment's boundaries within the classroom," that parents become more involved in their children's education in this respect, and for parents to increase communication with school district officials, teachers, and counselors to ensure the emotional safety of their children.

Recommendations specifically for teachers and school administrators include the need to share presentations, lesson plans, books, and videos on Sikhs with students; that bullying assessment and prevention measures and policies be implemented during elementary school years and not simply at the middle school and high school grades; that school staff be trained on ways to identify and intervene in bullying incidents; and, that bullying on school buses should be prevented. These are solutions that teachers and administrators can and are expected to address based on current curriculum and role requirements and legislation. However, other recommendations posed to teachers and administrators include the need to involve students and parents in bullying prevention efforts and the need for administrators to gather data on religious bullying incidents. These latter two recommendations are important but they require an awareness of religious bullying among school staff and the willingness for individuals in and witnesses of a bullying incident to report it.

As a more informed community is growing, my experience at the US National InterFaith Anti-Bullying Forum[50] showed that there are many American organizations and individuals

---

[50] This Forum was held in December 2017 in Washington, D.C. More details about the Forum are noted here: http://www.amhp.us/summit/.

addressing religious bullying. Particularly prominent in this discussion are: Sikh Kid2Kid[51],

founded by a high school student who aims to address religious bullying and support her Sikh

peers; the Islamic Network Group[52], that offers numerous cultural literacy workshops in-person

and online to address Islamophobia and religious bullying; and the Islamic Circle of North

America – Council for Social Justice[53], that organizes a webinar series to discuss religious bullying

and discrimination towards Muslims. A number of educators are also working throughout the

school year and in the summer to educate parents and teachers across the US about religious

literacy.

Three notable teachers that I have met, conversed with, and am most familiar with are Seth

Brady, John Camardella, and Chris Murray[54]. In Illinois, Brady and Camardella have been teaching

world religions for over two decades. Their courses have been consistently popular with their

students and have led them to organize religious literacy courses for teacher colleagues, while

Camardella also offers courses for parents[55] – an interest that grew among parents as they

witnessed the interest among their own children in Camardella's classes. In Maryland, Chris

Murray, who is also a full-time world religions high school teacher, has offered professional

development for teachers over many summers and has been instrumental in supporting the growth

of Sikh Kid2Kid, founded by one of his students[56]. Each of these teachers contributed to the writing

---

[51] Sikh Kid2Kid: http://sikhkid2kid.com/
[52] The ever-changing programs from Islamic Network Group are posted online here:
https://ing.org/programs/
[53] ICNA-CSJ programming is posted online here: http://icnacsj.org/
[54] These teachers' real names are listed because they are not participants but teachers who are publicly
doing this work alongside the Harvard Religious Literacy Project.
[55] Some details about their work with teacher colleagues and parents are highlighted here:
https://chicagotonight.wttw.com/2017/07/19/we-teach-we-don-t-preach-public-school-teachers-find-
space-religion-classroom, https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/07/viewing-religion-through-a-
cultural-lens/.
[56] Some details about Murray's work are highlighted here: https://www.nbpts.org/religious-tolerance-
teaching-the-teachers/.

of the National Council for the Social Studies' supplementary documents on religious literacy (2017, p. 92-98) in the College, Career, and Civic Life Framework (C3 Framework)[57]. Today, each of them works closely with the Religious Literacy Project at Harvard in various ways.

To my knowledge, there are no Canadian organizations working to foster religious literacy in order to address religious bullying except for the World Sikh Organization of Canada that has conducted a report on religious bullying and provided online resources about Sikhism[58]. Many are focused on addressing religious discrimination in general, such as the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) that tracks the anti-Muslim incidents across Canada for public awareness[59]. The NCCM programming focuses on three pillars of civic engagement, defending rights, and public advocacy, which includes educational workshops. Similarly, the Centre of Israel and Jewish Affairs focuses on anti-Semitism in schools, communities, hate speech, and terrorism but discusses these priorities from a legislative perspective[60]. As responses to bullying and religious discrimination in the community and meso-system where members of the microsystems interact, these solutions are beginning to raise more awareness about religious bullying. Together, the responses in the micro- and meso- system are applications of programming and strategies developed from community conversations but they are also academic-based strategies and policies that are researched and proposed by individuals and factors in the exo- and macro-systems.

---

[57] The NCSS C3 Framework is available online here: https://www.socialstudies.org/c3. The supplementary documentation on religious literacy, noted in national curriculum documentation for the first time, can be found from page 92 to 98.

[58] The World Sikh Organization of Canada's online resources on Sikhism are available here: http://www.worldsikh.org/resources

[59] This data from 2013-2018 are posted here: https://www.nccm.ca/map/#. The reported number of incidents have consistently increased from 12 in 2013 to 70 in 2017.

[60] A complete list of the CIJA priorities are listed here: https://cija.ca/priorities/.

5.4.3. Exo- and Macro-responses in local institutions and culture: Academic and socio-cultural responses

Since bullying research largely began in the 1970s in Norway by Professor of Psychology Dan Olweus (1978), the response to bullying has focused on understanding the individuals who are involved in bullying incidents, then the role of students in each incident, such as the bystander, and then to a systems-based approach that incorporates the role of various adults in society, especially school educators (see Jimerson, Swearer, and Espelage, 2010). This has led many schools, school boards or districts, and governments to adopt research-based solutions.

In the whole-school approaches, schools address the general phenomenon of bullying through various means, including anti-bullying programs. However, while state and provincial policies budget millions of dollars for anti-bullying programs each year (e.g., BC Government, 2013; NJEA, 2012), international studies show that schools with anti-bullying programs are more likely to experience bullying incidents than those without anti-bullying programs as students acquire bullying slurs they were previously unaware of (Jeong & Lee, 2013; Mitchell, 2012). Additionally, many studies have raised that bullying remains a complex phenomenon that is hard to understand and assess uniformly. "The reality of assessing a complex, underground behavior involving multiple participants and influenced by multiple factors is that there may be no single 'gold standard' for accuracy" (Hymel & Swearer, 2015, p. 294).

Despite these findings, numerous programs still exist and are lauded worldwide with varying success based on contextual dynamics (Mishna & Van Wert, 2015), such as *The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*[61] from Norway, Dr. Anthony Pikas's *Method of Shared Concern*[62]

---

[61] More details about the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program are available here: http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus_bullying_prevention_program.page

[62] More details about the Method of Shared Concern are available here: http://www.kenrigby.net/11e-Shared-Concern-Method-How-it-Works

from Australia, and the *KiVa* intervention program[63] from Finland. Each program has been developed by academics and have been popularly adopted in various international contexts. Each program includes dialogue and interaction between students, and between students and educators. This aligns strongly with a common consensus in bullying research that now highlights the need for healthy relationships in one's social ecology as the means to avert bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2008, 2010; Mishna & Van Wert, 2015; Nickerson, Mele, and Osborne-Oliver, 2010; Olweus, 1993; Pepler & Craig, 2000).

In a longitudinal eight-year study, Espelage and Swearer (2008) found that students were most likely to bully others if they exhibited higher levels of delinquency at school, experienced higher levels of negative family environment, were less engaged in school, and perceived their lived neighbourhood as an unsafe environment; thereby, experiencing a plethora of negative milieus in their social-ecology. As such, they argue, alongside other scholars (Espelage & Swearer, 2010; Nickerson, Mele, and Osborne-Oliver, 2010; Olweus, 1993; Pepler & Craig, 2000), that all adults in a student's social environment, including family members, teachers, school administrators, school mental health professionals, school health professionals, school resource officers, and school support staff, should be included in solutions to address bullying as they are all crucial in a youth's development.

These academic studies have influenced school and community policies, illustrating an exo-system influence over one's micro- and meso-system and continues to influence attitudes in the macro-system of society as well. To change socio-cultural behaviours, attitudes, and values about bullying, PREVNet works directly with policy makers in Canada, and public bodies, such as the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto,

---

[63] More details about KiVa are available here: http://www.kivaprogram.net/program

and private organizations, such as Telus and the Family Channel. With PHAC, PREVNet has created the Canadian Best Practices Portal[64] so that educators and community organizations can easily access research-based programming to address bullying. With Telus and Family Channel, they engage with in particular and aim to promote digital citizenship in relation to cyberbullying[65] and illustrate the characteristics of a supportive bystander of a bullying incident, respectively[66]. While PREVNet is Canada-specific and uses research to mobilize knowledge across levels of the macrosystem, researchers and government bodies in the US also mobilize knowledge but in a different manner. Most well-known sources, such as stopbullying.gov, Mental Health America[67], and Dr. Sameer Hinduja's cyberbullying.org offer video resources, workshops, and publications to inform various members of the public about bullying.

As research on bullying informs policies and programming in the exo-system of individuals, the perceptions towards bullying changes in the schools, homes, communities, and cities in the micro- and meso-system of students and educators, and thereby slowly changing the macrosystem attitudes to be more alert and opposed to bully. However, research referenced in this chapter also shows that despite an understanding of the harmfulness of bullying that new policies and programming convey in the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-level, bullying persists; suggesting that the problem with bullying remains at the individual level. The misidentification or lack of identification of bullying and/or the personal attitudes about bias-based bullying that may hinder teachers or students from reporting it, can relate to the power of intersectionality at the macro-level that influences the personal beliefs of an individual. In such situations, despite the

---

[64] The Portal is available online here: http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/.
[65] The Telus WISE homepage is here and the PREVNet logo can be seen as a partner at the bottom of the screen: https://wise.telus.com/en/
[66] Details for each of these projects, and others, are listed online: https://www.prevnet.ca/projects.
[67] Mental Health America's bullying tips for parents are available here:
http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/bullying-tips-parents.

school or community-based sentiments regarding certain bias-based bullying, such as religious bullying or bullying based on sexual orientation, an individual teacher, student, or parent may still reject the new socio-cultural approaches to specific forms of bias-based bullying. As such, seeking a preventative solution or response to bullying at the individual is equally important to a whole-school or whole-community approach. With respect to religious bullying, the potential bias towards religion or non-religions, or the lack of awareness about religious bullying at the individual level, can potentially be addressed by education, education such as religious literacy that can foster respect and/or understanding.

Summary

This chapter introduced the phenomenon of bullying, religious bullying, and its short-term, long-term, intragenerational, and intergenerational effects, including how the effects of bullying overlap with the factors that can lead one towards violent extremism. It also presented the current responses to bullying at the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems of society, per Bronfenbrenner's postulation that highlights the plethora of influential aspects that can lead to bullying, and how a matrixed and long-term solution, and the involvement of all the actors in one's social environment is needed to counter the myriad of influential aspects. As a complex phenomenon, there is ongoing research about bullying and religious bullying to better understand and address it, as incidents of bullying in Canada and the US have persisted at high levels compared to other high-income countries despite such pervasive bullying policies, programs, and initiatives at all levels of society. As part of the solution then, and beyond the initiatives in the other systems within society, this study explored the potential of addressing the bias of students at the individual level via religious literacy. Findings from my study in relation to religious literacy are discussed in Chapter VII. The following chapter introduces the methodology used in gathering data related to these findings.

CHAPTER VI: RESEARCH DESIGN

Based on the ramifications of bullying described in the previous chapter, I took an explicit stance against religious bullying in my study and aimed to seek multi-faceted avenues to understand religious bullying in each context among various stakeholders, such as students, parents, teachers, principals, and community leaders. In recognizing the unjust nature of bias-based bullying occurrences, I aimed to act as an advocate against religious bullying and work with participants and likeminded individuals in their cities to seek opportunities for change.

To be an advocate and work alongside my participants, my research used Critical Communicative Methodology (CCM) through a pragmatic framework and mixed methods transformational design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Purposed to analyze educational inequalities and address social injustices, CCM conducts research with vulnerable groups in order to generate social and educational transformation (Puigvert, Christou, and Holford, 2012)[68]. CCM aligned with my values and goals as an individual, a teacher, and a researcher[69]. Furthermore, CCM's emphasis on egalitarianism, inclusion, and dialogue to reach an agreed upon consensus despite differences creates the environment needed for religious literacy from Taylor's secular, Eck's pluralism, and Ghosh's critical multiculturalism. Likewise, CCM promotes the characteristics needed to foster religious literacy from Fraser's participatory parity and Callan's empathetic identification.

---

[68] To date, CCM has been used in several small and large scale studies by the Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities at the University of Barcelona (CREA UB), such as INCLUDE-ED "Strategies for Education and Social Inclusion in Europe from Education" (CREA, 2006-2011) funded by the European Commission's Research Framework Programmes for research on vulnerable groups. To my knowledge, only one other study on bullying in Spain has used CCM. Most others who conduct research on bullying are psychologists who use primarily quantitative methodologies and methods for their study.

[69] These values include the importance of student and individual voice in school and the community.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) describe a pragmatic framework as an approach aimed to advance the underrepresented or marginalized populations. It also mandates the researcher to take a stance on the research topic and offer recommendations in order to improve social justice for the population being studied, while being sensitive to the needs of the studied population. Although the researchers appear to dictate the process and content of the study in this description, the framework aims to make room for researchers to identify power imbalances in order to create opportunities that empower the individuals and communities they are working in. Thus, it is an ideological and value-based approach that enables researchers to explicitly discuss one's thoughts on harmful phenomena, such as bullying.

As a result, CCM within this pragmatic framework was a suitable approach for my research on the controversial and sensitive topics of religious bullying and religious literacy. To elaborate on these details, the first part of this chapter (from section 6.1 to 6.3) details the methodology, methods, and analytical approach that I used in my study. The second part of this chapter (from section 6.4 to 6.6) presents how the research was conducted using these approaches. The chapter concludes by explaining the limitations in my study in relation to the methodology itself, the research design, and my personal limitations as well.

6.1. Methodology: Critical Communicative Methodology

In 2006, Jesús Gómez developed Critical Communicative Methodology (CCM) from his natural inclination to dialogue with people from all different ethnic and educational backgrounds and his academic work in Europe that showed the value of inclusive dialogue (Gómez, Puigvert, and Flecha, 2011). These experiences, coupled with the influence of Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action and Freire's (1970) dialogic approach, led him to embrace the idea that all

people possess the capacity to engage in critical thinking, and that knowledge should be accessible to every individual, whether they are academics, deemed "experts", or not (Gómez, Puigvert, and Flecha, 2011; CREA UB, 2015).

Consequently, CCM's collaborative approach invites all stakeholders of the research topic to participate in the study, "in order to generate meaningful analyses of social reality and produce usable knowledge" (Puigvert et al, 2012, p. 513). Theories and research-based knowledge is thus contrasted to and interpreted in relation to the participants' knowledge with the participants' support. Through this process, researchers are able to identify the "exclusionary" and "transformative" aspects of reality during data analysis. Exclusionary data are any institutional or individual attitudes that exclude participants from a phenomenon or context. Alternatively, transformative data are any institutional or individual attitudes that participants can use to transform their vulnerable state[70]. CCM's egalitarian dialogue and inclusionary efforts to reach a consensual purpose parallels Guttman and Thompson's deliberative democracy (1996, 2014), which influenced Moore's conception of religious literacy, and thereby my own. In doing so, "communication structures bear the potential for emancipation that offsets the authoritarian potential of the systemic means of control" (Flecha, Gómez, and Puigvert, 2003, 126).

With its basis in Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action and Freire's (1970) dialogic approach, CCM aims to be dialogic, egalitarian, and emancipatory in nature. With respect to the theory of communicative action, CCM's main theoretical strands relate to Habermas's principles of universality of language and action, absence of interpretative hierarchy, and equal epistemological value[71] (Puigvert, Christou, and Holford, 2012). Firstly, in the premise of

---

[70]I analyzed my data to find exclusionary and transformative elements in participant conversations in this manner.

[71] The limitations regarding the ideal nature of these principles are addressed in the limitations section of this chapter in Section 6.6. This includes a brief mention of Habermas' acknowledgements on the

universality of language and action, Habermas posits that every individual has the capacity for language, and action and should be given the opportunity to communicate and interact accordingly. Secondly, the absence of interpretative hierarchy indicates that, while everyone is capable of interpreting content, no one can be given precedence over another based on the social role one may hold. Thirdly, the equal epistemological premise posits that no single form of epistemology will supersede another, i.e., the researcher's and the participants' knowledge are equally valid as the researcher may be more knowledgeable about certain topics and perspectives while the participant may be more knowledgeable about other topics and perspectives, especially in relation to their context and local lived experiences (Habermas 1984, 1990). This capitalizes on Habermas's dual conception of reality through *systems* – pertaining to the academic community and the theories and previous research that has been conducted to explain the world – and *lifeworlds* – conceptualized as the daily interpretations and generalizations made by research participants based on their daily experiences. In accordance, CCM postulates that the lifeworlds was previously silenced by the systems world, but CCM brings the perspectives together to encourage the creation of new knowledge (Gómez, Puigvert, and Flecha, 2011). Habermas (1990) posits this possibility of new knowledge as the researcher and participants become actors who initiate actions in the lifeworlds that existed around and before them.

CCM supposes two additional factors within the practice of Habermas's (1984, 1990) communicative rationality, which occurs when individuals use knowledge to converse and reach a rational consensus (Flecha, Gómez, and Puigvert, 2003). Firstly, during communication, the *illocutionary speech* –when the speaker is explicit about their intentions through the content of the speech – in Habermas's theory of communicative action must be used instead of the *perlocutionary*

---

constraints of these principles. However, the principles are discussed here, as they constituted foundational aspects in the development of CCM.

speech – when the speaker hopes to create an effect on the listener and the intent of the speech is not explicit in the content of the speech. Hence, under CCM, clarity of speech is important to contribute to honest and effective communication. Secondly, *validity claims* must be used in CCM instead of *power claims*, where validity claims are ideas offered to compel one to alter their initial ideas, and power claims are ideas imposed through coercive means (Habermas, 1984, 1990). Thus, communicative rationality and communicative action can be promoted only if all agents agree to a goal that is understood by all (Habermas, 1990) in order to minimize coercion.

Less prominent but equally valuable in CCM is the influence of Freire's (1970) approach to dialogic action. Conceptualized as a means of learning and knowing, dialogue is much more than a method of task completion or participation for individuals. Dialogue leads to the pursuit of knowledge; it is not a means to an end. Through dialogue, theory and practice need to be unified and balanced, just as learning and knowing can be. More importantly, dialogue is a form of education and can raise critical consciousness (Friere's conscientization), and create opportunities to empower participants to see themselves as agents of their own transformation through collaboration with researchers (Freire, 1970).

6.2. Methods and analysis

In practice, CCM has three methods specific to its methodology that are typically used in consecutive order: communicative daily life stories, communicative focus groups, and communicative observations (Gómez, Racionero, and Sordé, 2010). In communicative daily life stories, researchers meet with participants to discuss and mutually reflect on occurrences in the participants' daily life through dialogue. In communicative focus groups, community members who are familiar with one another gather to create a "natural group" and dialogue to understand participant perspectives as well as a clear purpose to transform the social reality of the topic at

hand. In this method, the researcher becomes an active participant in this group and contributes ideas towards the change. During communicative observations, the researcher is expected to take notes and share it with the research participants in order to dialogue about the observed findings. In my study, I adapted each method based on my constraints and study objectives as my study followed a pragmatic and mixed methods transformational design. As the research design evolved, the specific methods were adapted over time as well[72]. Like Padrós's (2014), who conducted research on preventing peer violence in Spanish schools using CCM, a transformative approach, and mixed methods, I did not use all the CCM methods. Informed by her findings on the necessary inclusion of familial and community voices and participation in developing and implementing preventative actions and policies in violence prevention, I sought to include voices from school and community settings as well.

In my study, I conducted semi-structured one-on-one conversations that were audio-recorded based on the comfort of each participant. There were two conversations that were not recorded and two conversations that involved more than one participant. In such circumstances, the latter two conversations consisted of a group of individuals who were already familiar and comfortable with one another, comprising the "natural grouping" aimed for in CCM.

In my qualitative analysis, I utilized a structure and format similar to that of communicative focus groups to co-analyze data and gather local perspectives further. In these meetings, interested participants and local leaders co-analyzed data with me that I had previously analyzed using two approaches – thematic analysis (Braun et. al, 2006) – to analyze and find patterned themes in my qualitative conversation transcriptions – and data mining (Han, Kamber, and Pei, 2011) – to analyze and find patterned themes in my open-ended responses from student questionnaires. As

---

[72] The final methods that were used are detailed in Section 6.5: "Revised research design," of this chapter.

all the conversations[73] I had with participants were audio-recorded, they were transcribed, then analyzed using NVivo, a computer software that aids in qualitative data analysis (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013), before my co-analysis.

NVivo enabled me to organize and analyze all conversations individually as it gathered the quotes that were categorized to each emerging theme in my study. This facilitated my ability to relate the themes to one another within their specific contexts. After I completed an initial thematic analysis through NVivo, I shared specific quotes I categorized into certain themes with my research participants who attended the co-analysis meetings. Together, we analyzed the quotes further, tried to make sense of them from a local perspective, and aimed to delve deeper to consider the transformative (TE) and exclusionary elements (EE) of each quote or within each theme.

To analyze the open-ended responses in the student questionnaire, I used data mining, a technique typically used to garner knowledge by analyzing large data sets (Han, Kamber, Pei, 2011). Although the general process of data mining involves seven stages, my data set was smaller in size and only required three stages. First, all the relevant data was gathered, which I completed by grouping all the responses for a specific question. Secondly, each response was reviewed manually to identify the most common key words, which I identified and tallied based the usage of key words, such as "respect." Thirdly, I analyzed the total mention of each key word to identify patterns in order to yield knowledge from the data mining process, a process also commonly referred to as "knowledge discovery from data" (Han, Kamber, Pei, 2011, p. 8).

This secondary form of analysis was unexpected and an adaptation of the study design that arose from the level of detail that students included in their survey responses. This flexibility in

---

[73] Based on the CCM approach, all interviews in my study were conducted as conversations (and described as such opposed to "interviews" in semi-structured format.

my research design can largely be attributed to the general approach of my study – a pragmatic mixed methods transformational design approach.

6.3. Approach: Pragmatic mixed methods transformational design

To create the space and invite the processes necessary for my research interests and goals, and in accordance with critical realism (CR) and critical communicative methodology (CCM), I used a pragmatic, mixed methods transformational design. In accordance to CR perspectives, Greene and Hall (2010) recognize that paradigms are fallible and created based on contextual time and space with underlying historical discourse practices and so, "no particular bundles of assumptions are sacrosanct" (p.121). In doing so, they advocate for the use of pragmatic approaches in research because it focuses on problem solving and outcomes which allows one to be more flexible in their choice of methods for the practical purposes of induction, deduction, and abduction. To this, they summarize pragmatism as:

> (T)he rejection of the traditional mind and matter dualism; a view of knowledge as both constructed and as a function of organism-environment transaction; a recognition that knowledge is fallible because we can never be certain that our current knowledge will be appropriate for future inquiry problems; a belief that truth comes from experience, and that absolute truth will be determined at the end of history; a problem-solving, action-focused inquiry process; an advancement of the term *warranted assertions* to underscore the point that assertions can be warranted only in specific inquiry contexts and that their value must be re-established in new inquiries; and a commitment to values of democracy, freedom, equality, and progress (p.131).

As a result, the flexibility of pragmatism allowed me to focus on the methods that are most relevant for my participants, and correspond to an approach that was in line with critical realism as well (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). These values are also echoed in mixed methods research.

154

Researchers use mixed methods when they find that quantitative data is too general and lacks the context or perspective of a participant and that qualitative data appears too specific to the biases and perspectives of certain participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In such circumstances, a second method is needed to enhance a primary method, although one form of data collection may be given priority over another, as mine does with qualitative data. In gathering my quantitative data, I hoped to better grasp the current contextual details of my participant schools in both Montreal and Modesto. However, my minimal quantitative data, especially that from Montreal, offers a limited understanding of religious bullying and religious literacy in both contexts. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter VIII.

Through qualitative dialogues, I was able to understand the general ideas and perspectives from my brief quantitative data collection. Through this process, each consecutive method organically informed the next, such that I understood my survey responses better after the subsequent conversations I had with students, parents, teachers, and community members, and that discussions in the co-analysis meetings further informed my understanding. Therefore, while fixed mixed methods design exists, my research followed the emergent mixed methods design that allowed one to select a method of research as the study develops. This flexibility encouraged greater participant collaboration and permitted me to address issues that developed during the research process more readily. Hence, although my research relied mostly on the CCM prescribed methods, I also invited the use of other methods (in order to create an artefact) which would be based on the strengths and involvement of my participants in each context. Thus, the emergent mixed methods design was apt as I hoped that it would allow participants to choose their preferred

method of expression in Phase 3 of my initial research plan[74], be it through a visual, verbal, or action based medium.

The mixed methods approach allowed me to triangulate the findings, and develop and expand on emerging ideas as they arose. Triangulation enabled me to consider how findings converged, corroborated, or corresponded with one another across the different perspectives and contexts. Finding corresponding results were valuable as I considered if my findings agreed, contradicted, or informed one another in each context. Mixed methods also coheres with the ontology and epistemology of critical realism, both used in my study (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010).

6.4. Initial research design

Everything discussed in this chapter thus far greatly influenced the design of my study, but due to logistical constraints, I adapted the CCM methods for my own purposes. An initial research design was prepared with a pilot study in 2015. However, despite a promising visit to Modesto City Schools (MCS) in October 2015 where teachers and the school curriculum coordinator at the time seemed committed and excited to participate in my study, and had reviewed and approved the survey I was to share with students (Appendix A), my formal request to conduct my study was declined by MCS in December 2015. No reason was offered but I later learned that teachers and coordinators were asked not to engage with any researchers or media sources about the course and that no course content was to be shared.

I have yet to fully understand the rationale for this refusal; however, local participants and I suspect that the school board may have been protective about the program and its existence amidst the shooting by religious extremists in San Bernardino, California in early December 2015.

---

[74] My initial research design is discussed in Section 6.4 of this chapter.

Sophie[75], a Modesto participant, also suspected that MCS was concerned with the potential need to close schools should a parental threat arise towards a school for teaching about religion, which had recently occurred in another part of the US (Sophie interview, September 28, 2016). Due to the refusal from MCS, I had to redesign my research to ensure consistency in my comparative study. The influence of national and international affairs on my study was a consistent theme and struggle throughout the three phases of my eventual study. The effect of the current affairs is presented in the following section alongside a description of my final research design.

6.5. Revised research design

The three phases of my revised research design, as presented in Table 1 began in October 2015 and concluded in November 2017. In October 2015, I visited Modesto to acquaint myself with the city and meet key stakeholders of the *World Geography and World Religions* course, such as Yvonne Taylor and Sherry McIntyre, who had helped design the course and taught the course since its inception, respectively. My data collection in Phase 1 of my study in the two cities is detailed in Section 6.5.1 and it facilitated the obtainment of objectives one, two, and three in my study[76]. Section 6.5.2, discusses the process of co-analysis that was completed with my participants in both cities during Phase 2 of my study. Phase 3 involved knowledge mobilization and is elaborated upon in Section 6.5.3. This phase enabled me to accomplish objective two and four in my study. Due to financial constraints, each phase in Modesto was short compared to those in Montreal; however, email communication with Modesto participants have been very consistent

---

[75] A pseudonym, as all participants are referenced with pseudonyms in my dissertation.
[76] The objectives in my study were: 1) to understand religious bullying. 2) Raise awareness of religious bullying. 3) Find solutions to prevent or respond to religious bullying, and see if the ERC and WGWR were such solutions. 4) Inform students, teachers, parents, school administrators and community leaders about these solutions in the event that they exist, which they do.

throughout the study in comparison. Each of the following sub-sections describe each phase in detail to explain how the overarching regional and national affairs influenced the participation and communication of participants overall, and inform the various layers of the social-ecology for each of my participants in Modesto and Montreal.

Table 1: My study timeline

Phase	Modesto, California	Montreal, Quebec
Initial visit	October 2015	n/a
1: Data Collection	September to October 2016	October 2016 to January 2017
2: Co-Analysis	January to February 2017	February to March 2017
3: Knowledge Mobilization	April 2017	April to November 2017

6.5.1. Phase 1: Data collection (September 2016 to January 2017)

In mid-September 2016, I began my data collection in Modesto, two months before the US Elections in November. The divisive rhetoric of the Trump campaign pervaded media sources and some students mimicked it in their US classroom and playground conversations as well (Reinl, 2016; Safia interview, September 25, 2016). Misunderstandings and fears around religious individuals and religious extremists abounded from events such as the December 2015 attack in San Bernardino, California[77] and the June 2016 Orlando shooting[78]. Among many outspoken states, the Californian state government portrayed a notably anti-Trump image[79]. Yet, as with many other pockets in the US, Trump supporters in Modesto were proud and unafraid, noted by campaign posters at the end of driveways I saw during my visit. Hate crimes in 2015 were also

---

[77] Details about the San Bernardino shooting are available here: http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-san-bernardino-shooting-terror-investigation-htmlstory.html

[78] Details about the Orlando shooting are available here: https://www.nytimes.com/news-event/2016-orlando-shooting

[79] There are many reports detailing California's anti-Trump sentiment during the 2016 elections. Here is one article detailing such views: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/12/20/why-californias-voters-were-so-anti-trump-that-some-republicans-dont-want-to-include-them-in-2016-totals/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8daaa41de151

emblematic of conflicting beliefs and attitudes in the US as the top two reasons for single-bias hate crimes were based on religious bias (at 19.7% of 5,818 crimes) and race/ethnicity/ancestry bias (at 59.2% of 5,818 crimes), evident through the Black Lives Matter movement (FBI, 2016).

To prepare for that visit, I emailed several religious leaders to schedule meetings with them. After many emails, I met with a number of leaders during my 16-day trip who gave me the opportunity to invite their students to complete a survey (Appendix A) and invite adult community members to speak with me one-on-one. To ensure the survey language and content was appropriate for the local students, I had previously asked Yvonne Taylor (a retired teacher who co-designed, co-developed, and taught the WGWR course), Sherry McIntyre, and one other teacher who is no longer with Modesto City Schools to review each question in October 2015. Through their advice, I removed questions regarding the students' birthplace and their length of time in their birthplace and the US, due to the sensitive nature of immigration status for the ethnically Hispanic population in the Californian Central Valley. Their local voices and perspectives also ensured that the terminology was fitting in describing racial backgrounds.

Through a snowball effect, and tremendous support from Yvonne Taylor, I was acquainted with even more interested and passionate community leaders who would later become my friends. In step with CCM, I clarified the epistemology and expertise of the participant explicitly as a local community member and expert of the experiences they faced as I began each audiotaped conversation, thereby ensuring illocutionary speech was included. To avail myself for new insights through the participants, each conversation was very casual and I began them with the intention to understand why the participant was interested in my study, in discussing religious bullying and religious literacy, and the participant's thoughts on the possible connection between the two. (As a semi-structured exploratory conversation, those were the three guiding points of each

conversation. Any points or insights the participants shared became avenues to broaden our conversation more.) While in Modesto, I realized that the young adult population (those who were in college or recently graduated from college) was a valuable population to speak with as well, since they completed the World Religions course and were able to reflect upon it in hindsight. Through the transformative design, I then prepared an additional survey for them to complete as previous students of the course.

In total, I distributed over 200 student surveys and 50 were completed, held conversations with 15 adults and 1 youth, and introduced my research to nine religious and religiously unaffiliated groups altogether. This included a Brethren church, a Catholic church, the local gurdwara, a local Humanist group, two Latter Day Saint stakes, a mandir, the local mosque, the local synagogue, and a United Church. Although I allotted a one-week period to share and receive surveys at each community, some of the surveys were still being completed as I left Modesto so the religious leaders volunteered to mail me the responses as they were submitted. In each circumstance, the leader promised to maintain confidentiality for students and agreed not to review their responses. After I left, the members of the Stanislaus County Interfaith Council, who I had met, prepared an in-service teacher presentation on religious bullying to the Modesto City Schools elementary and secondary teachers in October 2016 too. This boded for a promising visit in Phase 2, as the presentation coincided with the recent bill from the California Department of Education to recognize religious bullying and the need to support it (AB 2845, September 2016).

At that time, Canadians were also greatly influenced by the varying sentiments that percolated in the American context yet many domestic events played a strong role as well. In Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had been elected in October 2015. For many, he was a welcome change to the conservative leadership of Stephen Harper, the previous Prime Minister

who he defeated and who had raised a popular debate regarding the wearing of the *niqab* in judicial

hearings[80]. Harper's ploy in introducing this discussion trailed on the undercurrent of angst

towards Muslim individuals in Canada in the previous years. Several incidences illustrate this,

such as one in London, Ontario where a Muslim mother was spat on, verbally attacked, and had

her hijab pulled off by another woman while grocery shopping[81]. It is also evident through the

National Council of Canadian Muslim's (NCCM) tracking of anti-Muslim incidents across

Canada[82], where each report is verified and documented, that there had been a consistent rise in

the number of anti-Muslim incidents from 12 incidents in 2013, to 23 in 2014, 59 in 2015, and 65

in 2016. In December 2015, the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report regarding

the institutional maltreatment of Indigenous peoples in the Indian Residential School System was

also published and listed steps towards reconciliation between the Canadian public and Indigenous

communities of Canada.. Evidently, the recognition of beliefs was on the forefront of Canadian

politics and society in the years leading up to my data collection, and it remains so today.

In Quebec, the discussion of religious identities and beliefs was exceptionally heated as

thoughts of the proposed Quebec Charter of Values from 2013 lingered, where 40% of hate crimes

based on religion in Quebec from 2013 to 2014 were committed in Montreal[83] (Ministère de la

sécurité publique, 2016). In 2015, these tensions remained as some Muslim students in Quebec

reported facing the most hostile climate they had experienced since 9/11 (Perreaux & Stevenson,

2015) and a veiled pregnant Muslim woman was violently attacked by teenage boys, while the

---

[80] Details on this current event between Stephen Harper and the niqab can be found here: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/ottawa-appealing-court-decision-on-niqabs-at-citizenship-ceremony/article26366808/.
[81] A description of this incident is available here: https://globalnews.ca/news/2781841/muslim-woman-speaks-out-following-attack-at-grocery-store-in-london-ont/.
[82] The NCCM map is available here: https://www.nccm.ca/map/#.
[83] Statistical detail from 2013 to 2017 is listed in Chapter V, Section 5.2, "What is religious bullying?"

Conservative government proposed a hotline to address citizens' 'barbaric cultural practices' to allegedly stop terrorism and extreme religious practices (Barber, 2015). Through a 2015 polling, Jack Jedwab, Director of the Association of Canadian Studies, found that 61 per cent of Quebecois had rarely or never seen a woman wearing a *niqab* and so many were "unable to separate what we need to: the issue of terrorism from the issue of the niqab," (Jedwab in Plante, 2016). In this backdrop, I was eager to approach Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu groups to participate in my study. However, I tried to maintain the comparative nature of my study by inviting the equivalent nine different religious and religiously unaffiliated groups from Modesto to participate in my research in Montreal, but only a selection of these groups decided to participate[84].

With each religious group, I first emailed them to set a convenient time to meet and discuss my study and answer questions that may arise. While this was an effective method in Modesto, this was ineffective in Montreal. Despite approaching over 15 communities in June via email, as I had with communities in Modesto, very few individuals responded, perhaps due to the laissez-faire attitude the summer brings to Montrealers. However, some did respond to schedule a meeting in September or October when their youth programs restarted. As a result, the data collection process in Montreal extended from October 2016 to January 2017, lengthy compared to the 16-day timeframe I experienced in Modesto.

Yet, I was able to include a Protestant church, a Catholic parish, a gurdwara, an online Humanist group, one Latter Day Saint stakes, a mandir, a mosque, a synagogue, and a United Church in my study. As responses were slow and few, I reached out to seek support from McGill University chaplains, Dr. Ratna Ghosh who is my research supervisor, and student organizations

---

[84] Perceptions of why some groups may have participated compared to others are discussed in the limitations section (Section 6.6) of this chapter.

at McGill University. Dr. Ghosh connected me with a local mandir and helped me distribute an online version of my college student survey to her undergraduate students in her Multicultural Education course at McGill University. This online survey was also distributed to students on the membership list of the McGill University Sikh Student Association, Indian Student Association, and Muslim Student Association. With a desire to recognize First Nations spiritualities also, I reached out to the McGill University First People's House and the Concordia University chaplain for First Nations spiritualities. However, I was unable to secure a conversation and participation from either group. Thus, although I distributed over 300 student surveys in-person and online and elicited adult participation over three months, I only received 16 responses from elementary and secondary students, 32 hard-copy surveys from college students, 8 online surveys from college students, and completed conversations with 13 adults and one youth[85]. As I was physically accessible in Montreal, I collected each student survey in-person, while one parent chose to scan and email me their child's survey.

6.5.2. Phase 2: Co-analysis (January to March 2017)

As soon as phase one concluded in mid-January 2017, I travelled to Modesto to begin Phase 2 of my study and arrived on the day of Donald Trump's inauguration to become the 45th President of the United States. To prepare for this trip, I first transcribed each conversation I had with Modesto participants verbatim and then reviewed the transcripts and survey data using thematic analysis. Secondly, in reviewing each transcript through NVivo, I categorized themes that arose from the text itself. Using data mining, I found further themes and overarching ideas from the students' open-ended survey responses (listed in Appendix B1 and B2). In Modesto, 13 themes

---

[85] These details are organized in a table in Chapter VII of this dissertation.

arose from the data and I categorized them into five overarching concerns that revolved in the society, family, school, among students, and as phenomena in relation to the different systems of one's social-ecology. I then shared this initial review of data with participants and interested community members in a co-analysis meeting, which I referred to as Co-Analysis Meeting #1.

Due to the participants' busy schedules, Meeting #1 occurred on two separate dates. During Meeting #1a, eight people committed to attend, but health and extracurricular activities hindered two other individuals from attending. However, four individuals unexpectedly attended. As a result, 11 people attended altogether including two youth, four Stanislaus County Interfaith Council members, and four teachers, and myself. From this group, there were five males and five females, where four were parents[86]. During Meeting #1b the day after, three people committed to attend but only two were able to attend in the end – a young adult and a retired teacher.

On both occasions of Meeting #1, I began each meeting with an opening activity to break down the social tensions and socio-cultural barriers, e.g. age, gender, race, religious dress, social status, etc., that would potentially hinder discussion. In this activity, I asked participants to select an object that best represented an aspect of who they were beyond their social roles and positions in society. Thus, items like a USB key, a Ziploc bag, white-out, a pin, and other random objects I gathered were selected. As an introduction, each individual was asked to share their item with someone beside them. Afterwards, each individual was asked to introduce their partner and their object to the rest of the group through a think-pair-share activity format. Then, I reviewed the meeting goals and guidelines for co-analysis (in Appendix C1). As guidelines that are core to the CCM approach, each individual had to agree verbally to comply by these guidelines before we progressed in the meeting. Once the agreement was given, I reviewed the initial thematic analysis

---

[86] I was unsure if the three other adults were parents.

that I completed. Individuals were invited to choose a theme that interested them and to analyze the data in pairs per the "Goals of Analysis" on page two of Appendix C1. After an hour of analysis, we then discussed each individual's review as a whole group.

This overall approach was an adaptation of the CCM communicative focus group meetings. Through this process, participants raised the need to further categorize some data so that it was more specific and easier to analyze. For example, while analysis about schools was compiled as one large category for analysis, participants suggested the re-categorization of data into details about elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions. Overall, it was a very informative process but the dynamics of analysis with a group of 11 during Meeting #1a versus a group of three in Meeting #1b were quite clear; discussions and ideas were much more manageable and progressed better in Meeting #1b as it was a smaller group meeting. However, the time I had allotted to the co-analysis was insufficient on both occasions. Thus, after the meeting, I gathered the comments from everyone's co-analysis and spent more time analyzing the data to distinguish between transformative (TE) and exclusionary elements (EE). I shared this data with participants in Co-analysis Meeting #2.

Between Meeting #1 and Meeting #2, however, Trump signed an executive order to ban entry for citizens from Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen for 90 days, as well as an indefinite prohibition of entry for refugees from Syria. This led to countless protests in the US and around the globe. It also coloured much of the discussion and attendance in the scheduled Meetings #2a and #2b – two meetings organized separately to review and discuss my independent analysis with the local participant, scheduled at different times due to conflicting schedules. Unfortunately, many Modesto participants made last minute cancellations to Meeting #2a and #2b due to unexpected work related issues, family engagements, and an unexpected death in the family. One

Yemeni participant and the local imam were unable to attend the meetings due to personal and communal affairs that arose out of the executive order. As a result, three individuals attended Meeting #2a and none attended #2b. (Individuals who attended Meeting #1 and #2, included individuals who were self-identified atheist, Jewish, Mormon, Muslim, non-religious, Protestant, and myself.)

Despite the drop in attendance, the discussion during #2a showed a clear and fervent desire to support Modesto communities, especially the Muslim community, through my research. During the meeting, we did discuss the transformative and exclusionary elements but focused more on the possible action that could be taken in lieu of the content and ideas that arose from the data. Many possible avenues for knowledge mobilization and data dissemination arose from that meeting, one being a meeting with the Modesto City School's social studies curriculum coordinator, which two members in the meeting were well acquainted with. Through their guidance and support, I did share my findings and our corporate suggestions to the coordinator. Hence, as I left Modesto, there were plans set in place for my next trip where I would focus solely on knowledge mobilization and dissemination. However, my final days in Modesto redirected my focus on Montreal where a college student killed six Muslims in Sainte-Foy, Quebec during Friday prayers in late January 2017[87].

In Montreal and Canada (at the local and national levels), politicians and community members, like students and faculty members at McGill University (see "Conversations with Muslims," 2017 and Duenkler, 2017) spoke out against the Sainte-Foy massacre and Islamophobia in Canadian society. To welcome discussion and understanding, 14 Montreal mosques publicly invited Montrealers to visit their mosques two weeks after the Saint-Foy attack as well ("They're

---

[87] Details about this incident are available here: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-city-mosque-shooting-bisonnette-sentencing-1.4621689

no different", 2017). However, the Trump executive order regarding immigration and refugees prompted an increasing number of refugees to cross the US-Canadian border in February and March 2017, which may have further raised unease among members of the Canadian society. This was exhibited by an anti-Muslim protest outside a mosque in downtown Toronto in February (Nasser, 2017), reports of a large presence of far-right groups in Quebec, including the over 60,000 online membership for the far-right group La Meute (Perry in Gonick and Levy, 2018), and a bomb threat targeting Muslim students in McGill University in March (Riga, 2017).

While Montreal participants were interested in co-analysis in light of these events, regular and unexpected commitments restrained individuals to attend meetings. In Montreal's Meeting #1, two individuals attended the meeting in a local fast-food venue[88]. Both male individuals were teachers – one was Francophone and teaching the *Ethics and Religious Culture* course at the secondary level and the other an Anglophone teaching adult education in science and math. Unlike the first meeting in Modesto, both individuals read the thematically analyzed data for interest and drew observations and links as I raised questions based on my analysis of transformative (TE) and exclusionary elements (EE) during the meeting. Unlike others in Modesto, neither participant considered the TE and EE aspects in the data. Hence, although I used the same meeting agenda in Montreal (in Appendix C2), this experience was markedly different from that in Modesto.

After Meeting #1 in Montreal, I further analyzed the data to identify TE and EE and offer potential avenues for knowledge mobilization and data dissemination as I did in Modesto. However, in an effort to foster a comfortable and more intimate environment for Meeting #2, I arranged a meeting over dinner in a meeting room within the McGill University Faculty of

---

[88] I had tried to schedule a meeting at a local religious site, as I did in Modesto, but none were available. I also attempted to schedule another time for individuals to meet in a Meeting #1b, but participants' schedules were too varied to allocate a common time to meet.

Education building. While the six individuals who attended the meeting seemed uncomfortable at first, the atmosphere did loosen over time.

In this meeting, seven individuals participated in the co-analysis. Excluding myself, there was one youth, two teachers, one accountant, one health professional, and one entrepreneur. Among the two females (including myself) and five males, none were parents. Individuals who attended (including myself) self-affiliated as anti-religious, Catholic, Mormon, Muslim and Protestant. The specific profile details of each participant and how they were recruited is elaborated upon in Chapter VII and VIII. For reasons I will discuss in the limitations section of this chapter and Chapter VII, the two individuals who attended Meeting #1 spoke the most alongside the youth. The conversation during Meeting #2 was drastically different from my experience in Modesto. As most individuals did not attend Meeting #1, most of the meeting discussion revolved around understanding the issues that arose from the data rather than analyzing them. Towards the end of the meeting, we did begin to discuss potential strategies for knowledge mobilization and data dissemination but this conversation was limited due to the two-hour time slot of the meeting. Due to my own scheduling constraints in March, I was unable to arrange a third co-analysis meeting and had to conclude Phase 2 at this time.

6.5.3. Phase 3: Knowledge mobilization and data dissemination (April to November 2017)

In early April 2017, I visited Modesto for the fourth time to share my findings with the local community. Since my last visit, anti-Muslim, anti-refugee, and anti-immigrant sentiments increased as individuals traveling to the US were prohibited from bringing certain electronic devices onto flights from ten Muslim majority countries[89] and 32 mosques were attacked from

---

[89] Details about the ban on electronics are available here:
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/20/business/laptop-ban-air-travel.html

January to mid-March compared to 19 attacks over the same period in 2016[90]. Through racial and religious misunderstandings, Pakistani, Indian, Iranian, and Sikh individuals had been targeted or killed for being Muslim or being perceived to be Muslim too[91].

Among the Jewish community, the Anti-Defamation League ("US Anti-Semitic incidents", 2017) noted an 86% increase in anti-Semitic incidents compared to the first three months in the previous year. The ADL report shows that there was an increase of incidents from 942 to 1,266 in 2015 and 2016. Due to the spike in incidents in the first quarter of 2017, they suspected that there would be over 2000 anti-Semitic incidents in the US within 2017 overall[92]. These statistical concerns were reinforced by data that Mogahed and Chouhoud (2017) gathered as well. Through their phone interviews among 1140 people who self-identified as being Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, non-affiliated, and among the general public, Mogahed and Chouhoud found that Muslims and Jewish people experienced the most religious discrimination among all the surveyed groups in the past year. They also found that 38% of Muslims and 27% of Jewish people in their study experienced more fear and anxiety for safety from White supremacist groups after the US elections, of which there are 917 in the US with the most in California (see https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map for a breakdown of hate-groups.)

---

[90] Information on attacked mosques are noted here: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-mosques-threats-double-islamophobia-threats-vandalism-2017-cair-american-islamic-relations-a7631581.html. In 2017, the Council on American-Islamic Relations found that nine mosques had been targeted every month on average: https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/20/us/mosques-targeted-2017-trnd/index.html.

[91] Instances of these crimes can be seen in these news reports from 2017 in Washington state, Virginia, and Oregon, respectively: https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/05/us/washington-sikh-shooting/index.html, https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/national-international/Muslim-Familys-Virginia-Home-Vandalized-Quran-Torn-Up-417328033.html, http://ktla.com/2017/03/30/iranian-refugees-home-vandalized-with-anti-muslim-graffiti-destroyed-furniture-in-oregon/

[92] In actuality, 1,986 anti-Semitic hate crimes were reported to the Anti-Defamation League by the end of 2017, as per the ADL Heat Map data https://www.adl.org/heat-map?s=eyJpZGVvbG9naWVzIjpbXSwiaW5jaWRlbnRzIjpbIkFudGktU2VtaXRpYyJdbmNpZGVudCJd LCJ5ZWFyIjpbMjAxNywyMDE3XX0%253D.

Due to the relevancy of my study in this context, and through the momentum after Phase 2, I shared my findings in many milieus among parents and youth during my weeklong trip to Modesto. This included the Congregation Beth Shalom, the Modesto Islamic Center, seminary classes among high school students at two Latter Day Saints churches, the Modesto City Schools (MCS) Board of Directors Meeting, a second and third grade class in Merced (a neighbouring town to Modesto), and one interfaith leaders gathering with leaders from various beliefs throughout the county. During each presentation, I shared handouts for youth and adults that summarized the main points in my presentation (Appendix D1, D2, E1, and E2). Through email, I shared my handouts with the leaders of a Catholic community, a Fijian Hindu community in Modesto, the Sikh community, the Soroptomist group of Oakdale (a neighbouring town to Modesto), a parent advocate for the La Raza Parent Union a member of the Advocates for Justice Community group, and leaders of the Indian Hindu temple of Modesto. Through Facebook, I shared my handouts with the Stanislaus Humanist community – accessible to all leaders and members of the group – as there were scheduling conflicts to present in-person.

Overall, response from students was positive as it seemed like they were concerned and, through facial expression and some discussions, it seemed like they felt that an aspect of themselves or their community was being recognized. Contrastingly, parent responses were somewhat mixed. As with previous visits, a few religious leaders continued to be some of the greatest supporters of my study and they worked very hard to inform their community members about religious bullying. The local imam, a rabbi, and one Mormon leader (who was the President of the local School Board of Directors) were incredibly helpful. During the interfaith leaders gathering, some leaders were also shocked to hear about religious bullying and seemed affected

by the news. Response from the school board was the most distant. Details regarding all these perspectives are discussed in Chapter VII.

In Montreal, August 2017 saw responses to the Charlottesville, Virginia "Unite the Right Rally" as La Meute, an alt-right group, organized a protest in Quebec City approximately one week after Charlottesville, with individuals who had participated in the American rally as well[93]. In Montreal, these sentiments emboldened a storeowner who chose to sell and display a Confederate flag in their storefront. When asked to remove the flag, he initially responded by saying that it was simply for business purposes but that he was also helping "people learn their history." He later removed the flag[94]. In September, Montreal added an Iroquois symbol to the city flag[95]. In October, the Quebec Liberal government discussed and passed Bill 62, a ban on face covering for public service workers and recipients, including on public transit. Although the Bill was later suspended, international headlines offered several responses to this ban including shouts of support and Islamophobia as some local Montrealers objected to it[96]. From the perspective of Solange Lefebvre, Professor and the Chair of Religion, Culture, and Society in the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at the Université de Montréal, this ban was clearly an influence of France and the conception of French identity that coincides with Catholicism[97].

Despite such charged events, the response rate for knowledge mobilization and data dissemination efforts slowed down slightly as the warm weather began to encroach on the city and

---

[93] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-far-right-la-meute-1.4254792
[94] https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/montreal-has-a-strong-historical-link-to-americas-confederate-past
[95] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/montreal-flag-amherst-indigenous-1.4287015
[96] https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/quebecs-face-covering-ban-puts-province-in-world-headlines, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/montreal-at-odds-with-provincial-government-over-legislation-to-ban-face-coverings/article36034912/, http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2018/02/20922/
[97] https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/10/23/quebecs-face-veil-ban-may-face-a-supreme-court-challenge.html

as the new school year began. Thus, my presentations to youth and my participant's community groups were somewhat limited, although I was able to extend the presentations to other community groups instead. Altogether, between mid-April and November 2017, I presented my research findings with various community groups, such as the Gurdwara Sahib Greater Montreal, one Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the community at Shiane Haidery Islamic Association Inc., youth at the Innovation Youth Centre in downtown Montreal, St. Monica's Parish, the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal, and to the Spirituality and Community Animators of the English Montreal School Board. Attempts for knowledge mobilization beyond the data dissemination were difficult for various reasons. These limitations to the study are detailed below.

6.6. Limitations of my methodology, methods, study design, and my role as researcher

CCM, its methods, theoretical foundation, and the pragmatic and transformational design approach opened opportunities for me to adapt to the constraints and dynamics of each group of participants in each context. As I adjusted and added methods and approaches due to unexpected hurdles in my study, CCM remained the framework to my overall data collection and analysis process. However, CCM also presented some constraints in itself, which translated into some of the limitations in my study. Limitations arose in relation to the study design and my own bias.

With respect to CCM overall, the methodology and Habermas' theories as the theoretical foundation of the methodology have been criticized by scholars for being too utopian in light of their egalitarian and constructive approach. For example, critics, such as feminists, judge Habermas for his blindness towards gender struggles that can influence dialogue and say that he focuses too heavily on the procedural transformative powers of rationality through dialogue, and not the content of the dialogue itself (Puigvert, Christou, and Holford, 2012). While Habermas

acknowledges the power struggles that exist, he sees the potential for dialogue to engender social transformation and emancipation and has argued that this potential is the focus of his theory (Puigvert, Christou, and Holford, 2012). In addition to the underlying social struggles, like gender, CCM acknowledges the power struggles inherent in the researcher and participant relationship but it is unable to remove the power embedded in socio-cultural barriers in certain contexts.

In my own research, this power struggle between *systems* (where academics reside) and *lifeworlds* (where participants engage daily) and the authority my participants and the community conferred to me based on my role as the researcher required consistent consciousness to be explicit and direct in order to maintain illocutionary speech throughout my data collection and analysis. Like the critics, I believe that CCM aims to minimize the strength of socio-cultural practices and the powers given to and expected of certain social roles; however, as socio-cultural barriers are engrained in many societies, it is very difficult, and almost too idealistic to consider that they can be minimized in short term and doctoral studies.

As a critical methodology, CCM is also critiqued for being too naïve in assuming all participants will naturally reflect and self-reflect in order to understand and transform social inequalities that exist (Puigvert, Christou, and Holford, 2012). Wary of this challenge, in addition to introducing myself and communicating via illocutionary speech, I also explained the expected collaborative roles between my participants and me as we commenced our dialogues. I could only encourage participants to reflect and self-reflect to the level they preferred, noted in my meeting guidelines in Appendix C1 and C2; however, their degree of reflection, self-reflection, and analysis varied and this did influence the co-analysis process.

During my Co-Analysis Meeting #2 in Montreal, I tried to create a welcoming environment over dinner and interacted with an opening icebreaker with all the participants as I had in Modesto.

However, the social norms were clearly portrayed in the room when two participants, both white males, were most vocal in the conversation. As the conversation progressed, the third white male participant also began to speak more while the racial and religious minorities regardless of gender were most meek to contribute, despite having been quite outspoken in our one-on-one conversations. The youngest participant, a male high school student of a racial minority, was the slowest to warm up in the conversation, albeit being the most outspoken by the end of our meeting as many youth are. As this meeting was held in a McGill University building, opposed to a local religious site as were the Modesto meetings, many social norms of the Montreal society were sustained in our meeting, such as the priority given to members of the predominantly white, Christian, or atheist background, despite the CCM influenced goals and guidelines that I had clarified at the beginning. As such, this experience clearly illustrated the weaknesses and struggles of actualizing the ideals of CCM and harkened back to the criticisms of naïveté that others shared.

In terms of the structure of my study, there was selection bias in gathering participants in both cities as community leaders introduced me to certain people they were acquainted with or who they knew would be interested in my study, using snowball sampling. There was also bias in data collection as CCM conversations are less formal and intended to create a comfortable environment for conversing with potentially vulnerable or marginalized individuals in society.

An informal conversation format is helpful in minimizing the social roles that a researcher may present, but it also made it difficult to structure conversations and be more neutral about certain topics. For example, as I transcribed my data, I could hear my own bias for and against the courses in the tone I used to describe them. This was included in conversations for individuals who were unfamiliar with the courses, and my subjectivity was more obvious when I described the ERC course. This is problematic and I should have been more neutral. However, through the

informal and casual tone I set in the conversation overall, this bias was corrected somewhat overtime through the content that was discussed later in the conversations[98]. Additionally, given the short time frame of my conversations, especially in Modesto, I had to inform participants about either course in a short period in order to get their perspectives.

While I struggled to offer a brief, unbiased, and informative introduction to the WGWR and the ERC, it was equally arduous to inform individuals about religious literacy. As a result, a study about perceptions on religious literacy resulted in the need to educate about religious literacy first, which at times made the efforts seem counterproductive. In such discussions, the most trying conversations related to a desire to correct individuals' lack of religious literacy and perceptions towards other religious groups. However, in being mindful of the social power dynamics between a researcher and participant and that a number of my participants had been discriminated against or were members of a vulnerable or marginalized community, I chose to remain neutral in those circumstances and listen to the anger or frustration that a select few participants expressed towards another religious group in these conversations.

This was exceptionally difficult in one circumstance as a participant was angry towards Christians for an uninformed reason (the details of which I cannot unfortunately remember). As a Christian and a researcher, I struggled deeply in that moment to know how best to respond. I did not share that I was a Christian with the participant[99], but this tension between the personal and the professional was tugging strongly in my mind and heart in that moment. Other moments of tension that arose related to my experience and reality as a resident of Montreal, Quebec, and not

---

[98] In future studies, I plan to have a standard outline that dictates the course description to inform each participant about, even if they may be aware of it already. This way, everyone has the same information about a course, or another topic that we are trying to address, discuss, review, and analyze.

[99] I told participants that I am a Christian only if it was appropriate to share and only if they asked. This was not shared most of the time.

just a researcher in the city. It was trying to conduct research in a context that a researcher lives in. I realized that my own biases come in much faster as the stories and experiences I gather in my study relate directly to others that I am aware of or individuals in my personal relationships. As a result, a study on the personal matter of religious bullying, where I understood it to be a phenomenon influenced by ones social-ecology, was easily related to other instances in my social environment in Montreal.

Out of my control, however, was my personal limitation as an "out-group" member in the communities that I visited. In Modesto, I was an outsider as a non-American, non-white or non-Latina (the majority group in Modesto) minority, and a researcher. In Montreal, I was a non-white, non-French-speaking, new resident from Ontario, who was a researcher. In the specific groups and communities I approached in both cities, I was not a member of their specific religious group either. This most likely related to the lack of response I received from certain groups. In Modesto, initial responses were slow[100] but quick to engage once responses were made directly or through tremendously supportive locals, such as Yvonne Taylor and other local leaders. In Montreal, skepticism among some contacts was consistent throughout, from the initial response, initial in-person engagement, and even after several email communications.

In Montreal specifically, a perception of being an out-group member may have existed among the three Muslim communities I emailed that did not respond[101]. The Hindu community in Montreal only responded via contact that my supervisor made. Among the Sikh community, Mr. Manjit Singh, the Sikh Chaplain at McGill University, approached a local gurdwara on my behalf

---

[100] In Modesto and Montreal, a number of delays coincided with several religious holidays (e.g., October 2016 had numerous Jewish High Holidays) so it was understandable that I had to wait a while for response with certain communities that I was in touch with earlier.

[101] I had approached these three in particular as Muslim friends had recommended I reach out to them based on the mosque's approachable leaders and community.

but they first declined to participate. He said that, "Basically, there is apathy and people don't see the value of this activity immediately" (Email communication, October 14, 2016). However, after clarification that their data would help raise understanding between the experiences of Sikh youth in Greater Montreal compared to the findings from the Sikh Coalition report (2014) that pertained to US-based Sikh experiences, he was able to find a few individuals in the congregation who were interested in participating.

As a study on religious bullying, a topic that is rarely reported by youth, still unfamiliar among educators, some parents, and some religious leaders, the nature of my study may have hindered responsiveness or willingness for individuals to participate as well.

Summary

My research design accounted for my ontology and epistemology as my methodology, methods, analysis, and the approach of my overall study aligned well with critical realism. Through critical communicative methodology, pragmatism, mixed methods, and its transformational approach, I was able to include students', teachers', principals', and parents' perspective on religious literacy and religious bullying in the North American public school. Together, the many aspects of my research design helped me adapt to the needs of each context and differing participants as well. This was extraordinarily valuable given the unpredictable impositions and sentiments towards religious individuals before and during the period of my study. Thus, while it was disappointing and a struggle to revise my research design, the flexibility of CCM and the pragmatic mixed methods transformational design offered a strong foundation that facilitated a smooth transition to the eventual three phases of my doctoral study. The next chapter details the specific data that was garnered from these three phases.

CHAPTER VII: DATA AND PRELIMINARY CO-ANALYSIS (MODESTO)

In accordance with my methodology, my research consisted of two co-analysis sessions in Modesto and Montreal, respectively, that was conducted during Phase 2 of my study. Each co-analysis incorporated my participants in the analysis process so that their local perspectives and expertise in their lived experiences informed the analysis and understanding of data overall. The process ensured CCM's collaborative approach as it invites all stakeholders of the research topic to participate in the study, "in order to generate meaningful analyses of social reality and produce usable knowledge" (Puigvert et al, 2012, p. 513). This chapter details this experience and the findings from our co-analysis in Modesto, a process that also enabled the participants to inform me of some of the most accessible and relevant ways to share our findings with locals. The next chapter discusses my findings from the co-analysis in Montreal. Chapter IX summarizes the particular aspects of my findings that relate to my three research questions, which aimed to explore the connection between religious literacy and religious bullying:

1. What is religious bullying?
2. To what extent does religious bullying occur at the public school level in Montreal and/or Modesto?
3. Do the ERC and/or WGWR foster inclusive classrooms and school environments that encourage students to discuss religion and/or address religious bullying with mutual respect, empathy for others, and self-reflection?

As bullying incidents influence and are influenced by many systems in society, my exploratory study included the voices of many stakeholders in society, such as that of students, teachers, principals, parents, and religious and/or community leaders. Each of them add to overall answers to these three questions and this chapter discusses the wide range of responses gathered from these perspectives across the themes of society (mesosystem), family and school

(microsystem), student (the individual), and in consideration of phenomena themselves (exosystem and macrosystem). To organize this discussion, each theme is discussed within their specific context with data from Modesto.

Co-analysis in Modesto

In January 2017, I co-analyzed my Modesto data alongside interested participants and community members. Together, we reviewed the 49 student surveys, three adult student surveys (from current college students or recent college graduates who attended schools in the Modesto City Schools district), and transcript data from conversations with 15 adults and 1 youth. Page 3 of Appendix C1 offers a summary of this data and Tables 2 and 3 depict these details.

Table 2: Summary of student and adult participants in Modesto by religious affiliation

Religious Group	Student surveys (Received 49; Distributed 300+).	Adult student surveys (Received 3; Distributed 18.)	Adult perspectives (15 conversations)
Atheist	0	0	1, teacher
Catholic	9	2	0
Hindu	2	0	1
Jewish	3, conversed with a high school student	1	3 adults – 3 parents, and 1 who was a teacher
Latter Day Saint (LDS)	27	0	0, approached none
Muslim	6	0	5 adults – 3 parents, 2 young adults; 2 teachers; 1 health professional
Non-religious	0	0	1, teacher
Orthodox Christian	1	0	0, approached none
Sikh	0	0	1, city councillor and parent
United Brethren	0	0	1, retired teacher
Universal Congregational Church	0	0	1, contacted me via Facebook post on the Stanislaus Humanist site, retired teacher
Blank responses/ unknown	1	0	1 teacher (who was a parent)

Table 3: Summary of student and adult participants in Modesto by gender

Gender	Student	Adult
Female	25	13
Male	22	5
Blank response	3	0

During data collection, two student surveys were invalid due to contradictory data in their survey responses and two Muslim students chose not to complete the survey despite their parents' approval to do so. One female student was given parental approval and chose to submit a blank questionnaire. Thus, in total, three questionnaires were deemed to be invalid. One Hindu student wanted to complete a survey but parental approval was not given. Within the overall student group, 31 students attended high school in Modesto City Schools (MCS) district and the rest of the students were from various other school districts and grade levels, noted in Table 4. Hence, only 31 students could offer experience-based perspectives on the WGWR course.

Table 4: Summary of student participants by school level and district

School district and grade level	Total
Ceres Unified Schools	**2**
Elementary	1
Junior High	1
Chartered School	**3**
Gr 5-12	1
Gr 6-12	2
Modesto City Schools	**39**
High School	31
Junior High	8
n/a[102]	**1**
n/a	1
Stanislaus Union Elementary School District	**3**
Junior High	3

---

[102] This student completed a full questionnaire but marked "no" when asked for their specific school name.

Turlock Unified School District	**1**
Elementary	1
Grand Total	**49**

Among the 15 adult participants who conversed with me, two have a background in religious studies, eight are teachers or retired teachers (one who currently teaches and one who taught the WGWR course), and seven are identifiable parents based on what they shared during our conversation. Other participants may have been parents as well but no mention of their children was included during our conversation. Table 5 presents the detailed profiles and pseudonyms for each of the 15 adult participants from Modesto listed in chronological order of our conversations in September 2016. Some individuals lived outside of Modesto in the neighbouring cities, such as Lauren. Their perspectives are included in the analysis as a social-ecological model considers the many influences in one's meso-system and how they can influence and be influenced by the other aspects of one's ecology.

Table 5: Detailed profiles of adult participants in Modesto

Participants	Participant profile
Lynn	A 7th grade special education teacher (retired for 10 years), who taught in Modesto City Schools. I met her and spoke with her at a United Brethren church.
Mahit	A Sikh city councillor and parent who graduated from the Modesto City Schools (MCS) system. The course did not exist when he was in 9th Grade. I spoke with him in his office.
Josie and Martin	Josie is a Jewish parent who has lived in various parts of the US. I did not speak with her about her profession. Her son, Martin, experienced religious bullying in Boy Scouts. I spoke with them at the local synagogue.
Laila	A Jewish parent who spoke with me briefly at the synagogue.
Halimah	A Muslim parent with children in elementary school and is a health professional[103]. I spoke with her at the local mosque.
Daria	A Muslim parent with children in elementary school and currently completing teacher education. I spoke with her at the mosque.
Safia	A Muslim parent with children in elementary school. She was eager to speak with me at the mosque because her son had been religious bullied at school, on the

---

[103] I did not ask any participants about their profession unless they shared details about it first.

	playground, and at the mosque. I did not ask about her profession. I spoke with her at the mosque.
Lauren	An atheist elementary teacher who has a background in religious studies and infuses her class discussion with religious literacy. She teaches outside of MCS in a nearby county. She found me through a posting I shared on the Stanislaus Humanist Facebook Group. I spoke with her at Yvonne Taylor's home.
John	A retired MCS middle school teacher who attends the Universal Congregational Church. He found me through my posting on the Stanislaus Humanist Facebook Group. I spoke with him at a café.
Raju	A Fijian Hindu male who works in the local agricultural industry. I spoke with him at his mandir.
Aadil	A Muslim young adult who attends the Modesto Junior College. He grew up in a Catholic family and converted into Islam. I spoke with him at the mosque and via email.
Ann	A Jewish high school science teacher. She teaches outside of MCS but within the county. I met her in her classroom after school.
Aliah	A Muslim young adult who was born and raised in the county. She is not a parent and tutors many students in the area. I spoke with her at the mosque.
Blake	A retired teacher who helped design the WGWR course. I met him unexpectedly at the McHenry Museum where he is a docent, and we spoke there. I did not ask his religious affiliation.
Sophie	A non-religious parent and teacher who currently teaches the WGWR class. I spoke with her in her home.

From the data, five themes arose with a number of sub-themes in each one. Each of these themes are listed in Table 6 and are discussed from sub-sections 7.1.1 to 7.1.5. Appendix C1 presents a sample of the summary table of exclusionary elements (EE) and transformative elements (TE) that was presented during Co-Analysis Meeting #2. Each EE and TE were identified during and after Co-Analysis Meeting #1. The following five sub-sections describe the analysis of EE and TE in each theme.

Table 6: Themes that arose from thematic analysis in Modesto

Theme	Sub-theme (and additional categories in each one)
Society	• Exposure to religious identities • Interaction with religious individuals in Modesto o Recent interactions as a result of the US elections or religious extremism
Family	• Family upbringing • Parental struggle

School	• School & community environment • School administration • The role of the teacher • Teacher training to foster religious literacy • The Modesto 9th Grade World Religions course • Courses with religious literacy in general
Students	• Student curiosity about different religions • Summary of student survey responses • Summary of graduated student survey responses (students currently in college or have graduated)
Phenomena	• Fear • Influence of media • Misunderstanding or bullying of Muslims • Religious contexts more open to other religious individuals • Religious bullying and religious literacy

7.1. Society

In line with Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological framework, exclusionary elements (EE) – institutional or individual attitudes that exclude participants from a phenomenon or context – and transformative elements (TE) – institutional or individual attitudes that participants can use to transform their vulnerable state – related to religious bullying and discrimination were seen at various levels of society. In public environments, exclusionary elements (EE) appeared through examples in the playground, a Scout group, workplaces, and day-to-day interaction with people in the city.

In public areas, a Muslim mother explained to me that students in Modesto bullied her Fifth Grade son at school and on the playground using rhetoric from Trump's campaign during the 2016 US Elections. The mother (Safia) explained to me:

> [My son is] always coming home and saying, 'Mom, this person said this and this person said that, and this person told me that because if Donald Trump becomes president I'm going to be kicked out because they say that I'm, you know, related to, I'm Muslim and I can't live here anymore (Sept. 22, 2016).

This student was also bullied at his mosque because he was of mixed descent and had olive coloured skin compared to other peers who were predominantly of Yemeni descent. In this situation, youth behaviour, perhaps informed by media, were identified as an EE.

A Jewish student I spoke with (Martin) also experienced bullying outside of the school. In a Scout group, one Scout leader validated the bullying that he experienced from another peer. When Martin's mother and older brother went to speak with the Scout leader, the Scout leader assuredly said, "Martin should toughen up and, you know, if he toughened up, this wouldn't bother him" (Josie, Sept. 23, 2016). This negative attitude from a Scout leader, an individual in a position of power and a presumed leader within the community, was the exclusionary element.

Among other young adult and adult participants I spoke with, EEs seemed to exist in their daily interactions as they felt that the public's perceptions towards their religious or perceived religious identity were problematic. Participants found people's assumptions (Aadil), unwillingness to listen (Raju), and racial and prejudicial beliefs towards and within religious communities confining and frustrating. To these perceptions, Daria, a Muslim woman who was born and raised in the US and the county, exhaled, "I was born and raised here. You don't see the people the way they see you." However, in a few circumstances, the exclusionary element (EE) appeared to be the participants themselves rather than others in their community. For example, having encountered negative childhood experiences because of their religious identity, Daria and Mahit's own exclusionary experiences from childhood led them to enroll their children to private religious schools in an effort to protect their own children from EE in society. Yet, despite these EEs, participant conversations showed that TE also existed and could offset many of these exclusionary situations over time.

After obtaining tangible and experiential exposure with other religious individuals, a number of my participants (Aliah, Safia, Ann, Lauren, Mahit, Raju) witnessed a dismantling in their own stereotypes and prejudices (or that of others) and witnessed a growth in understanding and confidence among the children and adults they described in our conversations; thereby, highlighting the importance of exposure to those that are different from oneself. While several examples illustrate this among peers and other community leaders, Mahit's experience most clearly articulated this understanding:

> I wear my turban with pride…A lot of times, I am more intimidated and self-deprecating than other people are and I think my school years is what that is a result of because during my time in school I felt that I was different and I was reminded that I was different. So, in the real world now, I still think 'maybe I'm different' but I get so much reassurance from people now. In the real world, it's a lot easier than at the school level … If we can get this outreach at that (school aged) level, then I don't think (bullying) is an issue at all. (Sept. 22, 2016).

As a city councillor, Mahit was concerned when he campaigned to be a public servant and approached community members door to door with a turban. However, as he won 70% of the votes over an incumbent, he felt that the community was not as concerned about attire anymore. He shared that, "They look at the person, their work ethic, and how they will represent the public." This public acceptance was coupled with that from close non-Sikh friends who often reassured Mahit that, to them, his turban was just another piece of his clothing. Through these encounters, Mahit expressed that the exclusionary societal attitudes in his early life (that still affected him) had changed. To protect himself and his children, he was wary of these attitudes and that in some ways he had excluded himself and his family. However, his encounters showed that societal attitudes had changed, and what was once an EE in his life became a transformative element that fostered his self-confidence. These experiences illustrated the existence of EE in Modesto's meso-system,

but that TE also existed and could lead to transformative change for some individuals. Similarly, discussions about one's family in individuals' micro-system showed that family attitudes were EEs and TEs as well.

7.2. Family

Quite a few Modesto participants noted the influential role of the family in a discussion of religious bullying and religious literacy, unlike participants in Montreal[104]. Aadil and Raju explicitly raised concerns about family and parents being the source of religious prejudices and misunderstanding that students exhibited. At the same time, Daria and Josie showed that a lack of knowledge about religious bullying within their families made them inadvertently exclusionary elements too. In consideration of her children's sense of belonging, Daria noted, "I don't want my kids to feel like they're not in a community," so she chose to send her children to a non-public school.

Juxtaposing this experience, Safia remained an advocate for public education but she struggled to support her Fifth Grade son who was bullied at the school and playground for being Muslim, and at the mosque for not being a "real Muslim." In these circumstances, she was thankful for a strong relationship with her son as they consistently engaged in open dialogue, where he informed her about most affairs. As a result, attempt after attempt, she patiently helped her son understand how his peers were misinformed by invalid sources. However, she was incredibly bothered.

> I want him to understand that you can be from anywhere in the world and be a
> Muslim or be, you know, Christian, or be Jewish, and this and that, or so, and I think

---

[104] Montreal participants also spoke of the family as an influential foundation to developing respect for others and being one's support system; however, it was discussed more abstractly as a phenomenon. A few participants shared specific examples but it was quickly related to more general ideas about the family so "family" was not a theme in the Montreal findings.

that … he's starting to get a better rapport. It's just he thought if you're Arab, you're Muslim. I'm like you can be Arab and you can be Christian. It doesn't matter. So, I don't know. It's hard with children.

During my conversation with her, I learned that she was a caring individual of strong character, but it was clear that she struggled against the opposing narratives her son continuously received leading up to the 2016 US Elections. While she offered great resiliency against religious bullying, she was not fully aware of the resources and responses that could have supported her and Saaf, her son, through the experiences he had. As such, despite her efforts to support her son (exemplifying a strong TE), her lack of resources stifled her efforts to a certain extent and was an EE as well.

For Josie, her older son experienced religious bullying several years ago and he was too embarrassed to tell her. When another parent informed Josie about the bullying incident, she said, "We didn't really talk about it and he didn't have an older brother[105] so when these people had bullied my older son, he never heard it before. And we never even discussed it because we didn't think it would happen." Thus, as the son chose not to discuss the issue, parents, unfamiliar with religious bullying, chose to do the same.

Contrarily, while these examples show that a family was an EE, some participants' families also played a positive and transformative role in other instances. After Josie's experience with her older son, she was much more equipped to support her younger son, Martin, when he experienced religious bullying. She reported bullying to the Scout Leader, confronted the Leader's non-reactionary response for her son to "toughen up," escalated the bullying incident to the Scout Council, and relocated her son to a supportive Scout group, while her older son supported Martin as well. Here, the TE was the dialogue between parent and child (which Safia displayed too) and

---

[105] These statements were made in comparison to her younger son Martin who, after having learned about the religious bullying his older brother experienced, informed his mom about it when he experienced it himself.

the understanding of how to respond to the situation in the community. Hence, out of an EE, TE can arise. Aliah and Safia also expressed this transformation from one generation to the next.

As Muslim individuals who were both born and raised in California into separate multi-ethnic and multi-religious families, Aliah and Safia's parents experienced prejudice and discrimination from their family and society as they were growing up. As a result, their parents consciously raised Aliah and Safia with a distinct understanding of respect towards those who were different. Through her conversations with Saaf, Safia was aiming to foster these transformational attitudes in her son as well.

7.3. School

With a focus on the school context, six sub-themes emerged from the data co-analysis: school and community environment, school administration, the role of the teacher, teacher training to foster religious literacy, the WGWR course, and courses with religious literacy in general. Ideas from the first sub-theme were later folded into the second and third sub-theme.

7.3.1. School environment informed by administration, teacher, and community influence

Findings in the first three sub-themes within the school setting showed that EE revolved around teachers and administrators. While other participants vividly shared these struggles, Lauren experienced the most EE among all my teacher participants. As a well-traveled elementary school teacher, who grew up in a multi-religious community in New York and has a background in religious studies, she experienced a number of volatile situations and unsupportive attitudes from administration and colleagues due to their misunderstanding, or limited understanding, of multiculturalism. Additionally, administrators and teachers alike would remark to her that teaching

about religions in school was un-constitutional, illustrating a lack of knowledge about the First Amendment and their school curriculum.

On one occasion, a principal, unfamiliar with the school curriculum, left a highlighted copy of the curriculum for Lauren with a note stating, "I have gone through the second and third grade curriculum and nowhere does it say comparative religions is part of the curriculum. You must cease and desist." On the paper, the principal highlighted, "Children will learn about different Native American cultures, their holidays, and celebrations." However, two paragraphs below the highlighted notes, the curriculum also read that, "Students will learn about the different cultural and religious celebrations." So, after highlighting this detail, Lauren responded, "Yes, thank you very much. Yes, we do learn a lot about Native Americans but we also must do this." In our conversation, she admitted that this was cheeky of her but she was tired of the antagonizing attitudes and lack of support from principals and teachers. Large and small struggles like this were common occurrences for Lauren, an elementary school teacher in a neighbouring school district outside of Modesto.

In another situation, she spoke out against a principal who endorsed a school custodian's presentation where students were in blackface, misrepresented Mexicans, and valourized nationalism. To this, the principal rebuked Lauren and continued to defend the custodian. Moreover, while Lauren contended against school staff, one parent was ruthless in her disdain. While her daughter reportedly "terrorized the students in the class" (Lauren), her mother, a Seventh Day Adventist, had stolen a number of Lauren's classroom books and burned them at her church. Leading up to this event, she had consistently instructed Lauren on what she deemed permissible school content based on her religious beliefs. These misrepresentations and disrespect for various

multicultural worldviews from a racial, ethnic, national, and religious perspectives were common struggles for Lauren.

In general, the misunderstanding of multiculturalism that many held baffled Lauren. In another instance, a colleague explained that she was being multicultural and inclusive by presenting different celebrations of Christmas globally, whereby she omitted non-Christian celebrations altogether without recognizing the EE in her lessons. In another situation, Lauren was astounded when an administrator she spoke with conceptualized multiculturalism in a Californian context to solely include Hispanic identities. In yet another, other teachers pressured Lauren to join morning prayer circles among teachers at school. Due to the misunderstanding among administrators and teachers, such as these, participants shared that some teachers who showed exclusionary attitudes were the exclusionary elements in these circumstances and environments that were exclusionary towards parents and students as well.

As a Jewish student, Laila's daughter cried in her 6th grade classroom when a teacher asked her to decorate a Christmas tree drawing. Laila was a teacher helper at the time so she took her daughter out of the classroom to ask her why she was crying, and her daughter explained that "they never listen" because she had told her teacher many times that she did not celebrate Christmas. As a solution, the teacher suggested to turn the page over and decorate a snowflake instead. When Laila told the teacher why her daughter was crying, the teacher insensitively told her daughter to "learn to deal with it." Like Laila, one or two teachers also discriminated against Saaf. While these are explicit incidents, a potentially hidden curriculum at school led Halimah and Daria's children, who did not look different, feel different inside. Safia also shared stories of how teachers' perceptions have led her to be disrespected as a parent.

7.3.2. The transformative role of teachers and school administrators

Despite such horrible stories, almost all participants agreed that teachers and administrators could be a crucial transformational element by fostering a loving, welcoming, comfortable, and safe classroom; parent and teacher participants understood that an inclusive school environment was pivotal for student development and could on occasion be more influential than the home. To illustrate the value they placed on the role of the teacher (the third sub-theme in this section), and juxtapose the EE narratives they shared, participants presented stories of supportive teachers and administrators. For example, Lauren's first and second grade graduates recognized disrespect in the schoolyard when they were in 4th grade and reported their astonishment to Lauren on many occasions. Lynn was able to develop a religious literacy class for her special education students only through the support of her local principal, even though several other teachers dismissed her students' ability to understand and discuss religious beliefs and practices. Administrators supported Ann when she felt unease after a student, who had made threats at their previous schools, referred to *Mein Kampf* without knowing that she was Jewish. Ann recognized that the incident was not bullying related but she was unclear about the students' actual perspective of *Mein Kampf*, and still thankful that the school administrator was able to respond professionally and support her as a teacher. During 9/11, Sophie experienced collegial support when teachers came together to discuss the terrorist attack and collaboratively consider how to broach the topic with their students. These four anecdotes echoed the perspective that many participants held; that, "It doesn't matter what is in the textbook as long as you have a good teacher" (Aliah), and an administration that is willing to support them.

7.3.3. The importance of teacher training to foster religious literacy

In the fourth sub-theme on teacher training, anecdotes from teacher participants showed that limited training is offered on religious literacy and minimal professional development training is given to WGWR teachers. During professional development days, Sophie described herself as "an island in her staff" where no professional content is offered to support her as a WGWR teacher and she is the lone teacher who teaches the course at her school. As such, this, in addition to the response I received from MCS about my initial research design, suggested that the current district administration invests less in the WGWR program than the previous administration.

Previously, the teachers who were among the first to teach the course visited local religious sites, spoke with local religious leaders, and attended lectures on religions and teaching about religion at Stanislaus College and those held by Dr. Charles Haynes, the Founding Director of the Religious Freedom Center in the US. Sophie shared that,

> (Training) was professionally prepared for us and we were trained by all these professionals and we just felt like we were properly trained and ready to do the job. We weren't alone. We weren't abandoned. We weren't guessing. We were being supported.

As a group, the teachers across various schools received continuous group training and collaboratively sought ways to understand and discuss 9/11 with their students (Blake and Sophie). Today, seasoned WGWR teachers mentor new WGWR teachers at each school to equip and support new teachers informally themselves, as the district does not offer formal professional development from WGWR teachers. While I was unable to gather details about this mentoring model, it is potentially another TE within the teacher training of the course as well. Regarding teacher training in general, Lauren advocated for more religious literacy training among all teachers. During our conversation, she became progressively more and more vocal towards advocating for change in teacher education. She stated, "I can only do so much with the 21 children

in my classroom every year," and felt that more teachers need to foster respect and understanding among the other students in the school (Lauren).

7.3.4. Continued support for the WGWR course

Within the fifth sub-theme regarding the WGWR course, the constraints of the course and its benefits were discussed. The constraints posed many EEs, such as the curriculum itself, the time allotted to teach it, the obscurity of the course, the age of the students, and the existence of the course in an antagonizing environment. Concerning the curriculum, Ann found that the course was somewhat limited in the religions it covered, while understanding the introductory intent of the course. Yet, Blake, who previously taught the course also found that the curriculum structure was limiting in that it stipulated the distinct separation between the teaching of geography and religion and that allotting one week to teach each religion was quite demanding. In their review of the textbook itself[106], Aliah, Hamilah, and Daria, felt that the images were out-dated and some could lead students to misunderstand Islam. Figure 1 was especially problematic in their perspective as a very small percentage of Muslim women cover their whole body including their face. Aliah, Hamilah, and Daria were also concerned with Figure 2 as they felt the image chose to highlight a singular re-enactment with a weapon whereas more common practices without weapons could have been portrayed.

---

[106] Course textbook: Meredith, S. (2001). *The Usborne Internet-linked encyclopedia of world religions*. https://www.usbornebooksathome.ca/catalogue/catalogue.aspx?id=8934

ISLAM

Islam in everyday life

The religious laws of Islam come from the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*, and are called the *Shari'ah*, which means the 'clear, straight path'. They are guidelines on matters ranging from a person's actions to affairs of state. In Muslim countries, such as Iran, there is little difference between religious laws and the laws of the country.

Muslims living in non-Muslim countries are sometimes torn between the need to keep the laws and customs of the country, and the desire to follow Islam.

Islam teaches that all life is created by Allah and so should be respected. This affects all aspects of Muslim life and involves many social responsibilities. Family life is very important in Islam, and anything which threatens it, such as the possibility of affairs outside marriage, is to be avoided. For this reason, men and women are expected to act and dress modestly and, in some cultures, they are not allowed to mix freely.

In some places in the Muslim world, it is the custom for women to live apart from men, and to cover their whole body including their face when outside the home. This practice, called *purdah*, is said to protect women from unwanted male attention and to allow them to be respected for who they are, not how they look.

Islamic dress code

Men must be covered from the navel to the knee. For women, acting and dressing modestly is called *hijab*. It includes covering the head, arms and legs, but the interpretation of the rules varies.

Some Muslim women in western countries wear western clothes, but often choose styles that cover their legs and upper arms.

Many Muslim women wear head scarves, and plain, loose-fitting long sleeved clothes to hide the shape of their body.

Some women wear a veil to hide the lower part of the face. Clothes are often black, so as not to draw attention to the wearer.

This woman is wearing a burkha, which covers everything but her eyes. Some burkhas have a mesh screen to hide the eyes too.

Food laws

In Islam, meat must be prepared in a certain way for it to be *halal* (permitted). The name of Allah is said as the animal is killed, and its blood is allowed to drain away. The *Qur'an* forbids Muslims to eat pork, which is thought to be an impure food. Alcohol is also forbidden, as being drunk makes people forget their duties to Allah, for example, prayer.

The Jihad

The inner struggle a person has to live a good life is called the *Jihad*. For many Muslims, it includes the holy duty to try to win others over to Islam by setting a good example.

Figure 2: Page 76 of the Usborne Internet-Linked Encyclopedia of World Religions (2001).

ISLAM

Islamic calendar

The Islamic calendar is dated from the *Hijrah*, Muhammad's journey to Madinah. The letters AH written after a date mean "Anno Hegirae" or "year of the *Hijrah*". During the year 2000CE, Muslims witnessed the start of the year 1421AH.

The Islamic year has twelve lunar months. These are based on the cycles of the Moon.

The Islamic year is about 11 days shorter than the solar year (the time it takes the Earth to travel once around the Sun), on which the Gregorian (Western) calendar is based. This means that festivals fall on a different solar date each year.

For Muslims, a month begins at sunset on the day when the crescent moon is first seen. As this depends on where the observer is, and the weather, it is difficult to say exactly when a new month will start.

The Islamic calendar

1st month	*Muharram*
2nd month	*Safar*
3rd month	*Rabi al-Awal*
4th month	*Rabi al-Thani*
5th month	*Jumad al-Ula*
6th month	*Jumad al-Thani*
7th month	*Rajab*
8th month	*Shaban*
9th month	*Ramadan*
10th month	*Shawal*
11th month	*Zul-Qida*
12th month	*Zul-Hijja*

New year festival

Shi'ite Muslims celebrate the beginning of the new year with a ten-day festival called *Muharram*, which shares its name with the first Islamic month. The last and most important day is *Ashura*. The events below are believed to have taken place on *Ashura*.

Allah created the heavens and the Earth. He also created Adam who entered Paradise.

Noah's ark, carrying two of every living creature, found dry land after a flood that had drowned the Earth.

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt where they had been kept in slavery under the Pharaoh.

Muharram is particularly important to Shi'ite Muslims. For them it is a time when they mourn the deaths of the *caliphs* Ali and Hussein. On the tenth day, many Shi'ites dress in black and take part in solemn processions. Some act out passion plays telling the story of Hussein and the massacre at Karbala in which he was killed.

On the holy day of *Ashura*, Shi'ite Muslims take part in historical reenactments of the life of the caliph Hussein. This man is drawing his mock-sword during one such battle.

Figure 3: Page 78 of the Usborne Internet-Linked Encyclopedia of World Religions (2001).

In addition to the lack of updated course content, the WGWR course appeared rather obscure within the school district, as there are only one or two teachers who teach the course at each school. Sophie felt like "an island in her staff" with no counterparts, and was unsure if other teachers were aware of the course at all. Many participants I spoke with were unaware of the course overall.

Students' attitudes further complicate the perceived benefit of the course as it is taught to 9th grade students. Sophie explained that, "I get to some of them. Not all of them. I have over 200 Freshmen. Some of them (couldn't) care less." Additionally, she remarks that, "They're 14 years old. They know nothing except what they hear at home or maybe on TV. They don't have… I don't believe they have a real honest opinion of their own at this point. They're young." As a result, fear of raising conflicting views in class that stem from misinformed parental views lead teachers to withhold dialogue in the WGWR classroom. Dialogue does exist for quick Q&A in class but not for items related to current events for the most part. However, the course presents many TEs, which also offset the EES.

While the course structure is limiting in some ways, the current format of the course and its existence offers valuable transformational elements. Although Blake preferred to teach the course in an interdisciplinary structure, the course currently allows teachers to be acquainted with their students during the first two weeks of the world religions portion before the world religions (WR) are taught. In the first two weeks, the foundation of respect, being a good listener, the First Amendment, the Supreme Court, one's rights and responsibilities, and history of Rogers Williams, a 17th century British-American Christian minister who advocated for freedom of conscience and the separation of church and state, are taught in conjunction with the development of empathetic, legislative, and historical understanding needed to legitimize lessons on religious identities that

were informed by Marcia Beauchamp and Dr. Charles Haynes, experts who helped develop the course (Sophie). This structure thereby enables teachers and students to build a rapport and understanding between teacher-students and student-students that is needed to foster a safe environment to discuss contentious topics in the classroom.

Furthermore, participants felt that the existence of the course itself legitimates the teaching *about* religion in public schools and gives student identities a degree of credibility (Aliah and Mahit). In doing so, the course can potentially help students feel more included and offer them a foundation to enable them to share their own identity (Mahit). Echoing Mark Haskett, the previous Director of the Stanislaus County Interfaith Council, Ann valued the course as it "is to open [students'] eyes" and teach more than what is learned in religious sites. Among community members, Mahit has found that many are happy that their children acquire religious literacy in the course, illustrated by the messages of gratitude that Sophie now receives at parent-teacher night compared to the questions she used to receive about the course. John also expressed these views. When I told him that the WGWR is the only course of its kind in the US, he remarked, "You're kidding! I didn't know that Modesto was so progressive. I think that's a progressive move to make religion a mandatory part of education."

Perhaps most salient in the existence of the course itself is the strong district administrative support that was given at the onset of the course. Without the administrative support and the outlook of teachers like Blake and Sophie, the TE of the course would not be as clear or as marked. For Sophie explained:

> I point out that the First Amendment (is) the first of 27 [amendments] and that even though they are not listed in the order of importance, the first one's got to be put up front for a reason. And, in the First Amendment, there's five rights and the first one mentioned is religion. It's the first, first, first thing anyone sees. If you hand them the Constitution, it's the first one that shows, this is what's important to us - is religion. That's how important this class is.

Echoing this sentiment, Blake noted the saliency of the course by stating that the WGWR is "like teaching history or math – just another way to see the world."

7.3.5. A call for religious literacy to begin in younger school grades

With respect to the sixth sub-theme about courses on religious literacy in general, participants who were better acquainted with young students (Lauren, Mahit, and Safia) noticed that elementary students who had received religious literacy content in their class had changed attitudes towards those who were different from themselves. Not only has religious literacy changed perceptions, but parents also found that their children or other children were naturally curious about others' religious identities (Safia, Mahit, adult survey respondent #1), noted by Saaf who told Safia that he "feels like, he has to explain everything to everybody." Building on this, Safia thought that students should acquire some religious literacy before 9th grade, because by that time, "you've already been exposed to so much so maybe if you were taught correctly in the school early on, it would be better for them." In agreement, Mahit and adult survey respondent #1 clearly expressed that they wished a course likened to WGWR was offered in their youth so that they did not have to be the first response for their peers.

To these findings, all the collaborators in the Modesto Co-Analysis Meeting #1 unanimously declared that religious literacy should start earlier to offset the fact that, "People are jerks." Aadil expressed this idea as well when he said that a religious literacy course in college or high school level "is a necessity in the diverse world we live in. The United States is just one country in this world and people need to understand more about other countries and cultures too." To prevent negativity and disrespect based on religious differences, the collaborators advocated for an earlier introduction of religious literacy. To this, Mark Haskett, added that religious

education is needed in milieus like school, outside of media, gossip, and individual faith communities, as they may hold their own misconceptions about other groups as well.

7.4. Students

To gather individual student perspectives on religious literacy and religious bullying, I conducted semi-structured interviews with students and adults and distributed student surveys to elementary, middle, secondary, post-secondary students, and those who had recently graduated from college. The first part of this section details adult perspectives about students and is followed by a summary of survey responses from students themselves.

Adult participants felt that students are generally curious about different religious beliefs and identities (Aliah, Ann, Blake, John). Though, a student's first interaction can be exclusionary due to negative representations of something on TV (or from parents as noted by Aadil and Raju), peers will ask questions (sometimes to ill-equipped students) about their religious identity (Mahit). From his own experience, Mahit felt that students who feel like they lack credibility are less confident, and may be a source of the stereotypes, stigma, and bullying they may experience later. Through her work with students, Aliah found that it is crucial to respond to students' curiosity, for when students' questions are not addressed directly or appropriately, students know that a teacher is uncomfortable and holds certain values. A delayed or hesitant response can then imply messages they have received through the hidden curriculum for students to not ask questions anymore. For example, during the Co-Analysis Meeting #1b, Aliah, a community member, found that Sophie's request for teachers to reframe questions with, "Wow, that's interesting…" to begin a question so that students in the class are not offended, is problematic. From experience, Aliah knows that students can understand the teacher and the true attitude of a peer that may be asking the question

regardless of the words that are used. In such circumstances, Aliah felt that it is important for the teacher to address the peer's (and potentially the teacher's own) attitude so that a hidden message is not communicated.

Thus, to adequately address students' curiosity, participants pointed to the need to develop student confidence, a safe classroom space, for individuals to offer time to listen and for parents to address student curiosity also. In particular, Ann's son was equipped with the sufficient knowledge and confidence to self-identify and self-affiliate with his Jewish religion. Hence, when his peers approached him with questions out of curiosity and interest, he was able to answer them albeit their elementary school age. This was possible as his teacher created a safe, comfortable classroom for his or her elementary students to speak their minds and ask questions, similar to the environment that Lauren fosters for her students. In hindsight, Mahit recognized that his inquisitive friends were pivotal in the sharing of his Sikh identity as they took the time to understand it and those friendships have "lasted for years and (he) expects them to last for many more years to come." Coupled with the confidence of the students themselves, is a parent's willingness to inform their children's friends about their religious identity, which Safia offered on many occasions. Student responses also supplement these adult perspectives about their children, youth, and their own childhood experiences.

Findings from student surveys showed the presence of religious discrimination and religious bullying and key perspectives on religious bullying and the WGWR course. While none of the students have seen religious discrimination or religious bullying stemming from their teachers, 16% (n=5 of 31) of surveyed students said they knew of or saw students being religiously bullied at school by other students ("yes" (n=4) and "very much" (n=1)). For the same question, 29% (n=9 of 31) said that they "somewhat" knew of or saw students being religiously bullied at

school by other students, indicating that they may not be fully familiar with what religious bullying entails. In accordance with findings from the CAIR-CA, Sikh Coalition, and HAF reports, 18% of students (n=9) said that they did not report any discrimination or religious bullying to teachers and/or school staff, even though three of them said "yes" they had seen religious bullying among students, one said they had "very much" seen religious bullying among students, four said that they "somewhat" saw religious bullying among students, and one said "I don't know". Among the 68% of students (n=34) who left their response "blank" to indicate if they did or did not report an incident to an educator, , one person said "yes" they had witnessed religious bullying among students, three said "very much", and five said "somewhat" to indicate an additional number of students who did not report bullying.

Specific students' perspectives on religious bullying and the WGWR that were shared in the open-ended survey questions were categorized using data mining that tabulated the number of times certain ideas or words were used. Regarding, "What are your thoughts about religious bullying (which is bullying that occurs based on an individual's religious or non-religious identity)?", 65% (n=32) of students expressed negative perceptions towards religious bullying, 12% (n=6) said that they had not seen instances of religious bullying, 18% (n=9) did not respond to this question, and 8% (n=4) of responses could not be categorized into these themes. To, "What thoughts do you have about the *World Geography and World Religions* course?[107]", 40% (n=20) of students shared positive thoughts about the course, 8% (n=4) shared negative thoughts about the course, 6% (n=3) said they were unable to answer the question because they take/took AP

---

[107] All students were familiar with brief details about WGWR as the previous question in the survey read: "Did you know that the *World Geography and World Religions* is the only course of its kind in America? No other public school district offers a mandatory course about religious knowledge and understanding like this. Why do you think Modesto City's School District has established a course like this?"

Human Geography, which all three participants said they enjoyed, 14% (n=7) said "n/a" or

mentioned that they do not have access to this class, 26% (n=13) did not respond to this question,

and 8% (n=4) responses could not be categorized into these themes. Among these responses, five

students made explicit statements regarding an attitudinal transformation, by stating:

- I like it very much, I think it is a good idea because I very rarely receive or hear someone bashing my church and I feel that the class really helps.
- Higher understanding
- I enjoyed studying other's beliefs and found it very eye opening experiences they gave me a better perspective on the world I am living in.
- I really enjoyed learning about what other people believe because I think it's interesting and helps me understand my peers.
- I think it's positive and helps people gain other perspectives.

Similarly, three alumni of the course have told their previous WGWR teacher that the course has

changed how they understand others (Sophie) and two adult survey respondents (out of three)

shared positive comments about the course in their surveys as well. Overall, based on data mining

analysis of open-ended responses, 62% of current students suggest that the course can be a TE as

their comments mention the courses' ability to raise knowledge and attitudes.

7.5. Phenomena

Regarding the discussion of phenomena, several sub-themes of fear, the influence of media,

the misunderstanding or bullying of Muslims, the propensity for religious contexts to be more open

to other religious individuals, and thoughts on religious bullying and religious literacy arose during

analysis. However, after the first co-analysis meeting, fear was recognized as an overarching EE

that enveloped these sub-themes. This consists of the fear of error, fear among children, parents,

and administration, and the fearmongering that the media perpetuates. Ideas on religious bullying

and religious literacy were noted separately.

7.5.1. Fear can stifle interaction and change

Among students, there is a fear of looking different or being regarded negatively due to dress or appearance, and fear of shame. Aliah shared that "…a lot of (Muslim kids) do get bullied and a lot of them because they're afraid of getting bullied are really cautious about letting people know who or what religion they are. I've had kids like flat-out deny." Those who are bullied or discriminated against are afraid of embarrassment so they do not want to tell their parents about any discrimination or bullying or they do not want parents to take action because it will raise attention to them (Safia). For Amy, "fear seems heavily rooted in the school experience" and Mahit confirms this from his personal reflection as his experience during his school years raised fears for him in adulthood.

Among parents, even a supportive parent with the best intentions will at times minimize a situation to protect their children. For, in Safia's own childhood, her parents were fearful of negative action or attention towards their children and instructed that, "If anybody asks, just don't say anything." This is doubly difficult as Muslim parents I spoke with shared their own struggles in the community, such as when strangers in the community ignored and frowned at Daria and approached Halimah with the intent to interrogate her.

Among school administrators, fear also informed their attitudes and behaviours. A fear of error was evident when textbook writers and administrators dismissed Lauren after she approached them to correct inaccurate textbook content regarding Islam. A fear of parents led the school district to keep WGWR teachers and information about the course away from the public, as they perceived that one angry parent could "take (the course) down" (Sophie). This general fear of parents also existed among teachers, as it was commonly understood that the public were fearful of anything related with Islam in some communities, which participants largely charged the media for stimulating.

Among Muslim participants, it was clear that Muslims were the most showcased minority group in the media and were often portrayed negatively, to which kids were sensitive (Aliah). This led students to equate Muslims with ISIS (Saaf's peers) and the assumption that Muslims are individuals who are completely new or foreign to America (Halimah). During the Co-analysis Meeting #1, Amy expressed that "media campaigns from elections foster divisive attitudes purposely, and society takes on these attitudes and beliefs without critically considering the issues that are raised." This troubled participants as they felt that news sources sensationalized issues to gain attention, which raised fear and could lead individuals to close-mindedness as some people may have made-up their mind about a religious group prior meeting them.

However, in recognizing the fear that existed, participants discussed TEs that could counter the sources of fear as they aimed to promote knowledge and experience. Through content knowledge in school, Ann articulated that, "…the more people know, the less they are afraid of." While her comments focus mostly on student perceptions, Lauren emphasized the need to do likewise among teachers, stating that teachers need a change in understanding and to recognize that teaching about something does not mean that they are promoting it. For Aliah, a better understanding of religious teachings on equality should be promoted so that acceptance for all groups in humanity would be encouraged. Concerning experience, Mahit shared that it was important to encounter friends and others "in the real world" outside of school who encouraged and reassured an individual's identity. Many of these perspectives were carried out by Safia in her relationship with Saaf.

Due to her own experience with over-protective parents and the constraint she felt in her childhood to hide her Muslim identity, Safia tried to inform and support Saaf to live a different

experience. In doing so, she coached him to understand the world's diverse beliefs, opinions, and identities.

> I want him to understand that you can be from anywhere in the world and be a Muslim or be, you know, Christian, or be Jewish, and this and that, or so, and I think that … he's starting to get a better rapport. It's just he thought if you're Arab, you're Muslim. I'm like you can be Arab and you can be Christian. It doesn't matter. So, I don't know. It's hard with children.

Through the struggles parents experienced, such as that of Safia, all the participants believed in the potential benefit of a religious literacy program towards combating the phenomenon of religious bullying.

7.5.2. Religious bullying and religious illiteracy rooted in fear

Again rooted in fear, participants believed that religious bullying and religious illiteracy stemmed from ill-informed parents and teachers with a fear and lack of knowledge of the unknown, thereby creating a source of discrimination among religious and non-religious individuals within their groups and towards those who are not affiliated to it (mentioned by Sikh, Muslim, and non-religious participants). This fear and misinformation led to discrimination in the school environment at a young age. To assuage this, participants noted that the Internet, parents, teachers, one's religious beliefs, were potential TEs but also EEs. To adequately deter the potential for religious bullying, participants stated that a religious literacy course was possibly beneficial if teachers of the course have the intention of using it to prevent religious bullying, and if the course is tailored by someone who has gone through religious bullying. Additionally, the school environment, fostered by school administration that supports religious literacy and protects religious identities of teachers and students at school, needed to match religious literacy goals to be successful. Friends and community support for religious individuals was also mentioned,

presenting a multiplicity of individuals who could offer a community approach in one's meso- and microsystems to counter religious bullying and attitudes relating to it in the exosystem.

Summary

Structured by Bronfenbrenner's social ecological framework, the Modesto data reflect components of the micro, meso, and exo levels of society that are influenced by attitudes, beliefs, and values in the macrosystem. By analyzing the three research questions through the social-ecological framework, it is clear that religious bullying is not confined to the schoolyard. Various players and outlets in each system of society inform it.

In relation to my first research question, "W*hat is religious bullying?"* the Modesto data offers illustrations of bullying that occurs across and within religious groups based on one's intersectionalities of race, ethnicity, and religious identity. Although religious bullying from non-religious individuals was discussed, no specific illustrations were shared.

Regarding my second research question, "*To what extent does religious bullying occur at the public school level in Montreal and/or Modesto?*" my data was not representative so it is not possible to state to the extent of religious bullying in Modesto. Nonetheless, the data shows that religious bullying does occur at schools. Discrimination towards parents and teachers also exists from school administration, other teachers, and school staff, and from community members who have influence or access to public school environments, e.g. Lauren's interaction with the Seventh Day Adventist parent who burned her class books.

With respect to my third research question, "*Do the ERC and/or WGWR foster inclusive classrooms and school environments that encourage students to discuss religion and/or address religious bullying with mutual respect, empathy for others, and self-reflection?"* participant conversations suggest that the classroom was an inclusive space, as 14 students who completed

the WGWR course felt that it was an inclusive and welcoming space. It is unclear if the course also fostered an inclusive school environment as some teachers (and community members) are not familiar with the course and the school district is hesitant to discuss the course with researchers and media, suggesting an effort to keep the influence and knowledge of the course minimal. These sentiments and attitudes reflect the fear that can stifle interaction and change among educators and the public. The fear of error among educators coupled with the fearmongering that the media perpetuates may have minimized conversations within the schools, district, and with researchers and media overall. The omission of discussion may have also prevented students from raising any concern of religious bullying out of a cultural norm to omit discussion about religious issues at school, and out of a fear of shame or embarrassment for having experienced it themselves. However, as the school administrators kept their distance in our communications and offered limited details, I cannot conclude the specific reasons for their hesitancy and fear, and can only surmise that an inclusive school environment was fostered to a certain extent and only in some schools.

In the course itself, the WGWR aims to foster respect for others under the First Amendment, but not necessarily empathy or self-reflection. Discussion in the form of Q&A is not encouraged either. However, some students have developed an empathy for others through the course that resulted from the religious literacy in the course and possibly the self-reflection that the religious literacy promoted.

Thus, within the context of Modesto and the WGWR course, my findings show that there is a potential connection between religious bullying and religious literacy as the WGWR was able to foster respect among students, and empathy and self-reflection among others, which could in turn prevent religious bullying. Moreover, to adequately deter the potential for religious bullying,

participants stated that a religious literacy course was possibly beneficial if teachers of a course intend to use it to prevent religious bullying, and if the course is tailored by someone who has gone through religious bullying. These findings then answer my overarching research question and raise the importance of the teacher, and teacher training in religious literacy courses overall. However, with consideration of the social-ecological framework, a religious literacy course in schools is only part of the solution towards preventing religious bullying, even if the course is designed with religious bullying in mind and tailored by someone who has experienced religious bullying. As society itself influences an individual's development, it is important to consider religious literacy outside of the school environment for other members of society as well. Otherwise, the religious literacy in a school setting may not offer students enough knowledge, skills, or time to critically question the stereotypes or discrimination towards religious groups and individuals they see in their social-ecology.

My study could not further explore this new conclusion but it is considerable for research on the WGWR and religious literacy going forward. Additionally, one other point that was briefly stated and unaddressed in my findings is Mahit's sensibility that religious settings, such as the Stanislaus County Interfaith Council, are more open and welcoming to other religious individuals, even those who are of different religious backgrounds. In particular, in describing the Catholic school where his Sikh children attend, Mahit noted that:

> You can speak religion freely there. If I wanted for the children to take a field trip to the Sikh temple, I could arrange it. We could show them, 'Oh these are the things.' You could further engage them because there is already a religious setting taking place there.

I found similar sentiments in my Masters research. Though there is insufficient data to discuss this in detail in this study, the idea of a more welcoming environment among religious settings opposed to secular settings pose many questions for future research in Modesto and elsewhere.

CHAPTER VIII: DATA AND PRELIMINARY CO-ANALYSIS (MONTREAL)

To continue the documentation from the preliminary co-analysis, this chapter details my experience and the findings from my co-analysis of the Montreal data. As in Chapter VII, this chapter discusses each theme within their specific context within Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological framework and concludes by summarizing the Montreal findings that pertain to my three specific research questions. Data analysis in Montreal was exceptionally difficult as the complexities and social variances in the English and French-speaking communities of Montreal were akin to analyzing two contexts on its own. Overall, the analysis between Modesto and Montreal felt like I was reviewing and writing about three different contexts – French and English Montreal and Modesto.

Co-analysis in Montreal

In February 2017, I co-analyzed my Montreal data alongside some participants. Together, we reviewed the 16 student surveys, 40 adult student surveys (from students currently in CEGEP, university or post-secondary graduates)[108], and transcript data from conversations with 14 adults and one youth. Page 3 of Appendix C2 and Table 7 offers a summary of this data.

---

[108] From the 40 students who attended high school in Montreal, 17 completed the ERC course material while they were still in high school (as they graduated after 2008 when the ERC was established).

Table 7: Summary of student and adult participants in Montreal by religious affiliation

Religious Group	Student surveys (Received 16[109]; Distributed 52).	Adult student surveys (Received 32 hard copy, 8 online; Distributed 33 hard copies and 150+ online.)	Adult perspectives (14 conversations)
Agnostic	0	1 online response, 2 hard copy responses	0
Anglican	0	1 online response, 2 hard copy responses	0
Associated Gospel Church	0	1 hard copy response	0
Baptist	0	1 hard copy response	0
Catholic	3	2 online response, 4 hardcopy responses	0
Hindu	0	1 online response	0
Evangelical Christians	1	22 hardcopy responses	0
Jewish	1 + conversed with Gr. 5 student	0	2 – 2 parents (1 who was a university staff)
Latter Day Saint (LDS)	2	0	2 – 1 parent (health professional), 1 teacher
Muslim	5	1 online response	2 – 1 health professional, 1 accountant
Non-religious	0	0	2 – 1 teacher, 1 entrepreneur
"Nothing in particular"	0	1 online response	0
Protestant	0	2 hardcopy responses	2 – as a follow-up to the surveys they completed as college students
Orthodox Christian	0	1 online response	0
Sikh	4	0	2 – 2 parents (1 truck driver, 1 cashier)
United Church	0	1 hardcopy survey	0
Blank responses/ unknown	0	0	2 – 1 principal (who is a parent), 1 vice-principal

---

[109] Each community group I approached in Montreal was smaller than the ones in Modesto so there was much less youth in each Montreal group. As with many things in Montreal, gatherings are more localized and there are many smaller religious groups that gather. Modesto has less groups but they are bigger in number.

Table 8: Summary of student and adult participants in Montreal by gender

Gender	Student	Adult
Female	29	6
Male	26	8
Blank	1	0

From the 16 current students who completed a survey, one of them is an elementary school student while the rest are in secondary school. Ten students attend French school boards and six attend English school boards. From this group, five attend private schools and 11 attend public schools. Geographically, three students are from Montreal schools (in the boroughs of Notre-Dame-de-Grace and Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie) and 13 are from neighbouring suburbs (LaSalle, Vaudreuil-Dorion, South Shore, Dorval, Kirkland, Laval, and Montreal West).

Among the adult student participants, 23 out of 40 secondary school graduates attend secondary school in Montreal (noted in Table 9). The 17 who did not attend secondary school in Montreal were excluded from some of the analysis. Among the 23, 17 students had the opportunity to complete the ERC course material while they were still in high school (as they graduated after 2008 when the ERC was established).

Within the adult student surveys, four students marked down more than one religious affiliation in their response. Both of their affiliations are noted in Table 7 but the tally of students at the top of the Table indicates the exact number of individuals that submitted a survey response. The six individuals under "n/a" in Table 9 currently attend an alternative education centre where they are completing their high school education course requirements in a class of six people on a part-time basis. They have not graduated from high school yet but they have attended other high school settings in Montreal. They are all above the age of 18 and included in the group of 17 students who had the opportunity to complete the ERC curriculum in their previous elementary or secondary schooling.

Table 9: Montreal adult student participants' year of graduation from secondary school

Year	2001	2002	2004	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	In 1st year university	Blank	CEGEP	n/a	Grand Total
	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	6	23

Among the 14 adult participants who conversed with me, none have a background in religious studies (based on the profile details they shared during our conversation), two are teachers (where one currently teaches the ERC in secondary schools), and six are identifiable parents based on the detail they shared during our conversation. Some participants may have been parents as well but they did not mention anything about their children during our conversation. Table 10 presents the profiles and pseudonyms for each of the 14 adult participants listed in chronological order of our conversations that occurred between November 2016 and mid-January 2017.

Table 10: Detailed profiles of adult participants in Montreal

Participants	Participant profile
Ben	Self-professed "anti-religious" businessman who grew up in Montreal. Anglophone. A member of Centre For Inquiry Canada (CFI) Montreal Facebook group. I spoke with him at a café.
Ryan	A Christian American post-secondary student studying at a satellite campus of an American college in Montreal. Has been in Montreal for 2-3 months at time of conversation. I spoke with him at a café.
Sai	A Sikh father and truck driver. I spoke with him briefly at the gurdwara in Dollard-des-Ormeaux, a suburb of Montreal.
Sarah	A Christian post-secondary student who grew up in Montreal. Not sure if she is an Anglophone, Francophone, or Allophone[110]. I spoke with her at a café.
Gita	A Sikh mother who moved to Montreal in 2003. A multi-lingual allophone. Spoke with her at the gurdwara in Dollard-des-Ormeaux.
Henry	A self-professed "active atheist, secularist." He began teaching maths and sciences in adult education in 2015 in an English school board. He is an Anglophone who grew up in Montreal. A member of CFI Montreal Facebook group. I spoke with him at a café.

---

[110] In Quebec, the terminology of Anglophone, Francophone, and Allophone refers to individuals who have English, French, and another language as their mother-tongue, respectively.

Daphne, Patricia, Patrick	Daphne – a Jewish mother who has a son with autism. Possibly a Montreal native. Patricia – a Jewish mother who works at Concordia University. Patrick – a Jewish 5th grade student. Son of Patricia. I spoke with them at a synagogue in Montreal.
Khadar	A Muslim young adult and a local leader at his mosque. Multilingual. I spoke with him at a mosque in Montreal.
Ghadah	A Muslim young adult and pharmacist who moved to Montreal in 2013. Multilingual, and fluent in French and English. I spoke with her at a café.
Jackie	A LDS mother and health physician who is a leader at her church and member of an interfaith dialogue group in Montreal. She moved to Montreal over 15 years ago from Western Canada. I spoke with her at her home. She participated in the Harvard Divinity School's Massive Online Open source Course (MOOC) on religious literacy herself before our initial conversation.
Marc	A LDS young adult who recently graduated from the Faculty of Education at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) as an *Ethics and Religious Culture* teacher. He is Francophone and teaches in French secondary schools. I spoke with him at a café.
David, Bernard	David – a principal of an elementary school in a French-speaking school board in Montreal. He arrived to his school two years ago and was a high school principal for 20 years beforehand. Francophone. From Montreal but lived in Ontario for a period. I did not inquire about his religious affiliation. Bernard – the vice-principal of David's elementary school in a French-speaking school board in Montreal. He arrived to his school two years ago and was a high school vice principal beforehand. Francophone. I did not inquire about his religious affiliation. I met them both at their school office.

From the data, four themes arose with a number of sub-themes in each one. Unlike Modesto, family was a not a theme in the Montreal data. Table 11 lists each of these themes, which the following sub-sections discuss.

Table 11: Themes that arose from thematic analysis in Montreal

Theme	Sub-theme (and additional categories in each one)
Society	• City & Society • Contact, and minority and majority dynamics • Workplace

School	• School environment
	   o Elementary school
	   o Secondary school
	   o College and university
	• School administration
	   o Hidden curriculum
	• Teachers
	• Teacher training
	• Views on the *Ethics and Religious Cultures* course
	• Religious literacy in general
	• Religious literacy at a young age

Students	• Summary of student survey responses

Phenomena	• Fear
	• Controversial topic and taboo
	• The internet and media
	• Formation
	   o Identity formation
	   o Respect formation
	   o Support system
	• Religious bullying
	• Religious bullying and religious literacy

8.1. Society

Again, in reflection of Bronfenbrenner's social ecological framework, the data in Montreal presents participant perspectives across various levels of society. Whereas Modesto participants shared views on the interaction with religious individuals in society, Montreal participants were more abstract in their thinking and stated descriptors about city and society rather than specific transformative element (TE) or exclusionary element (EE). As a result, less personal anecdotes were shared. Through these overarching perspectives, eight participants (David, Ghadah, Henry, Gita, Ben, Marc, Ryan, and Jackie) mentioned that Montreal is very multicultural and four of them compared its multiculturalism to the rest of Quebec. The

participants did not describe in detail how they felt Montreal was more multicultural than the rest

of Quebec in terms of engagement between cultures, but the idea of multiculturalism was related

to the visual representation of varying races (Marc, Patricia), ethnicities (Gita), and cultures in a

general sense (Ghadah, Henry). Marc mentioned teaching classes that included students from

three to four religions. With respect to the relationship between the religious groups, three

individuals mentioned that the Quebec community is "very, very secular, unreligious" (Henry)

or "do not like religion" (Ghadah) and that in the "French community, we don't have much

religion now. We kind of skipped it in the 60s, 70s" (David). As a result, the attitudes towards

religious literacy and religious bullying participants described were EE in nature.

Different conversations raised tensions about the need for Montrealers to conform to the

majority of Montreal society. In some ways, individuals referred to conformity with respect to

dress and in others, it was in relation to beliefs and expressions of belief and practice. For Ben, he

expressed that it would be helpful if religious minorities were more consistent in their difference

and dress so that it would be easier for others to recognize and accept it. In his example, he

expressed confusion from meeting a Sikh man who did not keep his hair in a turban but left it long.

Although this discussion was from a work experience in the US, he was visibly uncomfortable

with what he believed to be an anomaly that he did not know how to respond to. In contrast, Khadar

was frustrated at the wavering degree of conformity that the majority imposed:

> Twenty years ago when Muslims migrated to Canada and they were going to places like
> St. Zotique beach and the [inaudible]. They'll go anywhere where there's water and a
> river right? You would see the man and the male of each family would go into the water
> to have fun. And even the little girl from each family would go into the water and have
> fun. And you would have the ladies stay back because they wouldn't wear bikinis to go
> into the water. And you would see people look around and say, "Oh, look how oppressed
> these women are. They're not even allowed to go into the water and their men are having
> so much pleasure and fun, you know, jumping into the water and having fun." And here
> we are, you know, living and adapting with the technology that's offered to us and we
> come in with the burkini and we said, "You know what, we've found an alternative for

those women." But today, what society says, instead of society clapping and saying "Islam is a religion that adapted with technology."…And so you find out that 20 years later, when the same women is able to go into the water and have fun, people are still judging negatively and saying, "Oh look, now they can go into the water but they have to dress up." But OK, what's wrong? What was your point? That they're not enjoying and having a hobby of going into the water? Or what they're wearing?

Khadar's frustration was further stimulated, as people thought his wife was a professional swimmer when she wore the burkini during a trip to Cancun and respected her then as a result. To Khadar, such an example showed a lack of understanding among people and negative perception in society that was promoted by the media, which other participants raised concerns about as well (Jackie, Ryan, Ghadah). For, despite the diversity within Montreal, participants shared that a lack of contact and understanding perpetuated a divide among people.

From her secondary school experience, Sarah shared that there is a difference between multiculturalism and inclusiveness. The boroughs of Montreal can be non-inclusive as,

> there are so many different boroughs and like, you know kind of segregated almost. You know, you find the Anglophone and Francophone and it's completely separated and racially separated. I don't know, I don't find it very inclusive at all… I think the general feeling is still a bit standoff-ish with everybody (Sarah).

David shared similar thoughts when we spoke about teachers. There is "always a reaction when a teacher comes with a hijab…there is a malaise about it." There is a "tolerance for daycare workers but not teachers. We're not there yet…kids won't see it that much but parents will." Elaborating on this, David said that the Montreal society is not ready for this yet so the rest of Quebec will definitely not be ready either. In each of these reflections, the participants related observations in the school environment to what they saw in the rest of society.

Building on this, Ben, Ryan, and Sarah shared thoughts on the struggle between minority and majority groups. Most poignant for the Montreal community was Sarah's reflection. For, in her secondary school where 90% of the students were West Indian, the White students believed

that their affiliation with the larger society legitimized their differential treatment towards their non-White classmates. Sarah described that, "a lot of the perpetrators were the White students there so even if you are the minority, you're not the minority. Do you know what I'm saying?" These students discriminated against non-White parents and spoke rudely to them during teacher-parent nights as well. According to Sarah, the teachers and school administration only responded to the students when they realized that the negative attitude was directed towards parents.

Despite these negative attitudes, David clarified that different age groups within the city have very different experiences in schooling. Individuals in their 50s and 60s, like himself, did not witness much immigration growing up and did not discuss world religions in their classroom. The younger generation today discuss world religions at school, encounter more immigrants, and people who are open in sharing about non-Christian religions too. Hence, while Sarah's recent experience contends David's views, other participants shared common thoughts. For Ryan, he felt welcomed and that Montreal was "very liberal but not in an aggressive way" compared to parts of Burlington, Vermont and Philadelphia where he was raised. For Jackie, she recognized that Montreal was not immune to the global problem of people having a lack of understanding for others, but that Montreal possesses the tools and schools to transform such thinking. For Ghadah, who grew up in parts of Africa, Europe, and Asia, she felt that, "In the West, people are more mingled…And I think if you work in a place where people will see you and know that you're normal and not too weird or anything then it changes." Through these perspectives, and others, participants clearly shared that, despite the negative attitudes in Montreal, the contact, exposure to individuals, and schooling Montrealers could access were TEs that could dismantle assumptions and the negative attitudes that exist in the city. Younger teachers, like Marc, have embraced these tools and diversity in his own ERC class.

I've mostly taught in Montreal and most of the schools I've done were very multicultural so usually, I was one of the few white kids in the class and it was interesting for that. So, yeah, it was not rare to have at least three to four religion, at least, when I was teaching them. And it was also interesting to see what the students could add to the class when we were teaching it.

To this, he added that students were willing to share their own personal experiences in the class as he also encouraged them to be more open and comfortable with religious differences.

8.2. School

Related to Marc's comments were many other perspectives on the school environment (in the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels), school administration (and the hidden curriculum they may present), the role of the teacher, teacher training to foster religious literacy, the ERC, courses with religious literacy in general, and religious literacy among young students.

8.2.1. The school environment and the administration's hidden curriculum

From personal experiences as an administrator (David), parent (Patricia, Jackie), and student (Sarah), four participants highlighted the exclusionary elements of the school environment that may have been promoted by a hidden curriculum from the school administration (Jackie, Sarah). In consideration of the past few homogeneous elementary schools that her son had attended in the Montreal area[111], Patricia found that the awareness and recognition of diversity was not enough, "Christmas isn't going to be missed…It's not like the whole school is necessarily aware that, 'Oh, it's Eid. It's Diwali.'" Her observations of Christian normativity harkened back to points from many participants describing the societal aspects related to religious literacy and religious bullying, such as Sarah in describing her own high school experience. However, at the elementary

---

[111] Patricia's son, Patrick, had moved around to many schools in Montreal by Fifth Grade due to school bullying and conflicts, which Patricia did not describe in detail.

level, David shared details about daycare workers who were influencing the school environment negatively.

Although it did not exist at David's elementary school, David knew of several incidents of bullying among daycare workers because many, as he described them, were Moroccans, Algerians, or new immigrants from the Maghreb in general. The tension between different daycare workers from various French-speaking countries in the Maghreb led to racism and rivalry between adults that arose in front of students a school, especially when Muslim holidays arose and they vied for the day off. Along with racism, David explained that some would accuse others of not being the "right kind of Muslim." In his own school within the past two years, he had to intervene between adult daycare workers, and he found that most issues related closely to religion. Although conflicts among high school teachers are more prevalent, from his experience as a previous high school principal, he felt that the conflicts between daycare workers were a bigger problem and of greater concern than that among his teachers. Thus, although David was not aware of religious bullying among his students, he knew that the bullying among his daycare workers that may have been based on religion was potentially fostering an EE in his school environment.

Sarah felt that an exclusionary environment was also fostered at her school by the administration and that, even though the ERC was taught at school, the school environment and the school administration communicated an alternate hidden curriculum that contradicted the ERC aims. Sarah observed this contradiction when she realized that teachers only responded to students who discriminated against parents but not when the same students discriminated against other classmates for the same reason. Similarly, Jackie, a LDS participant, struggled with this contradiction when her child's school promoted the screening of *The Book of Mormons* without discussing the explicit harm that the content of the play could pose on Mormon students and

community despite teaching to the objectives of the ERC[112]. Jackie felt offended that the school would promote such a play but she paused to say that, "I'm sure the school is totally unaware…Sometimes, we're so unaware of our own biases, or that even the things that we do are offensive to others." Related to exclusionary elements, Jackie observed that, "Often the hidden messages [are] more powerful than the explicit ones"; however, the same comment could be applied to transformative elements.

Transformative elements were noticed in elementary, secondary, and adult education environments. In David's elementary school, Patricia and Patrick noticed a very clear anti-bullying culture that incorporated and equipped students and was consistent through the year. There were announcements to promote this aspect of school culture on the first day of school and during the year. There was a week of anti-bullying activities[113], teachers who were aware of anti-bullying resources, and students who were equipped with strategies to address bullying via animator-mediator program. This program taught kids to "Walk away. Think about it. Talk about it. Find a solution," seek adult support, and "special training to help positively instead of tell [the bullies] off negatively" (Patrick). All this included responses that informed those who were bullied, bullying, and the bystander, and taught students to be proactive rather than reactive (Patricia).

From Patricia's perspective and Patrick's sharing, this school in particular was very inclusive. David felt that the teacher's sense of ownership at the school really influenced this environment but Patricia and Patrick explained that the sense of ownership trickled down among

---

[112] Two differing reviews of *The Book of Mormons* can be seen here:
https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/book-of-mormon-musical-column,
https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/feb/06/the-book-of-mormon-review-a-visionary-musical-masterpiece-genital-jokes-and-all
[113] These activities included theatre, little puppets, drawing contest, a testimony that was shared by a bullied individual, a student form for reporting bullying, posting of posters on school walls and murals in the school courtyard, and comments on the school interphone.

students too. "The teachers can't be everywhere. The lunchtime monitors can't be everywhere. There's got to be a culture of relationship" (Patricia); the animator-mediator program gave Patrick a sense of responsibility towards the younger students at his school so that even the students promoted the school culture.

In the secondary school environment where there are more students, Marc noticed that students naturally created a more inclusive and welcoming environment themselves when his ERC students began to share their own experiences when there were at least three to four other religious groups in the classroom. In the adult education space, Henry also commented on the initiative and leadership of his students. He noted that, "I've seen remarkable tolerance from students" as we discussed that they were older, most likely less insecure, and have more life experiences to learn to set aside conflicts that usually arose in other high school education settings. With this background and as students in adult education who may have been more motivated to graduate than other students, their common goal to graduate may have led to a collegiality that led them to set aside cliquishness.

From these conversations, the EE in the school environment seemed to stem from adults in the school environment, whether they were administrators or not. Contrasting this observation was the role of students as transformative elements (TE), and administrators as well in some cases. As described by Patricia, David was a great principal – so open even to speak English with parents who struggle with French despite being a principal in the French school board. "So much of the [healthy relationships at schools] is dependent on the principal and the principals change…if the next one is a lousy one, then it all reverts back to nothing" (Daphne and Patricia). To form the healthy relationship, David was truly an exemplary principal. He shared that he was aware of the dynamics of the student age group and found effective ways to communicate to them by being

visually present in each classroom and sharing a consistent message about bullying in each one: "I

don't gather [the elementary students] in the arena or the gym, it's too big. I go in every single

class" (David). His personality and welcome attitude towards all students was also visible when I

visited his school and saw him hi-five a student after a student walked up and looked up to say hi

to David. During this time, he also joked with a daycare worker at the school and hi-fived them

too. Thus, in considering the school environment and school administration, the school leadership

can be pivotal in promoting a positive or negative hidden messages in the curriculum and school

culture. Teachers are crucial actors as well.

8.2.2. ERC success dependent on the teacher
    As the third sub-theme, and with a closer consideration of the ERC, six participants shared

that the success of the ERC depends on the teacher who is teaching it (Khadar, Jackie, Marc, Gita,

Sarah, Henry), i.e. teachers can be the EE or TE. As an EE, participants observed and were aware

of:

- teachers who self-censored to avoid controversy and conflict (Henry, Jackie, Sarah) especially as the success of raising controversial topics is more teacher dependent in secondary school (Jackie),
- teachers who exclude mention of some religions or perceive a hierarchy of religions and express that in their teaching by omission or attitude when discussing other religions (Jackie and Sarah),
- teachers who may focus more on the ethics component of the course rather than the religious culture component (Jackie),
- teachers who do not respond when students laugh or tease one another in relation to a religious culture (Sarah),
- teachers who are unfamiliar with the ERC and use the course to teach the old Moral and Religious Education curriculum rather than the ERC curriculum (Sarah), and
- teachers who are asked to teach the ERC despite their discomfort with the topic (David).

In supporting one of her children in their ERC assignment, Jackie also realized that a TE that a

teacher aims to promote could become an EE when the teacher does not monitor the student

progress overall[114]. Despite these personal experiences and awareness, many participants were also

highly respectful of teachers and the potential for teachers to be a TE overall.

Gita, a Sikh mother, shared a deep reverence for teachers:

For us, we say 'guru.' Guru means teacher, which has a very particular meaning. It's a Sanskrit word – guru. 'Gu' it says darkness. 'Ru' who give you the knowledge to take away the darkness. That's guru. Education is the one. It takes all the darkness away and brings us the light – the light of knowledge to learn about others, to learn about ourselves.

Similarly, Marc emphasized the importance of an ERC teacher's knowledge – the knowledge to

understand the ERC curriculum, to teach beyond the main four religions of Catholicism,

Protestantism, Judaism, and Native Spiritualities, to set aside their own beliefs, but also the ability

to analyze and the difference between religion, politics, and culture – and teach that to the students.

In addition to knowledge, Sarah, Jackie, and Marc also spoke about the importance of a passionate

teacher. "I think [the ERC] needs people who are passionate about talking about controversial

issues and really want to feed into youth and you know, be the kind of catalyst that makes change"

(Sarah). Even as a parent, Jackie highly valued a passionate teacher because her children had a

passionate ERC elementary teacher: "She really got it and she really kind of made it important in

the classroom and my kids loved it and I loved it because of that too." Her children came home to

talk about their ERC discussions. In turn, that particular teacher influenced her students and

Jackie's whole family too. From observing other ERC teachers, Marc noted that a passionate

teacher was also one who asked questions and modeled the type of questions that could be asked

---

[114] In this experience, her son's ERC teacher asked the students to study a religion to present it to the class. Her son chose Christianity but began to argue with the other Christian students in the group when they disagreed on theological beliefs in Christianity. The parents soon became involved in the dispute before the teacher was aware. When the teacher was informed, they did not resolve the issue nor discuss the nuances within a religious belief with the students and parents. Instead, the teacher asked the parents to help their children resolve the issue.

in class, in order to foster comfort among students to do the same. To accomplish these aims, teacher training was identified as a TE, and was the fourth sub-theme in the theme of schooling.

8.2.3. The importance of ERC teacher training and its continual improvement

Marc completed four years of study at the Université de Quebec a Montreal (UQAM) to become an ERC teacher[115]. Although he graduated and felt ill-equipped to teach the ERC courses, as did many of his peers due to the difficult topics the ERC includes and due to the course itself, he did appreciate his training very much. Towards the end of his program, UQAM asked him and his peers for feedback on how to improve the teacher training. As a result, he was given the tools and knowledge to help him gain further resources in the future. During his training, he also felt that his Philosophy and Religious Studies professors were accommodating to the needs of the ERC students they received so that they would be better equipped to teach the ERC, even though most of the students in class were not from the faculty of education. Furthermore, Marc appreciated his training because he felt that UQAM gave an equal level of respect to the ethics and religious culture component of the course, as an equal number of philosophy and religious studies classes were required. Marc was unfamiliar with the ERC training offered at other universities but he recognized the value of his own. Since he was my only ERC teacher participant, he spoke the most about teacher training in relation to the ERC. However, when discussing the ERC itself, all my participants were outspoken in their sharing.

---

[115] UQAM has a specific degree for ERC teachers and is more rigorous in providing training for ERC teachers than most other universities in Quebec (Chan, 2019). As a result, Marc received specific training to become an ERC teacher.

8.2.4. Skepticism and hope in the ERC course

As the fifth sub-theme within the microsystem of the school, participants listed many EE and TE of the ERC program. Altogether, six participants explicitly stated that the ERC is a good course (Jackie, Gita, Marc, Sarah, David, Ben) but many raised concerns about it and saw its volatility (Jackie). Yet, nobody said that it was a bad course. "[It is a] good course but [it] depends on how it's implemented" (Ben) and "practiced" (Khadar). David was conscious of the criticisms towards the course and that "it's still [a] pretty hot [topic] these days in Quebec" and Sarah that the course had the potential to teach students *about* different beliefs through a critical lens despite its many areas of improvement. The hesitancy my educator participants showed related to an understanding that the course was assigned to any teacher who had space in their schedule (Marc, David, Bernard). Even Sarah, a student, suspected this practice from her own observation.

Under negative practices such as allocating the course to teachers who had no training in this area but had space in their schedules, the course was seen as a political tool, used by parents to advocate their own specific tradition (Jackie) or to appease large populations in Quebec as nobody failed an ERC course (Henry), and as there was an overemphasis of Christianity in the curriculum (Henry). "Even the fact that Christianity is divided into Protestantism and Catholicism seems to be an overkill. I mean, you could put the two into one section…I mean, why not Sunni and Shi'a Islam as two separate branches?" (Henry) In consideration of the ERC's second course objective to understand the other, Henry noted that the majority of people in Montreal and Quebec identify as Christians so a course that prioritizes the teaching of the majority contradicts the course objectives to understand the other altogether. To this point, some participants were surprised to learn that it is not a priority to teach about Islam in every school year (Ben, Jackie, Patricia, Henry) and felt that the curriculum focused too much on Quebec history and was not relevant to the world

or the Montreal society today. In qualifying these concerns, Sarah explained that, "We really didn't learn about other religions."

In addition to their analysis and observations, negative hearsay about the course also circulated to taint public perception about the course itself (Henry). Perhaps due to this public perception or personal perspectives, participants also found that some teachers' and principals' possessed a negative attitude towards the class. This in turn influenced their own experience of the course as well (Jackie, Sarah, David, Marc). For example, Jackie's negative experience as a parent one year left her fearful and disdained towards the course overall, and Sarah was uncomfortable with the course because she felt that her teacher most likely did not respond to teasing towards religious minority students because of her teacher's probable Catholic identity[116].

As with all other sub-themes, our co-analysis also raised several TEs regarding the ERC course. Through the third course competency of dialogue, Marc, Henry, Jackie, and Gita felt that the course could break down prejudice and stereotypes and broaden students' minds by discussing religion and controversial topics in order to remove the taboo from these subjects and learn how to communicate about issues and differences (Marc). In such opportunities and environments, students were then able to express their own ideas and identities (Marc and Jackie). In one particular anecdote, Gita shared that her daughter was able to learn about and help recognize a classmate's religious identity, leading her classmate to an emotional response of thanks. The overall positive experience her daughter had with the course led Gita to strongly emphasize that any bad effect from the course was ultimately the result of bad teaching. To Gita, the ERC was a vehicle for teachers to be a source of positive influence, as children do not always listen to parents even if they have a healthy or strong child-parent relationship. This was also substantiated in

---

[116] This was an assumption that Sarah raised, but she did not clarify why she believed her teacher may have been Catholic.

Jackie's experience as the open dialogue in her children's class was continued at home; showcasing the possibly transformative nature of dialogue in the ERC that can be multiplied at home with a parent who is also religiously literate. To this, she remarked that, "I've loved it."

8.2.5. A call for religious literacy to begin at a young age

The fifth and sixth sub-theme related to religious literacy courses in general and exposure to religious literacy at a young age. Overall, participants stated that religious literacy is "good" explicitly (Ghadah, Jackie, Henry), and some felt that it was important for parents (Jackie and Ghadah), adults in general (Ben), and that it should begin at a young age (Ben, Ghadah, Gita, Henry, Jackie, and Ryan). Only two participants seemed somewhat hesitant to consider young students' abilities overall, whether it was to understand the complexities of religious literacy (Khadar) or bullying (David[117]). With these perspectives, only Ghadah felt that religious literacy could be an exclusionary element since it was a hard topic to teach. All other participants understood religious literacy only as a transformative element in comparison, especially Jackie as she personally feared others as a child because there was no religious literacy in her community or information about other people.

From many of their personal experiences and observations, participants noted that education itself is transformative when it includes the teaching of understanding and respect (Ghadah and Gita) and that religious literacy in particular could "open eyes" in our world today (Ryan and Jackie). Any form of religious literacy course could break down prejudice, which would then prevent or respond to any form of EE that prejudice would have engendered (Marc). These

---

[117] Even though David, an elementary school principal, promoted bullying awareness at his school to all students in attitude and school culture, he did mention that he was unsure how students younger than the third grade could comprehend bullying. This contradicted the bullying experiences that Patrick, Patricia's Fifth Grade son, faced in his previous elementary schools in English school boards.

perspectives were consistent for all age groups. For children and youth in particular, Jackie and Marc knew that students were already self-aware and interested from six to thirteen years of age, that students have many questions in general and an informed religious literate teacher could address their questions (Marc). To accomplish this among young children, Ryan suggested teaching students incrementally with the basics so that they are aware that, "This is common around the world. You're going to have to get used to this." Afterwards, he suggested teaching the students the same topic in a more in-depth manner so that they could analyze and understand it within their specific context.

8.3. Students

Among the 23 post-secondary students, 13% (n=3) said "yes," 4% (n=1) said "very much," and 26% (n=6) said "somewhat" to the question on observing or knowing about students who were religiously bullied by other students. Among the 16 secondary students, 18% (n=3) said "yes" and 25% (n=4) said "somewhat" to observing or knowing about students who were religiously bullied by other students. During the Montreal Co-Analysis Meeting #2, Ghadah, a Montreal community member, raised the possibility that "somewhat" could also mean "yes" as some students may feel that something is wrong but unsure of what or why they feel so. Based on the way my survey question was phrased, Khadar, another community member, added that "yes" could also refer to people not wanting to admit that they were the individuals who were embarrassed. Troublingly, five individuals among the adult students mentioned that religious bullying stemmed from their teachers and two current students made the same observation. Problematically, these reports confirm that religious bullying does happen in Montreal. Unlike responses from Modesto, Montreal respondents show that teachers have been the bully as well. However, despite the existence of religious bullying, data from the former school students who are now adult students

and current students suggest that younger participants currently in school or recently graduated are all more aware of appropriate bullying responses in general. This may be due to an increased focus on bullying awareness in the past few decades. For, among the adult students, six (and possibly two others who left a response blank) noted that they did not report bullying to teachers or school staff, but all the current secondary students who witnessed discrimination or bullying (except for three individuals who left their response blank) notified teachers and school staff after an incident. As my study presents a very small and non-representative sample, it cannot be concluded that students are generally more comfortable and informed in reporting discriminatory acts or bullying; however, it is encouraging evidence to show that some students individually are equipped with the resources needed to respond to discrimination and bullying. Additionally, despite the minimal data collected, the information does show the potential of an increasingly aware student body over time.

One benefit of my data collection is that I was able to find a shift in some perceptions over time, as my data included perspectives from graduates of the ERC program and those currently completing it today. From this chronological spectrum, when asked if they thought it was important for "myself and my peers at school to be able to talk about our religious and/or non-religious beliefs at school without fear of being bullied," 87% (20 of 23) post-secondary students who had attended secondary school in Montreal said, "yes," or "very much." In comparison, 100% of students (16 of 16) currently attending secondary school in Montreal said, "yes" or "very much" suggesting a testament to a striking increase in bullying awareness in Montreal schools overall.

When all students (N=56) were asked, "what are your thoughts about religious bullying (which is bullying that occurs based on an individual's religious or non-religious identity)?" 64% thought negatively about it, 18% noted that religious bullying is just as bad as any other form of

bullying, 5% experienced or mentioned that they knew about it, 4% offered a solution for it, such as education and the ERC class, 13% did not respond to the question, and 5% offered responses that could not be categorized into the previous themes. To respond to religious bullying, students suggested solutions from the school policy, such as suspension (13%), through dialogue with all involved parties including teachers and school administrators (18%), the establishment of religious literacy programs (11%), school assemblies and conferences (13%), while some offered no suggestions (16%) and others shared responses that could not be categorized (13%). Unlike in Modesto, no student shared that they would step in to resolve a bullying incident (except Patrick who shared this perspective in our one-on-one conversation). Everyone who offered suggestions recommended an institutional or policy solution.

Regarding student perspectives on the ERC course, a larger number of post-secondary students (35%, n=8) were more negative about the course compared to the current elementary and secondary students we spoke with (13%, n=2), suggesting a possible change in the way the course is taught in some milieus. Conversely, current elementary and secondary students show a comparatively more positive review of the course (81%, n=13) opposed to the current post-secondary students who did enjoy the course (61%, n=14). These mixed emotions are evident in the comments of three post-secondary students.

For example, one evangelical Christian student currently studying at Concordia University, Montreal reflected that: "From what I remember, we only really studied the three major monotheistic religions." Another evangelical Christian student currently studying at Université de Montreal felt that, "[The course was] not that interesting. I felt we were studying somethings no one believed anymore almost like history. Some teachers [were] judging." Alternately, a current student affiliated with the United Church and attending CEGEP Marianopolis thought that, "It's a

good course because it helps students learn about more religions but it also opens up the possibility for religious bullying." These descriptions, among others, focused on the informative basis of the course but current elementary and secondary students seemed to comment more on the attitudinal potentials of the course, such as one Sikh student who shared that, "Personally, I think that this course helps students to reflect on their own beliefs and it helps them be more educated about other religions. It has helped me a lot with my ethical dilemmas in recent months." Although a negative review of the course, another student also noted an attitudinal angle: "In my personal experience, it teaches that my religion is no different from any other, in that all religions are equally false." As minimal comments were shared about the course's ability to influence attitudinal changes, my data was inconclusive in summarizing whether the ERC was able to change student attitudes more positively or negatively, unlike comments from the WGWR course.

8.4. Three phenomena regarding fear, individual formation and development, and religious bullying and religious literacy

Regarding the theme of phenomena, the sub-theme of fear arose, as it did in Modesto. However, this was coupled with the sub-themes of controversial topics and taboos that were often promoted and maintained by the media, individual formation and development (specifically with respect to one's identity, respect for others, and the role that one's support system plays in this development), and ideas and observations of religious bullying and religious literacy overall.

8.4.1. Fear in approaching controversial topics and taboos, and media's role in its promotion of fear

With respect to fear, participants felt that there was a fear of the course and a fear of others based on a lack of information about both (Jackie), and a fear of dialogue that would perpetuate the exclusionary elements of fear as it allowed misunderstandings to persist within and across

groups (Marc). In Jackie's personal childhood, she learned that a closed religious community could promote fear as a group[118], and so the fear of judgement within one's own religious community could hinder one from learning about or engaging with others. As she became a parent, she also observed that there was a fear among parents who wanted control over their child's curriculum and felt that the ERC was not able to offer this. For herself, she recognized that her own bad experience in helping her son complete an ERC assignment engendered fear about the course in the following years. To overcome this communal fear, she felt that the individual's ability to question and wonder could be the transformative element. For, despite the EE from her own community, she felt that her personal reflection and understanding that "just because you're taught something doesn't mean it's actually true," and ability to question and wonder about her early lessons were TE in her life. Her later exposure to positive experiences with others also dismantled many fears that she was taught as a child.

To assuage such fears, Ben and Jackie both felt that the school was the right environment to address the controversial topics and taboos in society (the second sub-theme), as it would be too difficult to engage in controversial topics in the workplace among adults, who were also members of society and maintained the norm. Henry, though, noted that this was a struggle to accomplish in schools as teachers and school administration aimed to maintain or create a safe space by omitting such topics: "School boards are politicians essentially. They take such a safe and conservative position rather than trying to do something constructive." In this sense, the perception of the topics as controversial and the educators who permitted the exclusion of such topics were EEs to Henry. For David, the overarching idea of ethics and religious culture was taboo in itself, aside from any specific topics within the class. The course environment itself was tumultuous as

---

[118] Jackie's experience related to learning about sexual education and her community's refrain from discussing related matters.

he suggested that some students could use it to intentionally raise controversy[119]. To teach the ERC in light of these perceived controversies, some teachers stay close to discussing the mainstream controversial topics in class (such as sexual orientation) while others (like the Charter of Values) were excluded (Jackie and Sarah), suggesting that a hierarchy of taboo topics exists. This hierarchy and perception about the taboo for many participants was maintained by media sources (Gita, Henry, Khadar, and Marc); only Ben said that, "Media can expand your mind." With respect to religion, Henry felt that the media portrayed one religion distinctly different from others and that the media "decides [who] to give the voice [to]." Khadar agreed wholeheartedly about the media's selectiveness, and Marc felt that the media does not show any positive aspects about religion.

In response to these exclusionary elements, the participants noted that educating adults could minimize controversy (Jackie) and that teachers who are comfortable discussing controversial issues in class can help students critique and question prejudice or misunderstanding (Marc). In doing so, teachers could also teach to foster an understanding of religion as it is different from tradition and culture in order to alleviate some of the controversy in discussing and understanding certain issues (Gita and Marc). To support these teachers, it is important to foster a recognition of rights and the courage to discuss these topics: "A certain respect for free speech is important and a willingness to discuss difficult issues head on" (Ben). This would then support the students who are interested in discussing and understanding controversial topics (Ghadah) and who consider ERC as the course that can address such concerns (Sarah). Thus, through these perspective, teachers were recognized as a potential TE by guiding the transformative act of discussing controversial topics, as such a practice implicitly challenges the status quo which chooses not to talk about them, and supports the development of TE among students as well. By

---

[119] To this, he offered the hypothetical example of non-Muslim students using the course content as an opportunity to challenge a Muslim ERC teacher. This may have been a suggestion of his own fear as well.

supporting students in this manner, teachers could inherently support a student's understanding of the world and themselves.

8.4.2. The importance of individual formation and development

Despite my initial focus on the school environment, all participants noted that their identity formation (the third sub-theme) was independent of their school experience. Rather, it was informed by parents, their own experience, and affiliation to an ideology or group. Schooling informed the reflection of some life experiences, but it was not deemed as influential as the other sources that were mentioned. For example, the closed community environment of Jackie's childhood was identified as an EE as it led her parents to opt-out of a sex education course for Jackie. In hindsight, Jackie understood that the relationships she had in childhood and adult life were more influential in her identity formation overall; alluding to similar thoughts that Ben shared on how when one's identity is affiliated to an ideology, the ideology can foster exclusionary attitudes and values and "impede critical thinking." In these examples, the participants did not distinguish between their identification with a group and their own identity; however, in reality, their affiliation with the group influenced their identity formation and thinking.

To counter the minimizing aspects of group membership, Ben noted the importance of self-understanding, as it offers a foundation for one to understand others; as the recognition of common values can lead one to address the different lenses easier. Jackie noted this self-reflection as a TE as well. Her reflection of the EE in her childhood led her to take on TE and attitudes in her identity and the understanding of herself. This self-understanding led her to encourage wonder and questioning for herself and her children.

The fourth and fifth sub-themes related to developing attitudes of respect, and the support system participants had that fostered their respect for others. Gita, who is Sikh, and Marc, who is

a Latter Day Saint, specifically shared that their belief system taught them to respect others. Although parents were identified potentially both as EE and TE, they, along with Ghadah and Sarah described their parents and family experiences that had taught them respect. In this discussion, the ERC was believed to have potential to also foster respect, but the influential figures and anecdotes that were described indicated that the parents were most important in a child and student's life in childhood when children spend more time with their parents (Gita) and later when parents can reinforce what is taught in the ERC (Jackie). To support the individual teachings of parents, participants emphasized the importance of a support system overall. Role models throughout the family were important, evident in the examples that were shared about Gita's daughter and her grandmother, and Khadah who spoke very fondly about his father's care for others that he wished to emulate. When the home (and family network) is a safe place for inquiry (to foster understanding and respect), parents can encourage (and model) further curiosity (Jackie).

8.4.3. Religious bullying and religious literacy

The final sub-themes in our discussions regarding phenomena were religious bullying and religious literacy. Unlike the discussion on religious bullying in Modesto where we focused on the perceptions of religious bullying, the Montreal participants spoke more about incidents. Specifically, all the educators in my study (Marc, David, Bernard, Henry) had not witnessed any religious bullying in their class or school among students. Instead, David and Ghadah had witnessed insults, teasing, and discrimination based on religion. However, among adults, David, Bernard, and Henry had seen incidents of religious bullying.

Henry and Jackie believed that religious bullying arose out of ignorance and a lack of understanding of one another. Additionally, Jackie felt that there was an understanding that

bullying of any form only occurred in one's school years at school; hence, the ignorance among adults was an EE to identifying and addressing religious bullying overall.

While my conversation with Ryan did not contradict these ideas, he also mentioned the possibility of a strength-by-numbers mentality as the teasing based on religious beliefs in his high school only turned into religious bullying in college when more like-minded individuals began to congregate. This suggests that other socio-cultural beliefs and attitudes may influence the potential for religious bullying beyond ignorance or a lack of understanding. In spite of these perspectives and anecdotes, albeit brief, participants also shared two TEs. Ghadah shared that her niece was teased for being Muslim but she responded with resiliency by verbally addressing the issue and walking away. This resiliency among youth who have been or may be bullied as a member of a minority group has been documented in another study that I completed with the Hindu American Foundation in 2018 (see Balaji, Chan, Arshanapally, Khanna, Pallod, Forthcoming). Another identified TE was Marc's fortitude as an aware teacher; during class, he heard students make a discriminatory side comment about a religious group and he addressed it before it escalated further. Thus, although the Montreal participants discussed anecdotes more than their specific perceptions about religious bullying, the examples they shared offer glimpses of their thoughts and the possible state of religious bullying in Montreal.

Religious literacy was also described as a potential TE for religious bullying, which participants shared from a theoretical and personal perspective. Theoretically, Henry posited that:

> Yeah, if you remove the reason to bully, that [religious literacy] right there [at a young age] would be your-, you're fixing things. I don't know if it's important but the-, adult bullying. Is that-? I'm active on the atheist online community and you do get a lot of, even atheists bullying religious people. (Henry)

Like Henry, Ryan felt that religious literacy as knowledge could change people's understanding of one another, to "open eyes more to help people realize that these are very real views that people

have. A lot of them have based their entire lives around, you know, this, this…aspect of themselves and to mock that is extremely degrading to some people and it's not realized enough." Marc shared these positive theoretical thoughts and experiential responses as well as an ERC teacher. As a parent, Jackie added that:

> I think (the ERC) totally has potential. I think, absolutely-. My own experience is that if you know somebody from another religious tradition, you've interacted with them, you've come to learn and understand them, you're less afraid of them. And I think when we have less fear, there's less bullying. So, I do think the potential there is really great. I think probably, as you're seeing it, probably there is some part of a two-edged sword on this too because if it's not done well or if it's taught with insensitivity, or if teachers aren't trained or if the parents-, even if the parents aren't on board with it, it can actually become a controversy, which is exactly what you're trying to have it not do. (Jackie)

Jackie's experience speaks to the power of knowledge that can lead to open interactions and understanding without fear. In relation to religious literacy's potential connection to address religious bullying, she raises similar fears that other participants spoke about regarding the specific ERC teacher and teacher training. Similarly, Khadar said the positive connection between religious literacy and religious bullying would be dependent on the teacher and course content.

8.4.4. Resiliency
        As with Modesto, the Montreal data set posed one aspect to consider for future research, that of resiliency. At work in the pharmacy, Ghadah shared that a customer commented negatively on her hijab to which she reacted calmly and told them that another pharmacist would be there to help them. Ghadah's niece, as previously mentioned in this chapter, was teased by other girls at school but she responded positively. On a few occasions, Ryan was called a bigot but his response to those interactions is that, "I don't mind the confrontation nearly as much." Instead, he feels sad about each encounter rather than finding it offensive. To him, it reflected the fact that individuals

in Burlington, VT, where he attends school most of the time, have come to over generalize all individuals within a group. Regarding her Montreal high school, Sarah shared that atheist students would make jokes about Jesus towards her but she thought it was nothing compared to what her Muslim friend had gone through so her personal experience did not come across as an exceptionally negative act in her mind.

In each of these four circumstances, the individuals were able to step back to analyze the situation without expressing a negative response. Instead, they understood it as a lack of knowledge from another party or compare their experience to that of others who may be more marginalized than themselves. These details suggest that religious literacy, and perhaps an awareness of religious bullying and religious discrimination, is equipping individuals with the ability to perceive the lack of knowledge among antagonizing individuals and to respond to it cognitively before responding behaviourally. This creates room for future research in bullying overall.

Summary

Similar to the data from Modesto, this data set reflects Bronfenbrenner's social ecological framework as perspectives and ideas were embedded in the micro (school), meso (society), exo (media), and macro (fear) levels and aspects of society. Traces of the phenomenal sub-themes of fear, individual formation and development, and perspectives on religious bullying and religious literacy were present in the themes pertaining to society, the school, and students. Again, as with the Modesto data set, highlighting that the misunderstanding and prejudice within religious bullying, as well as the lack of religious literacy, is a societal issue and permeates across various milieus and not just the school environment.

Through this discussion, the Montreal data set answered my first research question of, "*What is religious bullying?*" akin to that from Modesto – that religious bullying is between and within religious groups. Through sharing from Henry and David, among others, Montreal was noted as a secular environment, not thoroughly welcoming of religious individuals. As such, religious bullying from non-religious individuals was discussed more prominently than it was in Modesto. In both locations, participants believed that Muslim students were bullied the most.

Regarding my second research question, *"To what extent does religious bullying occur at the public school level in Montreal and/or Modesto?"* My data was again non-representative of the sample population so my study is unable to discuss the extent of religious bullying in Montreal. In particular, Jackie and Ghadah were unsure of the extent of religious bullying because students may not have been familiar with the definition, or that their experiences constituted bullying. However, data shows that religious bullying does occur at Montreal public schools among students. In one school, religious bullying incidents arose more among adults than students, specifically daycare workers. In some school environments, religious bullying was maintained due to a lack of response by teachers and school administrators (Sarah), but symptoms of it were addressed before an incident could arise (Marc).

To my third research question, *"Do the ERC and/or WGWR foster inclusive classrooms and school environments that encourage students to discuss religion and/or address religious bullying with mutual respect, empathy for others, and self-reflection?"* the student survey data gathered that 11 students who attended a Montreal school and had completed a portion of the ERC program said that their ERC class was inclusive and welcoming. In the conversations, Jackie and Gita shared that their children were encouraged to discuss different religions on their own. Gita's daughter felt a sense of respect and empathy for their classmate. Jackie's children may have felt

similarly, but this was not explicitly shared. Instead, Jackie, like Henry and Ben, spoke about the opportunity for the course to raise wonder and curiosity, in hopes of fostering understanding. Furthermore, I can only conclude that the ERC can foster inclusive classrooms for some, but that this did not necessarily filter into the school environment. At times the ERC teachings contradicted the school environment (Sarah and Jackie), but the course did positively foster the mutual respect, empathy, and perhaps self-reflection for some individual students. Overall, the individual development of one's identity and respect for others stemmed from the teachings and modeling of parents and family network and, for Gita and Marc, their religious teachings.

Thus, my findings show that there is a potential connection between religious bullying and religious literacy in the Montreal context and that the positive or negative effects of the connection are highly dependent on the ERC teacher and school administration and environment. To positively foster respect, empathy, and self-reflection among students, Montreal participants were aware and concerned about the role of the teacher and the degree of teacher training that is needed. However, a discussion on teacher training was less prominent in Montreal than it was in Modesto, where participants in Montreal spoke about the importance of religious literacy in general, as knowledge for all members of society to consider that can equip them to discuss seemingly controversial topics or taboos. The next chapter raises areas for future research and discusses the combined summary of findings related to my three research questions that aimed to explore the connection between religious literacy and religious bullying.

CHAPTER IX: SECONDARY ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes the comparative findings from both contexts (discussed in detail in Chapter VII and VIII) in relation to my research sub-questions and how those findings inform the conclusions for my overarching research question. As my findings are summarized for each sub-question, counter considerations are interwoven in each discussion. Firstly, in asking "*What is religious bullying?*" Section 9.1.1 also considers why content-based bullying needs focus, rather than the study of bullying overall. Secondly, in addressing *"Do the ERC and/or WGWR foster inclusive classrooms and school environments that encourage students to discuss religion and/or address religious bullying with mutual respect, empathy for others, and self-reflection?"* Section 9.1.3 asks why religious literacy is necessary at all since current bullying research promotes social-emotional learning and healthy relationships in a whole-school approach.

Through these conversations, this chapter concludes that religious bullying has connections to religious literacy that can be positive and negative in nature. To positively foster respect, empathy, and self-reflection among students in order to minimize the potential for religious bullying, religious literacy should ideally include dialogue, analytical thinking skills, and encourage interaction with individuals who students may perceive as 'other'. A teacher's attitude, curriculum, and teacher training are crucial components to foster this form of religious literacy. As these conclusions raise many questions, this chapter concludes by offering suggestions for further research.

9.1. Discussion of Key Findings

My survey questionnaires and conversations with participants on religious bullying and its potential connection with religious literacy raised these themes in both contexts:

Table 12: Summary of themes in Modesto and Montreal

Theme	Modesto Sub-themes	Montreal Sub-themes
Society	• Exposure to religious identities • Interaction with religious individuals in Modesto ○ Recent interactions as a result of the US elections or religious extremism	• City & Society • Contact, and minority and majority dynamics • Workplace
Family	• Family upbringing • Parental struggle	*Family influence was discussed briefly as a formative influencer of respect. Discussed more abstractly under "Phenomena."*

School	• School & community environment
	• School administration
	• The role of the teacher
	• The importance of teacher training to foster religious literacy
	• Views on the Modesto 9th Grade World Religions course
	• Courses with religious literacy in general
		• School environment
		   ○ Elementary school
		   ○ Secondary school
		   ○ College and university
		• School administration
		   ○ Hidden curriculum
		• Teachers
		• Teacher training
		• Views on the *Ethics and Religious Cultures* course
		• Religious literacy in general
		• Religious literacy at a young age

Students	• Student curiosity about different religions • Summary of student survey responses • Summary of graduated student survey responses (students currently in college or have graduated)	• Student awareness of bullying and religious bullying over time • Student perceptions of ERC over time

Phenomena	• Fear
	• Influence of media
	• Misunderstanding or bullying of Muslims
	• Religious contexts more open to other religious individuals
	• Religious bullying and religious literacy
		• Fear
		• Controversial topic and taboo
		• The internet and media
		• Formation/Development
		   ○ Identity development
		   ○ Respect formation
		   ○ Support system
		• Religious bullying
		• Religious bullying and religious literacy

Due to a variety of possible reasons, such as the educational background, occupation, immediate and personal interests of participants, the Montreal participants spoke about religious bullying and religious literacy more abstractly in form compared to those from Modesto. However, several common themes arose, such as the influence of societal factors and conversations that informed religious bullying at the school, the importance of the school environment, the value of religious literacy training for teachers, the need for religious literacy to begin at a young age, and the place of fear and the role of media in society. These themes highlight the relevancy of Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological framework to conversations and understandings about all forms of bullying, including religious bullying. Related to my research overall, there was a common recognition that different teachers and forms of religious literacy programs can be a source of positive or negative influence towards religious bullying. The following three sub-sections elaborate on these commonalities and discuss the overall findings across Modesto and Montreal pertaining to the three sub-questions of my research.

9.1.1. "What is religious bullying?" and "Why focus on content-based bullying?"

As discussed in Chapter V, religious bullying occurs when there is a power imbalance created by one party in an effort to denigrate another party based on one's actual or perceived religious or non-religious identity. It can be based on one's physical appearance, such as one's race or clothing, or a tenet of one's belief. Without sharing this specific definition, all participants in both contexts were quick to understand what religious bullying meant, albeit for a few where I clarified that it does include bullying towards non-religious individuals. Unexpected to some, the atheist participants were the ones who were aware and most familiar of non-religious individuals who bullied those who were religious. Nevertheless, none of my participants was familiar with the

terminology despite being familiar with the concept. Thus, while many individuals, especially in Modesto, offered concrete examples of religious bullying, many did not discuss or were unfamiliar with the nuances of religious bullying, such as the intersectionality of identities that converge based on race, gender, and religion experienced among the *hijabi* girls in my class before my study first began.

During this data collection process and in my conversations with academics, I met a number of individuals (non-participants) who asked, "What is religious bullying?" and "Why focus on religious bullying and not bullying overall?" including scholars of bullying, who are predominantly from an educational psychology background. While I fully respect, value, and look to the work of these scholars regularly, it should be noted that we are both studying the same phenomenon from different angles. As a schoolteacher who aims to support the well-being of my students based on the social environment that I can analyze, decipher, and support my students through, I need to respond to any form of bullying based on these factors. As the content-basis of bullying and the power imbalance that defines it is social, this study has confirmed the importance for educators and researchers to understand the social factors in order to respond to them adequately in a social classroom environment. Very often, content-based bullying is also referred to as bias-based bullying. As such, the bias within the bullying, which reflects the attitudes and beliefs in culture and society, need and can be addressed by educators through curriculum and teaching. The bias towards one's religious or non-religious belief in religious bullying can be exceptionally traumatic to some individuals as the belief and values within the beliefs are a fundamental aspect of most cultures (Fraser 1999).

With an understanding of the social influence towards bullying, one needs to be mindful that content-based bullying is contextual, illustrated more concretely by a 2015 GLSEN study that

found that anti-LGBT remarks, harassment, and assault towards LGBT students in the US were more prevalent in the South compared to the Northeast and Western regions of the US[120]. Likewise, all forms of content-based bullying, whether based on gender, race, language, or religion, needs to be better understood by educators, parents, students and the public alike, especially in relation to intersectionality within certain contexts. To do so, this again requires one to understand the socio-cultural, political, and economic inequality within each aspect of one's intersectionality in a given context – particularly as a student's well-being falls in the professional purview of teachers.

To understand students' intersectional identities, many factors need to be considered, including race, class, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, and mental and physical abilities (Ghosh & Galczynski, 2015). Each factor is a significant aspect of one's identity as it allows an individual to understand oneself in relation to how they are recognized, misrecognized, or not recognized in society (Taylor, 1992). As misrecognition and the lack of recognition can lead to a form of oppression that can "imprison someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (Taylor, 1992, p. 25), it is therefore important for teachers to counter such actions by recognizing students' multiple identities and their intersectionalities. With respect to religious bullying, students may experience compounded degradation in some environments, such as bullying experienced by *hijabi* Muslim girls (CAIR-CA, 2015) and turban-wearing Sikh boys (Sikh Coalition, 2014) who are targeted more than others in the same religion due to gender identity related to what they wear. As a result, educators need to perceive a students' intersectionality to address the compounded degradation that students in these situations may feel, even if they may not be able to articulate it, as they may be too young or hurt to analyze the situation themselves. If

---

[120]

https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2015%20National%20GLSEN%202015%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20%28NSCS%29%20-%20Full%20Report_0.pdf

left unaddressed due to misrecognition, students will simply learn not to raise a concern if they know that it will not be addressed adequately.

Furthermore, if as teachers, we are asked to teach the whole child and recognize their multiple identities, why are we not discussing aspects of their identities when it may be the basis of a conflict? This then leads to a discussion on teacher training and the teacher's individual comfort with religion, spirituality, and the discussion about it in a public school setting. For this reason, my research calls for targeted approaches to address each specific form of bullying that exists; when the fundamental issue behind each form of bullying is addressed, the foundational misunderstanding behind an incident can be prevented in the future. As a result, this exploration of religious bullying has confirmed that both content-based bullying and bullying overall are important angles to explore but that the content-basis of bullying may differ based on context. When various aspects of a student's identity is bullied, it is important to discuss intersectionality, as individuals have more than one identity marker, as well as a discussion of the specific factors. Such conversations may or may not hinder bullying from happening; however, not discussing the specific forms of bias will enable the bias to persist in society – a controversial but necessary conversation as addressing bias effectively requires a cultural shift in society (Short, 2017). The extent of religious bullying in Modesto and Montreal are discussed in the following section.

9.1.2. "To what extent does religious bullying occur at the public school level in Montreal and/or Modesto?"

My study was conducted in Modesto and Montreal due to the mandatory religious literacy courses in each milieu, and not for the rate of religious bullying in each context. However, I was interested to see how the religious literacy courses may or may not influence the extent to which religious bullying occurred in each public school environment. Table 13 summarizes these

findings per context. The Modesto data is based on 49 student surveys, where 31 students attended Modesto City School (MCS) district high schools and previous MCS students completed three additional surveys. The Montreal data is based on 16 current student surveys, and 23 out of 39 post-secondary students surveyed who attended secondary school in Montreal. The 16 who did attend secondary school in Montreal are excluded from the data below. Due to the sample size, this data is not representative of either populations and does not illustrate the extent of religious bullying from students and teachers, but it confirms that it exists in both contexts despite the religious literacy courses they have.

Table 13: Student perceptions about religious discrimination and bullying perpetrated by peers or teachers in Modesto and Montreal

		Modesto City Schools students (data gathered Sept 2016)	Montreal (data gathered Oct 2016 – Jan 2017)
Students	Students who observed or knew that peers were discriminated against based on their religious and/or nonreligious beliefs by other students	23% (n=7 of 31) said "yes" (n=6) and "very much" (n=1). 35% (n=11 of 31) said "somewhat."	Graduated students: 13% (n=3 of 23) said "yes" (n=2) and "very much" (n=1). 39% (n=9) said "somewhat." Current students: 31% (n=5 of 16) said "yes" (n=4) and "very much" (n=1). 25% (n=4) said "somewhat."
	Students who observed or knew that peers were bullied based on their religious and/or nonreligious beliefs by other students	16% (n=5 of 31) said "yes" (n=4) and "very much" (n=1). 29% (n=9 of 31) said "somewhat," indicating that they may not be fully familiar with what religious bullying entails.	Graduated students: 17% (n=4 of 23) said "yes" (n=3) and "very much" (n=1). 26% (n=6) said "somewhat." Current students: 19% (n=3 of 16) said "yes" and 0 said "very much."

			25% (n=4) said "somewhat."
Teachers	Students who observed or knew that peers were discriminated against based on their religious and/or nonreligious beliefs by teachers	6% (n=2 of 31) said "yes" (n=2) and 0 said "very much." 3% (n=1 of 31) said "somewhat." 3 people is small but still concerning since no other individuals from any other age group or school board noticed this.	Graduated students: 4% (n=1 of 23) said "very much." 17% (n=4) said "somewhat." Current students: 19% (n=3 of 16) said "somewhat."
	Students who observed or knew that peers were bullied based on their religious and/or nonreligious beliefs by teachers	No student responded: "Yes," "Very much," or "Somewhat." 29 of the 31 MCS students said "Not at all." Others responded, "Don't know" or left their response blank."	Graduated students: 22% (n=5 of 23) said "somewhat." Current students: 13% (n=2 of 16) said "somewhat."

In both contexts, religious discrimination and bullying by students towards other students was observed and teachers were seen discriminating against students based on their religious and/or nonreligious beliefs. In Montreal, students reported that they "somewhat" observed teachers bullying based on religious or non-religious belief, which is of great concern as teachers are the ones responsible for protecting students from or addressing students in such incidents.

Concurrently, the student questionnaire stated, "*If you answered "Somewhat" or "Very much" in the previous four statements about discrimination and bullying, please answer this: When students were discriminated against or bullied based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs, teachers and/or school staff were notified. Please circle: Yes / No."* In Modesto, 18% of students (n=9) said that they did not report any discrimination or religious bullying to teachers and/or school staff even though three of them said "yes" they had seen religious bullying among students, one said they had "very much" seen religious bullying among students, four said they "somewhat" saw religious bullying among students, and one said "I don't know." Among the 68%

of students (n=34) who left their response "blank" for that same question, one person said "yes" they had witnessed religious bullying among students, three said "very much", and five said "somewhat". Based on the data, it appears as though some students may be afraid to report religious bullying, unaware of what it may be, or unaware and/or uncomfortable with the individuals they are to report that incident to, matching the findings of other religious bullying reports (Balaji et al., 2016; Council of American Islamic Relations, 2015; Sikh Coalition, 2014).

In Montreal, 15% (6 of 39) said that they did not report any discrimination or religious bullying to teachers and/or school staff. Among current secondary students, all students said that they had reported the discrimination or bullying they saw except for three individuals who had left their response blank. This included four students who "somewhat" saw bullying and three who said "yes" to witnessing religious bullying. These findings suggest that many students in both contexts do not report religious bullying, so the reported numbers of religious bullying, and perhaps bullying overall, remains lower than the number of instances in actuality. As a very small sample, I cannot conclude from my data that some students are generally more comfortable and informed in reporting discriminatory acts or bullying incidences either; however, it is encouraging to know that some students have been equipped with the resources and individuals needed to respond to discrimination and bullying. Additionally, despite the minimal data collected, the information does show the potential of an increasingly aware student body over time, especially in Montreal (Chapter VIII).

Apart from the existence of religious bullying among students, that may or may not be perpetrated by teachers as well, my findings highlight that religious bullying can exist among adult educators and daycare workers who may be bullying one another within public schools also. These findings, such as the many experienced by school administrators, colleagues, and parents in

Lauren, Safia, and Jackie's experience illustrate that religious bullying, like all forms of bullying, does not only occur among students. Moreover, although unable to surmise the extent of religious bullying overall in public schools, I also found that religious bullying exists among students and adults outside of the school environment. As my study aimed to review religious bullying overall and not bullying to any specific religious or non-religious group, I did not ask questions or illicit findings to examine a higher prevalence of bullying towards Muslim or Jewish students in Modesto or Montreal, although some data in the US suggests that bullying towards these groups is exceptionally higher than that towards other religious groups. Rather, with the intent to explore religious bullying overall and its connection to religious literacy, I spoke to participants about religious bullying in general and we discussed it in these terms. The following section considers how these perspectives about religious bullying relate to thoughts about religious literacy.

9.1.3. "Do the ERC and/or WGWR foster inclusive classrooms and school environments that encourage students to discuss religion and/or address religious bullying with mutual respect, empathy for others, and self-reflection?" and "What about social-emotional learning and healthy relationships?"

Participants described the potential for the ERC and WGWR to be a transformative element (TE) that can foster inclusive classroom and school environments that discuss religion and encourage mutual respect, empathy, and self-reflection among students. However, they also explained that it could be an exclusionary element (EE) akin to Fraser's (1999) commentary that,

> Religious symbols – whether prayers, Christmas carols, or readings from sacred texts – can be a means of asserting the power of a dominant culture over others when used inappropriately in school. On the other hand, the very same symbols, when approached by students seeking to understand difference with respect and insight, can be a means of vastly enriching the school's curriculum. (p. 5)

In this vein, the participants also felt that if religious literacy was taught improperly by an ill-equipped teacher (Aadil, Mark, etc.), if the teacher and/or curriculum were biased (Aliah, Henry, etc.), or if the school environment contradicted the aims of the course (Jackie, Sarah, etc.), they all felt that the ERC or WGWR could promote religious discrimination and bullying. Apart from discussing the potential of the courses to harm or promote aspects of social cohesion, participants also shared concrete examples of positive and negative experiences depending on their school and city. As a result, participants raised similar perspectives to those articulated by scholars of religious literacy and religion and education about the importance of teacher attitude, curriculum, and teacher training in preparation for a robust religious literacy program.

With respect to teacher attitude, participants strongly felt that a teacher's willingness to understand their own bias and initiate discussion about controversial topics was a transformational element. This is discussed in detail by Jackson's interpretive approach (1997, 2004) through the need for teachers to analyze the representation of the content they review, the interpretation they or the conveyor of content shares, and a reflection of their own bias of the content. To participate in a semblance of this approach, teacher participants emphasized the importance of a supportive network of school administrators and parents in the community, similar to the Bildung approach in the Netherlands described by Miedema (2013, 2014). With a strong network, teachers are then encouraged to supplement or analyze the curriculum that may be outdated or problematic and encourage more dialogue about taboos or interaction with whom students are unfamiliar.

Regarding the curriculum, Aliah, Halimah, and Daria felt that the WGWR textbook was outdated and that some images were misleading. In Montreal, Henry was perhaps most poignant about the ERC when he remarked that the ERC curriculum was skewed as its second objective, "to recognize the other," contradicted the curriculum as it focuses on Christianity (the majority

religion in Quebec) rather than minority religions or beliefs. This suggests that more representatives from religious minority groups should be consulted when a textbook is being written or selected in Modesto and Quebec in the future. Yet, despite these concerns, Modesto and Montreal student surveys showed that their religious literacy classrooms were inclusive in most circumstances. Although the data set is not a representative sample, these findings do show that the courses can foster inclusive spaces where religion is discussed and mutual respect, empathy, and self-reflection are fostered. Perhaps this potential is realized through the influence of teacher training.

All participants who discussed teacher training saw it as pivotal in developing a teacher's ability to self-analyze, critique events, and discuss religious literacy matters with students. The ERC and WGWR teacher participants spoke about the value of their own teacher training experience at length or with great emphasis. In Moore, Jackson, and Miedema's writings, teacher training was also of great concern. Moore's conception of religious literacy offered a cultural studies framework to understand and analyze religious traditions, whereas Jackson's approach focused more on the soft-skills that teachers need when they analyze the 'parts and wholes' of traditions, and Miedema's approach was grounded on the strength of a teacher's ability to teach *about* religions and worldviews in an open, non-dogmatic fashion so as to encourage student agency to learn *from* religions as well. However, the exploration of the connection between religious literacy and religious bullying in this study is novel to the field of bullying research and religion and education. Most discussion related to religious bullying fostering inclusive spaces relates to the need for social-emotional learning and healthy relationships among students, teachers, and other adults in the lives of students.

9.1.3.1. Common solutions today: Social-emotional learning and healthy relationships through a whole-school approach

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is "the process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively" (Elias et al. (1997), in Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger, 2011, p. 406). Through SEL programs, educators aim to develop cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies that of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, in an effort for students to manage, adjust, adapt, and respond to social situations better, including the minimization of truancy and improved academic performance. In Durlak et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis of 213programs, they found that SEL participants showed a statistically significant improvement in their social emotional skills, attitudes, behaviours and an 11% increase in their academic achievement compared to the control group. Before their work and since then, numerous scholars of bullying research have supported the need for SEL, including Shelley Hymel, Department Head and Professor of Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Education at University of British Columbia, who's Social-Emotional Education and Development Research Team has developed the SEL Learning Resources Finder (http://www.selresources.com/about-this-project/). This Finder includes a section on mental health literacy developed by over three faculties of education in Canada in order to develop and support pre-service teachers' understanding of mental health. Due to the vast study of SEL, individuals may ask why an interest in RL (that relates to a discussion on religion and education) is necessary, especially in relation to RB.

Like the focus on fostering healthy relationships among adults and youth in society by PREVNet that is also of great focus in the field of bullying research, SEL research and programs

are invaluable but my study and others on bias-based bullying (see Newman & Fantus, 2015, CAIR-CA, 2015, and the 2017 GLSEN report by Kosciw, Greytak, Zongrone, Clark, and Truong, 2017) contend the need to promote further research on the content and social aspects of bullying incidents and socio-cultural norms and biases towards specific content as well (Short, 2017). In addition to the soft-skills related to SEL, the value of healthy relationships to encourage a supportive social-ecological environment, there is a need for hard knowledge so that an individual is able to analyze a situation based on the understanding of socio-cultural, political, and economic factors around them. The soft skills and hard knowledge work in unison. SEL as a solution or preventative measure to bullying is important but one's emotions and understanding of the social environment require knowledge and skills to understand and analyze their social environment, which is what religious literacy can foster.

My participants spoke more talk about the school environment than the course in both settings as well as the importance of the school administration, school community, and society at large, relating to the validity of the whole-school approach as well as the relevancy of the social-ecological framework to understand bullying. To supplement the skills that foster the social wellbeing of students in SEL programs, my study also showed that religious literacy courses cannot only teach about religion but also incorporates SEL objectives. This is evident by the WGWR's first two weeks that include character education and the ERC's two course objectives to promote the common good and understanding of the other, and as a course within the personal development category stipulated by Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur. Thus, religious literacy as a potential approach to religious bullying can be seen as an approach that addresses a gap but also meets the need to impart SEL also.

9.2. "Religious bullying: Can religious literacy programs address this phenomenon?"

As a causal relationship between religious bullying and religious literacy cannot be concluded, I ventured to understand if a connection existed between religious bullying and religious literacy in terms of fostering the attitudes necessary to minimize the likelihood of the former. In doing so, I examined the theoretical and practical potential for religious literacy to foster mutual respect, empathy, and self-reflection in a democratic and secular society per the foundation of Taylor's open-secularism, Eck's pluralism, and Ghosh's critical multiculturalism. This was balanced with a consideration of Habermas' even-handed demands for religious and secular groups. This foundational approach to my study was coupled with Fraser's participatory parity and Callan's empathetic identification. On this basis, I relied on the religious literacy conceptions by Moore, Prothero, Jackson, and Miedema to analyze the ERC and WGWR curriculum and discuss their potential to create inclusive classroom and school environments that encourage students to discuss religion and/or address religious bullying with mutual respect, empathy for others, and self-reflection. Grounded on this theoretical and conceptual basis, my empirical data collection from Modesto and Montreal found that a connection does exist between religious literacy and religious bullying, and that it can be either a negative and exclusionary factor that can encourage religious bullying and discrimination, as well as positive and transformative in deterring individuals from religious bullying and discrimination. In this comparative analysis, my findings raise the importance of the transformative elements identified by participants in each context, as each context varies in its historical and contemporary socio-cultural, economic, and political complexities. Yet, as my study aimed to review religious literacy overall within these contexts, my discussion elaborates on the details about religious literacy programming in general.

Thus, as religious literacy can foster respect and change a student's attitude, religious literacy is one solution to prevent or respond to religious bullying. However, findings show that this positive potential depends on the specific type of religious literacy that is offered and is highly dependent on dialogue and the opportunity for intergroup contact, in addition to the teacher attitudes, curriculum, and the particular form of teacher training that was discussed previously in this chapter. The following sub-sections elaborate on this focus on the importance of having a form of religious literacy that incorporates dialogue and intergroup contact.

9.2.1. Religious literacy that includes dialogue and analysis

Participants in both contexts felt that the Internet, parents, teachers, and one's religious beliefs, were potential TEs but also EEs. Their sharing also showed that religious bullying, as with all forms of bullying, is a social issue that can be rooted in values, attitudes, and behaviours based in the macrosystem that penetrates into each of the other systems. To break down these misconceptions, prejudices and biases, various participants emphasized the need to discuss these attitudes and beliefs in order to understand and analyze controversial topics, and dismantle the taboos associated with them (Jackie and Lauren). Thus, dialogue was an exercise that enabled and encouraged analytical thinking and understanding of perspectives, behaviours, and events. Currently, a lack of knowledge about the rights and responsibilities for teachers to teach about controversial topics refrain them from doing so out of fear of retaliation from parents and school administrators (Ben).

In the WGWR, the rights of the students are taught but teachers only understand that they can teach according to the local district guidelines of the course, and not their rights as teachers in California or the US. Dialogue about ideas is not encouraged in the WGWR course largely for fear

of misunderstanding from parents among teachers and school administration (Westheimer, 2015, and interview with Sophie). In the ERC, dialogue is the third competency but teacher training focuses more on the ethics or religious culture component and teachers often do not have enough time to develop their own dialogue or analytical skills to engage in dialogue during their teacher training program (Chan, 2018). Yet, dialogue can create the space to invite student inquiry as students have been found to be naturally curious about others' belief systems (Jackson, 2014). Additionally, dialogue can teach students the essential skills for conflict resolution and infuse a component of peace education into religious literacy courses[121] (Harris & Morrison, 2012). In this sense, many participants recognized the potential of religious literacy infused with dialogue that could increase the transformative part of religious literacy (Marc, Sarah, Henry, Ben, etc.)

Practically, as my study and findings extended beyond the school environment, the incorporation of dialogue in religious literacy can be seen in the larger society through the Stanislaus County Interfaith Council in Modesto and the Christian Jewish Dialogue of Montreal group. At a more international level, Diane Moore has created two Massive Online Open-Source Courses (MOOCs) from the Harvard Divinity School so that adults could engage with the content and dialogue about each video, recording, or reading they completed in the course online[122]. Having participated in one of the MOOCs myself, it is clear that Moore aims to guide adult students in experiencing a TE (transformative element) through religious literacy as assignments instruct

---

[121] Peace education includes skill development that "involves empowering people with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to create a safe world and build a sustainable environment" (Harris and Morrison, 2012, p. 9). Through dialogue and other approaches, peace educators foster the skills for students to question structures of direct and indirect violence in everyday life, and problem solve and manage ideas and conflicts non-violently by discussing alternative and teaching skills to listen, reflect, and cooperate with others (Harris, 2009; Harris and Morrison, 2012).
[122] Course descriptions for "World Religions Through Their Scriptures, "and "Religion, Conflict, and Peace in Contemporary Global Affairs"are available here: https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/courses/harvardx-course.

students to analyze religions based on her structured conception of religious literacy, self-reflect, and identify their own EEs through the process.

Theoretically, at the macro level, the practice of dialogue about religions enacts Taylor's open-secularism as a public school setting includes the teaching and discussion about religions and worldviews, Ghosh's critical multiculturalism as dialogue raises a student's analytical understanding about the power dynamics within diversity, and Eck's pluralism as dialogue can lead one towards seeing pluralism as a way of thinking so that students can engage in different conceptions and ideas while still being committed to and maintaining one's own differences and identity. This last point regarding dialogue also addresses Habermas' even-handed demands for religious and secular groups, as discussion about all worldviews is made accessible to all parties in a secular society. At local and individual levels, a dialogue of ideas promotes Fraser's participatory parity, as students are welcomed to inquire and voice their queries about religious and non-religious aspects. Dialogue also enables a student to develop Callan's empathetic identification so that they can practice listening to another viewpoint that may be largely different from their own, while learning to respect the individual who holds it at the same time.

From a conceptual basis, Jackson and Miedema also promote dialogue in their own approaches to religious literacy, as a review of the representation and interpretation of religious literacy content in Jackson's interpretive approach requires dialogue in order to achieve it, as does Miedema's *Bildung* and personhood development approach. Jackson's call for an understanding of the representation of a belief system and one's (or curricula) interpretation of it demands an analytical review of source material and oneself for teachers and students alike. In the promotion of dialogue, his writings reference a variety of approaches that are context specific, such as that suggested from the UK, Germany, and Norway. While Miedema encourages dialogue as well, he

also advocates for encountering and interacting with others in a public school, perhaps largely through his personal experience.

9.2.2. Religious literacy that includes encounter and the Intergroup Contact Theory

Related to Miedema's encouragement for personhood development is the need for a religious literacy program to help students understand the personal effect of religious belief on religiously affiliated individuals. Neither the WGWR nor ERC officially include this, although both have shown the potential to change attitudes, but a specific form of religious literacy is needed so that it incorporates this personal voice in order to foster understanding that goes beyond head knowledge (Ryan), relating also to the practice of Callan's empathetic identification. Additionally, where possible, the principles of the intergroup contact theory could be promoted to welcome interaction and encounters between individuals who are unfamiliar with one another, as was beneficial for several participants' personal life (Aliah, Safia, Mahit, Marc, Jackie, etc.). Ben mentioned this theory for potential consideration in religious literacy and fostering understanding between groups in particular.

In 1954, Gordon W. Allport, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, introduced his intergroup contact theory which stipulated that in-group and out-group prejudice could be addressed if four criteria were followed: 1) equal status was maintained between groups, 2) common goals were set between groups, 3) cooperation was established between groups, and 4) institutional support was established for the contact being made. In a meta-analysis of the intergroup contact theory, Pettigrew and Tropp (2011) found that 94% of the 515 studies they reviewed showed that prejudice was lowered between groups by encouraging interactions between them within the constraints of the intergroup contact theory. They reviewed the studies for

publication bias, participation selection, or sampling biases to ensure that this inverse relationship holds true. These studies showed that prejudice is reduced when contact is close and intimate in nature when contact is designed under Allport's criteria. For example, one four-year study among 2000 undergraduate found that students at the University of California, Los Angeles reported a reduction in prejudice after they were randomly assigned to reside in dormitories with students of diverse ethnicities (Levin, Van Laar, & Sidanius, 2003; Sidanius et al., 2008; Van Laar, Levin, Sinclair, & Sidanius, 2005). Similar findings were concluded in another six-month study among secondary students in Germany, Belgium, and England (Binder et al, 2009).

In Modesto, Mahit shared that it was important to encounter friends and others "in the real world" outside of school who encouraged and reassured an individual's identity. Aliah and Safia's families of mixed ethnic, race and religious backgrounds also illustrated the importance of encounter to understand the other. In Montreal, Ghadah, who grew up in parts of Africa, Europe, and Asia, felt that, "In the West, people are more mingled…And I think if you work in a place where people will see you and know that you're normal and not too weird or anything then it changes." However, Pettigrew and Tropp highlighted commentary by W. G. Stephen (1987), Professor Emeritus of Psychology at New Mexico State University, that notes that this theory holds based on a number of factors such as contact setting, the groups involved and the individuals under study. Perhaps for this reason, it was harder to offer conclusive evidence and arguments for Montreal as the contact setting varies greatly depending on the neighbourhood. For, despite the diversity within Montreal, participants shared that a lack of contact and understanding perpetuated a divide among people, including Sarah whose secondary school experience led them to believe that there is a difference between multiculturalism and inclusiveness.

In agreement, Pettigrew and Tropp's review revealed that the theory held when interactions with a few individuals can be generalized to other members of the group. Allport (1954) also recognized these limitations as he found that the out-group in-group boundaries were maintained when two common instances persisted – "re-fencing" and social norms. Re-fencing occurs based on an individual's decision to distinguish a member of a group they have interacted with from the rest of the group. As the member is singled out, they are associated with the negative views that pertain to the group, rather than the positive views about the group they belong to. Unlike re-fencing where in-group out-group boundaries are redrawn, social norms can be strong enough in certain contexts that individuals act in conflicting ways in different situations towards certain outgroups. This occurred between Black and White coal miners in West Virginia pre-1960s when miners worked together in the mines but relegated to their own racially segregated communities after work (Minard, 1952).

Theoretically, with respect to religious education in the UK in particular, Hull (2009) described that religious education as encounter introduced children and teachers to confront another world, one where they learn about the religion of other people (p. 21). For Hull, encounter is a fundamental aspect of religious education so that students could recognize the other and respect the fact that one's perspective encompasses a significant worldview that may differ from that of others in society. Although Allport did not consider the intergroup contact theory specifically for religious education or religious literacy, he too wrote that, "there is something about religion that makes for prejudice and something about it that unmakes prejudice" (Allport, 1966, p. 447), pointing to the two functions that religion can serve. For our conversation, this could be considered in relation to learning from religion.

Jackson also discussed the importance of understanding another's perspective beyond learning about religion as merely content knowledge. His fourth point highlights the need to avoid or exercise great caution in projecting assumptions from one religious tradition on to other religious traditions. Regarding this, he avoids religious comparisons based on themes, a common Western practice (and one adopted by the ERC), and chooses to consciously present each tradition based in its own categories and divisions. In doing so, students are presented with an additional means to 'insider' knowledge and understanding through its own language and perspectives. Meeting and interacting with individuals from different worldviews would foster an opportunity for this insight as well.

However, despite these theoretical and empirical premises, my review in Modesto and Montreal has shown that it is very difficult to offer a common prescribed form of religious literacy across all contexts. The inclusion of dialogue, analytical thought, and interaction in a religious literacy program is not welcomed for varying reasons depending on contextual complexities, such as the possible lack of teacher training for the dialogue competency in the ERC (Chan, 2019) and the fear of parental and public backlash in Modesto. Thus, the lengthy discussion of intergroup contact theory in relation to religious literacy is an avenue for greater study as it can touch upon each of the three criteria that expands the discussion on the need for improved teacher attitudes, curriculum, and teacher training previously discussed.

9.3. Further research

My study has contributed to bullying research by focusing on religious bullying and presenting another argument for the need to consider content-based bullying, especially because of contextual nuances. As a potential solution to prevent or respond to religious bullying, I have

found that religious literacy can be an established approach that public school teachers can consider for their school environment in Modesto, Montreal, and other parts of North America that already have religious literacy course offerings at their schools. While the previous sections discussed the key findings from my study in relation to my research questions, several additional areas for further research arose from my findings.

In relation to religious bullying in general, more research is needed on the resiliency of students who experience or may experience religious bullying or witness religious bullying in their context. Certain student participants in my study shared examples of their resilience, as did students in the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) Report *Classroom Subjected 2.0* (Balaji, Chan, Arshanapally, Khanna, Pallod, Forthcoming). The HAF report focused specifically on understanding Hindu-based bullying by surveying 399 middle, high school, and college students from August 2017 to March 2018 across the US, and conducting over a dozen semi-structured interviews in May 2018. As a co-principal investigator in that study, we found that female respondents (OR 0.29) and those living in states with presumably larger local Hindu populations (OR 0.40) were less likely to report having been bullied for being Hindu. However, several interviewees showed a high level of resilience when they felt discriminated against or misrepresented. They actively sought or intended to seek ways to work with educators or parents to inform others about Hinduism and themselves more positively. From these experiences of resiliency, questions arise such as, How do students respond across different religious and/or non-religious groups? Compared to other forms of content-based bullying, are those who experience or witness religious bullying more likely to respond verbally or physically, be resilient, and less likely to self-harm? What character traits may lead one student to be resilient compared to another?

These questions relate to a recent study by Wright and Young (2017) that approached 60 Christian, Jewish, and Muslim university students that studied the correlation between an individual's religious identity salience and their likelihood towards aggression or hostility if their religious group was threatened, based on their religious involvement or religious commitment. In their study, they found that an individual was more likely to exhibit aggression or hostility if they had a strong religious commitment to group beliefs rather than to the group members, and if their religious identity was a defining aspect of their identity. However, religious commitment was not significantly related to anger for individuals with a low sense of affiliation to one's religious identity. Similarly, if one had great religious involvement and religious identity was a primary aspect of their identity, they were less likely to exhibit aggression and anger, which "may occur through an activation of learned moral beliefs and values attributed to one's involvement in activities such as religious service attendance, prayer, or reading of scripture" (p. 64). This study, then suggests the potential for students to respond to religious bullying different based on their commitment and involvement to their own religion. With respect to aggression, the study also considered its implications towards the use of threat to cajole political response from certain religious groups, its potential to minimize intergroup conflicts, and its contributions to terrorism research. As the effects of bullying coincide with the push and pull factors that can lead one towards violent extremism, further study is needed on the understanding of ones resiliency in circumstances of religious bullying overall in the immediate future and long-term.

In relation to religious literacy and schooling, Mahit's decision to send his Sikh children to a Catholic school, and data from my Masters research showed that mono-religious private schools present an ease and freedom to discuss minority religions and create an inclusive space for individuals to talk about religion. What makes these spaces unique? How do they frame their

dialogue and intergroup contact? Despite an awareness of great difference, how and why do the non-majority religious groups feel secure in such spaces while not feeling the same in secular public school environments? Additionally, Lynn developed a religious literacy course for her Grade Seven special education students only through the support of her administrator, despite the doubt and dismay of many colleagues. What is the current state of religious literacy for students with learning needs? If they experience bullying how does their intersectionality of having a learning need overlap with other forms of bullying they may experience? Currently, my review has found only a selection of articles on teaching religious literacy for students with learning disabilities (Brown, 1987; Hunt, 2018; O'Brien, 2004), but this is an area ripe for further consideration especially as we learn more about students with disabilities who have various strengths, such as extremely high functioning and savant children with autism.

In relation to the connection between religious bullying and religious literacy, Mahit exhibited signs of intragenerational bullying. How can future studies consider the aspects of intergenerational and intragenerational bullying, especially as studies regarding workplace bullying and the effects of bullying on adults are increasing (Branch & Murray, 2015; DeLara, 2016; Maiuro, 2015; http://www.workplacebullying.org/), and my participants raised the need for religious literacy to begin at a younger age? As such, longitudinal studies are needed to help us understanding how religious literacy in schools and the larger society can influence one's experiences of religious bullying in childhood and/or adulthood.

With respect to my research study overall, the Critical Communicative Methodology has been critiqued for being too naïve in assuming all participants will naturally reflect and self-reflect in order to understand and transform social inequalities that exist (Puigvert, Christou, and Holford, 2012). In my study, I felt that my Montreal participants were more reticent overall. Perhaps this

was a result of having only two participants attend the first co-analysis meeting or perhaps there were other community dynamics that I was unaware of; nonetheless, my methodology and my own expectations and how that led me to design my study created room for growth in the study overall. As such, I encourage other researchers to explore each aspect of this study in greater depth for a more contextual understanding of this discussion, by city and within each religious and non-religious group as well. For each religious literacy course, I also encourage further research about the WGWR and ERC, as my study is not representative and my last conversations with the Social Studies coordinator at MCS showed that they were considering a curriculum update. For the ERC, there are rumours about a review of the curriculum, upon the 2018 ten-year anniversary of the course, and the potential of updating the curriculum as well.

Summary

This chapter summarized the common findings about the potential connection between religious literacy and religious bullying in Modesto and Montreal, as the unique findings for each context were discussed in Chapters VII and VIII. Through the summary, each sub-question addressed and culminated in the conclusion of the full research question. Findings show that as religious bullying is a social and public health concern that exists among students and adults outside of the school environment (within the structure of Brofenbrenner's social-ecological framework), the attitudes, behaviours, and values in the macrosystem inform the interactions within the exo-, meso-, and microsystems of students and adults. Thus, religious bullying was better understood through this study, but the extent of religious bullying was not based on the sensitivity of the topic matter and my small participant sample. In the school setting, the ERC and WGWR course were seen as potentially positive, negative, and neutral promoters of respect, empathy, and self-reflection based on teacher attitudes, administrative support, school

environment, and socio-cultural and political affairs in each context; thereby highlighting the saliency of contextual nuances when considering religious literacy in consideration of its connection to religious bullying.

CHAPTER X: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This research has immensely extended what I knew as a classroom teacher: that contextual nuances inform education, that education needs to be relevant to the environment of each student, and that the best classroom is inclusive and mindful of students' identities. Through this road and journey, I now know that an approach to religious literacy needs to be context-based, especially introductory religious literacy programs so that it is mindful and sensitive of the complexities and tensions within each milieu. This context-based understanding has also helped me see that content-based bullying varies by locale, even within specific schools or neighbourhoods within a city, as my findings on religious bullying have shown. Furthermore, I have learned that the recognition of one's religious or non-religious identity is valuable to religious and non-religious individuals in a secular society whether secular refers to closed secularism and includes those who oppose religious beliefs, or open secularism that welcomes the beliefs of all. Moreover, the particular students, parents, teachers, and community members I spoke to all aim to create a school and society that accept the diverse religious and non-religious affiliations and beliefs of its members.

My research began with observations of religious bullying in my classroom and a desire to understand the phenomenon and seek a means to address it. Today, I can reflect upon the bullying incident in my class and see three new perspectives. Firstly, although I was unsure of it at the time, there was an opportunity to talk about religion in a public school environment (based on the theoretical foundations of Bronfenbrenner, Taylor, Ghosh, Eck, Habermas, Fraser, Callan, and Hill-Collins and Bilge). Perhaps the other colleagues, like I, were unfamiliar with the parameters to discuss religious conflicts in the public school setting or felt ill equipped to discuss it. Simultaneously, perhaps some colleagues, teachers and the administration included, refrained from discussing religion due to their personal bias or fear of parental or communal retaliation if they did. Secondly, my colleagues or I should have addressed the incident more clearly beyond

consideration that the intimidating behaviour from the student's father may have led to such an incident. Now, I am familiar and aware of religious bullying as a phenomenon that educators and students can name, understand, discuss, and address. Upon reflection of the incident itself, I now see the intersectionalities of race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, and class in conjunction with the socio-cultural, economic, and perhaps political influences that may have led the student to bully the other, as well as the religious illiteracy the student may have had. The student who recently emigrated from a GCC country bullied the ethnically South Asian student of a Caribbean background based on a multiplicity of perceived identities constructed by the skin colour of the student. Thirdly, beyond the ability to analyze the situation, I now understand that religious literacy (with tremendous consideration of the conceptions by Moore, Prothero, Jackson, and Miedema, and the WGWR and ERC course in particular) is one way to respond to such an incident, and a means to prevent it in the future. These conclusions were presented across the previous chapters.

10.1. Chapter review

In Chapter I, I introduced my positionality, rationale for my study, and the epistemology and ontology for the study. In Chapter II, I shared a chronological survey of the Quebecois and Californian history of education to understand the socio-cultural, political, and economic tensions that led to the development of the ERC and WGWR course. This was done to display the uniqueness of each course as distinct forms of religious literacy that relate to and respond to the context and history of Modesto and Montreal. To begin this dissertation, it marked as a foundation and reminder for our discussion that the research question focused on religious literacy overall but that even then specific religious literacy programs should be considered.

In Chapter III, I examined the macro and micro theoretical premises regarding religious identities in secular democracies structured on Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological framework, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* (1959), the *United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990), and the *United Nation's Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief* (1981). The theoretical review of Taylor's open secularism (2007), Eck's pluralism (2006, 2013), Ghosh's critical multiculturalism (2013), and Habermas's postulations on faith and reason, alongside Fraser's participatory parity (2007), Callan's empathetic identification (1997, 2000), and Hill-Collins and Bilge's intersectionality (2017) illustrated a need to include religious identities in secular societies. Furthermore, the scholars complementary theories encourage societal and personal reflection to create spaces for this to occur and readjustment for those where it is lacking. In doing so, this chapter opened the opportunity to consider conceptions of religious literacy and its place in North American public schooling in the following chapter.

In Chapter IV, the conceptual analysis of religious literacy included the work of Diane Moore, Senior Lecturer on Religious Studies and Education at Harvard Divinity School, Stephen Prothero, Professor of Religion at Boston University, Robert Jackson, Professor Emeritus, Warwick Religious Education Research Unit at Warwick University, and Siebren Miedema, Professor in Educational Foundations and Religious Education at VU University Amsterdam. Each conception promoted religious literacy as a means towards social cohesion and against forms of religious illiteracy through their own differing educational approaches. Although none of them placed a great emphasis on the need to include non-religious and Indigenous worldviews, there is room to include it, and I suspect some scholars would, given their contextual and academic background. Nonetheless, this analysis proved the potential for religious literacy to foster long-

term empathetic attitudes and mutual respect from a theoretical basis, necessary agents to counter religious bullying.

Chapter V elaborated upon the complexities and nuances regarding bullying, religious bullying, its short and long-term effects intragenerationally and intergenerationally, and the common approaches currently used to address bullying in North America at the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-levels of society. These findings reinforce the understanding that bullying is a societal public health concern that can be informed by the attitudes, values, and behaviours in the many different levels of one's lived environment. Moreover, this chapter points to the minimal research that exists about religious bullying and how this study contributes only a small portion to the big gap within content-based bullying research.

After grounding the study in a historical contextual understanding, theoretical foundation, conceptual foothold, and literature review on religious bullying, Chapter VI explained the research design and methodology that was planned and why and how it was adapted due to the contextual dynamics in Modesto and the US in 2015 and 2016. As a largely qualitative study, Chapter VI offered a contemporary understanding of the socio-cultural and political realities in each context while illustrating how each phase of the study coincided and responded to the realities as they arose. Specifically, the chapter presented a snapshot of influential local, national, and global affairs from 2013 to 2017 that contextualized the difficulties and complexities, which arose during data collection and analysis. As a result, the chapter continued the contextual conversation from Chapter II to highlight the difficult realities in conducting research related to religion in secular societies about religious and non-religious individuals; thereby juxtaposing the theoretical review in Chapter III and the conceptual premises towards aspects of religious literacy and religious bullying discussed in Chapter IV and V.

Chapter VII and VIII described the study data and how data was co-analyzed with my participants in Modesto and Montreal, respectively, as I used the analytical approach of the CCM. In the process, I learned from my participants' insight, experience, and experts as community members of each city. Although the flow of discussion differed across the cities, their remarks raised common concerns across the 4,634 km distance between them. Participants in both cities shared various thoughts and reflections on the many aspects of society that informed the religious bullying that we discussed hypothetically and experientially. Students shared that bullying was wrong; confirming the presence of consistent anti-bullying programs at school, but survey findings showed that some were unfamiliar with the concept of religious bullying even if they remarked that it was wrong. Parents showed that they struggled greatly with tensions they had with school and community leaders who opposed discussions about religion or did not recognize forms of religious discrimination. Educators facing similar tensions with confrontational parents and administrators struggled likewise. Community leaders (religious and non-religious) who participated in the Modesto co-analysis meetings also shared the same sentiments. From this perspective, their considerations on their local religious literacy program showed an unanimous commitment to the premise of each program, balanced by the understanding that the success of the program depended on the teacher attitude, curriculum, and teacher training within each classroom. These remarks reflected the lived reality of the readjustments that were needed in the society, individual level, and curriculum, as previously described in Chapter III, IV, and V.

In Chapter IX, the commonalities from both cities were discussed to present the conclusions to each research sub-question as they informed my overall research question. The discussion of each conclusion was countered by questions that I have heard along the journey of this study. Such as, "*Why focus on content-based bullying, opposed to bullying in general?*" and

"Why is there a need to consider religious literacy when education about social-emotional learning and healthy relationships can be included cross-curriculum to address all forms of bullying?" In addressing these questions, I agreed upon the validity of each one and contended that this study complements the ongoing research about bullying overall. With a greater understanding of religious bullying, it is now clear that context greatly informs content and that content-based bullying differs across settings. As a result, the discussion in Chapter IX recognizes the need for continued research related to bullying incidents overall as it aids in understanding the bullied and bully involved in an incident and witnesses to bullying incidents while calling for the need to expand bullying research into specific forms of content-based bullying as well. In this respect, social-emotional learning and healthy relationships should be included in all forms of education. However, religious literacy can supplement these efforts with the content and analytical knowledge to inform the soft-skills and understanding from education on social-emotional learning and healthy relationships. Simultaneously, this chapter depicted how context and the religious literacy programs themselves can influence one another in society.

In these chapters, I documented the responses to the four objectives of my study. *Firstly*, to understand religious bullying, Chapter V shared a detailed literature review about religious bullying while Chapter VII, VIII, and IX summarized thoughts and experiences on religious bullying from my study participants. *Secondly*, to raise awareness of religious bullying, Phase 2 and 3 of my study led to many opportunities to discuss the ideas and findings about religious bullying to participants and key stakeholders in Modesto and Montreal, as well as share the local stories of individuals who did experience religious bullying and discrimination. Through this process, I endeavoured to recognize individuals' experiences and share the struggles of others who persevered so that individuals could be encouraged. *Thirdly*, in learning more about religious

literacy, I indeed found a solution that may prevent or respond to religious bullying. Conclusions

to the second and third objective of my study are noted in Chapters IV and VI. *Fourthly*, in a desire

for data dissemination and knowledge mobilization, I scheduled many presentations during phase

three of my study to inform students, teachers, parents, school administrators and community

leaders about these solutions in the event that they exist, which they do. This was discussed largely

in Chapter VI. However, I have been in contact with participants and stakeholders in both locales

since Phase 3, and the observations during Phase 3 have stirred some considerations. These are

discussed in the following section along with implications that my study raises for students,

educators, the developers of the WGWR and ERC courses, parents, community leaders, and

employers, policy makers, and researchers.

10.2. Considerations during and after Phase 3, their implications and recommendations

In November 2016, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) surveyed 10,000 K-12

educators across the US. The Center concluded that a "Trump effect" existed as 80% of

respondents described an increase in anxiety among marginalized students after the US elections

in November. The findings were acknowledged to be unscientific but it concluded that the election

and its results stirred this spike, yet it did not conclude that the rhetoric specifically from President

Trump was the cause of anxiety, or the slurs, harassment, or bigotry that some educators observed.

A month later, Dorothy Espelage, Professor of Psychology at the University of Florida,

recognizing the state of affairs for many students in the US classroom as reported by the SPLC

survey findings, cautioned against hasty conclusions especially as the American discourse at the

time may have surfaced pre-existing ideas and sentiments in the American public (Rios, 2016).

Dewey Cornell, Professor of Education at the University of Virginia, and Francis Huang, Associate

Professor of Educational, School and Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri, more

recently discussed this during a 2018 AERA presentation titled, "School teasing and bullying after

the Presidential Election." There, they shared that the rates of teasing and school bullying in 2017

across Virginia middle schools were higher in districts where the majority voted for Donald Trump

in comparison to those that voted for Hilary Clinton. Among middle schools, the rate of bullying

was 18% higher in Republican districts (where 35% of students reported bullying) compared to

Democratic districts (where almost 17% of the students reported bullying). While high, the rate of

bullying in Democratic districts in 2017 was found to be lower than the rate of bullying the same

districts had in 2015 (Barshay, 2018).

In a recent interview, Cornell shared that it is not fully clear why school bullying would

increase by districts in this manner.

> It's not that Trump alone is affecting how people think and feel and act...It's
> Trump in partnership with the local community. If we have a large segment of the
> parent community who are connected to racist, anti-immigrant sentiment, then
> Trump is giving permission to these people to give voice to that sentiment (Cornell
> in Barshay, 2018).

Similarly, in an earlier interview seeking her perspective on the Trump effect, Espelage had this

insight:

> Here's what we do know: The research saying that attitudes of the adults in the
> school building and in the community have a big impact on the kids' behavior is
> very, very consistent. For example, if a teacher is dismissive of sexual harassment
> and homophobic name-calling, kids actually call each other "fag" and "gay" more.

> So, from my perspective, from being in the schools and talking to teachers, we
> don't need hard core data when the rhetoric from a candidate on the television is
> telling an immigrant kid or student with undocumented parents that they could be
> deported or we [are] going to "build a wall." We just know that the social-political
> nature of things dictate how things play out in our schools. Kids look to the adults
> as role models. It's just very, very obvious. Parents are having these conversations
> with their kids. Teachers are talking about it. Principals are talking about it. This
> is happening. It may not be anything that you or I have to deal with, but the pain
> and anxiety for these kids is real (Espelage in Walker, 2016).

As her work is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological framework, her remarks reflect an understanding that societal rhetoric and attitudes move fluidly and is not bound by age groups or buildings, and that immediate micro-responses in the school is vital and can be established. This quote speaks specifically to the US context, but I suspect she would have similar considerations for any other geographic locale, such as Canada. Therefore, in consideration of the observations during and after Phase 3 of my study, what have students been observing around them during the past few years of my study? What are students seeing around them in the news and their local cities since Phase 3?

During the period of my study, the FBI reported that US hate crime incidents based on religious-bias fluctuated from 1,163 incidents in 2013, to 1,016 in 2014, to 1,245 in 2015. In 2016, this increased to 1,273 incidents, comprising 20.9% of all reported hate crimes that year[123]. In California, the number of hate crimes by religious motivation increased from 15% (129 of 843 incidents) in 2013, to 17% (128 of 759) in 2014, to 23% (191 of 837) in 2015, to 18% (171 of 932) in 2016 among all hate crimes in the state. In Modesto, the number of hate crimes by religious motivation bounced from 33% (1 of 3 incidents), to 0% (0 of 4) in both 2014 and 2015, to 36% (4 of 11) in 2016 among all hate crimes in the city[124]. Data from 2017 has yet to be published. In

---

[123] 2016 data reported in: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016/topic-pages/locationtype; 2015: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/topic-pages/locationtype_final; 2014: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2014/topic-pages/locationtype_final; 2013: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016/tables/table-13/table-13-state-cuts/table_13_california_hate_crime_incidents_per_bias_motivation_and_quarter_by_agency_2016.xls

[124] 2016 data for California and Modesto reported in: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016/tables/table-13/table-13-state-cuts/table_13_california_hate_crime_incidents_per_bias_motivation_and_quarter_by_agency_2016.xls; 2015: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/tables-and-data-declarations/13tabledatadecpdf/table-13-state-cuts/table_13_california_hate_crime_incidents_per_bias_motivation_and_quarter_by_agency_2015.xls; 2014: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2014/tables/table-13/table-13-state-cuts/table_13_california_hate_crime_incidents_per_bias_motivation_and_quarter_by_agency_2014.xls; 2013: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2013/tables/13tabledatadecpdf/table-13-state-cuts/table_13_hate_crime_incidents_per_bias_motivation_and_quarter_california_by_agency_2013.xls

2018, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that the number of hate groups rose to 954 from 917 in 2017, up 4%, including a jump of anti-immigrant groups, from 14 to 22[125].

In Canada, the rate of hate-related crimes based on religion increased from 28% (326 of 1,167) in 2013, to 34% (429 of 1,295) in 2014, to 35% (469 of 1,362) in 2015, and 33% (460 of 1,409) in 2016[126] among all hate-related crimes across the country. In Quebec, the rate of the crimes rose steadily from 26% (48 of 184 incidents) in 2013, to 36% (93 of 257) in 2014, to 48% (130 of 272) in 2015, and to 35% (116 of 327) in 2016. In Montreal, the Ministère de la Sécurité Publique did not specify the number of incidents in 2013 and 2014 but notes that 40% of all hate crimes based on religion in Quebec occurred in Montreal. In 2015, their report specified this at 46% (58 of 125) in the city[127]. Montreal data from 2016 and 2017 have yet to be published formally but media sources reference Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) reports that documented 158 hate crimes in 2016 and 250 in 2017[128], where 56% (57 of 101) of incidents from January to June 2017 were based on religion[129].

Although this data only illustrates the reported offences that may have transpired in specific areas within each region, they depict a rise in conflicts and hate based on religion and towards religious and non-religious individuals. While the social, political, and economic events that led to some of these acts are not described in any of the data, the overall increase in conflict and tension

---

[125] Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017. The Year In Hate and Extremism. https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2018/2017-year-hate-and-extremism
[126] 2013 data: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14191/c-g/desc/desc01-eng.htm; 2014 to 2016 data: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171128/t001d-eng.htm
[127] Quebec and Montreal data for 2013 and 2014: https://www.securitepublique.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Documents/police/statistiques/criminalite/2016/criminalite_2015.pdf; 2015: https://www.securitepublique.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Documents/ministere/diffusion/documents_transmis_acces/2017/123322.pdf; 2016: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171128/t002d-eng.htm
[128] https://www.ledevoir.com/societe/518298/mosquee
[129] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/montreal-hate-crimes-figures-1.4190343

suggests greater levels of minor forms of discrimination that exists before it is peaked towards hateful acts. What do such aspects of these social-ecologies, along with my findings, imply for the stakeholders of this study? The following sub-section describes my observations during Phase 3 of my study and offers implications in light of these statistical data and observations, especially as new members of each community shared additional anecdotes with me.

10.2.1. Students

At the Modesto mosque, I presented to approximately 50-60 students who were 10 years old and up. During the presentation, it was evident that a discussion on religious bullying resonated strongly with them as many shared stories of what they and their friends had experienced. When I asked the youth how they would respond to bullying, one young boy shared that his Sikh friend carries a bat in his backpack to protect himself and that he could carry a knife instead. In response, I asked the whole group what they thought about such an approach. Many shared a resounding no while others shook their heads. Afterwards, a few came to speak with me as well. Two girls in particular approached me with their story because they wanted me to clarify the nature of an incident and were unsure if it was indeed religious bullying. They described that their school bus driver had told to "Hurry up and get off my bus, you terrorists." Based on the authoritative role of the bus driver, the language he/she used, and the fact that these were two fifth or sixth grade *hijabi* girls, I helped the girls analyze the situation based on points raised in my discussion and I guided them to understand that this was indeed bullying coming from an adult figure of authority.

During another presentation in a nearby public school with second and third grade students, the students were also very alert and aware of religious bullying, and understood the importance of this topic. To conclude, their teacher led them to brainstorm potential solutions and responses

they could make if they witnessed religious bullying (and any form of bullying) as well. In this experience, as with the rest of my student presentations in Modesto, students I spoke with showed a positivity to our discussions through their facial expressions and our conversations. They were concerned and, through the discussions and presentations, it seemed like they felt that an aspect of themselves or their community was recognized.

In Montreal, students who attended presentations during Phase 3 were much more reserved and listened more than conversed with me. This may have spoken to my positionality as an outsider to their communities, a discomfort in discussing religious bullying, a lack of religious bullying in Montreal or lack of awareness about it, or a lack of interest in it altogether despite an understanding of its existence. Perhaps it was a reflection of their individual personalities too as their facial expressions also displayed interest in the conversation, especially one group at a youth centre who shared that some of them had experienced bullying based on their learning disabilities. However, upon a deeper review of these anecdotes, observations, and the statistical trends of hate-related crimes, it is clear that religious bullying and discrimination occurs among students. Additionally, some may be too fearful or shameful to admit it and to discuss it despite of, or perhaps due to, the high rate of religious discrimination, such as that in Quebec and Montreal in particular.

In Modesto, where Trump's remarks may be creating a sense of permissible discriminatory behaviour towards marginalized groups, students are unsure of what they are experiencing and some consider violent responses. In Modesto, I may have been the first adult to speak to some students about religious bullying as they may have dismissed an incident of which they were unsure. In Montreal, students may just remained silent out of discomfort. In both contexts, despite the concern they shared explicitly or implicitly, many students do not know how to recognize religious bullying, and some think it is only a joke (as noted on the list of seven reasons in Chapter

V). From this implication, I recommend and encourage students to *report religious bullying incidents (and all other forms of bullying) to a trusted adult. If you are confused about what happened, discuss your thoughts with an adult to understand what happened together and how to respond to it. It is difficult to talk about uncomfortable situations, but if adults are not aware of it, it will be hard to help yourself, and others who may be struggling through something similar.* To this point, it is important that adults understand the nuances of religious bullying and are willing to listen to and support students who approach them, especially educators.

10.2.2. Educators (Teachers and Administrators)

During Phase 3, I contacted the Modesto City Schools district with an aim to share my findings with them. Yet, response from the school board was the most distant from all the connections I tried to make in Modesto. I approached them to present my findings as an agenda item at an upcoming Board Meeting but the District Superintendent said that the data was better suited as a memo item. As a result, I respected their preference, submitted the attached memo, and arrived to the meeting early to insert my name in the list of ad-hoc presenters they allow at each meeting. Three people on the board were very warm and welcoming based on their smiles and nods during my presentation. They also came to speak with me during the break. The rest were quite serious and I am unsure if they were interested or skeptical of the findings. While this response to my brief presentation was underwhelming, the findings were also shared with community members who were present, as with a handout that I provided (Appendix F).

In Montreal, I contacted three ERC Coordinators across three English school boards. Unfortunately, only one responded but our meeting never realized as I had contacted them towards the end of their school year. However, through the connection of individuals I met at the Jewish

Christian Dialogue of Montreal, I was introduced to the coordinator of the English Montreal School Board's (EMSB) Spiritual and Community Animators who invited me to present at an upcoming meeting. There, the animators were engaged, curious, and participated in an ongoing conversation to understand what was happening and how to respond. The EMSB ERC Coordinator attended as well.

Although responses from both groups differed, there was a common lack of understanding about religious bullying and the potential role and value of the local religious literacy program. It appeared as if they were two distinct aspects that were not discussed or considered together, perhaps because religious bullying was not understood. These observations call for a change in educator knowledge, especially in light of an increasing rate of hate crimes on school and college campuses in the US (Table 14) and that the age of individuals who are under 18 years of age are consistently accused of the most hate-related crimes based on religion in Canada (Table 15). As professionals who work in these spaces and with this specific age group, I recommend that *educators inform themselves about religious bullying in order to respond to it via religious literacy and social-emotional learning. As Espelage states, dismissed incidents of bullying create the space for students to promote more discriminatory behaviour. Understand that educators play a crucial role in addressing societal discrimination and hate-crimes in and outside of school spaces.* In relation to my recommendations for students, *educators need to act professionally and respond to religious bullying even if they have yet to fully understand it, for students know even less and need a trustworthy adult to speak with about such incidents.* With respect to religious literacy, *do not fear it. Understand the legal parameters for your district and region so that you can protect yourself when you teach it and may be questioned by your colleagues or parents. Furthermore, support other colleagues who are endeavouring to include religious literacy as well*, such as the

two teacher participants who are now connected to create a support network in Modesto. As a final

point, *understand the importance of religious literacy for all students and learn how to teach it to*

them regardless of their learning ability.

Table 14: FBI: Hate crimes by location of incidents based on religious bias, USA (2013-2016)[130]
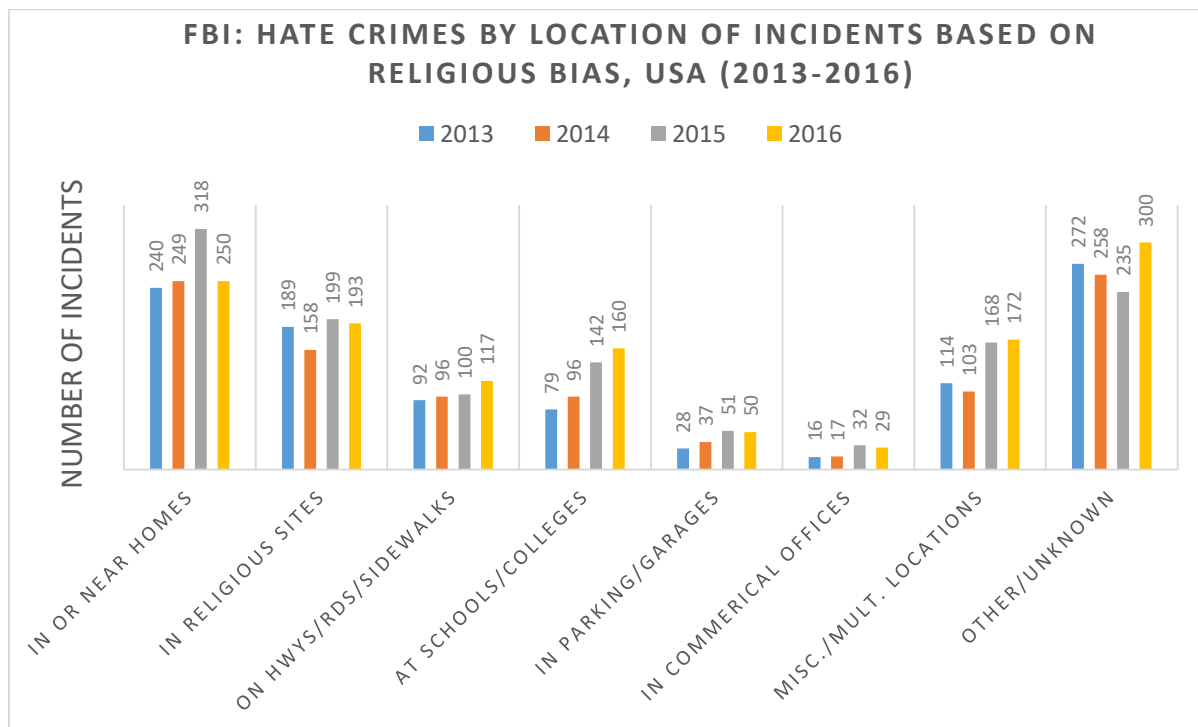
---

[130] 2016: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016/topic-pages/locationtype; 2015: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/topic-pages/locationtype_final; 2014: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2014/topic-pages/locationtype_final; 2013: https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2013/topic-pages/location-type/locationtype_final

Table 15: Statistics Canada: Age of persons accused of hate-related crimes based on religion, Canada, (2013, 2015, 2016)[131]

STATISTICS CANADA: AGE OF PERSONS ACCUSED OF HATE-RELATED CRIMES BASED ON RELIGION, CANADA (2013, 2015 AND 2016)
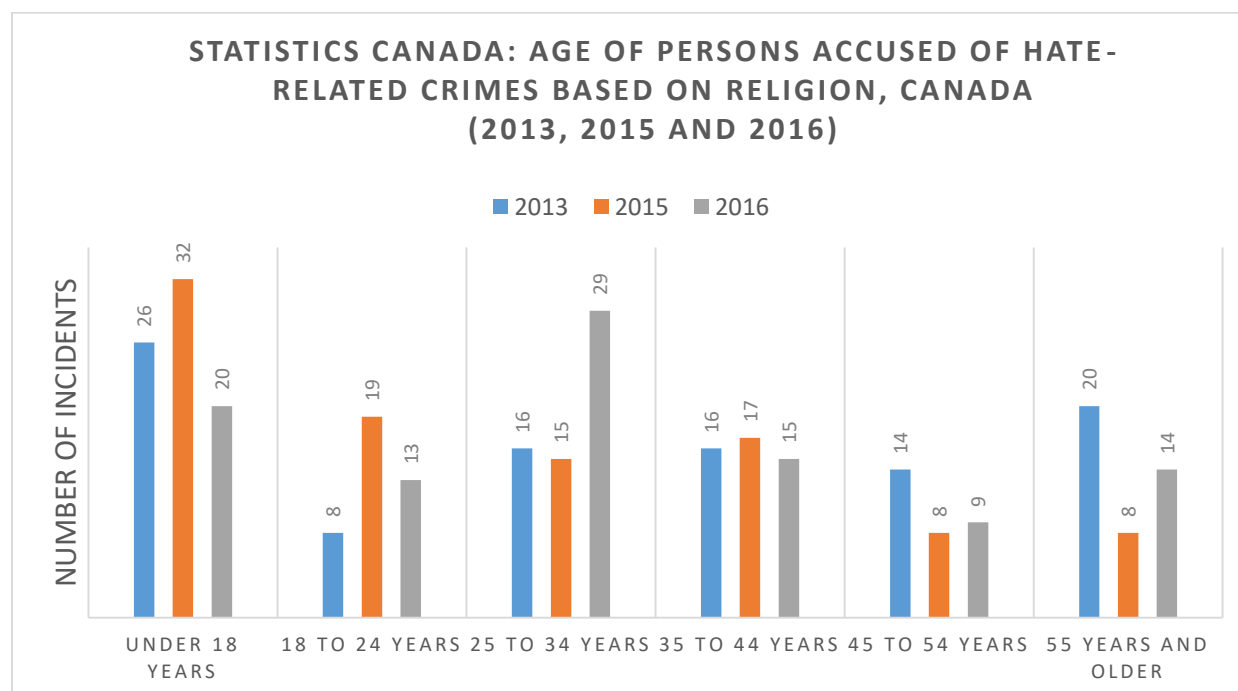
10.2.3. Course developers of the WGWR and ERC

As the WGWR is locally developed by the school district, I was eager to speak with the MCS Social Studies Coordinator during Phase 3 of my study. It was difficult at first, but through the support of and mention of a mutual contact and local representative, I was able to secure a meeting with the Coordinator who was generous with her time. We discussed my findings in relation to religious bullying and discussed more about how an introduction to religious bullying could potentially be included in the class curriculum. Additionally, we spoke about the need for dialogue and the opportunity for me to connect her with local religious leaders who would be happy to speak with the WGWR students or welcome a visit to their religious site. While these

---

[131] 2013: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14191/tbl/tbl06-eng.htm; 2015; https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14832/tbl/tbl06-eng.htm; 2016: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54915/tbl/tbl07-eng.htm. No age breakdown for 2014.

ideas did not transpire, at least not to my understanding, they were shared with the Coordinator and may contribute to changes in the future.

As the ERC curriculum is provincially developed and each individual teacher designs the lessons based on their context and preference, I did not endeavour to hold the same conversations in Montreal. Instead, I shared these findings with pre-service teachers in the McGill University courses in which I have lectured and in others where I have been a guest speaker. Moreover, there is ongoing conversation about the ERC curriculum among Canadian scholars, so I do not attempt to offer a detailed summary of the perspectives in this chapter[132].

Rather, in addition to the recommendations about religious literacy made in Chapter IX, I encourage *WGWR and ERC course/lesson developers to learn from the strengths in one another's curriculum.* Where the WGWR focuses on the rights of all citizens in the first two weeks of the world religion component of the course and combines it with character education, the ERC does not consistently discuss rights in the religious competency component of the course. As such, there is no basis for students to understand why they should be respectful of rights and identities from a historical or contemporary perspective. At the same time, the ERC offers the flexibility for teachers to discuss local representations of a world religion or include more discussion about more predominant world religions in the community, whereas the WGWR, in its condensed nature discusses world religions from a macro and almost uniform approach. As discussed in this dissertation, especially in Chapter II, there are reasons for the dynamics of each course albeit their misgivings, but there is great opportunity to learn from one another as well.

---

[132] For a snapshot of the current conversation, see "Ten Years On: New Perspectives on Quebec's Ethics and Religious Course" (Chan & McDonough, ed., 2019), a special issue on the *Ethics and Religious Culture* course in the journal of *Religion and Education* (https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/urel20/45/3?nav=tocList).

Additionally, my observations during Phase 3 in both cities imply that the WGWR and ERC programs are considered a secondary priority to other traditional social studies courses. From this observation, the findings in this study, and the data in Table 14 and 15, I encourage *WGWR and ERC course/lesson developers to understand the value of religious literacy courses and its potential to prevent and respond to discriminatory behaviours in and outside of school spaces.* Many religious and community leaders and scholars in both cities are eager to help.

10.2.4. Parents, Community Leaders, and Employers

Although parents, community leaders, and employers can be very different groups of individuals, the adults who attended my knowledge mobilization and data dissemination presentations often shared comments related to each group of stakeholders in their remarks. Yet, not all adults engaged in the presentations. In Modesto, adult responses were somewhat mixed. Some of them had never heard of religious bullying, did not know that it occurred, and did not know that the World Religions course was so unique. Others knew that religious bullying occurred and were happy to see it being discussed while some, I suspect from their facial expressions, were quiet about the incidents they knew of because, as the researcher I am not a member of their religious community or they felt discomfort in discussing it. Others shared stories with me as soon as I shared that I was there to discuss religious bullying. One mother told me that her sixth grade daughter had recently been religiously bullied through physical and verbal means when girls at school twisted her daughter's arm behind her and called her a terrorist. Unfortunately, while the school was informed and the bullies were told to stop, no action has been taken to my knowledge.

Despite these mixed responses, a number of religious and community leaders showed great support in this study throughout all its phases. The local imam, a rabbi, and one Mormon leader (who was also the President of the local School Board of Directors) were and continue to be some

of the greatest supporters of my study and they have been working very hard to inform their community members about religious bullying even before my study began. During an interfaith leaders gathering, some leaders were shocked to hear about religious bullying and showed concern. However, other leaders (in that particular meeting, and those who I have met on separate visits) appear to distance themselves from the phenomenon. I do not know if they do so because they think that it does not exist in their community or because I am an outsider to their community.

In Montreal, I had the opportunity to present to a group of seniors in a Montreal Catholic church who were very keen to learn about religious bullying and discuss it. I also spoke at a local Latter Day Saint temple where one parent in attendance shared that he struggled at work because colleagues spoke about the *Book of Mormons* musical and subtly teased and marginalized him because of it. In this discussion focused primarily on student experiences, the parent's comments were unexpected but showed the tensions regarding one's religious identity in society across age groups. In our conversation, he was seeking suggestions on how to respond in the workplace. In another presentation at the Jewish Christian Dialogue of Montreal, I shared my research findings to leaders who nodded and sought more details, some who were previously educators and acknowledged the struggle with the ERC program. In yet another, I spoke at a local mosque to individuals of all ages in one gathering who attentively and respectfully listened and asked questions about the religious bullying in general.

In both contexts, there was a lack of understanding about religious bullying among all individuals. Parents were unsure if their children were experiencing any form of religious bullying, and along with community leaders, were not always in conversation with one another. The Modesto imam and rabbi had many parents who had approached them with concerns of religious bullying, which may have been likewise in Montreal but I cannot confirm that. The leaders in the

Modesto interfaith meeting in particular, some who were attending in secrecy from their congregants, shared that while they wished to work across inter- and intra-faith lines, some of their congregants would not have accepted such conversations. (A leader during this meeting also shared individually with me after my presentation that the detail about inter- and intragenerational bullying had described his personal experience. As a senior, he only realized then that a childhood experience had affected his life up to that day.) This does not suggest that parents and other congregants would not have approached the leaders to discuss religious bullying incidents, but it raises a consideration of the types of personal conversations that congregants and religious leaders may discuss. At the same time, in making these observations, I do not suggest that it is necessary for individuals to discuss incidents of religious bullying with their religious or community leaders. However, from the example of the Modesto imam and rabbi, I have seen that some leaders can offer support for parents who do not know how to respond to religious bullying. In addition, from the interfaith groups that I have seen, leaders who are also unaware of how to respond to religious bullying can find support in other local leaders. Where religious bullying occurs, many leaders are eager to find support locally. Thus, it is recommended that *parents and local leaders seek support from one another, especially when they are not familiar with religious bullying. In some circumstances, bullying may be hard to understand as older generations were not educated about bullying (as with the current generation) and it was not discussed. Although difficult, I encourage all adults to reflect on their own experiences to see how they may have been harmed by bullying to understand how it can affect youth today, especially with the access to cyberbullying. Thus, it is important for adults to learn about religious bullying and discuss it openly with children and youth in their community to normalize the conversation, break the taboo, and create the space for students to understand and report such incidents. Additionally, it is crucial for adults to develop*

their own religious literacy to learn about others so that support for one another through religious

bullying can be easier to approach, even for individuals from differing religious or non-religious

backgrounds. Inter- and intra-faith efforts exist in North American places that can and do offer

support.

Having said this, while doing this study, research from the Institute for Social Policy and

Understanding (ISPU, 2016) showed that religious discrimination occurs among parents as well,

making it difficult for the 18% of Muslim parents in their study, the 5% of Jewish parents, 4% of

Catholic parents, and 2% of Protestant parents to respond to their own children's discrimination.

Later, Mogahed and Chouhoud (2017) of the ISPU conducted another study among 800 Muslim

and 240 Jewish people in January 2017 after Donald Trump's inauguration. This report on students

also showed discrimination among parents. Thus, for community leaders, *the taboo around*

religious discrimination needs to be broken so that community members can be supported. For

employers, *it is important to understand the developing research on workplace bullying, as adults*

may experience religious bullying at work. Religious bullying is just one form that can manifest in

the work environment but employees may not know how to respond to bullying outside of a school

environment. Additionally, HR policies need to address this growing phenomenon explicitly. From

2013 to 2016, there were minimal hate crimes in US commercial spaces (Table 14) but the high

rate of 25 to 34 year olds in Canada (Table 15) suggests that more scrutiny on certain employees

is needed, especially as corporate social responsibility is of great importance to several

organizations.

10.2.5. Policy makers

During Phase 3, I did not speak with any policy makers but I presented my findings at an

annual PREVNet conference in December 2017 attended by Quebec educational policy makers.

In one conversation with a representative from the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, she shared that there is a lack of understanding regarding religious bullying even for herself, and that there are avenues to discuss it more, particularly in light of the statistical data on religious-based hate crimes in Quebec and Montreal from 2013 to 2017. From these short observations, my overall findings, and statistical data, it is recommended that policy makers:

- *Recognize religious bullying among students in regional and district policy, explain it to educators, and provide them with resources to prevent and respond to it, such as religious literacy.* The California Assembly Committee on Education has recognized religious bullying through ACR 154 (2014) but it has not mandated specific ways for all educators to respond to it. Rather, it has left districts to decide how schools respond to bullying. However, Assembly Bill 2291 (2018) has recently proposed the need for all schools to identify specific ways to prevent bullying of all forms. I would add that it is beneficial for schools and districts to identify specific means to address the different forms of content-based bullying in both California and Quebec.
- *Design teacher training programs that discuss religious bullying and other forms of content-based bullying thoroughly in order to prepare and equip teachers with educators.* Training should also describe the forms of content-based bullying that exists locally so that teachers are familiar with the details and quicker to respond. Underlying this is the need for all educators in a school, whether they are a teacher or not, to respond to bullying incidents appropriately.
- *Consider religious literacy as the 4ᵗʰ R of education, as Stephen Prothero suggests*, with respect to our diverse and connected multi-religious society and world.
- *Understand that religious literacy complements social-emotional learning and healthy relationships by filling the gap to inform about the social issues in one's social-ecology.* It supplements existing solutions, but targets the specific issue at hand.
- *Invest in improving the WGWR and ERC program. Consider teacher training and curriculum development that will foster dialogue, analytical thinking, and in-group and out-group interaction (per Allport's criteria) in the religious literacy classrooms.*
- *Seek ways to offer awareness education for parents to familiarize them with religious bullying and religious literacy,* as they may perpetuate discriminatory attitudes from the society towards students or teachers.

For non-educational policy makers, *understand the long-term effects of intra- and intergenerational religious bullying and thus, bullying is not confined to the schoolyard. Seek ways to respond to and support adults in spaces where they may struggle with its short and long-term*

effects, such as the workplace. Working collaboratively with educational policy makers to address religious bullying at a young age can minimize the social, political, and economic costs of bullying as a public health and security concern, since the effects of religious bullying theoretically coincide with the factors that lead one towards violent extremism. Additionally, supporting a current religious literacy program in public schools and further developing its design is cost-effective and efficient in the long-term, since anti-bullying programs can be costly and meta-analysis on anti-bullying programs have found many to be counter-productive (Jeong & Lee, 2013; Mitchell, 2012).

Lastly, Mogahed and Chouhoud (2017) noted that religious bullying is a major concern for students whereas religious discrimination occurs among all age groups from various parties, including government officials as Muslims in the US are "significantly more likely than any other group to face secondary screening at border crossings (30% vs. 12% among the general public)" (p. 4). For all policy makers then, *consider if the current policies are discriminatory in any way. If so, how can they be changed?*

10.2.6. Researchers

As perhaps the first academic study on religious bullying in relation to religious literacy, this study raises several considerations for future study. Potential elaborations on this study include:

- Regarding religious bullying:
  - *What is the state of religious bullying in Canada?* We need a greater understanding of the Canadian landscape, similar to the CAIR, Sikh Coalition, and HAF reports in the US.

- *What is the state of religious bullying in workplaces?* 12% of Sikhs in the San Francisco Bay Area report religious bullying in the workplace post 9/11[133].
- *What are the nuances of religious bullying based on one's intersectionality* with language preference or mother tongue, gender, race, class, nationality, ethnicity, etc.?
- *In Canada, how is religious bullying understood with respect to Indigenous spirituality?* What is the state of bullying towards individuals with respect to their Indigenous spirituality?
- *What is the state of religious bullying towards or among those who are "nones"?*
- *How can we redefine bullying so that it is not limited to being a repeated offense?* It does not need to be a repeated offense before it is considered bullying – e.g. the bus driver calling the students terrorists. A one-time comment/act can sufficiently challenge a student's self-esteem and understanding, especially if offenses of the same nature occur several times but from separate individuals.
- More research is needed in Montreal overall. Based on this study, I would recommend future studies that focus on one or two specific neighbourhoods or boroughs, or studies that pertain to only English or French school boards.
- Regarding religious literacy:
  - *What is the level of religious literacy among Canadians outside of Quebec who have elective religious literacy courses?*
  - *Has the level of religious literacy in Modesto increased since the course began in 2000?*
  - *As American feelings towards religious groups have warmed[134], does this minimize the taboo in talking about religion or increase one's willingness to speak with people of a different worldview?*
  - *What is the state of religious literacy offered in teacher training programs in Canada and the US?*
  - *What are new and innovative ways to foster religious literacy among adults in a non-traditional school space?*
  - *How is religious literacy formed through inter- and intra-faith communities?*
  - *How often do non-religious leaders participate in interfaith communities? What experiences/knowledge/aims lead one leader to participate in one opposed to another?*
- Regarding religious bullying and religious literacy:
  - *How positive or negative is the connection between religious bullying and religious literacy when religious literacy is taught as an elective by a willing teacher?*
  - *Does the connection between religious bullying and religious literacy differ among public and private (confessional and non-confessional) schools? If so, how and why?*

---

[133] This statistic is not dated, but it is referenced by the Sikh Coalition here https://www.sikhcoalition.org/images/documents/fact%20sheet%20on%20hate%20against%20sikhs%20in%20america%20post%209-11%201.pdf.

[134] http://www.pewforum.org/2017/02/15/americans-express-increasingly-warm-feelings-toward-religious-groups/

Altogether, these considerations, implications, and recommendations for students, educators, the course/lesson developers of the WGWR and ERC courses, parents, community leaders, and employers, policy makers, and researchers are raised from the findings of my study. Now, as the study concludes within the context of Montreal and Modesto, my reflections on the original premise of my study lead me to consider how it may apply in the place where it first began – in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) of Ontario.

10.3. Back to the beginning and looking ahead

With an understanding of the social influence towards bullying, one needs to be mindful that content-based bullying is contextual. In the GTA, where my study began, the most prevalent form of discrimination and hate/bias crimes were based on religion, comprising 45% of all hate crimes (58 of 130 crimes) in 2013, 43% (63 of 147) in 2014, 43% (58 of 134) in 2015, and 47% (66 of 145) in 2016 (Toronto Police Services, 2016). In the Peel Region, where I taught, the Peel Regional Police reported hate/bias motivated crimes 35% (18 of 52 crimes) in 2014, 43% (27 of 63) in 2015, 44% (26 of 59) in 2016, 48% (76 of 158) in 2017 (Peel Regional Police, 2016; 2018). In 2017, the police categorized crimes with multiple motivators as "other" where many included the intersections of race, sexual orientation, gender, and religion so the 2017 rates are higher, despite the police's categorization (Peel Regional Police, 2018). The Peel Police explained that the over 90% increase in hate crimes towards Muslims from 2016 to 2017 may have been the result of public awareness and improved police training, as the data rose from five reported incidents in 2016 to 57 in 2017. This was similar for incidents towards Jewish people that rose from 23 in 2016 to 36 in 2017 (McLaughlin, 2018). These details, along with data regarding other religious groups that were targeted from 2014 to 2017, are listed in Table 16.

Table 16: Peel Regional Police Board: Reported hate motived crimes by type of religion (2014-2017)[135]

PEEL REGIONAL POLICE BOARD: REPORTED HATE MOTIVATED CRIMES BY TYPE OF RELIGION (2014-2017)

■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016 ■ 2017

NUMBER OF CRIMES

Religion	2014	2015	2016	2017
JEWISH	12	9	23	36
CHRISTIAN	2	13	1	2
HINDU	0	0	0	0
MUSLIM	4	11	5	57
SIKH	0	0	1	2
JEHOVAH WITNESS	0	0	0	1
COMBINATION	0	1	1	10
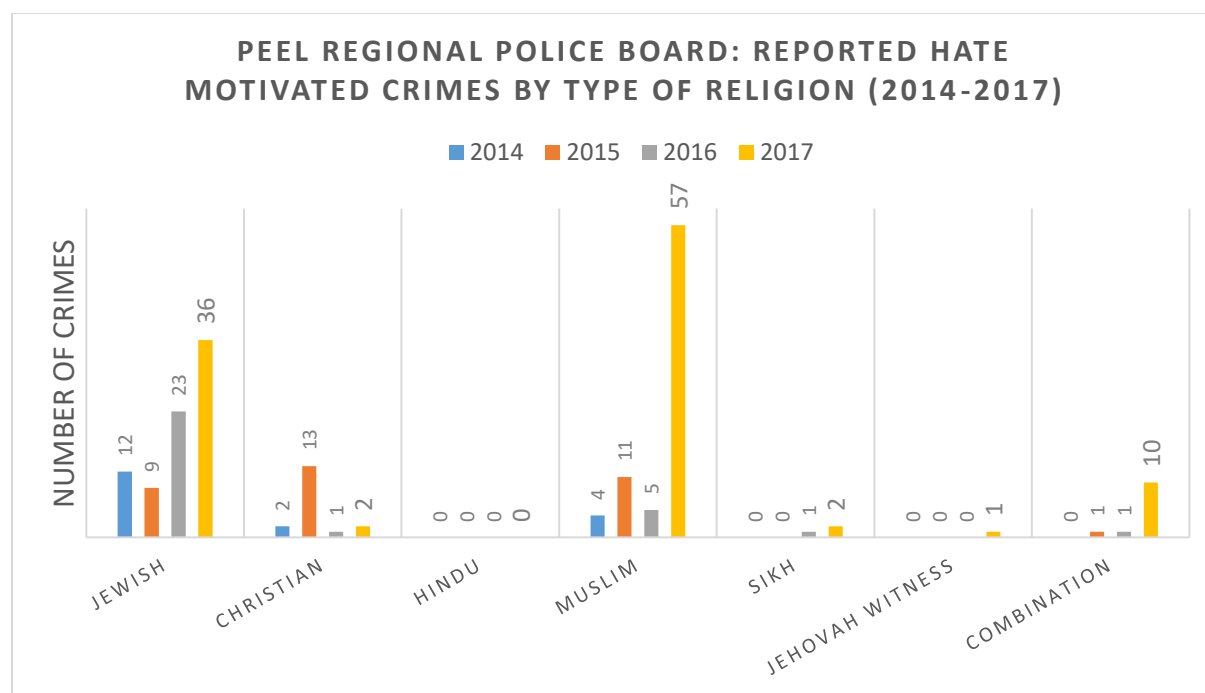
The 2017 sentiments were reflected in March 2017 when protestors interrupted a regular Board Meeting of the Peel District School Board (PDSB) and ripped a Qur'an. During that incident, protestors rallied against a twenty-year old policy that allowed Muslim, along with other religious students, to have prayer space in public schools. It included shouts of "This is a Christian country," "Islam is not a religion!" and "protect our children" (McGillivray, 2017; "Imam thanks Peel," 2017). Police arrived to resolve the conflict and the PDSB Chair, and Ontario Education Minister, and the Mayors of Mississauga and Brampton spoke openly against the discriminatory behaviour the next day, citing the legal responsibilities to protect religious accommodations as per the Ontario Human Rights Code (McGillivray, 2017).

---

[135] https://www.peelpoliceboard.ca/en/board-meetings/resources/2017---Hate-Bias-Motivated-Crimes---Annual-Report.pdf

In relation to Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological framework regarding one's individual development, this statistical data and narrative suggest an increasing rate of discrimination towards religious groups in the GTA and Peel Region and illustrates how attitudes and behaviours can easily filter into school settings. Unlike Modesto and parts of Montreal where some educators and school administration remain silent or reticent to engage with or discuss ideas or concerns regarding religion and religious identities, the PDSB educators and policy makers in the meso-, and exo- spheres of Peel Region and the Ministry of Education are outspoken against discrimination based on religion. Classroom teacher perspectives are silent from this brief data, but the voices from select parents are clear, as is the awareness and knowledge from the police services. From the findings in this study, questions now arise as to:

- *What is the religious literacy among parents in Peel and the GTA?*
- *What are educator attitudes and how religious literate are they? Are there emerging efforts to foster religious literacy among educators?*
- *How is societal religious discrimination manifested in school? If religious bullying exists, how is it understood, responded to, or prevented?*
- *Is religious bullying occurring in workplaces or other public spaces? If so, how are employers, community leaders, or policy makers responding to it?*

Although this study has concluded, these questions relate to my initial desire to support fellow colleagues, especially those from the PDSB where I taught and grew up. As such, I have begun to create specific initiatives to fulfil this goal at the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-levels. This includes the development of an approved certificate course at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, titled "Foundations of Religious, Spiritual, and Creed Literacy In Public Schools," co-designed with my colleague, Hiren Mistry, Instructional Coordinator of Equity and Inclusive Education at the PDSB and Ph.D. Candidate at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education. Additionally, this study, its objectives, and findings, have led me to co-found the Centre for Civic

Religious Literacy (www.ccrl-clrc.ca) with two other colleagues from the McGill University Faculty of Education – Dr. Sabrina Jafralie, and Erin Reid, Ph.D. Candidate. Together, we have gathered a group of religious literacy specialists across Canada to promote civic religious literacy among stakeholders in the levels of Bronfenbrenner's framework – students, educators, parents, industry leaders, and policy makers. Individually, I will complete projects in the US to contribute the findings from this study as well.

10.4. Concluding remarks

This study has taught me many things, including the importance and guidance of law but its inability to change hearts. In some circumstances where religious discrimination and bullying occur, students (and adults) stand up for themselves but their peers do not change (Mahit, Saaf). *How can an educator-researcher open people's eyes to change their hearts? Is this possible?* This study shows that change is possible but that it needs to be communal one. An educator cannot change an individual but can explain and share knowledge that can encourage an understanding of others. The students (and adults) must have an opportunity to reach their own conclusions and consider if and why respect for others is needed and warranted. Perspectives and personal narratives need to be discussed and considered for students to understand the detrimental effects of religious bullying and the value of another's religious or non-religious affiliation to that individual, regardless of the meaning it may have for oneself. While there are varying ways to engage with these ideas, this study found that religious literacy can offer this form of knowledge and foster this attitudinal change, especially as a means for educators to address religious bullying in public school environments.

REFERENCES

Abella, I. M., Goodman, E., & Sharp, R. (1997). *Growing up Jewish: Canadians tell their own stories*. Toronto, Ont: M&S.

Abdou, E. D. & Chan, W. Y. A. (2017). Analyzing constructions of polytheistic and monotheistic religious traditions: A critical multicultural approach to textbooks in Quebec. *Multicultural Perspectives, 19*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2016.1263961

Allen, M. (2015). Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2013. Statistics Canada. Retrieved from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14191-eng.htm#a16.

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The individual and his religion.* New York, US: The MacMillan Company.

Allport, G. W. (1951). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, UK: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

American Academy of Religion. (2010). *Guidelines for Teaching about Religion in K-12 Public Schools in the United States.* Produced by the American Academy of Religion, Religion in the Schools Task Force. Retrieved from https://www.aarweb.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Publications/epublications/AARK-12CurriculumGuidelines.pdf

Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T., and Norrie, A. (Eds.). (1998). *Critical realism: Essential readings.* London, UK: Routledge.

Assemblée nationale du Québec. (2005). Bill n°95: An Act to amend various legislative provisions of a confessional nature in the education field. Québec Official Publisher. Retrieved from http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-95-37-1.html

Axelrod, P. (1997). *The promise of schooling: education in Canada, 1800-1914*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Baker, C. (2009) Blurred encounters? Religious literacy, spiritual capital, and language. In Dinham, A., Furbey, R., & Lowndes, V. (2009). *Faith in the public realm: Controversies, policies and practices*. Bristol: Policy.

Baillargeon, N. (2016). *Enseigner au Québec*. Montreal, Canada: Groupe Ville-Marie Littérature, inc.

Balaji, M., Chan, W. Y. A, Arshanapally, S., Khanna, R, Pallod, K. (Forthcoming). *Classroom subjected 2.0.* Washington, DC: Hindu American Foundation.

Balaji, M., Khanna, R., Dinakar, A., Voruganti, H., & Pallod, K. (2016). *Classroom subjected: Bully & bias against Hindu students in American schools*. Washington, DC: Hindu American Foundation.

Baril, D. & Baillergeon, N. (Eds.). (2016). *La face cachée du cours Éthique et culture religieuse*. Ottawa, Canada: Leméac.

Barshay, J. (2018). "Early evidence of a 'Trump effect' on bullying in schools." The Hechinger Report. Retrieved from https://hechingerreport.org/early-evidence-of-a-trump-effect-on-bullying-in-schools/.

Basinger, D. (2011). Religious diversity in public education in Meister, C. (Ed). *The Oxford handbook of religious diversity. Oxford*, UK: Oxford University Press. P 277-289.

Bazeley, P. & Jackson, K. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo.* Los Angeles. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Beatbullying. (2008). *Interfaith Report.* Reference from a downloaded copy that is no longer available online.

Beyer, P., & Ramji, R. (2013). *Growing up Canadian: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Bhaskar, R. (2011). *Philosophy and the idea of freedom.* London, UK: Routledge.

Bhaskar, R. (1998a). Societies, in Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T., and Norrie, A. (Eds.). (1998). *Critical realism: Essential readings.* London, UK: Routledge, p. 206-257.

Bhaskar, R. (1998b). *The possibility of naturalism: A philosophical critique of the contemporary human science*s. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.

Bhui, K., Dinos, S. and Jones, E. (2012). Psychological process and pathways to radicalization. *Journal of Bioterrorism & Biodefense*, S5:003, 1–5. doi:10.4172/2157-2526.S5-003.

Bill 95: An act to amend various legislative provisions of a confessional nature in the education field. (2005). 1st session. Gouvernement du Quebec. Retrieved from http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=5&file=2005C20A.PDF

Bouchard, G. (2017). « M. Couillard a manqué de vision » - Gérard Bouchard (Video) Radio-Canada. Retrieved from http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1017420/commission-bouchard-taylor-signes-religieux-gerard-bouchard-charles-taylor-projet-loi-62

Bouchard, G. and Taylor, C. (2008). "Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation." Gouvernement du Québec. http://red.pucp.edu.pe/wp-content/uploads/biblioteca/buildingthefutureGerardBouchardycharlestaylor.pdf

Boudreau, S. From Confessional to Cultural: Religious Education in the Schools of Québec. *Religion & Education. 3*(3), 212-223. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15507394.2011.609104

Branch, S. & Murray, J. (2015). Workplace bullying: Is lack of understanding the reason for inaction? *Organizational Dynamics, 44*(4), 287-295. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2015.09.006

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology: Vol. 2. Research Designs*, 95-114. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David_Morgan19/post/What_type_of_data_analysis_would_I_use_for_open_ended_questionnaires_and_interviews_based_on_teaching_methods/attachment/59d643af79197b807799f15b/AS:444699128406016@1483035942861/download/Braun+12+APA+Handbook.pdf

Brazier, C. (2017). *UNICEF Report Card 14, Building our Future: Children and Sustainable Development Goals in Rich Countries.* The UNICEF Office of Research. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.ca/sites/default/files/2017-06/UNICEF%20Innocenti%20Report%20Card%2014%20EN.pdf

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development : Experiments by Nature and Design.* Cambridge, US: Harvard University Press.

Brown, A. S. (1987). *Religious education and the pupil with learning difficulties*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cahill, C., based on work with the Fed Up Honeys. (2007). Participatory data analysis. In Kindon, S., Pain, R., and Kesby, M. (Eds.). *Participatory action research approaches and methods: Connecting people, participation, and methods.* London, UK: Routledge, pp. 181-187.

Callan, E. (1997). *Creating citizens: Political education and liberal democracy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Callan, E. (2000). Discrimination and religious schooling. In *Citizenship in Diverse Societies.* Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman. (Eds.) (2000). Oxford Scholarship Online: DOI:10.1093/019829770X.001.0001, 45-70.

California Assembly Committee on Education (2018). *Assembly Bill-2772 Pupil instruction: ethnic studies.* Retrieved from http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB2772

California Assembly Committee on Education (2014). *Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 154 Modesto City Schools: World Geography-World Religions class*. Retrieved from https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140ACR154

Carey, J. & Swalec, A. (2017, March 28). "Muslim Family's Virginia Home Vandalized, Quran Torn Up". *NBC.* Retrieved from http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/Muslim-Familys-Virginia-Home-Vandalized-Quran-Torn-Up-417328033.html.

Chan, A. W. Y. (2012). *A place for religious discussion to create and strengthen an inclusive public school classroom*. Unpublished manuscript, Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON.

Chan, W. Y. A. (2019). A review of ERC teacher training programs across nine Quebec universities: A snapshot 10 years after 2008. *Religion & Education*.

Chater, M., & Erricker, C. (2013). *Does religious education have a future? Pedagogical and policy prospects*. London, UK: Routledge.

Clarke, E. A. and Kiselica, M. S. (1997). A systemic counseling approach to the problem of bullying. *Elementary school guidance and counselling, 31*(4), pp. 310-25.

Collier, A. (1994). *An introduction to Roy Bhaskar's philosophy.* London, UK: Verso.

"Communciative research." (Copyright 2015). Centre of research in theories and practices that overcome inequalities, University of Barcelona (CREA UB). Retrieved from http://creaub.info/research/critical-communicative-research/.

"Consideration for specific groups." (n.d.) *stopbullying.gov.* Retrieved from https://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/index.html

"Conversations with Muslims." (2017). McGill Reporter. Retrieved from http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2017/02/conversations-with-muslims-overcoming-fear-of-the-other/.

Council of American Islamic Relations. (2015). MISLABELED: The Impact of School Bullying and Discrimination on California Muslim Students. https://youthlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CAIR-CA-2015-Bullying-Report-Web.pdf

Coward, H., Slater, P., & Chagnon, R. (2009). "Religion." *The Canadian Encyclopedia.* Retrieved from https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/religion.

Craig, W., & Edge, H. M. (2012). *The health of Canada's young people: a mental health focus.* Public Health Agency of Canada. Retrieved from http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/publications/hbsc-mental-mentale/bullying-intimidation-eng.php

Craig, W. & Pepler, D. (2007). Understanding bullying: From research to practice. *Canadian psychology/Psychologie Canadienne. 48*(2). 86-93.

Craig, K., Bell, D. and Leschied, A. (2011). Pre-service teachers' knowledge and attitudes regarding school-based bullying. *Canadian journal of education. 34*(2). Pp. 21-33.

Cram, R. H. (2001). Memories by Christian adults of childhood bullying experiences: Implications for adult religious self-understanding. *Religious Education. 96*(3), 326-350.

Creswell, J.W., Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

DeLara, E. W. (2016). *Bullying scars: The impact on adult life and relationships.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Deaton, M. (2011a). United Nations: Rights and duties. In Chatterjee, D. K. *Encyclopedia of global justice.* Dordrecht, NL: Springer, p 1113-1115.

Deaton, M. (2011b). Universal declaration of human rights. In Chatterjee, D. K. *Encyclopedia of global justice.* Dordrecht, NL: Springer, p 1115-1116.

Demaray, M. K., & Malecki, C. K. (2003). Perceptions of the frequency and importance of social support by students classified as victims, bullies, and bully/victims in an urban middle school. *Social psychology review, 32,* 471-489.

Dewey, J. (1934). *A common faith.* New Haven: Yale University Press

Dewey, J. (1915). *The School and Society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education.* New York, NY: Touchstone.

Dillon, M. (2011). A sociological approach to questions about religious diversity in Meister, C. (Ed). *The Oxford handbook of religious diversity. Oxford*, UK: Oxford University Press. P 21-28.

Dinham, A. Furbey, R., and Lowndes V. (ed.) (2009). *Faith in the public realm: Controversies, policies, and practices*. Bristol, UK: The Policy Press.

Duenkler, M. (2017). Marching against islamophobia. McGill Daily. Retrieved from http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2017/02/marching-against-islamophobia/.

Durham, J. G. L., Earl of, 1792-1840. (1912). Lord Durham's report on the affairs of British North America. (Ed. Sir C. P. Lucas). Henry Frowde, M.A. Publisher to the University of Oxford. London. Retrieved from http://www.archive.org/stream/lorddurhamsrepor01durhiala/lorddurhamsrepor01durhiala_djvu.txt

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., and Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development, 82*(1), 405-321, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x.

Duval, A. (2018). Formation obligatoire sur les crimes haineux pour les policiers de Québec. *Radio-Canada.* Retrieved from: https://ici.radio canada.ca/nouvelle/1079601/policequebec-formation-crimes-haineux-attentat-grande-mosquee

Eck, D. L. (n.d.). "From Diversity to Pluralism." *The Pluralism Project: Harvard University.* http://pluralism.org/encounter/todays-challenges/from-diversity-topluralism

Eck, D. L. (2006). What is pluralism? *The Pluralism Project: Harvard University*. Retrieved from http://www.pluralism.org/pluralism/what_is_pluralism

"EMSB says secular charter endorses bullying: Montreal's largest English school board says Bill 60 'brings out the worst in Quebec society.' (2014). *CBC.* Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/emsb-says-secular-charter-endorses-bullying-1.2489840

Erricker, C. and Erricker, J. (2000). *Reconstructing religious, spiritual and moral education,* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Espelage, D. L. & Swearer, S. M. (2010). A social-ecological model for bullying prevention and intervention, In Jimerson, S. R., Swearer, S. M. and Espelage, D. L. (Eds.) *Handbook of*

bullying in schools: An international perspective (pp. 61-72). New York, NY: Routledge.

Falk, C. J. (1968). *The development and organization of education in California*. New York, US: Harcourt, Brace & World.

Farrington, D. P. (1993). Understanding and Preventing Bullying. Crime and Justice, 17, 381-458.

FBI. (2016). 2015 Hate crime statistics. Retrieved from https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015.

Feith, J. (2018). Quebec mosque shooting: 'Alexandre was not a monster,' high school teacher tells court. *Montreal Gazette.* Retrieved from https://montrealgazette.com/news/quebec/0424-city-bissonnette-teach

Flecha, R., Gómez, J., & Puigvert, L. (2003). *Contemporary sociological theory.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Fraser, J. (2016). *Between Church and State: Religion and Public Education in a Multicultural America. 2nd Ed.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Fraser, J., Ed. (2014). *The school in the United States: A documentary history.* (Third Edition). New York, NY: Routledge.

Fraser, J. (1999). *Between Church and State: Religion and Public Education in a Multicultural America.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Fraser, N. (2007). Identity, exclusion and critique: A response to four critics. *European Journal of Political Theory, 6*(3), 305-338.

Freire, P. (originally published 1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* (30th anniversary edition, 2010). New York, NY: Continuum.

Futrell, M. (2015). Broaching borderlands beyond religion (Part One). *The California Three Rs Project: Rights, responsibility, and respect.* Retrieved from http://ca3rsproject.org/bulletins/3RsBulletinJan2015.pdf

Galtung, J. (2015). *World politics of peace and war.* New York, NY: Hampton Press, Inc.

Galtung, J. & Fischer, D. (2013). *Johan Galtung: Pioneer of Peace Research*. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer.

Galtung, J. 1990. Cultural violence. *Journal of Peace Research. 27*(3): 291–305

Ghosh, R. (Spring, 2011). The liberating potential of multiculturalism in Canada: Ideals and realities. *Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens* (Special Edition). 3-8.

Ghosh, R., & Abdi, A. (2013). *Education and the Politics of Difference: Select Canadian Perspectives*. 2nd edition. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Gojer, J. (2010). *Fahim Ahmad's psychiatric evaluation*. Unpublished clinical evaluation, The Manasa Clinic, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Gómez, A., Puigvert, L., and Flecha, R. (2011). CCM: Informing real social transformation through research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 17*(3), 235–245. Retrieved from http://qix.sagepub.com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/content/17/3/235.full.pdf+html.

Gómez, A., Racionero, S., Sordé, T. (2010). Ten Years of Critical Communicative Methodology. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, *3*(1), pp. 17-43. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/irqr.2010.3.1.17

Gómez, A. (2008). Remembering Pato. *International journal of critical pedagogy, 1*(1), 1-2. Retrieved from http://freireproject.org/wp-content/journals/TIJCP/Vol1No1/45-35-1-PB.pdf.

Gómez, J., Latorre, A., Sánchez, M., Flecha, R. (2006). Chapter 2: The CCM and the dialogic society. (Unpublished English translation). *Metodología comunicativa crítica.*

Barcelona: El Roure. Retrieved from http://www.havenscenter.org/files/Critical%20Communicative%20Methodology_Chapter%202_Unpublished%20English%20translation.pdf

Gómez, J., Vargas, J. (2003). Why Roma do not like mainstream school: A voice of a people without a territory. *Harvard educational review, 73*(4): 559-590. Retrieved from http://www.metapress.com/content/k6807432592612j3/fulltext.pdf.

Government of B.C. (2013). "School-led anti-bullying efforts share in $1 million". *British Columbia Newsroom*. Retrieved from http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/02/school-led-anti-bullying-efforts-share-in-1-million.html

Gouvernement du Québec. (1999). *Religion in secular schools: A new perspective for Québec*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'éducation. Retrieved from http://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/bs40899

Greene, J. C. and Hall, J.N. (2010). Dialectics and pragmatism: being of consequence, in Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (2010). *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research. 2nd ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Pp 119-144.

Greenawalt, K. (2007). *Does God Belong in Public Schools?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Grelle, Bruce. "Defining and Promoting the Study of Religion in British and American Schools" In *International Handbook of the Religious, Moral and Spiritual Dimensions of Education*, by M. de Souza, K. Engebretson, G. Durka, R. Jackson and A. McGrady (Eds.), p. 461-474, Dordrecht: the Netherlands, Springer Academic Publishers, 2006.

Guttman, A. and Ben-Porath, S. (2015). Democratic education, in Gibbons, M. T. (ed.). *The encyclopedia of political thought. First Edition*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Guttman, A. and Thompson, D. (2014). *Why deliberative democracy?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Gutmann, A. and Thompson, D. (1996). *Democracy and Disagreement*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Gutmann, A. (1999) *Democratic Education.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action*. (T. McCarthy, Trans.) Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (1990). *Moral consciousness and communicative action.* (C. Lenhardt, S. W. Nicholsen, Trans.) Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (2010). An awareness of what is missing. In Habermas et al., *An awareness of what is missing: Faith and reason in a post-secular age.* (p. 15-23). Translated by Ciaran Cronin. Cambridge, UK; Polity Press.

Hamblim, J. (2013). http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/09/bullied-for-not-believing-in-god/279095/

Hamilton, C. (2014). I'm an atheist. But I've got faith in Religious Studies. *The Independent.* Retrieved from http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/im-an-atheist-but-ive-got-faith-in-religious-studies-9200300.html

Hargreaves, D. H. (1994). *The mosaic of learning: Schools and teachers for the next century.* Demos paper 8. London: Demos.

Harris, I. (2009). Peace education: Definition, approaches, and future directions. *Peace, Literature and Art, 1*, 77-96.

Harris, I. M., & Morrison, M. L. (2012). *Peace education*. McFarland.

Harris Interactive. (2005). *From teasing to torment: School climate in America. A survey of students and teachers.* Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). Retrieved from http://www.glsen.org/download/file/MzMzMg==

Harris, W. T. (1896). Horace Mann. *The Journal of Education. 44*(8). pp. 140-142. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/44045690

Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2013). Teaching empathy and preventing bullying. *Askwith Forum*. https://storify.com/HarvardEd/teaching-empathy-and-preventing-bullying-solutions

Hill Collins, P. & Bilge, S. (2016). *Intersectionality.* Chicester, UK:Wiley.

Hirsch, S., & Mc Andrew, M. (2014). To learn about the other and to get to know him: Judaism and the Jewish community of Quebec as represented in ethics and religious culture textbooks. In B. O. Andreassen & J. R. Lewis (Eds.), *Textbook Gods: Genre, text and teaching religious studies* (pp. 86–97). London, UK: Equinox Publishing.

Hull, J. M. (n.d.). Three models of religious education. *International Association for Religious Freedom.* Retrieved from https://www.iarf.net/REBooklet/Hull.htm.

Hwang Lynch, G. (2016, December 6). California will soon provide ethnic studies classes for all high schoolers. Here's why. *PRI*. Retrieved from https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-12-06/california-will-soon-provide-ethnic-studies-classes-all-high-schoolers-heres-why

Hymel, S. and Swearer, S. M. (2015). Four decades of research on school bullying. *American Psychological Association. 70*(4), 293-299. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038928

Hunt, D. (2017). *Addressing Special Educational Needs and Disability in the Curriculum: Religious Education. (2nd edition).* London: Routledge.

"Imam thanks Peel school board for gathering pages of Qur'an ripped at meeting." (2017). *CBC News.* Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/brampton-imam-qur-an-1.4047186

Institute for Economics & Peace. (2014). Five key questions answered on the link between peace and religion. Retrieved from http://www.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/Peace%20and%20Religion%20Report.pdf

Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. (2016). *ISPU American Muslim Poll Key Findings*. http://www.ispu.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ampkeyfindings-2.pdf

"Iranian Refugee's Home Vandalized With Anti-Muslim Graffiti, Destroyed Furniture in Oregon." (2017, March 30). *KTLA.* Retrieved from http://ktla.com/2017/03/30/iranian-refugees-home-vandalized-with-anti-muslim-graffiti-destroyed-furniture-in-oregon/.

Jackson, R. (2014). *Signposts – Policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious worldviews in intercultural education.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Jackson, R. (2015). Inclusive study of religions and other worldviews in publicly-funded schools in democratic societies**,** In *The future of religious education in Europe* by Kristina Stoeckl (Eds.). (p. 7-18). Florence, Italy: European University Institute. Retrieved from http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/37735.

Jackson, R. (2012). Religious education and the arts of interpretation revisited, in Avest, I. (Eds.). *On the edge: (Auto)biography and pedagogical theories on religious education*. Rotterdam, NLD: Sense Publishers. p. 57-

Jackson, R. (2004). *Rethinking religious education and plurality*: Issues in diversity and pedagogy. London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Jackson, R. (1997). *Religious Education: an interpretive approach.* London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton.

Jakobsen, J. R., & Pellegrini, A. (2008). *Secularisms*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Jeong, S. & Lee, B. H. (2013). A multilevel examination of peer victimization and bullying preventions in schools. *Journal of Criminology*, 2013 (2013), Article ID 735397, 10 pages. http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2013/735397

Jimerson, S. R., Swearer, S. M. & Espelage, D. L. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective.* New York, US: Routledge.

Khaf, M. (1998). Around the Ka'ba and over the crick: A Muslim girl in Hendricks County. *Religion and Education*, 25(1&2), p. 38-44.

Karenga, M. (1999). Kwanzaa roots and branches. *The official Kwanzaa website.* Retrieved from http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/origins1.shtml

Keddie, N. R. (1998). The new religious politics: Where, when, and why do "fundamentalisms" appear? *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *40*(4), 696-723. http://www.jstor.org/stable/179307

King, S. B. (2011). Interreligious dialogue in Meister, C. (Ed). *The Oxford handbook of religious diversity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. P 101-114.

Kirman, J. (2004). "Using the them of bullying to teach about human rights in the social studies." *McGill Journal of Education. 39(*3), 327-341.

Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Zongrone, A. D., Clark, C. M., Truong, N. L. (2017). The 2017 National School Climate Survey. *GLSEN Report.* https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%202017%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20%28NSCS%29%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf

Kymlicka, W. (2012). Responsible Citizenship. *Trudeau Foundation Papers*, *4*(2), 56-87. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/4486454/Responsible_Citizenship_2012_

Kymlicka, W. (2015). The three lives of multiculturalism. In S. Guo & L. Guo (Eds*.), Revisiting multiculturalism in Canada* (pp. 17-36). Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense publishers.

Leber, B. (2017). *Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2015.* Statistics Canada. Retrieved from https://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14832-eng.htm

Lereya, S. T., Copeland, W. E., Costello, E. J., & Wolke, D. (2015). Adult mental health consequences of peer bullying and maltreatment in childhood: two cohorts in two countries. *The Lancet. Psychiatry*, *2*(6), pp. 524-31.

Leroux, G. (2007). *Éthique, culture religieuse, dialogue: Arguments pour un programme*. Quebec: FIDES.

Lester, E. (2011). *Teaching about religions: A democratic approach for public schools*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Lester, E. and Roberts, P. S. (2006). *Learning about World Religions in Public Schools: the impact on student attitudes and community acceptance in Modesto, Calif*. Nashville, TN: First Amendment Center. Retrieved from http://www.religiousfreedomcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/FirstForum_ModestoWorldReligions.pdf

Levin, S., Van Laar, C. & Sidanius, J. (2003). The effects of ingroup and outgroup friendships on ethnic attitudes in college: A longitudinal study. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 6,* 76-92.

Linden, A. and Klandermans, B., 2006. Stigmatization and repression of extreme-right activism in the Netherlands. *Mobilization*: *An International Quarterly*, 11 (2), 213–228.

Loewen, C. (2017). Reports of hate crimes on the rise in Montreal, police say. *Montreal Gazette*. Retrieved from: http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/increase-in-reports-ofhate-crimes

Magnuson, R. (1980). *A brief history of Quebec education: from New France to Parti-Québecois*. Montreal, Canada: Harvest House.

Malette, N. (2017). Forms of fighting: A micro-social analysis of bullying and in-school violence. Canadian Journal of Education, *40*(1). Retrieved from http://www.cje-rce.ca/index.php/cje-rce/article/view/2096/2376

Markham, I. S. (2011). A religious studies approach to questions about religious diversity in Meister, C. (Ed). *The Oxford handbook of religious diversity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. P 21-28.

Maiuro, R. D. (Ed.) (2015). *Perspectives on bullying: Research on childhood, workplace, and cyberbullying.* New York : Springer Publishing Company

Maxwell, J.A. and Mittapalli, K. (2010). Realism as a stance for mixed methods research, in Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (2010). *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research. 2nd ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Pp 145-168.

Mcgillivray, K. (2017). "'How dare you say these hateful things?' Woman takes on Islamophobia at school board meeting." *CBC News.* Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/peel-school-board-meeting-islamophobia-1.4043940

McLaughlin, A. (2018). Death threats, graffiti, ripped Qur'an among 91% spike in Peel anti-Muslim hate crimes. *CBC News.* Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/peel-police-hate-crimes-rise-in-2017-1.4627197

McLaughlin, T.H. (1992). Citizenship, Diversity and Education: a philosophical perspective. *Journal of Moral Education, 21*, 235-250.

MÉES (2016). *Ethics and religious culture program: Background of the program.* Retrieved from http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/programme-ethique-et-culture-religieuse/background-for-the-erc-program/

MÉES. (2016). *The ethics and religious culture program.* Québec, Canada: Gouvernement du Québec. Retrieved from http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/ethics-and-religious-culture-program/

Meintel, D. (2015). La religion et le vivre-ensemble au-delà de la laïcité. In Saillant, F. (Ed.) *Pluralité et vivre ensemble*. Les Presses de l'Université Laval, pp. 175-192.

Michaud, L. (2013). Interview with Charles Taylor. *UC Observer.* Retrieved from https://www.ucobserver.org/interviews/2013/03/interview_charles_taylor/

Miedema, S. (2014). "Coming out religiously!" Religion, the public sphere, and religious identity formation. *Religious Education, 109*(4), 362-378.

Miedema, S. (May 01, 2013). Coming Out Religiously! Religion and Worldview as an Integral Part of the Social and Public Domain. *Religious Education*, *108*(3), 236-240.

Miedema, S. (January 01, 2012). A plea for inclusive worldview education in all schools : original research. *Koers : Bulletin for Christian Scholarship = Koers : Bulletin Vir Christelike Wetenskap*, *77*(1), 1-7.

Miedema, S., & ter Avest, I. (2011). In the Flow to Maximal Interreligious Citizenship Education. *Religious Education, 106(*4), 410-424. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2011.588116

Minard, R. D. (1952). Race relation sin the Pocahontas coal field. *Journal of Social Issues, 8,* 29-44.

Ministère de la sécurité publique. (2017). *Crimes motives par la haine déclarés par la police pour l'année 2015*. Retrieved from:
https://www.securitepublique.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Documents/ministere/diffusion/documents_transmis_acces/2017/123322.pdf

Ministère de la sécurité publique. (2016). *La criminalité au Québec en 2015: Principales tendances*. Retrieved from
http://www.securitepublique.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Documents/police/statistiques/criminalite/2016/criminalite_2015.pdf

Mishna, F. (2004). A qualitative study of bullying from multiple perspectives. *Children and schools, 26*(4), p. 234-47.

Mishna, F. & Van Wert, M. (2015). Bullying in Canada. Ontario: Oxford University Press Canada.

Mitchell, P. J. (2012). *The limits of anti-bullying legislation.* Institute of Marriage and Family Canada. Retrieved from
http://www.imfcanada.org/sites/default/files/IMFCPublicationMay2012FINAL-WEB.pdf

Mitchell, M. & Eguda, M. (2003) A review of narrative methodology. *Australian government Department of Defence: Defence science and technology organization.* Retrieved from http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/australia/narrative_methodology.pdf.

Mitra, D. (2007). Student voice in school reform: From listening to leadership. In Thiessen, D. and Cook-Sather, A. (Eds.) *International handbook of student experience in elementary and secondary school.* Dordrecht, NL: Springer, pp. 727-744.

Modood, T. (2009). Muslims, religious equality and secularism. In Levey, G. B. & Modood, T. (Eds.) *Secularism, religion, and multicultural citizenship.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 164-185.

Mogahed, D. & Chouhoud, Y. (2017). *American Muslim Poll 2017: Muslims at the crossroads*. Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. Retrieved from http://www.ispu.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/American-Muslim-Poll-2017-Report.pdf

Moshtaghian, A., Wu, H. & Cullinane, S. (2017, March 6). "Sikh man's shooting in Washington investigated as hate crime." *CNN.* Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/05/us/washington-sikh-shooting/.

Moghaddam, F. M. (2005). The Staircase to terrorism: A psychological exploration. *The American Psychologist, 60,* 2, 161-169.

Moore, D. (2006). Overcoming religious illiteracy: A cultural studies approach. *World history connected.* Retrieved from
http://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/4.1/moore.html

Moore, D. (2007). *Overcoming religious illiteracy: A cultural studies approach to the study of religion in secondary education.* New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

Moore, D. (2014). Overcoming religious illiteracy: Expanding the boundaries of religious education. *Religious Education, 109*(4), 379-389.

Nasser, S. (2017, February 17). Protesters outside Masjid Toronto call for ban on Islam as Muslims pray inside. CBC News. Retrieved from
http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/anti-muslim-protest-masjid-toronto-1.3988906

National Center for Education Statistics. (2017a). Percentage of public school students in grades 9-12 who reported having been bullied on school property or electronically bullied during

the previous 12 months, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 2009 through 2015. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_230.62.asp

National Center for Education Statistics. (2017b). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2017. *U.S. Department of Education*. Retrieved from https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/iscs17.pdf

Nesbitt, E. (2013). Ethnography, religion, and the Fifth Cup. In Miller, J., O'Grady, K., and McKenna, U. (Eds.). *Religion in education: Innovation in international research.* New York, NY: Routledge.

New Jersey Education Association (2012). "Christie signs anti-bullying fix". *NJEA*. Retrieved from http://www.njea.org/news/2012/03/27/christie%20signs%20anti-bullying%20fix

Newman, P. A., & Fantus, S. (2015). A social ecology of bias-based bullying of sexual and gender minority youth: Toward a conceptualization of conversion bullying. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, 27*(1), 46-63.

Nickerson, A. B., Mele, D, & Osborne-Oliver, K. M. (2010). Parent-child relationships and bullying. In Jimerson, S. R., Swearer, S. M, Espelage, D. L. (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 187-198). New York, NY: Routledge.

Noddings, N. & Brooks, L. (2016). Teaching Controversial Issues: The Case for Critical Thinking and Moral Commitment in the Classroom. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

O'Brien, L. (2004). Connecting with RE: an approach to religious education for children with autism and/or severe and complex learning disabilities. *Support for Learning, 19*(3), 132-136.

Oueslati, B., McAndrew, M., & Helly, D. (2011). Islam and Muslim cultures in Quebec French-Language textbooks over three periods: 1980s, 1990s, and the present day. *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society, 3*(1), 5-24.

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Olweus, D. (1978). *Aggression in the schools: Bullies and whipping boys*. London, UK: Hemisphere.

Padrós, M. (2014). A transformative approach to prevent peer violence in schools: Contributions from communicative research methods. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(7), 916–922. Retrieved from http://qix.sagepub.com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/content/20/7/916.full.pdf+html

Pan, S. W. & Spittal, P. M. (2013). Health effects of perceived racial and religious bullying among urban adolescents in China: A cross-sectional national study. *Global public health: An international journal for research, policy, and practice.* 8(6), 685-697. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2013.799218

Parker, P. (1998). Evoking the spirit in public education. *Educational leadership.* Retrieved from http://www.couragerenewal.org/PDFs/Parker-Palmer_Evoking-Spirit-Public-Education.pdf

Parker, P. (1983). *To know as we are known: A spirituality of education*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Peel Regional Police. (2016). *2015 Annual hate/bias motivated crime report.* Retrieved from https://www.peelpoliceboard.ca/en/board-meetings/resources/2015-Hate-Bias-Motivated-Crime-Report.pdf

Peel Regional Police. (2018). *2017 Annual hate/bias motivated crime report.* Retrieved from https://www.peelpoliceboard.ca/en/board-meetings/resources/2017---Hate-Bias-Motivated-Crimes---Annual-Report.pdf

Pekrul, S. and Levin, B. (2007). Building student voice for school improvement. In Thiessen, D. and Cook-Sather, A. (Eds.) *International handbook of student experience in elementary and secondary school.* Dordrecht, NL: Springer, pp. 711-726.

Pepler, D., & Craig, W. (2000). *Making a difference in bullying. LaMarsh Report No. 60.* Toronto: LaMarsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution, York University.

Perreault, L. & Stevenson, V. (2015, March 23). What drove seven young Quebeckers into the arms of the Islamic State? *The Globe and Mail.* Retrieved from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/what-drove-seven-young-quebeckers-into-the-arms-of-the-islamic-state/article23569474/

Pettigrew, T. F. & Tropp, L. R. (2011). *When groups meet: The dynamics of intergroup contact.* New York, US and Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

Pew Research Center. (2013). "Canada's changing religious landscape." Religion and public life project. Retrieved from http://www.pewforum.org/2013/06/27/canadas-changing-religious-landscape/.

Pew Research Center. (2012). "'Nones' on the rise." Religion and public life project. Retrieved from http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/.

Pew Research Center, Public Religious Research Institute (2014). American Values Atlas: State Profiles: California. Retrieved from http://ava.publicreligion.org/state?state=CA

Plante, C. (2016). Religious accommodations debate roars back to life as Bill 62 public hearings begin. *Montreal Gazette.* Retrieved from http://montrealgazette.com/news/quebec/religious-accommodations-debate-roars-back-to-life-as-bill-62-public-hearings-begin.

Prevnet. (2014). "Facts and solutions." Retrieved from http://www.prevnet.ca/bullying/facts-and-Solutions.

Prothero, S. (2007). Prothero, S. (2009). *Religious literacy: What every American needs to know--and doesn't.* Harper Collins.

Public Policy Institute of California. (2018). "Immigrants in California." Retrieved from http://www.ppic.org/publication/immigrants-in-california/

Puigvert, L., Christou, M., & Holford, J. (2012) CCM: including vulnerable voices in research through dialogue. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 42(4), 513-526. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2012.733341.

Reder, M. and Schmidt, J. S. J. (2010). Habermas and Religion. In Habermas et al., *An awareness of what is missing: Faith and reason in a post-secular age*. (p. 1-14). Translated by Ciaran Cronin. Cambridge, UK; Polity Press.

Reinl, J. (2016, April 12). "Rise in school bullying connected to US election." *AlJazeera.* Retrieved from http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/04/children-scared-depressed-trump-rhetoric-160410090827515.html

Riga, A. (2017, March 2). "Concordia increases surveillance after bomb threat against Muslims." *Montreal Gazette.* Retrieved from http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/montreal-police-investigate-bomb-threats-at-concordia-university.

Rigby, K. (1994). Why do some children bully at school? The contributions of negative attitudes towards victims and the perceived expectations of friends, parents, and teachers. *School psychology international*. *26*, pp. 147-161.

Rigby, K. and Johnson, K. (2016). The *Prevalence and Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies employed in Australian Schools.* Adelaide, University of South Australia. Retrieved from

https://www.unisa.edu.au/Global/EASS/EDS/184856%20Anti-bullying%20Report-FINAL-3large.pdf

Rios, E. (2016). "Donald Trump inspired a sickening tide of bullying in America's schools: In one middle school, a student hung a noose in the bathroom." *Mother Jones.* Retrieved from https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/12/trump-effect-schools-bullying-racism/.

Rodger, A. (2000). Moral, spiritual, religious, in Leicester, M., Modgil, C., and Modgil, S. (eds). *Education, culture and values: Spiritual and religious education. Volume V.* London, UK: Falmer Press, Taylor and Francis Group. Pages 3-12.

Rose, G. (2007). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials, 2nd ed.* London, UK: Sage Publications.

Rymarz, R. (2012). Teaching ethics and religious culture in Québec high schools: An overview, contextualization and some analytical comments. *Religious Education, 107*(3), p. 295-310.

Scott, J. T., & Armstrong, A. C. (2010). Faith-based schools and the public good: purposes and perspectives. *The Australian association for research in education.* Paper code: 1628. Retrieved from http://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2010/1628ScottArmstrong.pdf.

Seul, J.R.. (1999). "Ours is the way of god": religion, identity, and intergroup conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, *36* (5), 553–569. doi: 10.1177/0022343399036005004

Short, D. (2017). *Am I safe here? LGBTQ teens and bullying in schools.* UBC Press.

Sidanius, J., Levin, S. Van Laar, C., & Sears, D. O. (2008). *The diversity challenge: Social identity and intergroup relations on the college campus.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Sieger, L. E. (2012). United Nations: Reforms. In Chatterjee, D. K. *Encyclopedia of global justice.* Dordrecht, NL: Springer, p 1109-1112.

Sikh Coalition. (2014). "'Go Home Terrorist' A report on bullying against Sikh American school children." Retrieved from http://sikhcoalition.org/documents/pdf/go-home-terrorist.pdf

Smith, W.C. (1978). *The meaning and end of religion*. London: SPCK.

Stackhouse, Jr., J. G. (2011). Religious diversity, secularization, and postmodernity in Meister, C. (Ed). *The Oxford handbook of religious diversity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. P 239-249.

Statistics Canada. (2018). *First Nations People, Métis and Inuit in Canada: Diverse and Growing Populations.* Retrieved from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-659-x/89-659-x2018001-eng.htm

Stephan, W. G. (1987). The contact hypothesis in intergroup relations. In C. Hendrick (Ed.), *Review of personality and social psychology: Group processes and intergroup relations* (Vol. 9, pp. 13-40). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Stopbullying.gov. (2014). "Religion and Faith" Retrieved from http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/index.html

Stevens, L. P. & Bean, T. W. (2007). *Critical Literacy: Context, Research, and Practice in the K-12 Classroom.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Street, Brian. (2003). What's 'new' in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current issues in Comparative Education. 5*(2), 76-91.

Sykäri, V. (2012). Dialogic methodology and the dialogic space created after an interview, in Frog and Latvala, P. (eds.) *Approaching Methodology*. P 80-88. Retrieved from

http://www.helsinki.fi/folkloristiikka/English/RMN/RMNNewsletter_4_MAY_2012_Ap proaching_Methodology.pdf

Taki, M. (2010). Relations among bullying, stresses, and stressors: A longitudinal and comparative survey among countries. In Jimerson, S. R., Swearer, S. M, Espelage, D. L. (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 151-162). New York, NY: Routledge.

Taylor, C. (2017). Opinion: Neutralité de l'État: Le temps de la Réconciliation. *La Presse.* Retrieved from http://plus.lapresse.ca/screens/36c5c72e-28b9-49df-ba29-514fc56d647a%7CpUtyV30bPPsb.html

Taylor, C. (2009). What is secularism? In Levey, G. B. & Modood, T. (Eds.) *Secularism, religion, and multicultural citizenship.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, xi-xxii.

Taylor, C. (2007). *A secular age.* Cambridge, MA: The Belkanp Press of Harvard University Press.

Taylor, C. (1992). The Politics of Recognition. In A. Gutmann (Ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition* (pp. 25-74). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Teotonio, I. (2010). Toronto 18. *The Star.* Retrieved from http://www3.thestar.com/static/toronto18/

"The Difference Between Teasing & Bullying." (n.d.). *PREVNet*. Retrieved from http://www.prevnet.ca/bullying/educators/the-difference-between-teasing-and-bullying

The United Nations. (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. *Treaty Series, 1577*, 3. Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

Tiflati, H. (2015). Education, Religion, and Muslims in Quebec: An interview with Charles Taylor. *The Islamic Monthly.* Retrieved from https://www.theislamicmonthly.com/education-religion-and-muslims-in-quebec-an-interview-with-charles-taylor/

Toronto Police Services. (2016). *2016 Annual hate/bias crime statistical report*. Retrieved from https://www.torontopolice.on.ca/publications/files/reports/2016hatecrimereport.pdf

Totten, M. & Quigley, P. (2003). Bullying, school exclusion and literacy. *Canadian Public Health Association.* Retrieved http://www.cpha.ca/uploads/progs/_/safeschools/discussion_paper_e.pdf

"The Trump Effect: The impact of the 2016 presidential election on our nation's schools." (2016). Southern Poverty Law Center. Retrieved from https://www.splcenter.org/20161128/trump-effect-impact-2016-presidential-election-our-nations-schools.

"'They're no different than us': Montreal mosques open doors to public." (2017, February 13). *CBC News.* Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/beta/news/canada/montreal/they-re-no-different-than-us-montreal-mosques-open-doors-to-public-1.3978891.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Calls to action.* Retrieved from http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

"Types of bullying." (n.d.) *PREVNet.* Retrieved from http://www.prevnet.ca/bullying/types.

UN General Assembly. (1981). *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*, A/RES/36/55. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/36/a36r055.htm

UN General Assembly. (1959). *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, A/RES/1386(XIV). Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/malaysia/1959-Declaration-of-the-Rights-of-the-Child.pdf

UN General Assembly. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*, 217 [III] A. Paris. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/

U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). Modesto CCD, Stanislaus County, California, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_5YR_B01003&prodType=table

Van Laar, C., Levin, S., Sinclair, S. & Sidanius, J. (2005). The effect of university roommate contact on ethnic attitudes and behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 41,* 329-345.

Waddington, D.; Maxwell, B.; McDonough, K.; Cormier, A.A; and Schwimmer, M. (2012). Interculturalism in practice: Quebec's New Ethics and Religious Culture Curriculum and the Bouchard-Taylor report on reasonable accommodation in Beasley, T. and Peters, M.A. (eds*.) Interculturalism, education, and dialogue*. New York, NY: Peter Lang, 312-329.

Walker, T. (2016). The long-term impact of school bullying may be worse than you think. *NEAToday.* Retrieved from http://neatoday.org/2016/10/06/long-term-impact-of-school-bullying/

Weller, P. (2009). How participation changes things: 'inter-faith', 'multi-faith' and a new public imaginary. In Dinham, A., Furbey, R., & Lowndes, V. (2009). *Faith in the public realm: Controversies, policies and practices*. Bristol: Policy.

Wessler, S. L. and De Andrade, L. L. (2006). Slurs, Stereotypes, and Student Interventions: Examining the Dynamics, Impact, and Prevention of Harassment in Middle and High School. *Journal of Social Issues*, 62(3), 511—532.

Weissbourd, R. (2013). "Moral development & bullying: (HGSE). Retrieved from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/13/09/moral-development-and-bullying

Wertheimer, L. (2015). *Faith Ed.: Teaching about religion in an age of intolerance*. Boston: Beacon Press.

"What is bullying." (n.d.) *Stopbullying.gov.* https://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/index.html

Williams, B. (1979). The idea of equality, in Laslett, P. and Runciman, W. G. (eds.) *Philosophy, Politics and Society,* Series 2. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 110-131.

"Will truth bring reconciliation? Justice Murray Sinclair says not without education." (2015). *CBC News.* Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/taking-the-first-steps-onthe-road-to-reconciliation-1.3347611/will-truth-bring-reconciliation-justice-murray-sinclairsays-not-without-education-1.3348070

Wolff, L. (2017). *Canadian companion to UNICEF Report Card 14: Oh Canada! Our kids deserve better.* UNICEF Canada. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.ca/sites/default/files/2017-06/RC14%20Canadian%20Companion_0.pdf

World Sikh Organization of Canada. (2016). *The Experience of Sikh Students in Peel 2016 Update.* Retrieved from https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/worldsikh/pages/594/attachments/original/1493222417/WSO_Bullying_Survey_and_Analysis_Report.pdf?1493222417

Wright, J. D. & Young, J. R. (2017) Implications of religious identity salience, religious involvement, and religious commitment on aggression, *Identity, 17*(2), 55-68, DOI: 10.1080/15283488.2017.1303382

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Student survey (Modesto sample)

<u>Student Survey</u>

This survey is part of a study at McGill University, Montreal, Canada related to the *World Geography and World Religions* class in Modesto City Schools and bullying based on students' religious and/or non-religious identities in North American public school classrooms. Any responses you share will be kept anonymous, unless you write your name at the top of page 7.

You do not have to participate in this survey if you do not want to. If you begin the survey, you can skip any question or stop at any time.

Your responses will greatly inform this study, which may serve to impact your school, city, national, and international community. Thank you in advance for your time and honesty.

<u>Profile details</u>

What is your gender: □ Male   □ Female   □ Other

What is your ethnic background? Check mark one or more of the following, or write down your ethnic background if you do not see it listed below:

□ Native American. If so, which tribe(s)?_____

□ White American/Canadian
□ Black American/Canadian
□ Mexican Hispanic
□ Jamaican
□ Trinidadian
□ Cuban
□ Peruvian
□ Brazilian
□ Chinese
□ Vietnamese
□ Korean
□ Filipino

□ Indian (specify language: _____ _____)
□ Persian
□ Lebanese
□ Egyptian
□ Russian
□ Ukranian
□ Romanian
□ Polish
□ German
□ Greek
□ Italian
□ French
□ Other: _____

Do you practice a religion? □Yes □No

What is your religious or non-religious affiliation, if any? Check mark one or more of the following, or write down your belief if you do no not see it listed below:

- □ Anglican
- □ Catholic
- □ Evangelical Christian
- □ Jehovah's Witness
- □ Mormon
- □ Orthodox Christian, i.e. Greek or Russian Orthodox
- □ United Church
- □ Other Christian group: _____
  _____

- □ Atheist
- □ Agnostic
- □ Buddhist
- □ Hindu
- □ Jewish
- □ Muslim
- □ Sikh
- □ Zoroastrianism
- □ Nothing in particular
- □ Don't know
- □ Other: _____

How long have you been a part of this religious or non-religious community?

- □ Less than one year
- □ 1-5 years
- □ 5-10 years
- □ 10-15 years
- □ 15+ years

How often do you meet with your religious or non-religious community, in your religious or non-religious site or elsewhere?

- □ 1-3 times a month
- □ Approximately, once a week
- □ 1-3 times a week
- □ 4-7 times a week

Do you pray on your own? □Yes □No

If so, how often do you pray?

- □ 1-3 times a month
- □ Approximately, once a week
- □ 1-3 times a week
- □ 4-7 times a week
- □ 7+ times a week

Have you participated in any religious or non-religious milestones/ceremonies? (e.g. the Hajj, bar/bat mitzvah, baptism, or the Amrit sanskar.) □Yes □No

If so, which religious or non-religious milestones/ceremonies did you participate in? _____

Perspectives on the school and class

How long have you been attending school in Stanislaus County?

_____

What grade are you in? _____

What school do you attend? _____

Please write a check mark in the column that corresponds to your response for each statement below:

Opinion comments	Not at all	Some what	Yes	Very much	Indifferent
My city is a <u>welcoming</u> environment					
My city is an <u>inclusive</u> environment					
My school is a <u>welcoming</u> environment					
My school is an <u>inclusive</u> environment					
My *World Geography and World Religions* class is a <u>welcoming</u> environment (If you did not take this class, please write "n/a" in any one of the boxes.)					
My *World Geography and World Religions* class is an <u>inclusive</u> environment					
I feel safe being myself <u>at school</u>					
I feel safe being myself <u>in the *World Geography and World Religions*</u> class					
I can talk about my religious and/or non-religious beliefs openly in the <u>school environment</u>					
I can talk about my religious and/or non-religious beliefs openly in the *World Geography and World Religions* <u>class environment</u>					
I think it is important for myself and my peers at school to be able to talk about our religious and/or non-religious beliefs at school without fear of being bullied					

Fact/observation questions	Not at all	Some what	Yes	Very much	Indifferent	Don't know
Students at school have been <u>discriminated against</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by other students</u>						
Students at school have been <u>discriminated against</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by teachers or school staff</u>						
Students at school have been <u>bullied</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by other students</u>						
Students at school have been <u>bullied</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by teachers or school staff</u>						
If you answered "Somewhat" or "Very much" in the previous four statements about discrimination and bullying, please answer this: When students have been discriminated against or bullied based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs, teachers and/or school staff were notified. Please circle: Yes / No						

<u>Perspectives on religious literacy and religious bullying</u>

Please write your answers to the following questions:

Did you know that the *World Geography and World Religions* is the only course of its kind in America? No other public school district offers a mandatory course about religious knowledge and understanding like this. Why do you think Modesto City's School District has established a course like this?

What thoughts do you have about the *World Geography and World Religions* course?

What are your thoughts about religious bullying (which is bullying that occurs based on an individual's religious or non-religious identity)?

If religious bullying occurred/occurs at your school, how do you think the school can address this issue?

Is there anything else you would like to share with me about religious identities in your class, school environment, or community?

Thank you very much for your time and honesty. I am looking for 5 young adults who may be interested in continuing this conversation about the *World Geography and World Religions* and religious bullying. If you are interested in speaking with me, please write your name and email address down below.

Name: Email:

This is optional. If you do not write down your name, I will not contact you and your responses will remain anonymous. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: alice.chan@mail.mcgill.ca.

Thank you again,

Alice

APPENDIX B1: Open-ended survey responses – current students (Modesto)

<u>Student Survey, N = 50</u>

This survey is part of a study at McGill University, Montreal, Canada related to the *World Geography and World Religions* class in Modesto City Schools and bullying based on students' religious and/or non-religious identities in North American public school classrooms. Any responses you share will be kept anonymous.

You do not have to participate in this survey if you do not want to. If you begin the survey, you can skip any question or stop at any time.

Your responses will greatly inform this study, which may serve to impact your school, city, national, and international community. Thank you in advance for your time and honesty.

<u>Profile details</u>

What is your gender: 44% - Male   50% - Female   3% - Blank

What is your ethnic background? Check mark one or more of the following, or write down your ethnic background if you do not see it listed below:

Row Labels	Count of Ethnic	Count of 2nd Ethnic	Count of 3rd Ethnic
Bangla	1		
Black American/Canadian	1		
Blank	1	1	1
Cherokee	1	1	
Filipino	2	1	1
Hindi	1		
Hindu Punjabi	1		
Mexican Hispanic	12	1	
Native American	1	1	1
Native American (Cherokee)	2	2	
Pakistani	1		
Palestinian Brazilian	1		
Polish	1	1	1
White American/Canadian	21	7	1
Yemeni	1		
Yemeni Muslim	2		
Grand Total	**50**	**15**	**5**

Do you practice a religion?   78% - Yes   22% - No

What is your religious or non-religious affiliation, if any? Check mark one or more of the following, or write down your belief if you do no not see it listed below:

Religion	Blank	Catholic	Hindu	Hindu/ Sikh	Jewish	Mormon	Muslim	Orthodox Christian	Yemeni Muslim	Grand Total
Grand Total	2	9	1	1	3	27	5	1	1	50

How long have you been a part of this religious or non-religious community?

Length of time as affiliate of religion	5-10 years	10-15 years	1-5 years	15+ years	whole life	Blank	Grand Total
Grand Total	4	15	1	25	3	2	50

How often do you meet with your religious or non-religious community, in your religious or non-religious site or elsewhere?

Count of Frequency of meeting	1-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	4-7 times a week	Approx. 1/week	Blank	Grand Total
Grand Total	3	19	16	11	1	50

Do you pray on your own?   88% - Yes   10% - No   2% - Blank

If so, how often do you pray?

Frequency of Prayer	1-3 times a month	4-7x a week	5x a day	7+ times a week	Approx. 1/week	Blank	Grand Total
Grand Total	5	6	1	31	2	5	50

Have you participated in any religious or non-religious milestones/ceremonies? (e.g. the Hajj, bar/bat mitzvah, baptism, or the Amrit sanskar.)   82% - Yes   18% - No

If so, which religious or non-religious milestones/ceremonies did you participate in?

The students participants are quite devote as 50% (n=25) have been affiliated to their religion for over 15 years and 38% (n=19) attend gatherings at their religious site 1-3 times per week, with some participants attending their religious site 4-7 times a week (32%, n =16), and 62% (n=31) pray more than seven times a week and 82% (n=41) stating that they have participated in a religious/non-religious milestone such as their Bar Mitzvah and baptism.

Perspectives on the school and class

How long have you been attending school in Stanislaus County?

Length of time in Stanislaus County	1 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 to 20 years	Blank	Grand Total
Grand Total	3	13	23	6	5	50

What grade are you in?

Grade	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	Blank	Grand Total
Grand Total	2	4	9	7	7	9	11	1	50

What school do you attend?

Schools	Count of School
Aspire Vanguard College Preparatory Academy	2
Blank	1
Connecting Waters Chartered School	1
Fred C. Beyer High School	5
James C. Enochs High School	15
Joseph A. Gregori High School	2
Mae Hensley Junior High	1
Mark Twain Junior High	4
Modesto High School	1
No	1
Prescott Junior High	3

Roosevelt Junior High school	2
Thomas Downey High School	5
Grace M. Davis High School	3
La Loma Junior High	2
Dennis G. Earl Elementary School	1
Caswell Elementary School	1
Grand Total	**50**

Please write a check mark in the column that corresponds to your response for each statement below:

Opinion comments	Not at all	Somew hat	Yes	Very much	Indifferent	Blank	n/a
My city is a <u>welcoming</u> environment	2%	34%	40%	10%	6%	8%	-
My city is an <u>inclusive</u> environment	2%	38%	36%	6%	8%	10%	-
My school is a <u>welcoming</u> environment	2%	12%	50%	26%	4%	6%	-
My school is an <u>inclusive</u> environment[136]	6%	22%	36%	22%	4%	8%	-
My *World Geography and World Religions* class is a <u>welcoming</u> environment (If you did not take this class, write "n/a" in any one of the boxes.)*	2%	6%	26%	30%	2%	14%	20%
My *World Geography and World Religions* class is an <u>inclusive</u> environment (If you did not take this class, write "n/a" in any one of the boxes.)*	12%	8%	18%	26%	2%	14%	20%
I feel safe being myself <u>at school</u>	0%	22%	40%	28%	2%	8%	-
I feel safe being myself <u>in the *World Geography and World Religions* class</u> (If you did not take this class, write "n/a" in any one of the boxes.)*	2%	6%	32%	24%	2%	14%	20%
I can talk about my religious and/or non-religious beliefs openly in the <u>school environment</u>[137]	4%	24%	30%	26%	6%	8%	-

[136] One respondent marked off "Yes" and "Very much".

[137] On respondent marked off "Somewhat" and "Yes".

I can talk about my religious and/or non-religious beliefs openly in the *World Geography and World Religions* <u>class environment</u> (If you did not take this class, write "n/a" in any one of the boxes.)**	4%	14%	26%	20%	4%	14%	18%
I think it is important for myself and my peers at school to be able to talk about our religious and/or non-religious beliefs at school without fear of being bullied	6%	8%	48%	26%	4%	8%	-

Fact/observation questions	Not at all	Some what	Yes	Very much	Indifferent	Don't know	Blank
Students at school have been <u>discriminated against</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by other students</u>	32%	28%	14%	4%	0%	16%	6%
Students at school have been <u>discriminated against</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by teachers or school staff</u>	78%	2%	4%	0%	0%	12%	4%
Students at school have been <u>bullied</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by other students</u>	30%	24%	10%	8%	2%	22%	4%
Students at school have been <u>bullied</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by teachers or school staff</u>	76%	0%	0%	0%	2%	16%	6%
If you answered "Somewhat" or "Very much" in the previous four statements about discrimination and bullying, please answer this: When students have been discriminated against or bullied based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs, teachers and/or school staff were notified. Please circle: 14% - Yes 18% - No 68% - Blank							

Perspectives on religious literacy and religious bullying

Please write your answers to the following questions:

Did you know that the *World Geography and World Religions* is the only course of its kind in America? No other public school district offers a mandatory course about religious knowledge and understanding like this. Why do you think Modesto City's School District has established a course like this?

Summary of student responses:

- 20% (n=10) said they were not aware that it is the only course of its kind in America.
- 30% (n=15) said they think MCS established the course to teach about religious knowledge to "raise religious knowledge".
- 32% (n=16) said they think MCS established the course to teach/develop/instill certain attitudes such as respect or to "help kids get along", for "kids to be opened to the world around them", and to prevent/stop prejudice, discrimination, etc.
- 8% (n=4) said they think it was established because Modesto is "diverse" and "religiously diverse".
- 28% (n=14) did not respond to this question.
- 12% (n=6) responses could not be categorized into these themes.

Student responses:

- They want kids to be opened to the world around them.
- I did not know it is the only course in America and I think this was established to have more respect for others.
- I did not know, and I think they have created this course to better off students and raise religious knowledge.
- To help kids get along
- To help kids with problems from other kids about their religion.
- Some people think that Muslims and others it's okay to make fun of their religions and saying
- To inform students about other religions and to make students feel welcomed.
- Probably because of a increases integration and cohesion
- I did not know this. To inform us about different religions.
- I think that it is because there are many religions in Modesto and we need to be more educated about them so we could learn to relate to them.
- No. Probably because we are so diverse and it is necessary to show that is ok to be different.
- No. Modesto is a very religiously diverse place.
- I did not know that. I think it might to stop religious prejudice.
- Diversity
- To be more inclusive so people can gain a better understanding
- They felt it was important for students to be educated about other religions.
- I didn't know that. I'm not sure why because Modesto is still ghetto but I'm not sure about how religiously tolerant we are.
- To become aware and learn about other religions
- To provide religious awareness and promote religious tolerance
- To inform people about the different world religions and cultures around the world.

- I did not know this. I think it is about awareness and defeating stereotypes that may be unfair or untrue.
- We are advanced. Our district understands the issues of lack of understanding of religious views.
- No
- When I was a freshman I didn't really think there was a reason but now it maybe to teach kids about the differences of the world.
- Because they want us to be a good kid and to teach us about the past.
- To welcome all religions into the environment in order to prevent discrimination.
- I did not know that but I think the district established it for us to be aware of other religions/beliefs.
- I think it's because the school board wants the students to learn and understand religion and why they worship like they do and why they believe what they believe.
- Because culture and customs are being demoralized and being taken granted for.
- I think they have done this to make kids feel proud/comfortable about their beliefs.
- So people can learn different things about the world.
- I didn't know that, and I think it is good they established this because then people know more about their own and other religions.
- These courses are to learn more about other religions.
- I think they did this so the kids can be safe.
- To be able to teach the student about other religions so we can understand what they are like.

What thoughts do you have about the *World Geography and World Religions* course?

Summary of student responses:

- 40% (n=20) shared positive thoughts about the course.
- 8% (n=4) shared negative thoughts about the course.
- 6% (n=3) said they were unable to answer the question because they take/took AP Human Geography, which all three participants said they enjoyed.
- 14% (n=7) said "n/a" or mentioned that they do not have access to this class.
- 26% (n=13) did not respond to this question.
- 8% (n=4) responses could not be categorized into these themes.

Student responses:

- I enjoy learning about different cultures and religions.
- I think it's good for people to know what's okay and not okay.
- I like the course (AP Human Geography) and I find the topics in class interesting.
- I think it helps kids.
- I think it helps kids.
- My thoughts are that people bully people based on their religion and saying such as "allahuakbar" they say that that means you are going to bomb which is false.
- Sometimes the course is weird and uncomfortable because they make racist jokes.
- It is a short course only taking me about half a semester
- I liked it. It was interesting.

- I like it very much, I think it is a good idea because I very rarely receive or hear someone bashing my church and I feel that the class really helps.
- I took AP Human Geography and it still taught to appreciate the diversity of cultures which I felt has helped me.
- It is very easy.
- Higher understanding
- It is good
- I think it's positive and helps people gain other perspectives.
- I think it's very important for all high schools to have this course so that we can have a basic knowledge of popular religions.
- Don't remember much
- I enjoyed studying other's beliefs and found it very eye opening experiences they gave me a better perspective on the world I am living in.
- It was a good course but felt slightly shallow. I wish we had had more time.
- I really enjoyed it. I liked that I got to learn more about religions I wouldn't have learned about otherwise.
- I don't care
- I think it's a great course that teaches kids about how people act differently based on their religion.
- I don't have any of those classes at all.
- It is a great class that people should continue to take.
- I really enjoyed learning about what other people believe because I think it's interesting and helps me understand my peers.
- It taught me a lot that I never knew.
- I feel it is a great and interesting course. And I learned a lot from it.
- This course was very interesting to me because I've never heard of some of the religions talked about in the class.
- n/a. I'm taking AP Human (Geography)
- I think that it's fair on how they talk about each religion and how it started.
- I think that it's great for people to take this class so they can learn diverse things.
- I don't have any thoughts about it because we don't have this course in our school.
- I don't know much about it but it seems interesting.
- It was a good course that taught me about other religions.

What are your thoughts about religious bullying (which is bullying that occurs based on an individual's religious or non-religious identity)?

Summary of student responses:

- 64% (n=32) think negatively about religious bullying.
- 12% (n=6) had not seen instances of religious bullying.
- 18% (n=9) did not respond to this question.
- 8% (n=4) responses could not be categorized into these themes.

Student responses:

- I haven't really seen much but I have heard some stories in the past.
- I think there in mocking but not to the extent of bullying.
- I believe religious bullying is wrong and is a result of ignorance and lack of knowledge.
- I think it is not good.
- It's bad.
- No bullying happens
- I think it's bogus, like seriously, there are better things you could spend your time doing.
- Religious bullying should not even be a thing, but what could we even do about it?
- I didn't know it existed.
- I think all bullying is horrible, but religious bullying affects me the most, even when I hear a story about it.
- I think it is very wrong. My church heavily discourages it. I think its ok to compare and talk but never in a negative way.
- I think it is unconstitutional and un-American
- I don't see it a lot.
- Horrible
- Not okay
- It is unacceptable and has no place in our community.
- It's extremely wrong and cruel.
- It's not right whatsoever.
- I think that everyone should be able to practice their religion freely.
- Bullying because of faith or lack thereof should never be tolerated
- I think it is not needed and not right.
- Religious bullying is unacceptable. Religion matters to people and it hurts when it is attacked.
- It's bad. It isn't very cool. It's the reason we have so many issues.
- I don't care
- I've never seen or experienced religious bullying. People have made jokes about my religion but I'm never affected by it.
- What my thoughts about religious bullying is a bad horrible thing to do.
- Any type of bullying is wrong, but people shouldn't be bullied because of their beliefs.
- My thoughts on religious bullying is that it is wrong and needs to be stopped.
- Not cool
- I don't think bullying is ever a good thing.
- I personally have not seen it.
- Religious bullying should be participated in.
- I don't understand what the motive would be for why someone would be a religious bully.
- I feel this should not be happening because this is a free country.
- I think it is unfair to the people who are being bullied because that's what they want to believe.
- I personally think it's disgusting on how kids pick on others by saying cruel things about their religion. It's not cool or even appropriate that "religion bullying" is a topic that kids pick on.
- I think it's unfair and wrong to other kids because they're trying to fit in and just get bullied of what religion or race they are.
- I don't think it is fair because people can believe what they want.
- I think it's wrong.

- I think bullying about religion is bad.
- No one should be bullied because they believe in something that others may not.

If religious bullying occurred/occurs at your school, how do you think the school can address this issue?

<u>**Summary of student responses:**</u>

- 4% (n=2) would take personal action.
- 34% (n=17) thinks that the school should take action. Responses include suspension, mediation, and through a school assembly.
- 4% (n=2) do not think the school can do anything to address this issue.
- 4% (n=2) mentioned that parents should be informed.
- 8% (n=4) said that programs to instill religious knowledge/literacy and respect should be used.
- 10% (n=5) said that they do not know what the school can do.
- X did not respond to this question
- 18% (n=9) responses could not be categorized into these themes.

<u>**Student responses:**</u>

- Stop the problem of course. Move others if other problems arise.
- I don't think the school can fully address the issue.
- I believe the school should address the issue by educating the bully and the subject and take up proper punishment regarding the topic.
- Report to parents.
- The school would most likely place special rules on people or the way people act around us.
- The principal should be notified, a phone call to the bully's parents needs to be made. Then arrange a meeting so the principal, bully, and parents can have a stern talk about the child's behaviour. If it continues make a call to the authorities will help solve the solution.
- The school can have the students and "bullyer" in a room and they can explain their feelings and how religion is important.
- They have already done anti-bullying programs
- I don't know
- I think a cool approach for this issue would be to stick the bully in a religious class. They could become more educated and respectful toward other's beliefs.
- Encouraging on environment where students should tell a supervisor and it will be addressed as regular bullying.
- I don't know how they would address it.
- confront it
- In an assembly
- They can suspend the perpetrator and address it as any other bullying issue.
- The school could reinforce ideas of religious toleration learned in world Geo/Religions.
- They can punish the bully.
- They bully should be called to the office and should be dealt with immediately.

- Maybe cultural awareness activities to help promote tolerance.
- They could talk to the bully and work things out.
- Raising awareness and making it more widely talked about. It I open for discussion but not a popular topic. They should remove the taboo.
- I have no idea.
- I don't care
- Honestly, I don't really know. I feel if the school tried to do something kids parents might feel offended by it. Let's say no one gets offended, I don't think that the school can stop religious bullying because imperfect people "juase" and we are all imperfect.
- If religious bullying occurred/occurs at my school, how I think the school will address the issue is probably by suspension.
- At my school we have a club that meets at the flag pole to pray sometimes and signs that say the school is a non-bullying environment.
- They would talk to the bully and stop it instantly.
- referal
- I don't know what else it can do.
- I think the school already addresses the issue through the World Geography and World Religions course because it could work as diversity learning for the students.
- We have a language institute and Islamic people are being bullied because of it.
- I think that it won't help if the parents get notified because some don't really care.
- I think the school can stop this problem by addressing it often to kids!
- The school can tell us it is not fair and that we shouldn't bully each other because of what we believe.
- It will address it immediately.
- I think they should do something to the kid.
- They can confront the bully and try to help the victim.

Is there anything else you would like to share with me about religious identities in your class, school environment, or community?

Summary of student responses:

- 8% (n=4) mentioned that they think their school or society is very inclusive.
- 6% (n=3) wondered why religious beliefs were not discussed more at school.
- 22% (n=11) said "no" or "n/a"
- 46% (n=23) did not respond to this question
- 18% (n=9) responses could not be categorized into these themes.

Student responses:

- We should be able to express ourselves and learn from each other.
- I believe my school environment and community is very open to religious beliefs, and is not generally discriminatory.

- Many students that attend my school share interesting things about their religion freely because it's normal for many students to have a different religion than you so no one discriminates others at my school.
- Why is it that when someone is being arrested, they must state their religion? Like what does their religion have to do with anything?
- We have some Sikhs who openly wear their religion's hairnet, and nobody ever is negative towards them. Our school is very inclusive.
- It is a reallly easy course.
- There is a vast amount of religion in Modesto.
- I feel as though students don't really discuss personal beliefs and I wonder why?
- We have a very diverse community.
- I don't care
- I don't know of any bullying but people at my school of my religion get asked many questions.
- In my school environment all religions are accepted. I'm not treated differently because I'm a Jew and mostly all my peers are friendly.
- One time I think when I said I was Jewish someone didn't know what it was and made a rude comment
- We have a language institute and people flee from Syria, they come to our school to learn English.
- I honestly think that school environment should be more open about this topic :)

Thank you very much for your time and honesty. I am looking for 5 students who may be interested in continuing this conversation about the *World Geography and World Religions* and religious bullying. If you are interested in speaking with me, please write your name and email address down below.

17 students shared their name and email address but none responded to my email in order to continue the conversation. I was only have to invite two students to the co-analysis process and one of them was unable to participate at the last minute.

This is optional. If you do not write down your name, I will not contact you and your responses will remain anonymous. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: alice.chan@mail.mcgill.ca.

Thank you again,

Alice

APPENDIX B2: Open-ended survey responses – adult students (Modesto)

Adult Student Survey (Currently or recently a college graduate), N=3

This survey is part of a study at McGill University, Montreal, Canada related to your *World Geography and World Religions* class and bullying based on students' religious and/or non-religious identities in North American public school classrooms. Any responses you share will be kept anonymous, unless you write your name at the bottom of the sheet.

You do not have to participate in this survey if you do not want to. If you begin the survey, you can skip any question or stop at any time.

Your responses will greatly inform this study, which may serve to impact your school, city, national, and international community. Thank you in advance for your time and honesty.

Profile details

What is your gender: 0% - Male   100% - Female   0% - Other

What is your ethnic background? Check mark one or more of the following, or write down your ethnic background if you do not see it listed below:

Row Labels	Count of Ethnic	Count of 2nd Ethnic	Count of 3rd Ethnic
Choctaw Nation of Okalahoma	1		
Mexican Hispanic	2		
Polish			1
Romanian			1
Russian			1
White American/Canadian		1	
Grand Total	**3**	**1**	**3**

Do you practice a religion?   100% - Yes   0% - No

What is your religious or non-religious affiliation, if any? Check mark one or more of the following, or write down your belief if you do not see it listed below:

Religion	Catholic	Jewish	Grand Total
Grand Total	2	1	3

How long have you been a part of this religious or non-religious community?

Length of time as affiliate of religion	15+ years	Grand Total
Grand Total	3	3

How often do you meet with your religious or non-religious community, in your religious or non-religious site or elsewhere?

Count of Frequency of meeting	Less than once a month	1-3 times a week	Approx. 1/week	Grand Total
Grand Total	1	1	1	3

Do you pray on your own?   100% - Yes   0% - No

If so, how often do you pray?

Frequency of Prayer	Less than once a month	4-7x a week	7+ times a week	Grand Total
Grand Total	1	1	1	3

Have you participated in any religious or non-religious milestones/ceremonies? (e.g. the Hajj, bar/bat mitzvah, baptism, or the Amrit sanskar.)   100% - Yes   0% - No

If so, which religious or non-religious milestones/ceremonies did you participate in?
Baptism, 1st communion, confirmation, wedding

Perspectives on the school and class

How long did you attend school in Stanislaus County?

Length of time in Stanislaus County	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	Grand Total
Grand Total	2	1	3

Are you in college/university now? If so, which one?

- Senior in College
- College Graduate
- Graduated from CSU Stanislaus

What schools did you attend in Stanislaus County?

- La Loma Jr High, Thomas Downey High, UC Berkeley
- Mark Twain, Modesto High, CSU Stanislaus
- I am now teaching Spanish in St. Stanislaus School.

Please write a check mark in the column that corresponds to your response for each statement below:

Opinion comments	Not at all	Some what	Yes	Very much	Indifferent
When I attended school in Modesto, the city was a <u>welcoming</u> environment		1	1	1	
The city was an <u>inclusive</u> environment		1	1		1
My school was a <u>welcoming</u> environment		1	1	1	
My school was an <u>inclusive</u> environment		1	2		
My *World Geography and World Religions* class was a <u>welcoming</u> environment		2	1		
My *World Geography and World Religions* class was an <u>inclusive</u> environment		2	1		
I felt safe being myself <u>at school</u>		2	1		
I felt safe being myself <u>in the</u> *World Geography and World Religions* <u>class</u>		1	1	1	
I could talk about my religious and/or non-religious beliefs openly in the <u>school environment</u>		2		1	
I could talk about my religious and/or non-religious beliefs openly in the *World Geography and World Religions* <u>class environment</u>		1		1	1
I think it was important for myself and my peers at school to be able to talk about our religious and/or non-religious beliefs at school without fear of being bullied				3	

Fact/observation questions	Not at all	Some what	Yes	Very much	Indifferent	Don't know
Students at school were <u>discriminated against</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by other students</u>	1		2			
Students at school were <u>discriminated against</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by teachers or school staff</u>	1	1	1			
Students at school were <u>bullied</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by other students</u>	1		2			
Students at school were <u>bullied</u> based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs <u>by teachers or school staff</u>	2	1				
If you answered "Somewhat" or "Very much" in the previous four statements about discrimination and bullying, please answer this: When students were discriminated against or bullied based on their religious and/or non-religious beliefs, teachers and/or school staff were notified. Please circle: 0 - Yes 1 – No 2 - Blank						

<u>Perspectives on religious literacy and religious bullying</u>

Please write your answers to the following questions:

Did you know that the *World Geography and World Religions* is the only course of its kind in America? No other public school district offers a mandatory course about religious knowledge and understanding like this. Why do you think the Modesto City School District has established a course like this?

- Modesto schools tend to exhibit a lot of social and racial diversity amongst it's students. I think that the district also recognizes that many of the work environments students will encounter post-graduation are very diverse too. Knowledge can lead to understanding. Understanding can lead to collaboration.
- I think just to fulfill a class requirement?
- First I thought that it was requirement for all. I thought it was so that we would understand all religions and respect each other. Then I thought at that time kids are so vulnerable they don't know what they want so they need to be educated.

What thoughts do you have about the *World Geography and World Religions* course?

- The staff member who taught the course was well-versed on the facts in the text book but probably didn't have much real-life experience with the many cultures. For example, I'm Jewish and had never heard G-d referred to as "Yaweh" in any Jewish community, but the teacher taught that that's what Jews called G-d.
- It was nice because it focuses on different world religions.
- The teacher was awesome. He was open to questions and he was very respectful.

What are your thoughts about religious bullying (which is bullying that occurs based on an individual's religious or non-religious identity)?

- Religious bullying should NOT be tolerated in any situation, but especially in public schools. I don't think that enough staff care about understanding what religious bullying is, although they think it's bad.
- Nobody should be bullied because of religion.
- I think that bullying could be learned at home, so after Sept 11, people were very mean to other religions, and that is what the kids learn.

If religious bullying occurred/occurs at your school, how do you think the school can address this issue?

- Religious and racial diversity in MCS is almost binary (Hispanic or Caucasian) and anyone who is an exception is easily identifiable. I would say that it would be good to have a reporting system that allowed victims to anonymously report and have the perpetrator receive consequences, but many students may feel that it would be obvious and don't want to seem like a ""tattle tale."" Clearly explaining what religious bullying is and explaining that it is no different than any type of harassment and outlining consequences on the same level as other types of harassment could be beneficial. Maybe encourage students to stand up for themselves and help them see the bigger picture outside of their peer group…
- By letting students know that bullying others is not ok.
- n/a

Is there anything else you would like to share with me about religious identities in your class, school environment, or community?

- The largest type of religious bullying that I experienced in high school and middle school, was offensive slang that was not meant towards me. In the same vein of the phrase "that's so gay," many students- despite being my friends and having confronted them about it- would say "don't be such a Jew," "you're such a Jew", "He was being such a Jew," etc to other non-Jewish friends. They also tended to be the ones who said "that's so gay." I shouldn't have had to try to explain to them over and over why saying that phrase was offensive to me even though it wasn't directed at me.
- I am really open to learn about religion. I think it is very interesting. I'm not ok with Satanic religions being taught in schools.
- (Blank response).

APPENDIX C1: Co-analysis meeting goals and guidelines (Modesto)

Phase 2 of study (Modesto): Co-analysis

Agenda

1:00 pm – Opening activity
1:15 pm – Review goal of meeting and guidelines for co-analysis
1:30 pm – Co-analysis in pairs
2:30 pm – Gather as a big group to share summaries
3:00 pm – End meeting

Looking forward: Meeting next Sunday, January 29, 2017 from 1-3 pm, where summaries will be reviewed and the future collaborative project (Phase 3) will be discussed.

NOTE: All participation is voluntary. All analyzed data will be published in my dissertation but anything we produce for Phase 3 will be licensed using Creative Commons Licensing with everybody's name on it so that data can be shared publicly.

Opening activity

Choose an object in the middle of the table that best represents you. Introduce yourself to a buddy in the room and explain why you have chosen this object using 1 minute each. Introduce your parent and their object to the rest of the group. (To begin, I should raise each item for them to see during explanation of the activity.)

Goal of meetings

These goals are adapted from Freire's (1970) dialogic action and *conscientization*.

Conceptualized as a means of learning and knowing, dialogue is much more than a method of task completion or participation for individuals. Dialogue leads to the pursuit of knowledge; it is not a means to an end. Through dialogue, theory and practice need to be unified and balanced, just as learning and knowing can be. More importantly, dialogue is a form of education and can raise critical consciousness, and create opportunities to empower participants to see themselves as agents of their own transformation through collaboration with researchers.

Dialogue guidelines

These guidelines are adapted from Habermas's (1984, 1990) theory of communicative action and communicative rationality.

1. Every person has the capacity for language and action and is able to use it to communicate and interact;

2. No one is given priority over another based on the social role one may hold;

3. The researcher's and the participants' knowledge are equally valid;

4. All opinions have the same strength;

5. Intentions during dialogue should be explicit and match what is being said; and

6. Any disagreements that are raised are stated with valid claims rather than imposed through coercive means.

Agreement needed from the group to comply and practice these guidelines in order to proceed from this point.

Goal of co-analysis

1. **Review the quotes in each theme.** Are they grouped correctly? Do they belong more prominently in another theme? If so, please discuss with your partner. When in agreement, cross off the theme from the category and please explain why, so that Alice can document it. Please also feel free to cut out the quotes and reorganize them to headings that make more sense to you and your partner. If the quotes are grouped well, here are some questions to guide your analysis (using who, what, when, how, why):
   a. What other aspects are important that I did not see?
   b. Whose voice is most concerned with this theme? Why?
   c. How can these concerns be addressed?
   d. When did these issues arise? Do they revolve around a specific period of time or event?
2. **Review quotes and seek exclusionary and transformative elements**. Afterwards, please offer a summary of your ideas and questions for each theme on a piece of paper.
   a. **Exclusionary elements:** any institutional or individual attitudes that exclude participants from a phenomenon or context
   b. **Transformative elements:** any institutional or individual attitudes that participants can use to transform their vulnerable state
3. **Answer the main research question** (if possible): Does a connection exist between religious bullying and religious literacy?
4. **Initiate some form of societal change through a collaborative project.** (Identify target group to do this effectively).

Co-analysis guidelines

Effective co-analysis requires reflection and self-reflection. This is hard to do but Alice will try to model it myself. Please be respectful of everyone's comments as individuals share their self-reflection.

If you review a quote that you said, you do not have to disclose that it is your quote but you can if you would like and if it would clarify the quote that is stated.

If you know the identity of the person of the quote, and it is not you, please do not disclose the individual's identity.

Alice's role: collaborator; to guide and support participants towards creating a self-sustainable long-term transformation by incorporating the appropriate community members from the beginning, such as teachers, students, and parents.

Overview of data

Participant summary:

Religious Group	Student surveys (Received 50 complete; Distributed over 300).	College Student or Graduate surveys (Received 3 responses; Distributed X.)	Adult perspectives (15 conversations)
Muslim	6	0	5
Jewish	3, conversed with 1 Jewish student	1	3 adult – 3 parents, and 1 who was a teacher
Orthodox Christian	1	0	0, approached none
Mormon	27	0	0, approached none
United Brethren	0	0	2
Universal Congregational Church	0	0	1, contacted me via Facebook post on the Stanislaus Humanist site
Hindu	2	0	1
Sikh	0	0	1
St. Stanislaus Catholic Church	9	2	0
Non-religious	0	0	2 teachers
Blank responses/unknown	2	0	1 teacher

Other notes

- 2 participants have background in religious studies
- 8 participants are teachers or retired teachers; 2 of which taught or are teaching the WR course
- 7 participants are parents, based on what they shared during the conversation. Some participants may have been parents as well but they did not mention anything about their children during our conversation.
- Conversed with 1 high school student but there are 2 in the co-analysis group based on their interest to participate in the Collaborative Data Project.
- 1 participant is currently a college student

Gender	Student**	Adult*
Female	25	13
Male	22	5
Blank response	3	0

*15 adult conversations and 3 adult surveys.

**2 student surveys were invalid and 2 Muslim students chose not to complete the survey despite their parents' approval to do so. 1 student conversation.

Groups that did not respond: The House (dropped off invitation); CrossPoint, Baptist group (dropped off invitation and emailed them); Modesto Covenant (emailed several times and Yvonne called too); Grace Community Church (emailed several times);

Groups that showed interest but it never fell through: Buddhist, UU, Humanist group did not have any youth I could speak with.

Themes

Society

- Exposure to religious identities – 7 pages
- Interaction with religious individuals in Modesto – 9 pages
  - Recent interactions as a result of the US elections or religious extremism – 5 pages

Family

- Family upbringing – 4 pages
- Parental struggle – 4 pages

School

- School & community environment – 13 pages
- School administration – 9 pages
- The role of the teacher – 5 pages
- Teacher training to foster religious literacy – 3 pages
- The Modesto 9th Grade World Religions course – 10 pages
- Courses with religious literacy in general – 4 pages

Students

- Student curiosity about different religions – 4 pages
- Summary of student survey responses – 12 pages
- Summary of graduated student survey responses (students currently in college or have graduated) – 5 pages

Phenomena

- Fear – 2 pages
- Influence of media – 3 pages
- Misunderstanding or bullying of Muslims – 3 pages
- Religious contexts more open to other religious individuals – 1 page
- Religious bullying and religious literacy – 7 pages

Certain details have been removed to protect the confidentiality of individuals, as some aspects of their conversation will make them very obvious to the community. Some individuals do not mind so I have kept their details in the conversation as is.

For the sake of timing, we will just analyze the information by themes. Next time we meet, I will have reviewed your analysis and embed research findings beside it that support or challenge the themes we found. Then we will have a better idea of our main findings, the group we want to share it with, and how to do it.

APPENDIX C2: Co-analysis meeting goals and guidelines (Montreal)

Phase 2 of study (Montreal): Co-analysis #2

Agenda

6:00 pm – Opening activity
6:15 pm – Review goal of meeting and guidelines for co-analysis
6:30 pm – Review data
7:00 pm – Discuss ideas that arise from data and potential ways to share the findings
8:00 pm – End meeting

NOTE: All participation is voluntary. All analyzed data will be published in my dissertation but anything we produce for Phase 3 will be licensed using Creative Commons Licensing with everybody's name on it so that data can be shared publicly.

Goal of meeting

These goals are adapted from Freire's (1970) dialogic action and *conscientization*.

Conceptualized as a means of learning and knowing, dialogue is much more than a method of task completion or participation for individuals. Dialogue leads to the pursuit of knowledge; it is not a means to an end. Through dialogue, theory and practice need to be unified and balanced, just as learning and knowing can be. More importantly, dialogue is a form of education and can raise critical consciousness, and create opportunities to empower participants to see themselves as agents of their own transformation through collaboration with researchers.

Dialogue guidelines

These guidelines are adapted from Habermas's (1984, 1990) theory of communicative action and communicative rationality.

1. Every person has the capacity for language and action and is able to use it to communicate and interact;

2. No one is given priority over another based on the social role one may hold;

3. The researcher's and the participants' knowledge are equally valid;

4. All opinions have the same strength;

5. Intentions during dialogue should be explicit and match what is being said; and

6. Any disagreements that are raised are stated with valid claims rather than imposed through coercive means.

Agreement needed from the group to comply and practice these guidelines in order to proceed from this point.

Goal of co-analysis

1. **Review the quotes in each theme.** Are they grouped correctly? Do they belong more prominently in another theme?
   a. What other aspects are important that I did not see?
   b. Whose voice is most concerned with this theme? Why?
   c. How can these concerns be addressed?
   d. When did these issues arise? Do they revolve around a specific period of time or event?
2. **Review quotes and seek exclusionary and transformative elements**. Afterwards, please offer a summary of your ideas and questions for each theme on a piece of paper.
   a. **Exclusionary elements:** any institutional or individual attitudes that exclude participants from a phenomenon or context
   b. **Transformative elements:** any institutional or individual attitudes that participants can use to transform their vulnerable state
3. **Answer the main research question** (if possible): Does a connection exist between religious bullying and religious literacy?
4. **Initiate some form of societal change through a collaborative project.** (Identify target group to do this effectively).

Co-analysis guidelines

Effective co-analysis requires reflection and self-reflection. This is hard to do but Alice will try to model it myself. Please be respectful of everyone's comments as individuals share their self-reflection.

If you review a quote that you said, you do not have to disclose that it is your quote but you can if you would like and if it would clarify the quote that is stated.

If you know the identity of the person of the quote, and it is not you, please do not disclose the individual's identity.

Alice's role: collaborator; to guide and support participants towards creating a self-sustainable long-term transformation by incorporating the appropriate community members from the beginning, such as teachers, students, and parents.

Overview of data set

Group	Student surveys (Received 16 complete; Distributed 52).	College/Uni Student or Graduate surveys (Received 32 hard copy response and 8 online; Distributed 33 hard copies and 150+ online based on class size and group membership.)**	Adult perspectives (14 conversations)
Agnostic	0	1 online response, 2 hard copy responses	0
Anglican	0	1 online response, 2 hard copy responses	0
Associated Gospel Church	0	1 hard copy response	0
Baptist	0	1 hard copy response	0
Catholic	Received 3 surveys, Distributed 15 surveys	2 online response, 4 hardcopy responses	0
Hindu	0	1 online response	0
Evangelical Christians	Received 1 survey, Distributed 8 surveys	22 hardcopy responses	0
Jewish	Received 1 survey, Distributed 8 surveys	0	2 and 1 conversation with a Grade 5 student
Latter Day Saint	Received 2 surveys, Distributed 9 surveys	0	2
Muslim	Received 5 surveys, Distributed 8 surveys	1 online response	2
Non-religious	0	0	2
"Nothing in particular"	0	1 online response	0
Protestant	0	2 hardcopy responses	2 – as a follow-up to the surveys they completed as college students
Orthodox Christian	0	1 online response	0
Sikh	Received 4 surveys, Distributed 4 surveys	Distributed survey to 20 students	2
United Church	0	1 hardcopy survey	0
Blank responses/unknown	0	0	2

**Four students marked down more than one affiliation in their response. Both their affiliations are noted in their table but the tally of students at the top of the table indicates the exact number of individuals that submitted a survey response.

Gender	Student	Adult
Female	29	6
Male	26	8
Blank	1	0

Groups that did not respond: several mosques and churches. First Nations leaders at McGill and Concordia were approached but there was minimal response or interest in the study. One gurdwara responded and preferred not to participate.

Themes

Society

- City & Society
- Contact, and minority and majority dynamics
- Workplace

School

- School & community environment
  - Elementary school
  - Secondary school
  - College and university
- Teachers
- Teacher training
- Views on the Ethics and Religious Cultures course
- Religious literacy in general
- Religious literacy at a young age

Students

- Summary of student survey responses

Phenomena

- Fear
- Controversial topic and taboo
- The internet and media
- Formation
  - Identity formation
  - Respect formation
  - Support system
- Religious bullying
- Religious bullying and religious literacy

Certain details have been removed to protect the confidentiality of individuals, as some aspects of their conversation will make them very obvious to the community. Some individuals do not mind so I have kept their details in the conversation as is.

APPENDIX D1: Youth handout (Modesto)
Religious bullying
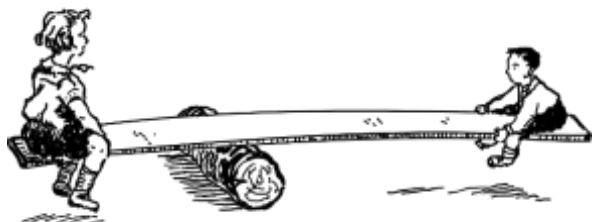
> ***Religious bullying*** happens when a religious or non-religious person purposely degrades another person emotionally, mentally, or physically based on the bullied person's religious or religious or non-religious identity. It creates or maintains **a power imbalance** between the parties (Kirman, 2004; PREVNet; stopbullying.gov).

Religious bullying is dangerous like all forms of bullying, because it can lead to (DeLara, 2016; Nansel et al., 2004; Pan & Spittal, 2013; Totten & Quigley, 2003, etc.):

- lower self-esteem
- poor mental health
- depression
- social anxiety
- sluggishness
- difficulty sleeping
- poor appetite

- increased chance of suffering self-injury or injury by others
- inattentiveness
- poor academic performance

- skipping class/school
- alcohol and/or drug use
- ideas of suicide
- suicide

It can pose harmful long-term effects to the bully, the bullied, and witnesses of bullying.

In Stanislaus County:
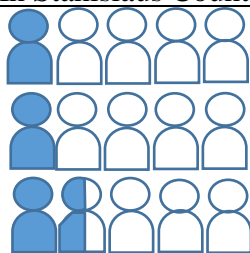
9 students out of 50 said they know of/saw religious discrimination

9 students out of 50 said they know of/saw religious bullying

12 students out of 50 said they "somewhat" saw religious bullying

This data is from my study with only 50 students so it does not represent everyone in Stanislaus County. However, all numbers include students in elementary, junior high, and high school so religious discrimination and religious bullying occurs across all grades.

So, how do we stop religious bullying? What do we need to do?

1. Increase your religious literacy and knowledge about other religious and non-religious beliefs.

2. Report religious bullying when you see it or when it happens to you.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me,
Alice at alice.chan@mail.mcgill.ca, or visit my website https://alicechan.org.
341

Solution #1: Increase your religious literacy and knowledge about other religious and non-religious beliefs

Religious literacy helps you understand that religions are:

| Internally diverse | Externally diverse | Influential historically and today |

Religious literacy is the ability to:

1. Know the basic tenets of the major world religions,
2. Discern and analyze the diversity within and across religions, and
3. Understand the role of religion in the social, political, and economic contexts in history and today.

Courses such as the 9th Grade *World Geography and World Religions* course in Modesto City Schools can help you learn religious literacy.

Solution #2: Report religious bullying when you see it or when it happens to you.

Students do not report because of:

1. **Fear**: "I was scared that the school would not agree with me."
2. **Embarrassment**: "I was scared and embarrassed."
3. **Thinking it was a joke**: "I didn't think it was a big deal."
4. **Thinking it won't help**: "I felt like they wouldn't care."
5. **Distrust of adults**: "Because I don't feel comfortable with an administrator and I don't have a good relationship with my parents."
6. **Fear of being called a tattletale**: "I didn't want them to get involved because the oppressor would learn that I told on him."
7. **Fear of bringing more attention to the problem**: "I wouldn't tell the school because all of a sudden everyone would know the problem."

⟶ *How can you make it a safe space for you or others to report?* ⟵

Sources: Balaji, M., Khanna, R., Dinakar, A., et al. (2016). *Classroom subjected: Bully & bias against Hindu students in American schools*. Washington, DC: Hindu American Foundation; Council on American-Islamic Relations (2015). *MISLABELED: The impact of school bullying and discrimination on California Muslim students*; Sikh Coalition. (2014). *"Go home terrorist." A report on bullying against Sikh American school children*.

APPENDIX D2: Adult handout (Modesto)
Religious bullying

> ***Religious bullying*** occurs when a religious or religiously unaffiliated person intentionally degrades another person emotionally, mentally, or physically based on the bullied individual's religious or religiously unaffiliated identity. It creates or maintains **a power imbalance** between the parties (Kirman, 2004; PREVNet; stopbullying.gov).
>
> Bullying can lead to lower self-esteem, poor mental health, depression, social anxiety, sluggishness, difficulty sleeping, poor appetite, increased likelihood of suffering self-injury or that perpetrated by others, inattentiveness, poor academic performance, truancy, alcohol consumption, drug use, and suicidal ideation (DeLara, 2016; Nansel et al., 2004; Pan & Spittal, 2013; Totten & Quigley, 2003, etc.).
>
> It can pose long-term detrimental effects to the bully, the bullied, and witnesses of bullying.

Climate in the US today[i]

2016 US Election results have raised fear and anxiety among:	Individuals who report religious discrimination:	Parents who report that their school-age children are bullied:
38% of Muslims* 27% of Jewish people* 8% of Catholics 11% of Protestants *Fear and anxiety for safety from White supremacist groups	60% of Muslims (mostly among younger Muslims, women, and Arabs) 38% of Jewish people 11% of Catholic *That is 3 out of 5 Muslims, 2 out of 5 Jewish people, and 1 out of 5 Catholics.*	42% of Muslim parents* 23% of Jewish parents 10% of parents among the general public *25% of bullying stems from teachers or school officials.

Modesto today - Key findings on religious bullying from students in Modesto:

- Within MCS schools (n=31): 16% said "yes" (n=4) and "very much" (n=1) to knowing/seeing students who were religiously bullied by other students; 29% (n=9) said "somewhat", indicating that they may not be familiar with what religious bullying entails
- In Modesto (n=50): 18% of students in the whole study (n=9) said that they did not report any discrimination or religious bullying to teachers and/or school staff despite indicating "somewhat", "yes", or "very much" to knowing/seeing religious bullying among students.
- US Reports[ii] on religious bullying show that teachers or school staff have been the bullies, but this did not occur among any of the students in the study.

Therefore, two concerns arise:
    1) Religious bullying occurs: How can we stop this?
    2) Students are not reporting religious bullying: Why and what can we do about this?

343

Concern #1: Religious bullying occurs.	Concern #2: Some students are not reporting religious bullying.
One solution: The MCS *World Geography & World Religions* 9th Grade course, a religious literacy program, can help. Religious literacy[iii] is the ability to: 1. Know the basic tenets of the major world religions, 2. Discern and analyze the diversity within and across religions, and 3. Understand the role of religion in the social, political, and economic contexts in history and today. 3 MCS alumni (among 5) said that the course changed how they perceive others. 5 current MCS students explicitly stated a positive attitudinal change towards people of different beliefs as a result of the course. *"I really enjoyed learning about what other people believe because I think it's interesting and helps me understand my peers."* – 11th Grade female student	Why students do not report[iv]: 1. **Fear**: "I was scared that the school would not agree with me." 2. **Embarrassment**: "I was scared and embarrassed." 3. **Thinking it was a joke**: "I didn't think it was a big deal." 4. **Thinking it won't help**: "I felt like they wouldn't care." 5. **Distrust of adults**: "Because I don't feel comfortable with an administrator and I don't have a good relationship with my parents." 6. **Fear of being called a tattletale**: "I didn't want them to get involved because the oppressor would learn that I told on him." 7. **Fear of bringing more attention to the problem**: "I wouldn't tell the school because all of a sudden everyone would know the problem." Solution: Foster healthy relationships and normalize discussions on religious bullying.

Going forward
- "Trump effect" may have long-lasting impact. 90% of 25,000+ educators surveyed said that the election has had a negative impact on their student mood and behaviour[v].
- Parents and community members need to be aware of religious bullying and discuss it with their children so they know as well. Be familiar with the effects of bullying.
- Support the MCS 9th Grade course. Administrators and teachers seem anxious about the benefits or perception about the course, but we know that it raises positive change so we should support it so that administrators and teachers are confident in their work.
- Initiate religious literacy courses for adults in Modesto.

[i] Mogahed, D. & Chouhoud, Y. (2017). *American Muslim Poll 2017: Muslims at the crossroads*. Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. http://www.ispu.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/American-Muslim-Poll-2017-Report.pdf

[ii] Balaji, M., Khanna, R., Dinakar, A., et al. (2016). *Classroom subjected: Bully & bias against Hindu students in American schools*. Washington, DC: Hindu American Foundation; Council on American-Islamic Relations (2015). *MISLABELED: The impact of school bullying and discrimination on California Muslim students*; Sikh Coalition. (2014). *"Go home terrorist." A report on bullying against Sikh American school children*. http://sikhcoalition.org/documents/pdf/go-home-terrorist.pdf
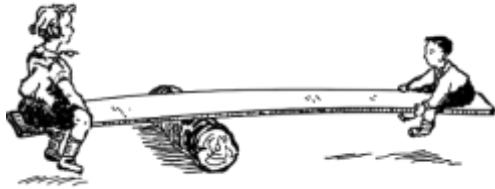
[iii] Moore, D. (2007). *Overcoming religious illiteracy: A cultural studies approach to the study of religion in secondary education*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

[iv] Same sources as ii, but all quotes are from the Council on American-Islamic Relations report.

[v] The Southern Poverty Law Center. (2016). *The Trump Effect: The Impact of The 2016 Presidential Election on Our Nation's Schools*.

APPENDIX E1: Youth handout (Montreal)
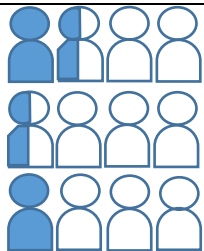## Religious bullying

> ***Religious bullying*** happens when a religious or non-religious person purposely degrades another person emotionally, mentally, or physically based on the bullied individual's actual or perceived religious or religiously unaffiliated identity, or the doctrines of one's worldview. It creates or maintains **a power imbalance** between the parties (Kirman, 2004; PREVNet; stopbullying.gov).

Religious bullying is dangerous like all forms of bullying, because it can lead to (DeLara, 2016; Nansel et al., 2004; Pan & Spittal, 2013; Totten & Quigley, 2003, etc.):

- lower self-esteem
- poor mental health
- depression
- social anxiety
- sluggishness
- difficulty sleeping
- poor appetite

- increased chance of suffering self-injury or injury by others
- inattentiveness
- poor academic performance

- skipping class/school
- alcohol and/or drug use
- ideas of suicide
- suicide

It can pose harmful long-term effects to the bully, the bullied, and witnesses of bullying.

<u>In Greater Montreal</u>:

5 students out of 16 said they know of/saw religious discrimination

3 students out of 16 said they know of/saw religious bullying

4 students out of 16 said they "somewhat" saw religious bullying

This data is from my study with only 16 secondary students so it does not represent everyone in Greater Montreal. The three who saw religious bullying were Mormon, Sikh, and Catholic. I surveyed students of many beliefs who attend French and English public and private schools.

So, how do we stop religious bullying? What do we need to do?

1. Increase your religious literacy and knowledge about other religious and non-religious beliefs.

2. Report religious bullying when you see it or when it happens to you.

345

Religious literacy helps you understand that religions are:

Internally diverse	Externally diverse	Influential historically and today

Religious literacy is the ability to:

1. Know the basic tenets of the major world religions,
2. Discern and analyze the diversity within and across religions, and
3. Understand the role of religion in the social, political, and economic contexts in history and today.

Courses such as the *Ethics and Religious Culture* course can help you learn religious literacy.

Solution #2: Report religious bullying when you see it or when it happens to you.

Students do not report because of:

1. **Fear**: "I was scared that the school would not agree with me."
2. **Embarrassment**: "I was scared and embarrassed."
3. **Thinking it was a joke**: "I didn't think it was a big deal."
4. **Thinking it won't help**: "I felt like they wouldn't care."
5. **Distrust of adults**: "Because I don't feel comfortable with an administrator and I don't have a good relationship with my parents."
6. **Fear of being called a tattletale**: "I didn't want them to get involved because the oppressor would learn that I told on him."
7. **Fear of bringing more attention to the problem**: "I wouldn't tell the school because all of a sudden everyone would know the problem."

➡️ *How can you make it a safe space for you or others to report?* ⬅️

Sources: Balaji, M., Khanna, R., Dinakar, A., et al. (2016). *Classroom subjected: Bully & bias against Hindu students in American schools*. Washington, DC: Hindu American Foundation; Council on American-Islamic Relations (2015). *MISLABELED: The impact of school bullying and discrimination on California Muslim students*; Sikh Coalition. (2014). *"Go home terrorist." A report on bullying against Sikh American school children*.

APPENDIX E2: Adult handout (Montreal)
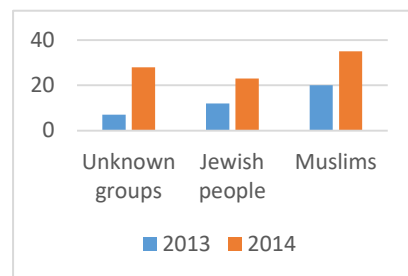## Religious bullying

Religious bullying occurs when a religious or religiously unaffiliated person intentionally or unintentionally degrades another person emotionally, mentally, or physically based on the bullied individual's actual or perceived religious or religiously unaffiliated identity, or the doctrines of one's worldview. It creates or maintains **a power imbalance** between the parties (Kirman, 2004; PREVNet; stopbullying.gov).

Bullying can lead to lower self-esteem, poor mental health, depression, social anxiety, sluggishness, difficulty sleeping, poor appetite, increased likelihood of suffering self-injury or that perpetrated by others, inattentiveness, poor academic performance, truancy, alcohol consumption, drug use, and suicidal ideation (DeLara, 2016; Nansel et al., 2004; Pan & Spittal, 2013; Totten & Quigley, 2003, etc.).

It can pose long-term detrimental effects to the bully, the bullied, and witnesses of bullying.

Quebec and perspectives from the US today:

2013-2014[vi]: Hate crimes in Quebec based on religion rose from 48 to 93 incidents.	**2014-2016 US reports[vii]:** Sikhs and Hindus: In both communities in the US, 1 in 3 students have been bullied for their beliefs. Muslims: 1 in 2 Muslim students in California have been bullied.	**2017 US study[viii]: Parents who report their school-age children are bullied:** 42% of Muslim parents* 23% of Jewish parents 10% of parents among the general public *25% of bullying stems from teachers or school officials.

Chart (Hate crimes in Quebec): bar values for Unknown groups, Jewish people, Muslims; legend: 2013 (blue), 2014 (orange); y-axis 0, 20, 40.

Montreal today - Key findings on religious bullying from 16 secondary students from French and English public and private schools:

- 19% of students said "yes" (n=3) to knowing of/seeing students who were religiously bullied by other students. They were Mormon, Sikh, and Catholic; 25% (n=4) said "somewhat", indicating that they may not be familiar with what religious bullying entails.
- All students who knew of/saw religious bullying happen or somewhat happen reported the incident. This is very good but the low number of participants in the study does not confirm that all students do this, especially as studies[ix] have shown that many do not report.
- The same studies show that teachers or school staff religiously bully students. In Montreal, 13% of students said "somewhat" (n=2) to knowing of/seeing teachers bully students.

Therefore, two concerns arise:
- 1) Religious bullying occurs: How can we stop this?
- 2) Students are not reporting religious bullying: Why and what can we do about this?

<u>Concern #1:</u> Religious bullying occurs. <u>One solution:</u> The *Ethics and Religious Culture* (ERC) Gr 1 to SEC V course, a religious literacy program, could help. Religious literacy[x] is the ability to: 4. Know the basic tenets of the major world religions, 5. Discern and analyze the diversity within and across religions, and 6. Understand the role of religion in the social, political, and economic contexts in history and today. ERC alumni showed doubt about the benefit of the course due to negative experiences. Many felt the course was only informative. However, 5 students in the ERC today said that the course can be transformational. *"Personally, I think that this course helps students to reflect on their own beliefs and it helps them be more educated about other religions. It has helped me a lot with my ethical dilemmas in recent months."* – SEC V female student	<u>Concern #2:</u> Some students do not report religious bullying. Why students do not report[xi]: 8. **Fear**: "I was scared that the school would not agree with me." 9. **Embarrassment**: "I was scared and embarrassed." 10. **Thinking it was a joke**: "I didn't think it was a big deal." 11. **Thinking it won't help**: "I felt like they wouldn't care." 12. **Distrust of adults**: "Because I don't feel comfortable with an administrator and I don't have a good relationship with my parents." 13. **Fear of being called a tattletale**: "I didn't want them to get involved because the oppressor would learn that I told on him." 14. **Fear of bringing more attention to the problem**: "I wouldn't tell the school because all of a sudden everyone would know the problem." <u>Solution:</u> Foster healthy relationships and normalize discussions on religious bullying.

Going forward
- "Trump effect" may have long-lasting impact. 90% of 25,000+ educators surveyed said that the election has had a negative impact on their student mood and behaviour[xii].
- Parents and community members need to be aware of religious bullying and discuss it with their children so they know as well. Be familiar with the effects of bullying.
- Support the ERC. Some educators do not see the benefits of the course and are scared of how people perceive it, but my study shows that courses like it can raise positive change. If we support the course, principals and teachers can be more confident in their work.
- Initiate religious literacy courses for adults in Montreal, so adults and youth are both informed.

[vi] Ministère de la sécurité publique. (2016). *La criminalité au Québec en 2015: Principales tendances.*
[vii] Balaji, M., et al. (2016). *Classroom subjected: Bully & bias against Hindu students in American schools.* Washington, DC: Hindu American Foundation; Council on American-Islamic Relations (2015). *MISLABELED: The impact of school bullying and discrimination on California Muslim students;* Sikh Coalition. (2014). *"Go home terrorist." A report on bullying against Sikh American school children.*
[viii] Mogahed, D. & Chouhoud, Y. (2017). *American Muslim Poll 2017: Muslims at the crossroads.* Institute for Social Policy and Understanding.
[ix] Same sources as ii.
[x] Moore, D. (2007). *Overcoming religious illiteracy: A cultural studies approach to the study of religion in secondary education.* New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
[xi] Same sources as ii, but all quotes are from the Council on American-Islamic Relations report.
[xii] The Southern Poverty Law Center. (2016). *The Trump Effect: The Impact of The 2016 Presidential Election on Our Nation's Schools.*

APPENDIX F: Handout that was shared with Modesto City Schools Board of Directors

Memo re: The Ph.D. research titled: Does a potential connection exist between religious bullying and religious literacy programs, such as the MCS 9th Grade *World Geography & World Religions* course?

Purpose of research: As a middle school teacher who witnessed religious bullying in my own classroom, this study was a means to better understand religious bullying and find a specific way to address it in a public school setting. My goal is to share my findings to better equip other teachers, administrators, and students when religious bullying arises.

Main conclusions from full study in Modesto, CA and Montreal, Canada:
Religious literacy programs, such as the MCS course, can change how students perceive one another in negative and positive ways (based on my study and other current studies). As such, more attention and value should be given to preserving and improving these courses to meet contemporary societal changes so that religious literacy can be a means to deter religious bullying from occurring. However, bullying is a communal concern and requires a communal approach to address it. The school is not solely responsible for addressing religious bullying but it is a key stakeholder. Thus, I am sharing my findings with the MCS Board of Directors as well as parents and religious leaders in Modesto.

Why Modesto? Modesto City School's was chosen because it offers the only religious literacy course in America that is required for graduation from a public high school.

Religious bullying occurs when a religious or religiously unaffiliated person intentionally degrades another person emotionally, mentally, or physically based on the bullied individual's religious or religiously unaffiliated identity, thereby creating or maintaining a power imbalance between the parties (Kirman, 2004; PREVNet; stopbullying.gov). It poses the same long-term detrimental effects as other forms of bullying that exist to individuals who bully, are bullied, and are witnesses of bullying.	*Religious literacy* is the ability to: 1) Know the basic tenets of the major world religions, 2) Discern and analyze the diversity within and across religions, and 3) Understand the role of religion in the social, political, and economic contexts in history and today (Moore, 2007).
Key findings on religious bullying from students: • 16% (n=5 of 31) said "yes" (n=4) and "very much" (n=1) to knowing/seeing students being religiously bullied at school by other students; 29% (n=9 of 31) said "somewhat" to this response,	Key findings about the MCS *World Geography & World Religions* (WGWR) 9th Grade course: • Adults I spoke with (and community members they know) who know about the course are happy that their children have a course like this to help them understand others.

indicating that they may not be familiar with what religious bullying entails • *Concern:* 18% of students (n=9) said that they did not report any discrimination or religious bullying to teachers and/or school staff. This coheres with findings from reports that show that many students are embarrassed or uncomfortable in reporting religious bullying (Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2015; Hindu American Foundation, 2016; Sikh Coalition, 2014). • US Reports on religious bullying show that teachers or school staff have been the bullies, but this was not the case in MCS.	• In the past, parents questioned the purpose of the WGWR course. During a recent parent-teacher night, a teacher in my study was thanked for teaching and offering the course instead. • Among five MCS alumni, three alumni recognized that the course changed the way they perceive others and two alumni had positive things to say about the course. • Five current MCS students explicitly stated a positive attitudinal transformation towards people of different beliefs as a result of the course. • The WGWR course legitimates the teaching about religion in public schools, which then gives students' religious identities some credibility and help them feel more included. One participant said he wished he had a course like this when he was a MCS student in the past.

Thus, the WGWR course can change how students perceive one another in a positive manner and can potentially deter religious bullying from happening. On this basis, potential strategies are proposed.

Approaches and ideas to consider

• Inform more parents and community members about the success of the course. This can address the fear many teachers have about disgruntled parents who may be unfamiliar with the effectiveness or purpose of the course.

• Inform teachers about religious bullying and the ways to respond to it so that students are more comfortable in reporting it when it occurs.

• Offer opportunities for group training and peer conversation among WGWR teachers. This was very successful for WGWR teachers when the course was first created and they needed to collaboratively decide how to address the topic of 9/11 in their classroom.

• Address the fear many teachers have about engaging in controversial topics in the world today by offering media literacy training with respect to religious literacy, through:
  o Online courses from the Religious Freedom Center at Newseum, especially, "Religion and News Media". It requires a 2-day visit to DC. http://www.religiousfreedomcenter.org/academics/courses/
  o Free Massive Online Open Course offered by the Harvard Divinity School called "Religious Literacy" here https://www.edx.org/course/religious-literacy-traditions-scriptures-harvardx-hds-3221-1x

The Data was collected from Sept 2016 – Jan 2017, with religious and non-religious perspectives from MCS. 50 student surveys were completed with 31 from MCS high schools, where only 24 have taken the WGWR course. Informal interviews were held with 14 adults of various beliefs.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss any of this data in greater detail.

Additional strategies for teachers and classrooms are available and I would be happy to discuss other strategies with your Social Sciences Curriculum Coordinator.