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PhD Thesis

Islamophobia in Quebec Secondary Schools: Inquiries into the Lived Experiences of Muslim Youth Post-9/11.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the lived experiences of Muslim students attending Quebec secondary schools in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks. These experiences are examined from a critical race theory perspective. By employing a critical ethnographic approach informed by institutional ethnography, this study collected data through interviewing former and current Muslim students with the aim of recognizing the authority of participants in describing their lived experiences. Through engaging in individual and focus group interviews, the study uncovered systemic bias and racism experienced by participants in the schools that they attended. The findings suggest that anti-Muslim racism experienced by participants was inextricably linked to the effects of the War on Terror in the North American context. Moreover, these experiences were also impacted by Quebec state practices, policies, and nationalist debates.

Résumé

Cette thèse examine les expériences vécues par les étudiants musulmans qui fréquentent des écoles secondaires du Québec au lendemain des attentats terroriste du 11 Septembre 2001. Les données sont scrutées avec le point de vue de la théorie critique. En utilisant une approche ethnographique critique informée par ethnographie institutionnelle, cette étude a recueilli des données en interrogeant les anciens et actuels étudiants musulmans dans le but de reconnaître l'autorité des participants à décrire leurs expériences vécues dans les écoles secondaires du Québec. Grâce à se livrer à des entretiens individuels du groupe et discussion, l'étude a révélé biais systémique et le racisme vécu par les répondants dans les écoles qu'ils ont fréquentées. Les résultats de cette étude suggèrent que le racisme anti-Musulman connu par les répondants a été inextricablement liée aux effets de la guerre contre le terrorisme. En outre, ces expériences ont également été touchées par les pratiques de l'État du Québec, les politiques et les débats nationalistes.

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research will one day contribute to a better world for my son and family. Thank you all for your

help, support, sacrifice, and love.

Introduction

The research project

This thesis examines the lived experiences of Muslim students attending Quebec secondary schools in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks (9/11). The questions guiding this study were: (1) how did Muslim students in Quebec secondary schools feel they were perceived in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks? (2) If anti-Muslim racism existed in Quebec secondary schools, what were its causes and how did it manifest? (3) What, if any, approaches did teachers believe could be employed in a high school setting to engage students in discussions about anti-Muslim racism, its origins, and its consequences? This study draws from previous research relating to anti-Muslim racism. It is qualitative in nature and employed ethnography (Smith, 2005 & 2006; Jiwani, 2006; Zine, 2001 & 2006). I interviewed Muslim students as well as teachers working in Quebec schools to develop a better understanding of the lived realities of Muslims attending Quebec secondary schools after 9/11. Critiques of anti-Muslim racism came from a critical race perspective informed by critical race feminist scholarship (Bilge, 2012 & 2013; Jiwani, 2010; Maira, 2014; Razack, 1998, 2008, 2010, & 2014; Thobani, 2007, & 2010).

Why this study?

I am a brown skinned Muslim man in my thirties. I have been a secondary school teacher in Quebec for over seven years. My road to becoming a secondary school teacher and academic was not a path clearly laid out for me. I initially started my university education in the field of commerce. After three years of studying in a field that I had very little interest in I felt there had to be more to my life than working as an accountant. It was at this point that I decided to go into the field of teaching. It was a life altering decision and I am a happier person for it. Throughout my career as a secondary school teacher I have had many ups and downs, but on the whole I feel

that by becoming a teacher I perform an essential duty for society. Teachers have the potential to shape and influence the world through every student they teach. Teachers can engage, inspire, and enlighten, while at the same time possess the ability to misinform, discriminate against, and intimidate their students.

My desire to learn about Muslim experiences in Quebec educational contexts unexpectedly came about one day while I was volunteering as a camp counselor during my summer vacation. The camp was for Muslim youth and was organized by a Muslim community centre in the Greater Montreal Region. Another counselor and I were engaging in an open discussion with the youth about challenges that they may have faced in school and in their daily interactions in Quebec society as visible minorities. The group discussion was calm and uneventful—most of the kids tuning out while we desperately tried to keep them engaged in a lively discussion. However, the instant we started talking about stereotypes relating to racism that they had experienced in their schools, the students almost in unison woke up and passionately discussed how they had been misperceived in their schools, called 'terrorist' by classmates, and had encountered teachers who misrepresented their faith. The children were shockingly eager and enthusiastic about voicing their experiences with racism and marginalization. It almost seemed as though they were able to breathe a sigh of relief now that an adult figure in their life was trying to understand what they were going through and how difficult their challenges were. This incident further impacted me because my niece, who like these children was still in elementary school at the time, was being bullied by another student because she believed in "Allah". More recently, one of my niece's teachers insisted that slavery was going to be re-instituted in Canada by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), after singling out which students in the class were Muslim.

Throughout my life, I have personally experienced a number of instances of anti-Muslim discrimination ranging from grimacing stares to strangers yelling insults at me in the street about my perceived beliefs. In one incident, I noticed that a work colleague of mine was laughing at an email he was reading. He summoned others around him to read the email and they also found the contents of the message amusing. I leaned over to see what was so comical about the email. The heading read "how to get a good laugh while riding on an airplane". This email contained a link to a website that had red Arabic writing scrawled across the page and a timer counting down. The email exclaimed "open this link while on an airplane and look upwards with your hands raised, to get a good laugh". The email was implying that the person opening the link would appear to be a radicalized Muslim terrorist attempting to blow up the plane. I found this incident troubling because none of my colleagues found this email the least bit insensitive or racist. All of these colleagues were teachers who teach Arab and Muslim students, and should have known better. Is this how they perceive Muslim students in their school? Would a similar type of email that was insulting to Jewish people or African Americans have been as socially acceptable? In that instant I began to realize how normalized stereotypical understandings and portrayals of Muslims were prevalent even amongst people I considered friends and colleagues.

In my capacity as a secondary school teacher I have taught a range of courses in social studies, mathematics, and the humanities. My faith and my ethnicity are central to who I am and therefore are entangled with my teacher identity. As a visible minority, I have always felt the need to encourage and cultivate social justice in my classes. Whether it has been through applying classroom rules and policies equitably to my students, or ensuring that students treat everyone in the class with respect and dignity, I have diligently worked towards ensuring social justice within my classroom and in the schools that I have worked in. Building from the work of

Parker Palmer (1997), I envision teaching as creating a safe space, which is both hospitable and "charged" (Palmer, 1997). This means building a classroom environment which is inviting for students to embark on the journey of learning. As Palmer notes, learning new things "raises the fear of getting lost in the unchartered and the unknown" (1997, p. 75). By creating a hospitable environment, students will feel comfortable about learning new things and engage in learning in more depth, which may create a "charged" environment. Such an environment is conducive to "pursuing the deep things of the world or of the soul" (Palmer, 1997, p. 75). In other words, through creating a comfortable and safe environment, I hope that students will be willing to take the risk of acquiring transformative knowledge—information which can bring about practical change in one's life. As I have come to know through experience, this is not a simple task. To help facilitate this process I have always encouraged a classroom space which supports solitude and fosters community (Palmer, 1997), believing that learning requires introspection and reflection. At a deeper level, "the integrity of the student's inner self must be respected, not violated, if we expect the student to learn" (Palmer, 1997, p. 76). Hence, learning can only be accomplished when the students feel they are being respected. Creating a sense of community within a classroom involves a "dialogical exchange in which our ignorance can be aired, our ideas tested, our biases challenged, and our knowledge expanded" (Palmer, 1997, p. 76). Through fostering this type of classroom community, misperceptions and misunderstandings can be discussed openly, with the hope that the classroom communal voice can challenge ignorant and biased views. Working towards building this space as a secondary school teacher has brought me a wealth of experiences and encounters, some of which have been enlightening and wonderful. However, I have also experienced a number of troubling incidents.

I can recall one occasion when I was discussing stereotypes with my students, and the cliché of "Muslim terrorists" came up. Throughout this discussion, one student fervently insisted that we need to be wary of Muslims and make sure that they do not "infect" society. On another occasion, a Muslim student who wore a headscarf was being harassed by a male student for her appearance. Other Muslim students have complained of being labeled as terrorists by their classmates. Over the last school year, an Ethics and Religious Culture teacher confided in me that a significant number of his students had ignorant and biased views towards Arabs and Muslims. My experiences and observations of anti-Muslim racism have caused me to question if other Muslims have had similar experiences with race and racism in Quebec schools. I wanted to explore why some Muslims may have negative experiences in institutions, which should be fostering intellectual development and growth, as well as exposure to diverse ways of understanding the world. It was through this study which I attempted to engage in this endeavour.

Context

Recent polls conducted across Canada asking Canadians if they have a generally favourable or unfavourable opinion of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, reveal a greater dislike towards Islam than the other faiths. 69 per cent of Quebecers have unfavourable perceptions of Islam, while 54 per cent of Canadians as a whole have a negative opinion of the faith (Angus Reid, 2013). In Quebec, various mosques have been vandalized (CBC, 2013 & 2009; CJC, 2008; CTV, 2006), and legislation such as Bill 94 and Bill 60[1] have been passed or proposed restricting Muslim women's dress in Quebec (ANQ, 2010 &

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[1] Bill 94 passed in 2010 and required individuals who wore face coverings to remove them if they wanted to work for the Quebec government or receive governmental services. Bill 60 was a proposed Bill for state secularism and religious neutrality which would have restricted government employees, or people working for government funded

2013). The 9/11 attacks and the ensuing War on Terror waged by the Bush administration and sustained throughout the presidency of Barack Obama have fundamentally affected the lives of Muslims, not only in Muslim-majority countries, but also in European and North American nations (Esposito, 2011; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2010; Razack, 2008; Salaita, 2006; Sheehi, 2011; Thobani; 2007). In the years since 9/11 there has been a significant increase in mistrust and prejudice towards Muslims in Canada (CAIR-CAN, 2008). Many of the biases and negative sentiment towards Muslims in Western nations both prior to 9/11 and its aftermath have been referred to as Islamophobia (Esposito, 2011; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2010; Lean, 2012). Some scholarship suggests that Muslim students in Canadian schools often face discrimination, especially Muslim women (Rezai-Rashti, 2005; Zine, 2001 & 2006). However, there is a gap in the literature about Muslims' lived experiences in Quebec educational settings.

Much of the anti-Muslim sentiment in the post-9/11 context has revolved around the notion of Muslims being violent and threatening to Western nations (Salaita, 2006; Sheehi, 2011; Razack, 2008; Thobani, 2007). Words such as 'terrorism' and 'terrorist' have increasingly become subjective terms to disproportionately highlight violence committed by Arabs or Muslims over violence committed by other religious and ethnic groups (Salaita, 2006). A recent example of how these terms were applied selectively was on February 18, 2010 when Joseph Stack, a software consultant, purposely flew a light aircraft into a government building in Austin Texas. Stack engaged in this hostile and violent act due to grievances he had with the US government, which he articulated in a suicide-manifesto. Stack was responsible for the death and injury of over a dozen people, yet despite the similarity to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, news

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institutions from wearing religious attire. Both Bills were primarily directed towards and affected Muslim women, as well as members of other religious communities.

agencies made concerted efforts not to label this act as terrorism (Greenwald, 2010). In stark

contrast to the media coverage of this event, Muslims who planned similar attacks such as Umar

Farouk Abdulmutallab (a.k.a. the Underwear Bomber), Faisal Shahzad (a.k.a. the Times Square

Bomber), the alleged Canadian terror cell labeled "the Toronto 18", and Michael Zehaf-Bibeau,

the man responsible for the 2014 Parliament Hill shootings in Ottawa were all featured

prominently in news media as terrorists.

The above examples highlight how in the current climate terrorism is increasingly being

defined by the cultural and religious affiliations of the people committing the acts and not

necessarily by the acts themselves (Greenwald, 2010). In other words, the labeling of an

individual as 'Muslim' determines if such acts fall under the definition of terrorism or just

random acts of violence. As Karim Karim (2002) observes, 'Islam' has become a term "that is

manipulated according to the needs of the particular source discussing it. Among other things it

has come variously to refer to a religion, a culture, a civilization, a community, a religious

revival, a militant cult, an ideology…" (pp. 108-109). Therefore, in the post-9/11 context,

'Islam' in public discourse has become synonymous with an 'Otherness' affiliated with terror

and violence. This has become increasingly pronounced in the Canadian context with the

growing number of 'radicalized' Canadian Muslim youth going overseas to join ISIS. For

example, when questioned by a reporter concerning the recent anti-terror legislation, Bill C-51[2],

on January 30, 2015, Prime Minister Stephen Harper clearly associated the monitoring of

terrorist activities with mosques. When asked how this legislation would differentiate between

radicalized individuals and teenagers just messing around in a basement, Mr. Harper responded

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[2] This legislation broadens the mandate of Canadian security agencies and enhances their powers. Critics of the Act argue that the legislation gives Canadian security agencies too much power, as some aspects of it contravene the Canadian Charter of Rights.

that terrorism is a serious offence "no matter what the age of the person is, or whether they're in a basement, or whether they're in a mosque or somewhere else" (reported by Mastracci, 2015). In another recent incident, the Canadian Justice Minister, Peter McKay, claimed that an attempted Valentine's Day shooting spree in February 2015 was clearly *not* a terrorist activity, because the attempted plotters did not have any "cultural affiliations". Mr. McKay did not specify 'Muslim' cultures. However, he made specific reference to groups like ISIS when discussing how such an action could have been classified as an act of terrorism (Auld & Tutton, 2015). These perceptions of terrorism being a uniquely Muslim phenomenon have been influenced by and draw from a longer and enduring legacy, as I will demonstrate throughout the thesis.

Before discussing this research project in more detail, it would be pertinent to provide brief explanations of some key terms used. The 'post-9/11 context' refers to the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks in which the World Trade Centre in New York City and the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia, were attacked by Muslim terrorists. As mentioned earlier, these attacks fundamentally affected the experiences of Muslims in Western nations (Esposito, 2011; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2010; Razack, 2008; Salaita, 2006; Sheehi, 2011; Thobani; 2007). Therefore, it is a logical demarcation point to begin my inquiry on Islamophobia. As Chris Allen (2010) states, "9/11 and its aftermath … provides an unprecedented and quite unique perspective from which to try and contextualize, as well as better understand, manifestations of Islamophobia in a given setting" (p. 83).

The 'War on Terror' generally refers to military campaigns which began after the 9/11 terror attacks, thus including the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and shifts in both domestic and foreign policies in the US, Canada, and in Europe (Kundnani, 2014; Kumar, 2012; Razack, 2008; Sheehi, 2011). The War on Terror, in addition to being wars waged in the name of

countering Islamic terrorism in other countries, encompasses the domestic policies and legislations that have been used as mechanisms for policing Muslims locally. In using this term, I would like to clarify that I am critical of labeling these invasions, occupations, and policies as a war against 'terror' and feel the term is problematic. As will be demonstrated throughout the thesis, the War on Terror has complex political, social, historical and economic dimensions, which call into question its legitimacy as a war against terrorism. However, this is how these occupations, invasions, and policies have been described in public discourse and I will therefore refer to them using this term.

The term 'Other' also frequently occurs in the thesis. This signifies how individuals and groups have been constructed as divergent and deviant from what is considered 'normal'. 'Otherness' is "the condition or quality of being different or "other," particularly if the differences in question are strange, bizarre, or exotic" (Miller, 2008, p. 587). Often the concept of 'Other' is represented as a diametrically opposed 'self'. Hence, designating a group or individuals as 'Other' not only defines that group or individuals but also defines the 'self' as its antithesis. 'Other', as I have employed the term, is a conception designated by a hegemonic subject which mystifies and fetishizes an object (Said, 1979). In other words, 'Othering' involves an obscuring and demonization of the 'Other'. In this research project, 'Othering' is a process which constructs a subject outside the nationalist space. The nationalist space refers to a conception of the nation, which members from the majoritarian culture envision possessing spatial power over (Hage, 2000). Chapter Two of the thesis describes the 'Othering' of Muslims in North American societies in a general sense, examining how anti-Muslim racism has constructed Muslims as threatening and backwards. Chapter Three and five examine the 'Othering' of Muslims specific to Quebec society and Quebec secondary schools respectively.

Overview of the chapters

Chapter One will introduce and historicize the phenomenon of Islamophobia and provide a functional definition of the term as it will be employed throughout the rest of this study. Additionally, the chapter will contextualize my research project by briefly examining how anti-Muslim racism has been studied through various approaches and epistemological frameworks. This will help situate my study in relation to the existing scholarship. Drawing from critical race theorists, Chapter Two will discuss how Islamophobia in North America emerges in the social relations of race, gender, and class. This chapter will demonstrate how in the post-9/11 context, Islamophobia is mediated and manufactured through the War on Terror by these social relations. The overall purpose of Chapter Two is to theorize how and why Islamophobia manifests from the theoretical perspective that undergirds this study. This will help contextualize participants' comments and experiences discussed in later chapters. After completing my analysis of Islamophobia in the North American context, Chapter Three will look specifically at Quebec society, as my research examines Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools. Here, I will briefly examine Quebec's history including the cultural shift in the 1960s which redefined Quebecois identity. As I will show, these changes brought about a reinvigoration of linguistic and nationalist sentiments, which resulted in a turbulent relationship with the 'Other', the brunt of which, I will argue, has been borne by Muslims in the post-9/11 context. Ultimately, Chapter Three will demonstrate how Islamophobia in Quebec, though impacted and influenced by the meta-narrative of Islamophobia in the North American context, also emerges as a result of historical, political, and social influences specific to Quebec. In other words, Islamophobia in Quebec is a textured and multifaceted phenomenon interacting with a number of local and global influences. Chapter Four of the thesis will then outline the methodological approaches that I

employed to investigate Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools. Additionally, this chapter will discuss the types of participants, how they were recruited, and the interview process. Here I will also discuss my location as a researcher, how it has influenced my interpretations, and how I attempted to make this transparent throughout the research project. Chapter Five, the data analysis of my interviews, will examine the lived experiences of Muslims in secondary schools in the post-9/11 context. This chapter will focus on trying to identify trends in the participants' comments which relate to my analysis of Islamophobia in Chapters Two and Three. This chapter aims to shed light on the experiences of Muslims in Quebec secondary schools, to ascertain if Islamophobia exists in these schools, and, drawing from the works of Dorothy Smith (2005), determine the 'relations of ruling' which may have facilitated its existence. The chapter will draw from the experiences of current, former, female and male Muslim students, as well as Muslim and non-Muslim teacher participants to help paint a portrait of the lived realities of Muslims in Quebec secondary schools and their experiences with race and racism. Chapter Five will also discuss teachers' beliefs and perceptions about challenging anti-Muslim racism in Quebec secondary schools. The thesis will conclude with a summary of my findings as well as some personal reflections on its limitations, challenges, and the potential for further research, which resulted from this study.

Chapter One

Theorizing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim Racism

Introduction

This chapter aims to clarify the concept of Islamophobia as well as examine some of the theoretical and methodological approaches which have been employed in the study of anti-Muslim racism. Islamophobia has been explored through various approaches and theoretical traditions including cultural and media studies, critical discourse analysis, ethnographic studies, and critical theory to mention a few. In the post-9/11 context many of the discussions and analyses of Islamophobia have been rooted in critical race theory (Bilge, 2012; Razack, 2008, 2010, & 2014; Thobani, 2007 & 2010; Zine, 2009). The first half of this chapter will engage in a discussion about the phenomenon of Islamophobia. In providing a functional definition for such a complex phenomenon, this chapter will first engage in a historical analysis of anti-Muslim racism as well as discuss how it emerges in various Western contexts. Thereafter, this chapter will trace the history of the usage of the term 'Islamophobia' and provide a comprehensive definition that will be used throughout the rest of this study. The second half of the chapter will review how anti-Muslim racism has been studied from various theoretical approaches and traditions to help situate my study within this body of literature. This will include a brief discussion of critical race theory which is the theoretical perspective on which I will base my critique of anti-Muslim racism in this study. Though Chapter Two will discuss critical race theory in more detail and examine how and why anti-Muslim racism occurs, this chapter will introduce some of the basic principles of this body of scholarship, why I have adopted this perspective, and some of the contributions of critical race theory in the field of education.

Part one: Understanding anti-Muslim racism

Historicizing Islamophobia. Islamophobia is a relatively new term which draws its etymological roots from Europe in the 20th century. However, fear and mistrust towards Muslims and being perceived as a diametrically opposed 'Other' has much deeper and enduring roots in Europe. As Paul Weller (2001) has observed, "Islamophobia is undeniably rooted in the historical inheritance of a conflictual relationship that has developed over many centuries involving the overlap of religion, politics and warfare" (p. 8). Western perceptions of Muslims and Islam began to form as early as the 7th century, when the Islamic faith began to make inroads into the Eastern Roman/Byzantine Empire, in the decades soon after the birth of Islam. As Muslim armies conquered vast territories and key cultural sites of the Byzantine Empire including Egypt, Damascus, and the venerated holy city of Jerusalem, Islam was perceived as a threat, particularly by the Church in Western Europe. Europe, in large part due to the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, saw Islam as a

> three-pronged challenge to its stronghold and wellbeing. First, Islam was both a religious
> and social ideology, one perceived to be able to challenge Europe's relative stability.
> Second, it was a proselytic religion, one that had the ability to challenge the ascendency
> of the Roman Church as well as the expansion of Christianity and third…not only might
> it be argued theologically that it had superseded Christianity, but through conversion and
> any social foothold gained within Europe's borders, so it might have had the potential to
> confine Christianity to the spiritual, theological and social wildernesses" (Allen, 2010, p.
> 26).

Muslim armies managed to make advances within some Western European territories, including the Iberian Peninsula and parts of Southern France. However, for the most part Islam was known to Europe in the absence of a physical presence. Eventually, by the turn of the 11th century the

perceptions of this threatening 'Other' would be used as a tool to gain political authority and ascendency by the Catholic Church through the Crusades. Referring to the Crusades, John Esposito (1999) observes that, "for the Pope, the call to the defense of the faith and Jerusalem provided an ideal opportunity to gain recognition for papal authority and its role in legitimating temporal rulers, and to reunite the Eastern (Greek) and Western (Latin) Churches" (p. 39). Hence, as Deepa Kumar (2012) notes, religion provided an ideological justification to advance social, economic, and political agendas.

The Crusades, a call to arms by Pope Urban II that led to the fall of Jerusalem from Muslim hands in 1099, was propagated as a militaristic pilgrimage to reconquer and liberate the holy lands of Jerusalem from the perceived heathens of Islam. Christians who returned to Europe from the Crusades told tales of idolatrous pagans possessing extravagant wealth and luxuries living sensual and lecherous lifestyles. These stories of the near East fueled misconceptions in European societies and fomented a narrative which justified a civilizing project in light of shifting power dynamics between Europe and the Orient. As Allen (2010) observes, these perceptions "opened the way for the Occident to begin to identify what was seen as the need to begin 'civilizing' the Orient: something that many have suggested found credence and gained fruition through colonial expansion in the following few hundred years" (p. 30). Thus began another chapter in Europe's interaction with the Orient—colonialism. Though colonialism was not exclusive to Muslim-majority lands, due to Europe's historical interactions with Muslims it took on a unique form of expression. As Akbar Ahmed (1999) notes, colonial powers perceived Islam as "a civilization doomed to barbarism and backwardness forever," (p. 60). Thus, the colonization of Muslim-majority lands was construed as being an act of magnanimity as they were civilizing the antithetical 'Other'. It is clear that anti-Muslim perceptions have been deeply

rooted in the European context. However the question arises how the phenomenon of

Islamophobia manifests itself in North American societies. As Dilwar Hussain (2004) notes,

Islamophobia is a phenomenon painted by the brushes of varying historical contexts and thus

should be understood as 'Islamophobias' that may be linked but not necessarily an extension of

one another.

Islamophobic trends in Europe and North America. Bearing in mind Hussain's (2004)

idea, nonetheless when examining biases and negative views and perceptions of Muslims and

Islam, a number of similarities emerge within the North American and European contexts. The

reason for briefly examining how Islamophobia manifests similarly in varying Western nations is

to demonstrate that anti-Muslim racism falls within a meta-narrative, in which there are general

trends that transcend local contexts. Many of these commonalities exist as an outgrowth of the

9/11 attacks within the context of the global War on Terror (Kumar, 2012; Sheehi, 2011). The

most glaring of these similarities occurs in the way Muslims have been represented in the media,

more specifically the narratives that are produced in news media. Muslims have been repeatedly

presented as violent, misogynistic, and inclined towards terrorism. Besides the recent

controversy in the case of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, one such example would

include the publication of the Prophet Muhammad cartoons by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands

Posten.* These cartoons presented a series of derogatory and inflammatory images of the Prophet

Muhammad. Prior to their publication it was obvious that such images would infuriate a

substantial number of Muslims worldwide. The images were printed by the paper which argued

that the discontent of a segment of society should not trump the principles of freedom of

expression. Yet, in 2003 the same paper rejected the printing of similar cartoons depicting Jesus,

as the editor at the time believed it may cause offence and provoke public outcry (Allen, 2010).

The Danish cartoons inspired similar reproductions in other European countries including France (Allen, 2010). Similarly, in the North American context, Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg have documented a series of caricatures insulting and negatively depicting Muslims and central figures in Islam as early as the Suez Crisis in the 1950s to the present War on Terror (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008).

Other examples of tensions exacerbated through the media in both Europe and North America include the negative focus on the construction of Islamic buildings and structures. In 2009 Switzerland held a referendum to ban the construction of minarets on mosques. Media coverage of this issue included inflammatory rhetoric from the political Right arguing that the minarets were a symbol of the impending Islamization of Switzerland, despite the fact that there were only four minarets in the country at the time of the referendum (Lean, 2012). Similar points of contention arose from the political Right and right-wing media outlets in the US during the opposition to the construction of the 'Ground Zero Mosque' in New York City in 2010 (Kumar, 2012). Another similarity can be seen in the types of fears and tensions towards local Muslim populations that have arisen from the ongoing War on Terror. Both Europe and North America have fostered increased anxieties towards its Muslim inhabitants and Islam in light of terrorist attacks and terror plots. In North America there has been the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing al-Qaeda inspired attempted terror plots of the Times Square Bomber and the Underwear Bomber. Similarly, Europe has experienced the July 7, 2005, suicide bombings which targeted civilians taking public transportation in central London, as well as other attempted terror plots involving Muslims.

Class-based discrimination has also targeted European and North American Muslims. Cesari (2011) observes that Muslims in European societies are mostly immigrants and are

socioeconomically marginalized, as the immigrant unemployment rates are twice that of natives.

This has brought about many instances of class-based discrimination for European Muslims

(Cesari, 2011). Similarly, Junaid Rana (2011) has documented how the War on Terror has

brought about the policing of immigrant Muslims in North American societies, which have

selectively applied laws against working-class Muslim immigrants. Another similarity between

anti-Muslim racism in North American societies and European contexts is that anti-Muslim

sentiment often arises from apprehensions towards cultural erosion. As Nathan Lean (2012)

mentions, "[a]nti-Muslim sentiment [is] not just a feeling among certain segments of the

population. It [is] state-sponsored praxis that aim[s]…to reinstate the heyday of white Christian

Europe" (p. 171). Preservationist discourses of white Christian Europe have been exacerbated by

the ascension of the political Right. Allen contends that "[a]s a consequence of the pressure

applied on Europe by such issues as terrorism, immigration and the widening of the EU's

boundaries, there has been a growing incidence of right-wing and nationalistic rhetoric and

discourse" (p. 114). Much of this right-wing rhetoric has fueled fears of the impending

Islamization of Europe (Liogier, 2012). Islamization is an ideology which asserts that Muslim

populations are threatening to numerically and culturally submerge all of Europe. Despite the

lack of substantive evidence of a "Muslim demographic boom", this ideology has gained

popularity in the public sphere and has been widely expressed by politicians, popular authors and

media pundits (Liogier, 2012). Similar fears of cultural erosion permeate a number of North

American contexts, particularly in several Canadian provinces (Bilge, 2013; Haque, 2012;

Thobani, 2007). As will be seen in Chapter Three of this study, much of the anti-Muslim racism

and the existence of Islamophobia in Quebec revolves around fears of Muslims fomenting the

cultural erosion of the French white Quebecois majority. Having analyzed some of the historical

causes and ideologies which have fostered and promoted anti-Muslim sentiments, and briefly

viewing similarities in anti-Muslim racism in Europe and North America, I will now define how

'Islamophobia' as a concept and phenomenon will be understood throughout the rest of this

inquiry.

       Origins of the term. To better understand the phenomenon of Islamophobia and thus be

able to use an operational definition for it in this study, let us first look at the term's origins.

According to Allen (2010), the earliest found usage of the term 'Islamophobia' can be traced

back to France in 1925 by authors Etienne Dinet and Slima Ben Ibrahim where they wrote 'accès

de délire Islamophobe' ('Islamophobic delirium'), referring to Western perceptions of Muslims.

In another instance Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner (2003) claimed that the term was

used during the Iranian revolution by religious conservatives to describe Muslim women who

refused to wear the *hijab*. However, neither of the instances described above describe how it has

come into usage in contemporary times. Arguably the most influential work from which the term

'Islamophobia' acquired the greatest currency and usage that relates to current understandings

arose from a report entitled *Islamophobia: a challenge for us all* by the Runnymede Trust in

1997 (Cesari, 2011, Esposito, 2011, Lean, 2012). The Runnymede Trust is a British think tank

that was created in 1968 to challenge racism, to help influence anti-racist legislation, and to

promote a cohesive multi-ethnic Britain (Runnymede Trust, 2007). The report described

Islamophobia as the "shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam—and therefore, to

fear or dislike of all or most Muslims" (Runnymede Trust, 1997, p. 1). The report argued that

Islamophobia produced 'closed views' of Islam, which could be understood as viewing Islam

monolithically, and as an ideological adversary which needed combating and disciplining

(Lewis, 1997).

The Runnymede Trust report was greeted with mixed reactions. There was both praise and criticism from Muslim and non-Muslim groups and organizations. One critique suggested that in the process of condemning biases and racism towards Muslims, the report simultaneously reproduced derogatory narratives of Muslims by consistently linking Muslims with terrorism. Another criticism of the report was that it often conflated racism specifically directed towards ethnic groups with prejudices against Muslims and Islam in general. Despite some of its shortcomings, Allen (2010) argues that the report and its model of Islamophobia laid the foundations for the most common and widespread definitions and conceptualizations about Islamophobia.

Defining Islamophobia. A number of academics and intellectuals have attempted to define Islamophobia, referring to it as intolerance towards Muslims' religious and cultural beliefs (Esposito & Mogahed, 2007). Some have argued, however, that the term "Islamophobia" is somewhat problematic in and of itself as it is latent with the assumption that negative views towards Islam and Muslims arise from psychological traumas synonymous with other phobias such as agoraphobia and arachnophobia rather than arising from social anxieties towards a distant 'Other' (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008). As such, the term 'Islamophobia' may be imprecisely used to describe a "diverse phenomenon, ranging from xenophobia to antiterrorism…[grouping] together all kinds of different forms of discourse, speech, and acts by suggesting that they all emanate from an identical ideological core, which is an irrational fear (a phobia) of Islam" (Cesari, 2011, p. 21). Some theorists have broadened the ideas implicit in the term Islamophobia to include "the practice of prejudice against Islam and the demonization and dehumanization of Muslims…generally manifested in negative attitudes, discrimination, physical harassment and vilification in the media" (Mohideen & Mohideen, 2008, p. 73). These

definitions, though useful in many respects, fall short of a comprehensive understanding of the

phenomenon of Islamophobia.

Defining such a term can pose a number of challenges. If an overly broad definition is

employed, then instances of anti-Muslim racism could escape censure because ultimately the

term becomes meaningless and does not describe a phenomenon that can tangibly be grasped or

observed. Conversely, if an overly simplistic definition is used, then inadequate solutions lacking

the depth and complexity required in addressing anti-Muslim racism will abound. That being

said, I am drawn to the following comprehensive definition by Allen (2010) for use throughout

this study:

> Islamophobia is an ideology, similar in theory, function and purpose to racism and other
>
> similar phenomena, that sustains and perpetuates negatively evaluated meaning about
>
> Muslims and Islam in the contemporary setting in similar ways to that which it has
>
> historically…that inform and construct thinking about Muslims and Islam as Other.
>
> Neither restricted to explicit nor direct relationships of power and domination but instead,
>
> and possibly even more importantly, in the less explicit and everyday relationships of
>
> power that we contemporarily encounter, identified both in that which is real and that
>
> which is clearly not" (p.190).

The above definition recognizes the historical roots of Islamophobia predating the 20th century

and explains that it is a phenomenon which has been influenced over the centuries by various

strains of thought and ideologies that viewed Muslims and the Orient as the 'Other'. This

definition also acknowledges the varying spheres in which Islamophobia exists (i.e. social,

economic, and political) and that these views result from both explicit and implicit power

relations. Explicit power relations include enacting discriminatory political policies and

legislation, as well as biased media discourses, while implicit power relations entail encounters with the non-Muslim majority attempting to maintain cultural dominance. Islamophobia is therefore an ideology, as it is a product of unequal power relations. Additionally, couched in this definition is the notion that Islamophobic messages, ideas, and actions can at times be subtle. Hence, although terms such as 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' may not be explicitly used, there may be implied meanings within messages, ideas, and actions that discriminate against Muslims. Many of the participants interviewed in this research project have described Islamophobia occurring in subtle and implicit forms, as will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Part two: Theoretical approaches to the study of anti-Muslim racism

This section will examine how scholars from various perspectives and theoretical traditions have examined anti-Muslim racism. In addition to explicating these theoretical traditions, I will explore some studies from these perspectives to illustrate the approaches and methodological tools that scholars from these traditions employ in their study of anti-Muslim racism, which have helped inform my study. In this section I will discuss post-colonial theory and critiques of Orientalism, critical theory, critical discourse analysis, critical pedagogy and media literacy, as well as critical race theory.

Post-colonial theory and critiques of Orientalism. Post-colonial theory is a collection of theoretical approaches that examine the impact of colonialism within a social, economic, and political system. This approach "focuses on the ways particular groups of people because of notions of race or ethnicity have been excluded, marginalized, and represented in ways that devalued or even dehumanized them" (Sherry, 2008, p. 650). Postcolonial theorists have examined the impacts of colonialism on both the colonized and colonizers, who have benefited from the violence and promotion of racist ideology resulting from colonization (Sherry, 2008).

One of the foundational works in post-colonial theory, which has examined anti-Muslim racism, was Edward Said's (1979) *Orientalism.* This work was a critique of Orientalism, and has informed many of the current day critiques of anti-Muslim racism (Kumar, 2012; Shaheen, 2008; Sheehi, 2011). According to Said (1979), Orientalism is "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the "Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident"" (p. 2). Said noted the presence of Orientalist thought in the works of European scholars, artists and academics throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Through analyzing canonical European literary works from this era, Said (1979) noted the existence of misrepresentations, over-simplifications and binaries which constructed the West as being diametrically opposed to the East. Said (1979) argued that Orientalists viewed the East or the "Orient" as being overly sensual, primitive, and violently opposed to the West. According to Said (1979), these views of the Orient perpetuated a constant ensemble of images and stereotypes that completely ignored the diversity across the Orient.

Said (1979) contended that Orientalism was a tool that was used by Western academics, scholars, and artists to assert dominance over the East. As Said (1979) stated,

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism [is] a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (p. 3).

The ideas of control and domination discussed by Said in *Orientalism* originated from the history that European nations have had in dominating Arab and Muslim-majority nations throughout the period of imperialism in the 16th and 17th centuries. In another one of his works, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993)*,* Said discussed how the practices of imperialism persisted throughout the

post-colonial era. Said (1993) noted, "In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism…lingers where it has always been in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices"(p. 9). This mindset of superiority is believed by Said to have laid the foundations for Orientalist thought throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and which in turn constructed the "Orient" as inferior and subordinate to Europe.

There have been a number of critiques in response to Said's ideas, most notably from the historian Bernard Lewis, whom Said had labelled as a key Orientalist scholar. One of Lewis's contentions was that Orientalism developed independently of the European imperial project, as the French and English both studied Islam prior to the period of imperialism in the 16th and 17th centuries. As such, Lewis contended that Orientalism did not advance the cause of imperialism (Lewis, 1993). However, as Said (1979) observes in *Orientalism* "[t]o say simply that Orientalism was a rationalization of colonial rule is to ignore the extent to which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact." (p. 39). In other words, Said acknowledged that there were European scholars studying Islam prior to the period of imperialism, and it was precisely the attitudes developed by these earlier scholars which created a theoretical pretext for an imperial project. Another critique of Said's work was that within his analysis of selected canonized Western texts, he reproduces the same essentializing discourse which his work sought to undermine, by portraying Western scholarship as homogeneous. In other words, some charge that Said used the same broad brush when describing those whom he was criticizing by not engaging with critical and dissenting views within European scholarship (Ahmad, 1992). Aijaz Ahmad (1992) further argued that by examining instances of Orientalist thought prior to European colonialism, Said's work was unclear as to whether Orientalism was a by-product of colonialism or whether colonialism came about through Orientalist thought.

Said's work, though predating a number of other studies examining anti-Muslim racism continues to be foundational. As Kumar (2012) notes, a number of lingering Orientalist myths continue to endure in dominant Western discourse about Islam. These include the notion that Islam is a monolithic religion that perpetuates gender-based discrimination, that Muslims are incapable of reason and rationality or democracy and self-rule, and that Islam is an inherently violent religion (Kumar, 2012). Building from the insights of this scholarship, which argues the homogenization of Muslim cultures, I contend that Orientalism has influenced our present day understanding of Islamophobia. However; Islamophobia is distinct from Orientalism and the two should not be conflated or understood to be the same.

Critical theory. One broad theoretical framework that has been used to examine anti-Muslim racism is critical theory. Critical theory is a foundational body of theory which has influenced a number of methodological and theoretical approaches, such as critical ethnography, critical discourse analysis, critical pedagogy, and critical race theory. It is a theoretical framework which has been used to examine social action, politics, class relations, as well as other spheres of human activity. Central to critical theory is critique which involves "examination of both action and motivation…In application it is the use of dialectic, reason, and ethics as a means to study the conditions under which people live" (Budd, 2008, p. 175). Critical theory developed in the 1930s in Germany through the works of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse, who built on Karl Marx's critiques of capitalism. Thus, a starting point of analysis in critical theory often relates to political power relations and class. Scholars who employ critical theory often engage in historical analysis. Historical analysis in critical theory goes beyond simply explaining events, but rather uses the examination of history to understand the current state of affairs (Budd, 2008). For example, if one were to examine the

social conditions of people living in a formally colonized nation, critical theorists would employ historical analysis to help explain how the perceptions, structures, and institutions, developed in the past, continue to influence the present.

Critical theory grounds its analysis on examining the impact of ideologies in lived human experience. Hence, this perspective assumes that ideology impacts and shapes the relationship between individuals and groups interacting with one another (Budd, 2008). In earlier phases of this theoretical framework much of the critique revolved around capitalism as a dominant economic ideology. In later stages these critiques were broadened and examined other ideologies relating to race, gender, and class. Through its critique of ideologies, critical theory analyzes the existing conditions of people and the possibility of liberation from oppressive conditions and structures. A number of studies that draw from this theoretical tradition employ critical ethnography when exploring anti-Muslim racism (Collet, 2007; Schlein & Chan, 2010), as will be discussed in Chapter Four. The following sections will examine theoretical approaches and traditions which have been influenced by critical theory and how they have been employed to examine anti-Muslim racism.

Critical discourse analysis. In the post-9/11 context critical discourse analysis (CDA) has been frequently employed to explore anti-Muslim racism in Western nations (Byng, 2010; Giardina, 2010; Kellner, 2004). CDA is a theoretical approach which originated within the discipline of linguistics, and studies the role of language in society (Weninger, 2008). Current forms of CDA have been strongly influenced by critical theory (Threadgold, 2003). There are different theoretical strands within CDA. Some approaches to CDA place emphasis on the layered nature of social existence. From this perspective social life is organized around a three-tier system: social events (micro level), social structures (macro level), and social practices

(meso level) (Fairclough, 1995 & 2003). Discourse is understood through its interaction with the various tiers of social existence and should be "analyzed in conjunction with other social elements of events and practices such as material surroundings and participants and their social relationships" (Weninger, 2008, p. 146). Hence, discourse is produced, interacts, and is mediated through social structures.

The study of anti-Muslim racism through CDA often occurs through another approach which places emphasis on "the role of cognition in maintaining oppressive social practices and reproducing ideologies" (Weninger, 2008, p. 146). In other words, this approach views oppressive practices as rooted in social norms within society, which influences discourse. Scholars from this perspective argue that "language use, discourse and communication should be studied in their social, cultural and political contexts" (van Dijk, 1994, p. 435). Hence, there is an emphasis on contextualizing discourse from this perspective. This entails focusing on issues relating to race, gender, class inequality, social power, power abuse, and how they are sustained and legitimized through text (van Dijk, 1994). With regards to studying anti-Muslim racism, CDA often informs studies of media. This occurs through analyzing media texts, such as film and news media (Karim, 2000; Kellner, 2004; Shaheen, 2001 & 2008). The study of anti-Muslim racism through CDA emphasizes that conflicts surrounding Muslim-majority nations are decontextualized and presented in a vacuum in the media. Hence, discussions revolving around geopolitics, colonization, decolonization, and imperialism are not involved in understanding these conflicts. Some CDA scholars are critically concerned with the media coverage of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the ensuing War on Terror.

One study by Douglas Kellner (2004), for example, argues that the US media was rife with irrationality, prejudice and loaded terminology after 9/11. Kellner draws such conclusions

through analyzing media texts relating to news coverage of the 9/11 attacks. He states, "broadcast television allowed dangerous and arguably deranged zealots to vent and circulate the most aggressive, fanatic, and downright lunatic views, creating a consensus for the need for immediate military action and all-out war" (p. 30). Here, Kellner refers to the emotionally charged responses by pundits and political analysts circulated in the media in the aftermath of these events. These views lacked any intelligible articulation of the "complexity of U.S. history in the Middle East, accounts of the origins of bin Laden and his network…[and] the complicity of the United States in training, funding, arming, and supporting the groups that became Islamic fundamentalist terrorists" (p. 30). Kellner's analysis, in addition to examining the language in news media related to the 9/11 attacks, includes a historical geopolitical analysis attempting to explain the root causes of the attacks. Through examining the US government's involvement in funding and training Afghan militants during the Cold War resistance to Soviet occupation, Kellner believes that the 9/11 attacks were an instance of "blowback". Blowback refers to the local unintended violent consequences of US foreign policies. Kellner, like other scholars who employ CDA when examining anti-Muslim racism (Byng, 2010; Giardina; 2010; Saghaye-Biria, 2012), analyzes media texts combined with geopolitical historical analysis to demonstrate how misinformation is disseminated to the public by only describing *what* is occurring, as opposed to explaining *why* it is happening.

Other examples of CDA involving anti-Muslim racism have looked at how the media facilitates and enables notions of Muslims being incompatible with the West. Michelle Byng (2010) has examined how Muslim veiling was constructed and understood in US media in light of France's *hijab* ban and debates over the *niqab* which had surfaced in Britain. The *hijab* refers to a head veil worn by many Muslim women. It often takes the form of a scarf, which covers a

woman's head, hair, and ears but leaves the face exposed. The *niqab* is a face cover that is worn in addition to the *hijab* by a minority of Muslim women who tend to adhere to more conservative interpretations of Islam. The *niqab* covers the nose, mouth, and chin, however leaves the eyes uncovered. This differs from the *burqa*, which is an enveloping garment worn from the head to toes and has a netted or transparent piece of cloth over the eyes. Byng's study examined articles from the New York Times and Washington Post from 2004-2006. Her findings suggested that despite there being fewer debates over issues relating to *hijab* and the *niqab* in the US, both papers "represented veiling in the USA similarly: through the lenses of the assimilation/integration of Muslims and concerns about the possibility that veiling was a tangential indicator of radicalism that could lead to terrorism" (Byng, 2010, p. 112). In other words, the veil was a signifier of difference, and potentially indicative of violence against the West. These associations of violence with religious signifiers is important for understanding how Muslims, particularly Muslim women, have experienced racism in the post-9/11 context, which will be further elaborated on in Chapter Five. As knowledge and reality from this perspective are socially constructed, the perpetuation of media biases against Muslims is problematic, as this constructs Muslims as a threatening 'Other' in the Western consciousness.

Byng, like Kellner, attempts to link these negative media depictions to politics. As Byng (2010) observes, "the ideology and hegemony of the West were supported by newspaper stories where representations of hijab and niqab were refracted through the prisms of the national identities of Western nations…and their efforts to combat Islamic terrorism" (p. 114). Byng's approach emphasizes how constructing the image of a threatening 'Other' through these media representations ultimately serves hegemonic goals by helping to manufacture public support and consent for the imperialist War on Terror. This was accomplished by examining the language

used in media texts with regards to Muslim women and veiling. As language surrounding the

practice of veiling was couched with sympathies and inclinations towards violence and terror, it

created the perception of a threatening 'Other', which required policing through the War on

Terror. It is clear from the discussion of the aforementioned studies that these approaches to

CDA, when examining anti-Muslim racism, combines textual analysis of news media with

geopolitical analysis. This approach links media representations to politics and notions of

hegemony and imperialism.

   Critical pedagogy and media literacy. Critical pedagogy is another approach for

studying anti-Muslim racism which has gained popularity, particularly within educational

scholarship. Critical pedagogy is a philosophy of education rooted in critical theory and is often

attributed to Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997).

This approach to education aims to liberate students through raising consciousness and

awareness of freedom and authoritarianism. Postmodernist, Marxist, anti-racist, feminist, queer,

and postcolonial theories have influenced and helped to elaborate Freire's conception of critical

pedagogy. The assumptions rooted in this framework stem from notions in class conflict in

which attempts are made to "eliminate inequalities on the basis of social class" (Mclaren, 1997).

The central questions surrounding critical pedagogy are how to "help students, particularly from

the oppressed classes, recognize that the dominant school culture is not neutral and does not

generally serve their needs…we need to ask how it is that the dominant culture functions to make

them…feel powerless" (Giroux, 1988, p. 7). Critical pedagogy often emerges within classroom

settings through constructivist approaches to teaching and learning (Mclaren, 1997). This implies

that knowledge is socially constructed and the construction of knowledge is a reciprocal process

between the teacher and students.

As 9/11 and the ensuing War on Terror fundamentally affected the lives of Muslims in European and North American nations (Esposito, 2011, & 2008; Salaita, 2006; Sheehi, 2011), critical pedagogy has become a tool to challenge anti-Muslim narratives in educational settings in the West. This has been accomplished by questioning the assumptions on which knowledge of Muslims has been constructed in Western discourse. Often this occurs through analyzing media texts and their assumed impact on Muslims in educational settings (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2004; Kincheloe, Steinberg, & Stonebanks, 2010). Critical pedagogues have emphasized the impact that media can have in constructing knowledge of the 'Other' through cultural pedagogy. Cultural pedagogy is the "construction, presentation, and engagement of various forms of images, text, talk, and action which results in the production of meaning…" (Giroux, 1992, p. ix). In other words, it is the production of meaning through culture. This perspective has employed CDA when examining anti-Muslim racism. However, it differs from traditional CDA as it links media analysis to how Muslims may be perceived within educational settings. This occurs when stereotypes of Muslims are perpetuated in various forms of media that students are exposed to. If students are inundated with negative representations of Muslims through media, there is a possibility that their knowledge of Muslims will be partially constructed through these representations (Kincheloe, 2004; Steinberg, 2004, & 2010). Thus, informal sites of learning, such as popular cultural media, can influence perceptions within formal educational settings. This can occur through negative and racist depictions of Muslims in films (Steinberg, 2010), children's cartoons (Sensoy, 2010), as well as comic books (Dar, 2010). Critical pedagogy aims to re-educate people about Muslims through critically analyzing media to become conscious of biases and misrepresentations of Muslims in the media. The process of questioning dominant discourses in the media comes about through media literacy.

Media literacy is an inquiry-based pedagogical tool which questions assumptions, messages, and consequences of a given form of media. Media literacy is not exclusive to the domain of critical pedagogy; however, much of the literature dealing with anti-Muslim racism from this perspective emphasizes this pedagogical approach (Abukhattala, 2004; Kincheloe, 2004; Steinberg, 2004 & 2010; Stonebanks, 2010). There are a number of approaches to engage in the process of media literacy. These include: analyzing a piece of media and questioning the presence of some messages and the absence of others embedded in the text; observing the colours, editing, and appearances of people in the media; comparing media portrayals in one's surroundings to reality; and questioning who produced the given media text (MEF, 2005). Much of the research examining racism against Muslims from a critical pedagogical perspective assume that negative media representations have a direct impact on Muslim experiences in educational settings. My study differs in that it seeks to hear the perspectives of Muslims in educational settings to see if *they* believe that media has impacted their lived experiences in educational settings. One of the critiques of traditional forms of critical pedagogy is that it examines inequality within educational curricula through capitalistic reproductions of class structures. As noted by Eric Margolis and Mary Romero (1996), "[p]erhaps due to the influence of Marxism on critical pedagogy, most research…has focused on the public education system and on capitalism's reproduction of class stratification rather than on gender, race, or other forms of inequality" (p. 3). This differs from critical race theory, in which race is central to its analysis of inequality.

Critical race theory. Critical race theory has been historically understood to have developed as a subdivision of critical legal studies (CLS) on the basis of racialized social and economic oppression. CLS argues that "the reasoning and logic of the law [is] in fact based on

arbitrary categorizations and decisions that both reflect[] and advance[] established power relationships in society by covering injustices with a mask of legitimacy" (Taylor, 2009, p. 2). In other words, CLS advocates that the law is a power-inscribed tool that serves the interests of some in society while perpetuating injustices towards others under the guise of being fair. One of the shortcomings of their critiques has been the failure to acknowledge the pervasiveness of racism within the legal system. Hence, critical race theory developed because of these deficiencies (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Critical race theory arose in part because of a perceived failure in the strategies employed during the civil rights movement, as influential critical race theorists "argued that the traditional approaches of filing *amicus* briefs, conducting protests and marches, and appealing to the moral sensibilities of decent citizens produced smaller and fewer gains than in previous times" (Delgado, 1995, p. xiii). Key legal scholars that influenced the field of critical race theory in its formative years include Derrick Bell, Allen Freeman, Charles Lawrence, Richard Delgado, Lani Guinier, and Kimberle Crenshaw. Critical race theory at its foundation has two primary interests. The first is to understand how the regime of white supremacy as well as its subordination of peoples of colour came into being and has been able to persist in society. The second is understanding the relationship between law and racial power and working towards changing the status quo (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). Within this paradigm race is not perceived as biological, but rather as socially constructed. That is to say that, "[in] CRT scholarship, the terms "White" and "Black" are not meant to signal individual or even group identity. Rather, they indicate a particular political and legal structure rooted in the ideology of White European supremacy and the global impact of colonialism" (Taylor, 2009, p. 4). Critical race theory is a theoretical approach in which race and racism is a starting point for analysis.

From this perspective, "racism is defined as a structure embedded in society that systematically advantages Whites and disadvantages people of color" (Sherry Marx, 2008, p. 163). Critical race theorists believe that racism is ingrained in society. It is considered a 'normal' condition and not something anomalous. Although critical race theory originated in the US, it is increasingly being explored in various countries from different perspectives seeking to understand racial inequalities in the fields of law, education, and other dimensions of society (Marx, 2008). The overall goal of critical race theory is to dismantle systemic inequalities in society through problematizing and focusing on dominant ideologies associated with race (Marx, 2008).

This approach to examining anti-Muslim racism focuses on how Muslims have been understood as 'Other' by virtue of inherent qualities, thus needing to be policed or expelled from the nationalist space. Jasmin Zine (2009) has employed a critical race theory approach in her study of gender, race, and Muslim cultural politics. Zine's study examined events in Ontario and Quebec which received widespread national attention and media coverage. According to Zine, these events put the Canadian Muslim community in the spotlight and constructed them as 'Other'. Her study looked at the *sharia* tribunal debates, a case of an honour killing of a Canadian Pakistani teen, and an anti-immigration citizen code from Hérouxville, a small Quebec municipality. Zine's approach to examining anti-Muslim racism involved analyzing historical events to uncover the taken-for-granted assumptions of Muslim 'Otherness' pervading discourses surrounding these events. This approach is typical of examining anti-Muslim racism from a critical race theory perspective (Bilge, 2010; Razack, 2008; Thobani, 2007). The underlying assumption present in these discourses was the incompatibility of Muslims within the national imaginary. Zine (2009) notes that, "Muslims are codified and reproduced in the apparatuses of the state and through the relations of ruling…Increasingly positioned as anti-liberal,

antidemocratic and unamenable to the requirements of modernity, Muslims represent the 'anti-citizen'" (p. 148). Consequently, Muslims in Canada and within Western nations in general, have been cast into a position of 'subaltern citizens'. In dialogue with Gramsci's use of the term, 'subaltern' denotes social groups who have been politically and socially marginalized by dominant social structures. It is a term frequently used in post-colonial theory describing how women from the third world have been represented and silenced in Western discourse (Spivak, 1988). Zine's use of the term entails racist state policies, new citizenship regimes, and racial and religious profiling, which are an outgrowth of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

A recurring theme in studies that employ critical race theory when examining anti-Muslim racism is making connections between racist discourses concerning Muslims with the enactment of racist policies and legislations which target them. Often this is accomplished by theorizing why and how these attitudes have emerged. Zine's examination of anti-Muslim racism reveals how Muslim women have been constructed in the Canadian imaginary as 'subaltern citizens'. By putting forward this assertion she attempts to clarify why Muslims have experienced racist attitudes and how they manifest. Zine's theorizing of anti-Muslim racism explains how certain actions when committed by Muslims are labeled one way, while not designated as such when committed by members of the majoritarian culture. Hence, the racism which is being experienced by Muslims remains undetected and unacknowledged by members of the non-Muslim majority.

For example, Zine (2009) theorizes and examines tropes surrounding public discourse to understand how anti-Muslim racism and attitudes in the Canadian context are unnoticed. The first trope Zine draws attention to is that of "disciplining culture". Disciplining culture comprises the "disciplinary technologies used to produce and reproduce the nation as a hegemonic cultural

entity" (p. 152). In other words, it entails approaches for reifying the superiority of some cultures and the inferiority of others. This appeared in the *sharia* tribunal debates, when there was public outcry against members of the Muslim community opting for faith-based mediation, which has been permitted in Ontario since 1991 (Service Ontario, 2009). The faith-based tribunals were a means through which faith communities were permitted to resolve civil disputes over divorce, child custody, and inheritance. Other faith groups in Ontario, including Jews, Indigenous Peoples, and Christians were able to opt for these tribunals to resolve conflicts within their communities. However, when there was talk of Muslims using these tribunals there was public outcry over lapidation, flogging, chopping off limbs, and other tropes that were conjured up from the buzz word '*sharia'* (Zine, 2009). Most of these narratives centred on protecting oppressed women from violent Muslim men. Ultimately, faith-based arbitration was discontinued in Ontario (Zine, 2009).

The second trope, "death by culture", as explicated by Zine (2009) is when "cultural differences in relation to gender…unsettle the multicultural nation" (p. 154). This trope was explained through the story of Aqsa Parvez, a sixteen-year-old teenager, who was the daughter of Pakistani immigrants. Aqsa was murdered by her father over a growing disparity between their cultural norms and her growing desire for autonomy. Media reports suggested that Aqsa was being coerced to wear the *hijab* by her father and consequently it was her 'culture', or her father's interpretations of cultural norms, that brought about her untimely death. Zine concludes her analysis by looking at the trope of "death of culture", which is a form of cultural gate-keeping, aimed at keeping the nationalist space free of contamination by the 'Other'. Zine goes about her analysis of anti-Muslim racism by drawing from the anti-immigration code of conduct produced by the municipality of Hérouxville. This charter, as will be discussed in Chapter Four,

aimed at preserving supposedly 'true Quebecois' values and culture by delineating norms that immigrants must adhere to when immigrating to the municipality. The assumptions underlying this code of conduct were that immigrants, particularly Muslim ones, were a threatening force that would erode and eventually bring about the death of Quebecois culture. As Zine's study employed critical race theory, her examination of these events revealed systematic racism pervasive in society that positioned Muslims as a threatening 'Other'. This study provided useful insights for my own research as it described how and why anti-Muslim racism manifests. Racist treatment towards Muslims in society does not exclusively occur through violence or physical harassment. Rather, it also occurs in the realm of perceptions and how Muslims are understood to be inherently different, backwards, and a corrupting element which erodes traditional Western cultures.

Some critiques of critical race theory argue that this theoretical approach emphasizes racialized politics of identity and representation while ignoring the impact of capitalist accumulation in the context of globalization and class divisions in racialized communities (McLaren, 1998). However, contemporary approaches to critical race theory have synthesized race, gender, and class relations when examining inequalities in societal structures including educational institutions (Parker & Stovall, 2004), as will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

Developing a deeper understanding of critical race theory

Having explored various theoretical frameworks which have been employed to study anti-Muslim racism in North American societies, I have decided to use a critical race theory perspective. A major part of the framework which undergirds this study stems from critical race feminist scholarship. I turn now to discuss some of the foundational principles of this body of

theory to further clarify my position and understanding of this approach to examining anti-Muslim racism.

There are a number of fundamental concepts which inform this theoretical perspective which include: *racism being embedded in society, racism being a persistent feature of society, critiques of liberalism, the notion of interest convergence, property rights in whiteness, storytelling, and the overall goal of dismantling racism*. Critical race theory argues that because *racism is embedded in society* it appears normal to those in positions of power and privilege and it is not perceived as something that is abnormal or aberrant. Those occupying positions of power and privilege are white. As Taylor (2009) mentions, "The assumptions of White superiority are so ingrained in political, legal, and educational structures that they are almost unrecognizable" (p. 4). According to this perspective racism exhibits in "the racial makeup of those in power and those who are disempowered as well as in the frequent absence of people of color in everything from political leadership to school curriculum to popular media" (Marx, 2008, p. 164). Given that white supremacy is understood to be the *de facto* political and ideological backdrop to society, racism is undetectable to the privileged members of society. Therefore, ironically, whites are unable to understand the world that they have created. Their advantages in politics, economics, and in education are imperceptible to them and therefore they are unable to comprehend non-white experiences and perspectives that have been shaped by white privilege (Taylor, 2009). Critical race theorists hold that peoples of colour, on the other hand, have first-hand knowledge as well as multigenerational experiences which confirm the disadvantages that arise from being non-white. An example of *racism being embedded in society* could be seen in Canadian responses to Omar Khadr's capture and imprisonment. Omar Khadr was a Canadian citizen who was captured as a child soldier by US forces in Afghanistan in July of 2002. When

news leaked out about his repeated torture and the Canadian government's indifference in protecting his rights, Canadians on the whole expressed little outrage, some polls indicating that the vast majority of Canadians were unhappy when he was remitted to Canadian state custody. Khadr's remittance to Canadian state custody only occurred after spending over a third of his life in a foreign prison (Razack, 2014). This instance is somewhat troubling as Canada has used humanitarianism and the cause of child soldiers to promote and sanitize its image as a benevolent and enlightened Western nation (Razack, 2014). Omar Khadr's case was deemed unworthy of sympathy or rescue, as his 'Otherness' precluded him from any possibility of rehabilitation or reform within Canadian society.

The second characteristic of *racism being a persistent feature of society* maintains that because racism is embedded in society it cannot simply be removed. This characteristic of critical race theory problematizes 'progresses' in racial equality through the notion of 'racial realism'. This term was coined by Derrick Bell (1990), and it implied that "racism is a problem influencing law and society because it is a problem influencing humans" (Marx, 2008, p. 164). Therefore, attempts to resolve racial inequalities must always be viewed with scepticism because of its rooted nature in society. The *persistence of racism* can also be viewed from the perspective of victims of racism and racialized violence, as their experiences can be traumatic and have lingering effects. For example, in Robina Thomas' (2014) study of Canadian residential schooling policies, she notes that not only did these schools contribute to the cultural genocide of Indigenous communities, but also inflicted sexual, physical, mental, and spiritual abuse on Indigenous children, which have affected generations.

Additionally, critical race theory is *critical of liberalism* because entrenched in notions of liberalism is the view that jurisprudence is, or at least should be, colour-blind. Critical race

theorists would argue that colour-blindness in reality, whether intentional or not, "masks the influence of race and racism in everyday forms of inequality and prevents them from being recognized as entrenched aspects of the justice system" (Marx, 2008, p. 164). The idea of colour-blindness subverts the lived reality of people of colour. Through the persistence of this type of rhetoric not only is there a denial of racism, but it enables the persistence of and inability to critique white privilege. This concept has been noted by Sherene Razack (1998), in her examination of domestic violence cases among Aboriginal and women of colour in Canada. As she notes, violence in these communities is "viewed as a cultural attribute rather than a product of male domination that is inextricably bound up with racism" (Razack, 1998, p. 58). These instances highlight how the legal system has helped facilitate injustices for racialized communities. When women of colour come forward with domestic violence cases their communities are besmirched and looked down upon, while if they do not report these instances, violence against women in these communities persists (Razack, 1998).

Another concept key to critical race theory is that of *interest convergence.* This was also developed by Bell (1980), who argued that legislation that favours racial equality is permitted only when it benefits dominant groups or groups occupying positions of privilege in society. In relation to this point, Bell (1980) cites the example of *Brown v. Board of Education* in which the decision to desegregate schools was made on the basis of recognizing the economic and political benefits that it entailed rather than ending the racist nature of the status quo. According to Mary Dudziak (1988) the ruling for *Brown v. Board of Education* came at the height of the Cold War. When images of lynchings and the Klu Klux Klan being part and parcel of US society abounded in the Soviet Union, China, and India, the US Justice Department felt the desegregation of schools was necessary to serve the nation's foreign policy interests. This would portray the

image of a benevolent progressive US society. A more recent example of this concept manifesting in Canadian society can be seen in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in which Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued an apology to former residential school students on June 11, 2008. The commission was mandated by the Federal government with the intent of facilitating a reconciliatory relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians (Thomas, 2014). However, as Chris Anderson and Claude Denis (2011) observe, the Canadian government's intents in creating this commission were disingenuous, patronizing, and were used as a tool to demonstrate the nation's "willingness to engage in fair and respectful dialogue with Aboriginal people" (p. 62)   The concept of *interest convergence* traces its roots to the Marxist theory that "the bourgeoisie will tolerate advances for the proletariat only if these advances benefit the bourgeoisie even more" (Taylor, 2009, p. 5). Hence, this concept draws from ideas and critiques of class and class inequities.

The notion of *property rights in whiteness* could be understood as the belief that by virtue of being white come certain entitlements to land, property, or resources. This view was paramount in the ideologies which justified slavery and developments in free-market capitalism (McNally, 2002). Based on my interpretation of this characteristic, *property rights in whiteness* could also be seen in more contemporary narratives, which have given rise to the British and US sponsored coup that supplanted the democratically elected Mohammad Mossadegh with the despotic Pahlavi Iranian Shah, the food for oil program in Iraq during the period of sanctions in the 1990s, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank loans which require indebted countries to exchange their natural resources for interest owed on their debts, as well as the current occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. Additionally, *property rights in whiteness* may assume that whiteness in and of itself is a form of property. As Bell (2009) mentions, "whiteness,

initially constructed as a form of racial identity, evolved into a form of property, historically and presently acknowledged and protected in American Law" (p. 44). Whiteness as a form of property inevitably resulted in the process of 'passing.' Passing occurred when people of colour, usually blacks, were able to pass as being white. The process of passing gave black people economic access as well as social mobility that was otherwise unattainable. According to Bell (2009) passing was based on an economic logic that was "related to the historical and continuing pattern of white racial domination and economic exploitation" and provided a "whole set of public and private privileges that materially and permanently guaranteed basic needs and, therefore, survival" (p. 45). Passing is a useful concept that provides insights into some of the tensions experienced by marginalized members of society who are able to blend into the majoritarian culture, as will be discussed in Chapter Five of the thesis.

Storytelling is central to critical race theory because seldom are the voices of the racially marginalized and oppressed heard in place of the narratives of the dominant groups in society. One of the main purposes of *storytelling* or narrative is to "redirect the dominant gaze, to make it see from a new point of view what has been there all along" (Taylor, 2009, p. 8). As critical race theory has been influenced by postmodernism, embedded within this approach is the idea that 'truth' is socially constructed and that there are multiple 'truths' and 'realities.' Therefore, narratives of racially marginalized peoples and groups provide insights into their 'truths' and 'realities' as a result of their lived experiences. Narratives of the oppressed provide a "call to context" which is essential because the "majoritarian mindset—the bundle of presuppositions, received wisdom, and shared cultural understandings of persons in the dominant group—[are] a principal obstacle to racial reform" (Delgado, 1994, p. 161). Incorporating the voice of the oppressed, also referred to as "naming your reality", is utilized in critical race theory for three

reasons. Firstly, it is employed because much of 'reality' is socially constructed; second, stories provide members of the socially marginalized a vehicle for psychic self-preservation—a remedy for the psychological pain caused by racial oppression; and finally, the exchange of stories from teller to listener can facilitate prevailing ethnocentrism and the tendency to view the world in a singular fashion (Delgado, 1989).

It may be argued that the use of narrative lacks objectivity and scholarly rigour. However as Bell (2009) observes, narrative "speaks for itself and is its own legitimation. It [is] written to record experience and insight that are often unique and…too little heard" (p. 49). Some have suggested that *storytelling,* though an important and useful tool, "should never be used uncritically…its potential as a tool for social change is remarkable, provided we pay attention to the interpretive structures that underpin how we hear and how we take up the stories of oppressed groups" (Razack, 1998, p. 37). In her examination of oppressed groups in courtrooms and classrooms, Razack suggests that the use of narrative and *storytelling* needs to be coupled with a deep understanding of our multiple identities and how they are constructed and intersect in a given time and context. Hence she argues that we need to probe "beneath the surface of what we know, to how we know" (Razack, 1998, p. 55). In other words, we need to engage in a reflexive process to better understand how we perceive our experiences.

Dismantling racism describes the overall goal and purpose of critical race theory. This signifies a commitment to work towards societal change and improve the lived realities of racially marginalized people. As Bell (1990) states, "We must realize, as our slave forebears did, that the struggle for freedom is, at bottom, a manifestation of our humanity which survives and grows stronger through resistance to oppression, even if that oppression is never overcome" (p. 397). Hence, social justice and the pursuit of freedom are at the heart of critical race theory.

Critical race theory and Islamophobia

A number of critical race scholars have framed their analysis and discussion surrounding the racist treatment of Muslims in Western nations around laws which have been enacted to unjustly target Muslims. Critical race theory is therefore a logical framework to employ in this study because part of my critique of anti-Muslim racism in Chapter Two of the thesis will demonstrate how the law is being used as a means to perpetuate racial subordination. Critical race theory provides a framework, as discussed above, for theorizing and understanding why and how racism occurs. It elucidates subtle and explicit forms of racism and articulates how they can be prevalent in society, yet disguised and masked in such a way that they continue to exist unimpeded. This is indispensable for analyzing participants' responses in my study, as it clarifies if they have experienced racist treatment and explains why they may have been perceived in a discriminatory manner. Furthermore, I have adopted this framework because scholarship from this perspective describes anti-Muslim racism as systemic racism which pervades society. Anti-Muslim racism, from this perspective, is not simply an outgrowth of the 9/11 terror attacks, but rather is symptomatic of a long enduring tradition of racism that has existed and is engrained in Western societies. In other words, the racist treatment Muslims have experienced in the post-9/11 context is the result of pre-existing racism towards racialized 'Others'. This manifests through numerous social structures including educational institutions (Ladson-Billings, 2009). In my experiences as a student and educator in Quebec, I have always felt that biases against Muslims have emerged as a result of exclusionary practices, discourses, and perceptions predicated on conceptions of national identity, citizenship, and belongingness to the nation. Critical race theory is a theoretical approach that helps explicate the ideological constructs that

are prevalent in social structures and embedded in society, which I contend have cast Muslims out from the nationalist space.

Additionally, it is my belief that through this theoretical framework policies and legislations policing Muslims, as well as the War on Terror can be properly understood. Critical race theory provides a framework for understanding anti-Muslim racism holistically, which is not simply limited to hate crimes, bullying, and instances of racialized violence. Rather, state policies and practices, political and media discourses, and political conflicts are all embedded in the practice of 'Islamophobia'. Theorizing anti-Muslim racism from this perspective demonstrates how the law is a power-inscribed tool that can be used to perpetuate injustices. A number of critical race theorists have drawn these connections through examining the socially-constructed power relations of race, gender, and class, as will be discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis. In particular, the works of critical race feminists, including Sirma Bilge, Sherene Razack, and Sunera Thobani, have provided useful insights, frameworks, and approaches to examine the phenomenon of Islamophobia. They have examined Islamophobia both from Canadian and global perspectives and have greatly influenced and informed this study, as will be seen in Chapter Two and Three.

Critical race theory and education

Critical race theory initially developed through the field of law. As Lopez (2004) mentions, "[t]he law serves not only to reflect but to solidify social prejudice, making law a prime instrument in the construction and reinforcement of racial subordination" (p. 966). Increasingly, academics from other fields have employed this theoretical perspective in analyzing social and racial inequities in different spheres. For example, a number of the seminal critical race works and theorists have examined cases related to education seeking to "explain the

social construction and operation of racism in educational institutions" (Parker, 2010, p. 43).

According to Laurence Parker (2010), critical race theory is a useful approach to examining

racism in higher educational institutions in relation to affirmative action debates, while other

theorists have suggested that it can be employed in various educational settings (Ladson-Billings,

2009).

Indeed, a major milestone which formalized and influenced the critical race theory

movement took place in an educational setting when Harvard Law Professor, Derrick Bell,

protested and eventually left his position at the school because of its refusal to hire women of

colour. This sparked other student led protests over the hiring practices of minorities and people

of colour at schools across the US in the 1980s. Critical race theory in education, as in the field

of law, arose because of a perceived failure with traditional civil rights movements strategies. As

Taylor (2009) mentions, "[e]ducators of color…were eager for a form of scholarly dialogue,

research methodology, and pedagogical framework in which to challenge the stalled civil rights

movement and the myth that we were going to soon be living in a colorblind society" (p. 9).

Critical race theory in educational settings includes criticisms of school curricula being used as a

means of maintaining white supremacy through the process of 'master scripting' (Swartz, 1992).

Master scripting refers to the omission of narratives of people of colour because they challenge

the dominant culture's authority and power. As Swartz (1992) observes,

> [m]aster scripting silences multiple voices and perspectives, primarily legitimizing
>
> dominant, white, upper-class, male voicings as the "standard" knowledge students need
>
> to know. All other accounts and perspectives are omitted from the master script unless
>
> they can be disempowered through misrepresentation. Thus, content that does not reflect

> the dominant voice must be brought under control, *mastered,* and then reshaped before it
>
> can become a part of the master script (p. 341).

Swartz's use of the term 'master scripting' was primarily focused towards African American experiences with schooling. However, similar arguments can be made for other peoples of colour, as narratives of most cultural groups, with the exceptions of Europeans, rarely form a meaningful portion of educational curricula. Therefore, critical race theory in the field of education provides a theoretical basis for critiquing Eurocentric educational curricula, which privileges the experiences, narratives, and interpretations of whites over other races and cultures. Such theorizing is helpful for working towards and constructing equity and anti-racism educational curricula (Yosso, 2010). Utilizing critical race theory as a framework for equity-based education may be a daunting task given the existence of master scripting in educational curricula that is embedded with racist notions of white supremacy. As Ladson-Billings mentions (2009),

> [a]dopting and adapting CRT as a framework for educational equity means that we will
>
> have to expose racism in education *and* propose radical solutions for addressing it. We
>
> will have to take bold and sometimes unpopular positions…we may have to defend a
>
> radical approach to democracy that seriously undermines the privilege of those who have
>
> so skillfully carved that privilege into the foundation of the nation (p. 33).

Yet, it is a necessary task, and as this study will demonstrate, is especially needed when examining racism towards Muslims in nationalist contexts such as Quebec, as will be seen in Chapter Three.

Conclusion

This chapter historicized the phenomenon of anti-Muslim racism, discussed some of its manifestations in Western contexts, as well as provided a comprehensive definition of how the term 'Islamophobia' will be employed throughout this study. Additionally, this chapter discussed how anti-Muslim racism has been explored through various theoretical traditions and approaches including postcolonial theory, critical theory, critical pedagogy, and critical race theory. This chapter then examined critical race theory—the theoretical framework undergirding this study—explicating the key concepts rooted in this theoretical tradition. Thereafter, this chapter discussed why critical race theory is a useful approach to examine the phenomenon of Islamophobia as well as how this theoretical framework has been applied to educational research. The following chapter will analyze Islamophobia from a critical race theory perspective in the North American context through the social relations of race, gender, and class and how anti-Muslim sentiment in the post-9/11 context is inextricably linked to the War on Terror.

Chapter Two

Viewing Islamophobia through the Socially Constructed Power Relations of Race, Gender,

and Class

Introduction

   This chapter will examine how critical race theory has explained the phenomenon of

Islamophobia through the social relations of race, gender, and class. Informed by a number of

critical race theorists (Razack, Smith, & Thobani, 2010; Solorzano & Yosso, 2009), I have

employed a similar approach in my analysis. As the first half of the previous chapter set out to

define *what* Islamophobia is, this chapter will spell out *why* and *how* Islamophobia emerges in

the post-9/11 context. In doing this analysis, I will be discussing the relations of race, gender,

and class separately. However, that is not to imply that these exist independently of one another.

Rather all of these social relations exist all together and all at once (Bannerji, 2005). The overall

aim of this chapter is to theorize how Islamophobia is socially organized through race, gender,

and class relations to shed light on how Muslims have experienced it in North America. This is

essential to my study as it provides a yardstick to gauge the experiences of my participants and to

determine if what they have described in their experiences in secondary schools in Quebec is

'Islamophobia'. In the post-9/11 context, Islamophobia which manifests through race, gender,

and class, has been mediated through the War on Terror (Razack, Smith, & Thobani, 2010).

Hence, my discussion of these social relations will be connected to analysis of the War on

Terror. I begin my discussion of Islamophobia from a critical race perspective by examining the

social relation of race.

Race

Islamophobia emerges through the concept of 'race' when Muslims are perceived negatively by virtue of assumed biologically based qualities inherent within them; *they* are different from *us*. Embedded within these beliefs is the notion of white supremacy. As Kumar (2012) observes, "Enlightenment philosophers divided human beings into various races or "species" with distinct characteristics…[this] led white Europeans to conclude they were superior to other "darker, colored peoples," who were both "ugly" and at best "semi-civilized" (p. 29). These notions that developed in the enlightenment period endured to form the theoretical foundations on which imperialism and colonialism were built. Razack (1998) contends that the epistemological cornerstone of imperialism viewed the colonized as possessing "a series of knowable characteristics [that] can be studied, known, and managed accordingly by the colonizers" (p. 10). These 'known characteristics' painted the native as a barbaric savage that represented the antithesis of the colonizer. More recent theorists have described a number of ways in which Muslims have been understood as culturally inferior in light of existing political realities. One such mode of discussing and understanding Muslims is through the notion of *culture talk.*

Politicizing Islamopohobia: Culture talk, 'good Muslim'/'bad Muslims', and race thinking. A number of critical race theorists have drawn from Mahmood Mamdani's (2004) work relating to culture talk. According to Mamdani, culture talk "assumes that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it, and it then explains politics as a consequence of that essence. Culture talk after 9/11, for example, qualified and explained the practice of "terrorism" as "Islamic"" (p. 17). This conceptualization of Muslims creates a discourse in which they are understood to possess certain essential characteristics and features. These features include predispositions to violence and aggression, barbarism, and misogyny. Conversely, Western

cultures are deemed to be inherently civil, progressive, and liberal. It is through this notion of

culture talk that arguments can be formulated suggesting that Muslims are not only incapable of

modernity, but also resistant to it (Mamdani, 2004). Culture talk has been employed by critical

race theorists because it theorizes how anti-Muslim racism is politicized and can be used as a

political tool. The most common and pervasive usage of this has occurred through the notion of a

'clash of civilizations' first asserted by Bernard Lewis and further developed by Samuel

Huntington. Their basic thesis argued that the opposing nature and essences of Western and

Eastern cultures will result in an inevitable conflict. This narrative is at the heart of the present

day conflicts raging between Western nations and the Middle East. Completely absent is an in-

depth analysis of historical and political factors which have influenced these conflicts. The

notion of culture talk cannot be understood independently of issues relating to politics, and

gender. For example, both Lewis and Huntington served as policy advisors to the US

government prior to and throughout the current War on Terror. The Bush administration, as well

as the conservative media drew their ideological justifications from the logic embedded in the

clash of civilizational discourse when justifying the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq (Sheehi,

2011). One of the central arguments justifying these wars was the assertion of bringing freedom

and democracy, especially to the women living in these countries. As Razack (2008) mentions,

"three allegorical figures have come to dominate the social landscape of the 'war on terror' and

its ideological underpinning of a clash of civilizations: the dangerous Muslim man, the

imperilled Muslim woman, and the civilized European" (p. 5). Hence, through the notion of

culture talk one can understand how Muslims were portrayed and conceptualized in order to

justify the War on Terror. The discourse of Muslim men was that of a violent and misogynistic

threat; Muslim women were understood as lacking agency and in need of rescue from their

inferior and oppressive cultures; and Western nations were perceived as potential saviours as they embodied the ideals that Muslim cultures were incapable of possessing. These allegorical figures or archetypes, as I will refer to them throughout the thesis, are essential to understanding Islamophobia in the post-9/11 context. Hence, Islamophobia has been rendered a useful tool in the realm of geopolitical power.

In relation to this point, Kumar (2011) states that, "during moments of conflict, political elites mobilize[] Islamophobia as a means to advance their larger agendas…Islam-bashing has been a useful tool in power politics for a long time" (p. 24). This has become strikingly apparent in the War on Terror as most of the biases towards Muslims within North America and abroad stem from fears propagated through this conflict (Alsultany, 2012, Kumar, 2011, Lean, 2012, Razack, 2008, Sheehi 2011). One of the dominant frames in politics which is frequently employed in relation to biases and racism towards Muslims in light of the War on Terror is that of the 'good Muslim' and 'bad Muslim.' According to Mamdani (2004), political and media discourses dichotomize Muslims into two camps. 'Good Muslims' are "modern, secular, and Westernized" and 'bad Muslims' are "doctrinal, antimodern, and virulent" (p. 24). These political and media discourses advocate that "good Muslims can be assisted into modernity, bad Muslims, figured as 'anti-modern' and as having 'a profound ability to be destructive,' require incarceration and military action" (Razack, 2008, p. 49). It is through this logic that the War on Terror gains credibility, as it is being waged against the 'bad Muslims'. Local Muslim populations are assumed to be 'bad Muslims' unless they are able to prove themselves to be 'good Muslims'. As Mamdani (2004) observes; "[a]ll Muslims [are] now under obligation to prove their credentials by joining in a war against "bad Muslims"" (p. 15). Within this political formulation, 'good Muslims' are supportive of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as they fall

within the group that is 'with us' as proclaimed by George W. Bush when he heralded the War

on Terror. According to this logic, 'good Muslims' cannot be critical of the War on Terror and

must support US and Canadian foreign policy. Therefore, 'bad Muslims' may not necessarily be

violently opposed to the West, but simply choose not to adopt a Westernized identity, as Thobani

(2007) observes,

> the 'bad' Muslims include those who refuse the westernization of their bodies and minds,
>
> who resist the domination of their societies, and who insist on adherence to their faith as
>
> the inspiration for their values and politics. These Muslims are 'guilty' by religious and
>
> cultural association, regardless of their actual stance on international politics or the use of
>
> violence by particular movements in particular contexts (p. 238).

Nowhere was this separation of 'good Muslims and 'bad Muslims' more apparent than in the

rounding up of thousands of innocent Muslims and Arabs after the 9/11 attacks simply because

of religious affiliations and acquaintances (Alsultany, 2012). One may presume that racist

political policies and discourses during the War on Terror emanated from those on the political

right, since the Bush administration—with overwhelming support from neoconservative

politicians, think tanks, and pundits—spearheaded the war. However, as some scholars have

noted, Islamophobic rhetoric was not limited to the right. Rather, there were liberals who also

embraced Islamophobic perceptions (Kumar, 2012, Morey & Yaqin, 2011, Sheehi, 2011).

The conservative strain of thought "locates the origins of terrorism in what is regarded as

Islamic culture's failure to adapt to modernity" (Kundnani, 2014, p. 10). Liberals, on the other

hand, identify the roots of terrorism "not in Islam itself but in a series of twentieth-century

ideologues who distorted the religion to produce a totalitarian ideology—Islamism—on the

models of communism and fascism" (Kundnani, 2014, p. 10). Both these approaches, however,

disregard the political and social conditions which facilitate and create Muslim terrorists. Liberal anti-Muslim biases have some qualities distinct from those of conservatives, but both biases are rooted in the same racist assumptions. As Steven Salaita (2006) contends, "[l]iberal anti-Arab [and anti-Muslim] racism exists within the same historical framework and is too embedded in the traditional American metanarrative of expansionism and White supremacy" (p. 57). According to Kumar (2012), liberal strands of Islamophobia reject the 'clash of civilizations' thesis and recognize that there are 'good Muslims' with whom there can be diplomatic relations. This was demonstrated by current US President Barack Obama when visiting Cairo in 2009, giving his 'A New Beginning' address. His address was an attempt to mend relations between the US and Muslim majority nations in the wake of George Bush's presidency and the War on Terror (Colvin, 2009).

Throughout Obama's presidency it became clear that he was not only perpetuating the War on Terror but had taken measures to increase its breadth and depth. During his first term he increased punitive sanctions against Iran for its supposed nuclear weapons program—a claim which has yet to be substantiated with credible evidence; escalated the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan by increasing the number of US troops and civilian deaths in this conflict; authorized the use of drones in Pakistan which have resulted in numerous civilian casualties; continued legitimizing extraordinary renditions; continued the operation of the Guantanamo Bay prison; prosecuted 'enemy combatants' held at Guantanamo including Canadian Omar Khadr, who, according to the Geneva Convention, was an illegal prisoner of war and a child soldier at the time of his capture; and has authorized the assassination of Anwar Al-Awlaki, a US citizen who was never tried or found guilty of any crimes (Sheehi, 2011). Hence, conservative Islamophobia initiated and justified the War on Terror, while liberal Islamophobia sustained and

sanitized it. For Democrats or Republicans, liberals or conservatives, in Canada, the US, and

abroad, it is clear that Islamophobia has been used as a political tool to orchestrate fear of

Muslims locally and abroad to legitimize and win support for an imperial agenda through notions

of racial inferiority. It is for this reason that the War on Terror is instrumental in understanding

Islamophobia in the post-9/11 context. These differences in liberal and conservative expressions

of Islamophobia, or as Kundnani (2014) has framed it, culturalist and reformist approaches to

understanding the Muslim 'Other', are useful as they describe how racist perceptions of Muslims

are fomented and experienced by Muslims within broader society. As my research examines

experiences of racism of Muslims in secondary schools, culture talk, liberal and conservative

expressions of Islamophobia, as well as other concepts, provide a theoretical basis for

understanding these experiences.

Another concept which helps shed light on how Islamophobia operates through the social

relation of race is that of r*ace thinking*, which according to Razack (2008), is "a structure of

thought that divides up the world between the deserving and undeserving according to descent"

(p. 8). Hannah Arendt (1944) discussed in great detail how race thinking was an ideology that

laid the ground work for imperialist actions. Arendt (1944) views race thinking as an ideology

which "interprets history as a natural fight of races" (p. 39), hence it is a perspective that

constructs privilege through race. Deserving races are entitled to control and dominate less

deserving races. Like culture talk, race thinking is also used as a political tool to exercise power.

As Razack (2008) observes, "race thinking matures into racism through its use as a political

weapon. Racism's graduation from an obscure free opinion to a full-fledged ideology occurred

with imperialism and the 'fateful days of the scramble for Africa' (p. 8). In the context of the

War on Terror, race thinking has been used to garner support for laws that have suspended due

process and violated fundamental rights particularly for Muslims. This has been accomplished

through legislation such as the USA PATRIOT ACT and the Anti-Terrorism Act that have been

legislated in both the US and Canada respectively. Provisions within the PATRIOT ACT

authorize the state to: monitor ethnic and religious groups; permit the indefinite detention of non-

citizens whom are suspected of having ties to terrorism; search and wiretap without probable

cause; arrest and hold a person as a "material witness" whose testimony might assist in a case;

use secret evidence , without granting the accused access to the evidence; put to trial those

designated as "enemy combatants" in military tribunals instead of civilian courts; and deport

non-citizens based on guilt by association (Alsultany, 2012).

As a result of these provisions, thousands of Muslims in the US have been rounded up

and detained unjustly, have had their fingerprints taken, been deported, and racially profiled. A

number of charitable organizations were closed or unable to continue operating because Muslims

feared being investigated if found donating funds to these charities (Alsultany, 2012). In the

Canadian context similar laws have been enacted through the Anti-Terrorism Act (2001 and

2015) and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Measures within the Anti-Terrorism Act

(2001) include:

> the strengthening of state powers of surveillance and detention; the imposition of greater
>
> restrictions on immigration and refugee policies; the increased scrutiny of immigrants
>
> and refugees (both at the borders and within the country) and a strengthening of the
>
> powers of deportation; a commitment to fighting the war against terrorism under the
>
> leadership of the Bush administration, most specifically to participate in the war on
>
> Afghanistan; and the intensification of intelligence, security, and military alliances with
>
> the United States (Thobani, 2007, p. 348).

Although not as many Muslims have been affected by this law in Canada as in the US, a number have been racially profiled, intimidated by Canadian Security Intelligence Services (CSIS), and most notably, provisions within this law allowed for the illegal detention, extraordinary rendition, and torture of Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen of Syrian descent in 2002 (Mazigh, 2009). The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act authorizes the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in conjunction with the Solicitor General to issue a security certificate. Security certificates, like the provisions mentioned above, suspend rights and due process for non-citizens residing within Canada. Critics contend that they are an example of pre-emptive punishment in which people are being punished before they have committed any crime or wrong-doing. Race is central to pre-emptive punishment as it is embedded with the belief that *they* are not like *us*. *Their* culture is uncivilized and violent and it is just a matter of time before *they* harm *us* (Mirzoeff, 2005). As Razack (2008) discusses in great detail, these provisions in US and Canadian laws have stripped away basic fundamental rights of Muslim men. Such a situation, where the suspension of the law (i.e. stripping away fundamental basic human rights) becomes the law, can be described as one where there is a proliferation of 'camps' (Arendt, 1973). These are spaces that legally authorize the "suspension of law and the creation of communities of people without 'the right to have rights'…camps are places where the rules of the world cease to apply" (Razack, 2008, p. 7). The danger of camps and the logic that underlies these spaces is that they normalize the violence enacted by the state as actions associated with the law and therefore legitimize and sanitize them. The basis for which camps operate in contemporary times is through race and how race is perceived.

Racializing Muslims: Pre-emptive prosecution, exaltation and legislating Islamophobia. Increasingly, Muslims have been categorized as a race. Rana (2007) contends

that in the American context this dates back to the civil rights movement in the 1960s. During

this period, Islam was a liberatory identification for African Americans through the Black

Nationalist movement of Nation of Islam (Daulatzai, 2012; Rana, 2007). This posed a threat to

the white supremacist social hierarchy of the US and eventually "the figure of the Muslim

became racialized through social and cultural signifiers across national, racial, and ethnic

boundaries" (Rana, 2007, p. 150). If Islam has been categorized as a 'race', as Rana (2007) and

others have argued (Kundnani, 2014; Ramachandran, 2009), it is clear that Muslims—members

of this 'race'—have been "stigmatized, put under surveillance, denied full citizenship rights, and

detained in camps on the basis that they are a pre-modern people located outside of reason, a

people against whom a secular, modern people must protect themselves" (Razack, 2008, p. 174).

This has occurred through pre-emptive prosecution.

     The presence of pre-emptive punishment, discussed above, invariably results in pre-

emptive prosecution, which involves

> targeting innocent people that haven't actually done anything wrong. It includes a range
>
> of tactics such as the use of *agent provocateurs* to incite people to do things they
>
> otherwise would not to the charge of "material support" for terrorists, which can be
>
> applied to something as innocuous as giving money to a charitable foundation (Kumar,
>
> 2012, p. 147).

As is the case with pre-emptive punishment, the underlying logic of pre-emptive prosecution is

that those being prosecuted, in this instance Muslims, have a predisposition towards violence and

committing violent crimes. As Downs (2011) observes, "to prove disposition, the government

claims that routine, normal behavior of the defendants—dress, religious observances…etc.—

indicates a 'predisposition' to commit terrorism, based on the false stereotype that *all* Muslims

are predisposed to commit terrorism" (p. 17). As such, the logic goes that "if they are sufficiently

'Muslims' they are sufficiently 'predisposed'" (Downs, 2011, p. 17). Pre-emptive prosecution

has been virulent both in the US and in Canada in the post 9/11 context in which 'terror plots'

and the notion of 'providing material support to terrorists' have been used as a means to

manufacture fear and apply laws selectively against Muslims (Kumar, 2012; Sheehi, 2011).

There have also been a number of instances both in the US and Canada, where *agent

provocateurs* have been employed trying to fish out terrorists where they would not otherwise

exist. A report published by New York University's Center for Human Rights and Global Justice

entitled *Targeted and Entrapped* (2011) found that the government often resorted to "a

dangerous incentive structure" by offering informants reduced criminal charges or changes in

immigration status. The report goes on to mention that the "government's informants introduced

and aggressively pushed ideas about violent jihad and moreover, actually *encouraged* the

defendants to believe that it was their duty to take action against the United States" (p. 2). This

has been the case with a number of informants and *agent provocateurs* including Shahed Hussain

in the case of the Newburgh Four; Craig Monteilh who infiltrated a Southern California mosque

for the FBI[3]; Shamiur Rahman, who was paid US $1,000 a month by the NYPD to 'bait'

Muslims into making incriminating statements; as well as Mubin Sheikh and Shaher Elsohemy,

the informants who provided a fire-arm, three tonnes of ammonium nitrate, and were paid

$300,000 and $4.1 million, respectively, in the Toronto 18 case (Friscolanti, 2008, Goldman,

2012, Harris, 2012, Teotonio, 2010). The practice of pre-emptive punishment and the use of

agent provocateurs is indicative of how a constant cloud of suspicion is cast over Muslims in

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[3] FBI even permitted Monteilh to have sex with the Muslim women in their investigation if it would lead to better intelligence. Monteilh himself later admitted that his work amounted to entrapment. So much so that the Muslim community he infiltrated reported him to the FBI because of the radical views he was disseminating.

North American societies and demonstrates how Muslims have experienced Islamophobia in the post-9/11 context. The enactment of racist and biased laws as seen in the discussion of pre-emptive punishment and prosecution in the Canadian and American contexts is not a recent phenomenon.

The US has had a long and enduring history of racism, which started long before its encounters with Muslims and the Muslim world. As Sheehi (2011) observes, "Islamophobia…comfortably emerge[d] from white America's history of racism and discomfort with people of color, especially when those people of color assert themselves" (p. 42-43). From as early as the conquests of the Americas and the extermination and subjugation of Indigenous Peoples, to the slave trade which built America's economic prowess on the backs of slaves, and the internment of the local Japanese diaspora during World War II, the US has had an unimpressive record of violating human rights and freedoms of racialized groups. A similar pattern can be seen within the Canadian context as documented by Thobani (2007), through selective immigration policies of 'preferred races', laws regulating native populations, and other legislation which has unjustly targeted racialized communities.

Thobani's (2007) analysis argues that in the case of Canada it is "not that the law was discriminatory and that racism can be found in its rulings. It is that the Canadian legal system *is* a regime of racial power" (p. 54). According to Thobani, these deviations when applying laws to racialized groups can be understood as the practice of *exaltation*. Exaltation is the process of attributing certain qualities which characterize the nationality of a people. Those who do not embody these qualities are considered strangers to the national community. As Thobani mentions, "national subjects who fail to live up to the exalted qualities are treated as aberrations...The failings of outsiders, however, are seen as reflective of the inadequacies of their

community, of their culture, and, indeed, of their entire 'race' (p. 6). In other words, there are certain imagined qualities inherent within English/French white Canadians. Those qualities exalt them over others and in essence define who gets to be a 'real' Canadian. When a national subject is unable to live up to these exalted qualities they are perceived as exceptions to the rule. Those who do not fit within the mould of the Canadian national subject (i.e. members of immigrant communities and people of colour) are believed to be strangers who do not truly belong within the nation. Such a difference warrants a change in behaviour towards, and treatment of certain classes of citizens. The exalted national subject is able to forget their own violent treatment of others throughout their national history, while at the same time condemning other racialized groups for engaging in similar actions and explaining such behaviour as defective and inferior qualities which are said to form the essence of that group. The process of selectively forgetting one's national history of violence thus gives rise to the notion that the rights that exist for national subjects are a result of an inherent worthiness, as Thobani (2007) states,

> The state organizes the rights that nationals come to acquire by treating these as rooted in their own intrinsic worthiness and not in the colonial violence, political, racial, and ethnic dominations, or in the classed and gendered exploitations and resistances that characterize nation formations (p. 11).

Similarly, the concept of exaltation helps explain how certain cultures can be perceived as contaminants to the nation. National subjects who convert to Islam and engage in criminal activities can have their deviant behaviour explained through the adoption of a foreign religion, as they have lost their status of exalted national subjects. This logic was operational in the reactions to the recent hit and run attack by Martin Couture-Rouleau in St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, as well as the Parliament Hill shootings by Michael Zehaf-Bibeau in Ottawa, Ontario,

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occurring in October 2014 within days of each other. Both of these murders were described as

acts of terrorism by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in his address to the nation as well as media

outlets on the days of and following the events (Maloney, 2015). Political and media discourses

claimed these men were inspired by the Islamic terrorist organization ISIS. However, both men

were prone to violence in the context of conditions preceding their adoption of radicalized views

that included mental illness and drug abuse (Derfel, 2014). These men's violent actions cannot

be understood independently of their lives and personalities prior to their acceptance of

radicalized Islamic views. However, their acts according to dominant political and media

narratives were a result of Islamic influences, which posed a threat to the nationalist space. In his

address to the nation, the Prime Minister described how these events were a grim reminder of

how violent acts of terrorism experienced in other nations can also occur in Canada, implying

this type of violence was foreign to the nationalist space. He made these statements despite the

fact that a similar act of violence was committed a few months prior, when Justin Bourque of

New Brunswick murdered three and critically injured two RCMP officers in June 2014.

Bourque, like Zehaf-Bibeau and Rouleau, had adopted radicalized anti-government ideologies

prior to committing these murders. However, Bourque's crimes were not classified as acts of

terrorism in media and political discourses (O'Toole, 2014). Additionally, Harper's

condemnation of supposed acts of Islamic extremism in Canada did not warrant a similar

condemnation of anti-Muslim backlash which surfaced in cities across Canada in the aftermath

of these events (Pugliese, 2014).

The concept of exaltation helps illustrate how 'terrorism' is constructed as a foreign

contaminant and infects the nation through Islam. Bourque's actions, being a white Canadian

man, were incomprehensible, and were explained as an aberration. He was understood to be

someone with mental health problems or socially abnormal. In contrast, Couture-Rouleau and

Zehaf-Bibeau, also white Canadians, were held to be infected with 'Muslimness' and therefore

classified as terrorists, which was the primary factor explaining their actions. As Islam is

constructed as a racialized faith (Kundnani, 2014; Rana 2011) Couture-Rouleau and Zehaf-

Bibeau were perceived as no longer being nationalist subjects, but had degenerated into

threatening Muslim 'Others' upon their conversions. Hence, in the case of Couture-Rouleau and

Zehaf-Bibeau, narratives of Islamic terrorism were used to sanitize homegrown terror. The Prime

Minister's national address in light of the tragic events committed by Couture-Rouleau and

Zehaf-Bibeau, located their acts of violence and terror in the meta-narrative of global Islamic

terrorism. This cast the actions of these white Canadians as originating outside of the nation, thus

preserving Canada's exalted status.

One may argue that the notion of exaltation in present times has no place in Canada and

other Western nations given that they pride themselves on fostering and encouraging

multiculturalism. However, drawing from the criticisms of Ahmed (2000), Bannerji (2000), and

Hage (2000), nations adopting multiculturalism engage in a process of re-imagining their

national image in such a way that they can co-exist with others, while using this difference to

assert white citizens' cultural superiority. Societies such as Canada, Australia, the US, and those

in Europe have had enduring histories of racialized discrimination and imperialist violence.

These histories do not simply vanish by claims of 'multiculturalism'. Indeed, such claims serve

to mask a nation's racist attitude or behaviours towards certain groups. Thobani (2007)

articulates this point when she states,

Multiculturalism as a specific policy and a socio-political racial ideology has thus come

to attest to the enduring superiority of whiteness, of its ability to transform and

accommodate itself to changing times and new opportunities. It became a framework that

assumed a certain rigidity in the cultures of racial others, of their enduring inferiority,

immaturity, and the need for their reformation under the tutelage of progressive—always

modernizing—western superiority (p. 155).

In other words, when nations pass legislation locally such as the USA PATRIOT ACT, or the

Anti-Terrorism Act (2001 and 2015), and engage in imperialist wars such as the occupation of

Afghanistan and Iraq, the mistreatment of racialized 'Others' goes unacknowledged because of

claims of being a multicultural nation. Within the multiculturalism framework it is understood

that certain racialized 'Others' are inferior and incapable of modernizing and therefore engaging

in the process of modernizing these 'Others' is a benevolent act. This masks the racialized

violence towards groups that are believed to be locked in a pre-modern state when attempts are

made to civilize them.

This section has demonstrated how power is fundamental to how race is socially

constructed in that imperialist wars have been justified through concepts such as culture talk,

'good Muslim' 'bad Muslim' discourses, and race thinking. Examining the social relation of race

also helps us understand how legislation, which has disproportionately targeted Muslims, has

been enacted through the proliferation of camps and the notion of exaltation. Detaining

supposedly dangerous Muslim men locally through these laws aids in manufacturing fears of the

'Muslim threat' which garners public acceptance and endorsements of the War on Terror. As

Sheehi (2011) observes, Islamophobia "has a pivotal role in manufacturing compliance and quiet

consent to, if not resounding endorsement of, anti-Muslim and Arab legislation domestically and

interventionist and imperialist policies [abroad]" (p. 141). Hence, race is essential in

understanding the archetype of 'dangerous Muslim men'. Additionally, racist treatment of

Muslims has been structured through class relations as a number of the anti-terrorism laws in the post-9/11 context have unjustly targeted Muslim immigrant working-classes (Rana, 2011). Islamophobia is also organized around gender. Much of the anti-Muslim rhetoric that endorsed the War on Terror argued its benefits through the supposed liberation of Muslim women. As will be seen in the following section, liberal feminist discourses abounded from politicians and feminists advocating freedom and rights for 'imperilled Muslim women' who needed to be saved and liberated from 'dangerous Muslim men'. The following sections will provide a deeper and more complete understanding of the phenomenon of Islamophobia by examining issues relating to gender and its intersection with race and class.

Gender

In this discussion about gender, I will examine how Islamophobia has been used to reproduce discourses which construct Muslim women as abused and oppressed at the hands of Muslim men. The mistreatment of women is hardly a new phenomenon or one that is limited to only some communities. However, when women from certain immigrant communities are the victims of violence there is a tendency to explain this gendered-based violence through practices and beliefs inherent within their culture. As Razack (1998) mentions, "violence in immigrant communities is viewed as a cultural attribute rather than a product of male domination" (p. 57-58). This has particular resonance in communities of brown women, as Yasmin Jiwani (1992) has noted in her study of South Asian women in the Canadian media. Jiwani (1992) suggests that Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu women have been portrayed as being confined to a particular archetype of the east. These portrayals view violence perpetrated by men from their communities as an inherent cultural quality. This type of discourse which is stripped of the economic, social, and

political contexts in which the violence is taking place reproduces conceptions and notions of Western superiority.

The plight of the 'imperilled Muslim woman'. After the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration, along with its Canadian and European allies, began its War on Terror, invading and occupying Afghanistan and Iraq. There were a number of criticisms aimed at the Bush administration for waging wars on countries which did not conclusively prove to be direct threats against the US (Mamdani, 2004; Margolis, 2008; McAlister, 2001). Rather, both Afghanistan and Iraq were *potential* threats, as Afghanistan was giving asylum to Osama Bin Laden, who was believed to be behind the 9/11 attacks, and Iraq supposedly possessed weapons of mass destruction, a claim which later was found to be completely false. Many of the criticisms of the War on Terror were deflected by its advocates through the adoption of feminist discourses. The trope of oppressed Muslim women was employed in political and media discourses because "rallying western populations around fantasies of saving Muslim women would be more effective than rallying them around the overtly imperialist policies of securing US control over oil and natural gas supplies" (Thobani, 2007, p. 218). The Bush administration, despite an abysmal reputation for protecting women's rights domestically (Kumar, 2012), advocated the necessity of the war on Afghanistan to rescue Afghan women. As President Bush stated "They're [i.e. the Taliban] an incredibly repressive government, a government that has a value system that's hard for many in America…to relate to. Incredibly repressive towards women" (Sammon, 2001).

The former President's wife, Laura Bush, along with a number of female politicians reiterated the Republican Party line in advocating women's rights through the violence in the War on Terror. Even feminist groups like the Feminist Majority, which represented over 220

human rights and women's organizations in the US and worldwide (Thobani, 2010), supported

the War on Terror reproducing the tropes of the 'imperilled Muslim woman' who needed to be

saved from the 'dangerous Muslim man' and her supposedly barbaric violent culture. Thobani's

(2010) examination of white feminist discourses in the US and Canada surrounding the War on

Terror noted that "they have helped revitalize 'Western' feminism through a focus on the global

that constitutes the West's gendered subject as the mark of the 'universal,' and the world of the

Muslim gendered subject as that of death, violence, and misogyny" (p. 129). In other words,

these discourses have perpetuated a hegemonic relationship of the West and its Islamic 'Other'.

Portraying the War on Terror as a women's rights issue created a situation where countries like

the US and Canada, under the guise of feminist discourse spoke out on behalf of Muslim women

against their oppressors. However, in the process, "the voice of the "Third World" woman

herself [was] effectively silenced, evacuated from an argument that [was] about her but in which

she [was] seldom invited to participate" (Morey & Yaqin, 2011, p. 179). Ultimately, framing the

oppression of Muslim women as a cultural trait, as the War on Terror has done, inadequately

accounts for the causes of suffering of women in Muslim countries (Abu-Lughod, 2003).

Similarly, a recurring theme that has appeared in Canadian political and media discourses of

violence perpetrated against Muslim women at the hands of Muslim men has been that of

'honour-based violence' and 'honour killings.'

Honour-based violence; a uniquely Muslim phenomenon. Honour killings and

honour-based violence are forms of violence enacted upon a family member or member of a

cultural group who is believed to have brought dishonour to the family or community. Often this

type of violence occurs within the context of marriage (Razack, 2008). The use of the term

honour killings or honour-based violence can be problematic because such violence is not

framed as a generic form of violence against women, but rather as a type of violence which originates within the perpetrator's culture. This creates a tendency to construct and explain similar acts of violence that are committed against women from Western cultures differently. These acts are usually referred to as instances of domestic violence in which the actions of the assailant are not understood to originate from inherent qualities of violence and backwardness. For example, in 2001, sixty-seven Canadian women were killed by their partners or ex-partners, seventeen of whom had abusive partners (SWC, 2003). In none of these instances was it assumed or even suggested that this violence was caused by the culture of the assailants. Honour killings and honour-based violence is believed to most often occur when a man kills or abuses a female member of his family because of 'immoral acts.' These acts include refusing an arranged marriage, flirting with or having relationships with men, marital infidelity, requesting a divorce, or being a victim of rape. However, with the exception of arranged marriages, a number of these issues are underlying causes for domestic violence cases in Western nations (Razack, 2008). These crimes in a Western context committed by Europeans and North Americans are commonly referred to as crimes of passion (Morey & Yaqin, 2011). Ultimately, the problem with constructing violence against Muslim women as being caused by having values contradictory to the West's creates the perception that being Muslim is irreconcilable with being a Westerner. As Morey and Yaqin (2011) observe, "The post-9/11 depiction of honor killings as a minority and often Muslim issue…is symptomatic of the way a certain kind of cultural practice can be held up as an example of the key difference between a civilized Self and an unenlightened Other" (p. 71). Media and political discourses of violence suffered by Muslim women locally and in Muslim-majority countries have created a space where native informants have become prevalent in the post-9/11 context.

Some media stories about the liberation of Muslim women from their oppressive cultures have come from Muslim women. Jiwani (2010) discusses how there are two types of media stories about Muslim women; stories relating to victimhood and stories relating to escape. Stories about to Muslim women as victims reproduce the 'imperilled Muslim woman' archetype and those framed around Muslim women escaping centre on narratives of Muslim women who attack Islam. Other stories surrounding Muslim women do not receive as much notoriety and are not seen as news-worthy. Hence, Muslim women are constructed in the media as victims of oppression needing to be saved, with the exception of those who have empowered themselves by turning against their faith. These women have been referred to by some as native informants (Kumar, 2012, Sheehi, 2011, Razack, 2008). If *hijab* clad women with religious and cultural affiliations embody the 'bad Muslims' (Mamdani, 2004), native informants—their antithetical counterparts—have been constructed as 'good Muslims'. These women have provided narratives reaffirming archetypal depictions of 'bad Muslim' men and women from an insider perspective. The logic that follows is that if Muslim women themselves claim that Islam is oppressive towards women, then it must be true. Native informants in the US, Europe, and Canada include Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Irshad Manji, Nonie Darwish, Wafa Sultan, and Brigitte Gabriel. Most of these native informants do not have scholarly or academic credentials which qualify them to speak authoritatively about Islam, Muslims, or Muslim-majority countries. Yet these women have "nonetheless made successful careers as "scholars" and "activists" based on their insider claims about Islam" (Sheehi, 2011, p. 95). For Sheehi, after 9/11 and the ensuing War on Terror, a space was created where native informants were able to produce oppressive narratives of the backwards and misogynistic practices and cultures of Muslims and Arabs which were readily consumed by the political elite, media, and Western audiences. These narratives were not

particularly powerful or well thought out. Rather, they were diatribes against Islam and Muslims heavily influenced by their limited personal experiences. Some native informants, as was the case of Hirsi Ali, were simply opportunists who used their vitriolic Islamophobic rhetoric to advance their political careers, as a number of her claims were later disproved (Sheehi, 2011).

The works of these native informants reached a wide audience because they quenched the "public's thirst and their government's need for narratives that would justify US militarism, war and destruction in Afghanistan and Iraq, illegal bombings in Pakistan and Yemen, and their murderous military support for Israeli killing of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians" (Sheehi, 2011, p. 92). As Razack (2008) observes, through their claims of being self-critical feminists, native informants have used their Islamophobic reproaches to advance racist neoliberal agendas. A common trend that binds their works is inattention to historical accuracy. Thus, the works of native informants employ culture talk, as they examine problems in the Muslim world devoid of historical and political analysis. All too often their works reproduce a message that the road to equality lies in journeying from "pre-modernity to modernity, and from the non-West to the West…where a single woman can make a difference and a dollar… [and] free-market capitalism underwrites the freedom to act" (Razack, 2008, p. 102). Hence, not only do these narratives support the archetype of the 'imperilled Muslim woman' but they also reinforce the notion that the key to salvation lies in the Westernization of their minds and bodies. Therefore, native informant narratives contribute to and reinforce discriminatory perceptions of Muslim women as will be discussed throughout the thesis.

This section has demonstrated how power operates through the social relation of gender in the post-9/11 context and is structured around race and class. As discussed with issues related to honour killings and honour-based violence, it is clear that there is a dominant tendency to

associate violence and barbarism directed towards Muslim women at the hands of Muslim men

as being a cultural trait. Hence, race combined with gender is essential to understanding the

archetype of 'imperilled Muslim women'. Gender-based Islamophobia in some instances

becomes organized through class as much of the discourse surrounding honour-based violence

involves women from socially marginalized immigrant communities. Additionally, native

informants have been used as mouth-pieces to justify the War on Terror as they have produced

'authentic insider perspectives' which justify the violence meted out in the civilizing imperialist

mission of the War on Terror (Razack, 2008, Sheehi, 2011). Their works advocate the notion that

free-market capitalism is a characteristic of a nation that possesses freedom. The following

section will examine Islamophobia through attending to class and economic relations.

Class and Economics

I turn now to discuss how class relations contribute to racist and discriminatory treatment

of racialized groups and how the War on Terror has facilitated this for Muslims. Additionally, I

will show how Islamophobia is employed to further the economic interests of Empire through

free-market capitalism. This economic approach has aided in securing precious natural resources

in Muslim-majority countries brought on by the War on Terror.

Colonized nations have histories of being exploited by the West, resulting in cultural and

economic subordination (Fanon, 1963 & 1965; Said, 1993). As Bannerji (2010) observes,

"cultural difference between the colonizing and colonized societies…is articulated through forms

of cultural essentialism within socioeconomic relations of ruling" (p.158). The end result of this

exploitation is a wretched existence for the colonized. This point was eloquently made by Fanon

(1963) when he described the lived realities of the settlers and the natives:

> The settlers' town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly lit
>
> town; the streets are covered with asphalt, and the garbage cans swallow all the leavings,
>
> unseen, unknown and hardly thought about…The settler's town is a well-fed town, an
>
> easygoing town; its belly is always full of good things. The settlers' town is a town of
>
> white people, of foreigners. The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the
>
> native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled
>
> by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die
>
> there…The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shows, of coal, of
>
> light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the
>
> mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs. (p. 39).

These realities described the native/settler experience during colonialism. However a similar

situation exists in the post-colonial era, where the Third World is exploited not directly by a

colonizing country but rather through international financial institutions, which impose political

and economic regimes that ultimately serve to strip nations of their natural resources.

Organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) lend developing

nations—overwhelmingly formerly colonized nations—funds which result in their perpetual

indebtedness. To qualify for these loans, Third World governments are "required to demonstrate

their 'commitment to free market economics,' a matter invariably hinging upon their

implementation of domestic policies subordinating the well-being of their own populations to the

profitability of Western corporate enterprises" (Sheehi, 2011, p. 25). The use of international

financial agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF to implement free-market economic

reforms in developing nations has often been termed as a type of neocolonialism in which

formally decolonized nations remain economically disadvantaged while Western countries profit

enormously through corporate enterprises continually feeding off of these nations. The exploitation of developing countries through *laissez-faire* economic policies has negatively affected the vast majority of their citizens. These policies have affected Muslims and non-Muslims alike. However, the War on Terror created a situation where the impact of neoliberal exploitation on Muslim-majority nations were heightened, sometimes through militarization and occupation (Kumar, 2012; Sheehi, 2011).

As discussed in previous sections, Islamophobia has served as a tool justifying the War on Terror. Through disseminating notions of imperilled Muslim women and menacing Muslim men, justification was provided for a civilizing mission in which violence and occupation of Muslim lands was necessary. Central to this narrative was the notion of bringing these nations into modernity and advocating democratic reforms. Yet, modernity is conflated with globalization and democracy with neoliberalism. Within the context of the War on Terror, modernity "requires Middle Eastern societies and protected-economies to swallow the magic pill of neoliberalism and globalization in order to join the league of civilized nations. If one rejects "political reform"…one rejects modernity, human rights, democracy and the "rule of law"" (Sheehi, 2011, p. 81). In other words, modernity has come to mean the propping up of political leaders who allow other nations to become the primary beneficiaries of their country's natural resources. Thus, the repressive monarchies of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait have been allies to the West, while being excluded from discussions of bringing modernity and democracy through the War on Terror. The War on Terror had little to do with the US and other nations bringing democratic reforms to Muslim-majority countries. Rather a primary motivation in this war was controlling "the oil wealth of that region at any cost. Consequently, its [the US's] foreign policy has been directed toward preventing the emergence of any government or

movement that might threaten its dominance in the region" (Kumar, 2012, p. 57). Therefore, it is

only when a nation adopts a *laissez-faire* economic system in which its natural resources become

liberalized that its political system, democratic or not, will be acceptable in the eyes of US

hegemony. The War on Terror has served as a pretext for greater access to natural resources and

the potential economic benefits that control of these resources entails.

The economic incentives underpinning the War on Terror were not solely driven by a

sense of greed and economic prosperity. Rather, these aspirations to possess racialized peoples'

wealth and exploit their labour emanates from a sense of superiority. Economic abuse towards

racialized and socially marginalized groups has had an enduring legacy in Western nations.

Europe and the Americas benefited tremendously through the exploitation of African slaves.

Similarly, throughout the periods of nation building in Canada there have been stark examples of

racist attitudes as Thobani (2007) mentions,

> the earliest arrival of Black and Asian migrants can be traced to the pre-Confederation
>
> period, the racism they encountered in the national commitment to 'Keep Canada White'
>
> greatly curtailed this migration. Even when their labour was recognized as necessary for
>
> economic development, these migrants were reviled and cast in the figure of the
>
> inassimilable and degenerate stranger (p. 91).

This exploitation of racialized and socially marginalized groups is rooted in the belief that certain

races of people are worthy of being exploited because of their inherent inferiority. This has been

the case not only at the local level, but also through imperialist encounters like the War on Terror

as Thobani (2007) observes,

> [f]acilitating the right of global mobility long enjoyed by white subjects, and of a global
>
> entitlement that allows them access to the best part of the planet's resources, has

historically been central to the mission of this west. That mission is today finding

expression in the new invasions and occupations" (p. 251).

In other words, white supremacy undergirds the economic motivations of the War on Terror, as

has been the case with other imperialist endeavours throughout the colonial era. These notions of

white supremacy have also facilitated class-based discrimination against Muslims in the

aftermath of 9/11.

Targeting of Muslim immigrant working-classes through the War on Terror. Rana

(2011), in his study of the Pakistani migrant worker diaspora has examined how the global

economy's push for cheap labour in the context of the War on Terror has brought about the

policing of immigrant working-class Muslims. Building on Nicholas De Genova's (2002)

framework of illegality, Rana (2011) argues that in the post-9/11 context, Muslim migrant

workers "are accepted into informal global labor migration markets that also deem them

dispensable in times of crisis and thus disposable through deportation" (p. 139). This makes

'illegality' for Muslim migrant workers a political identity, which uses their status as migrant

labourers as outside the law. What is meant by this is that if immigrant populations are deemed

as posing a threat to national security, the rule of law no longer applies to them and they are

stripped of their rights. This has manifested in legislations like the USA PATRIOT ACT, under

which thousands of Muslim immigrants in the US have been detained and/or deported. Rana

(2011) argues that since 9/11, there has been increased surveillance and incarceration of

Pakistani immigrants in the US. Through policing strategies such as detention and deportation,

immigrants may be detained until the state deems they no longer pose a threat or have no useful

information, at which point they are deported by force or voluntarily. According to Rana (2011),

"[t]he detention and deportation regime relies on selectively enforcing immigration laws among

suspect immigrant populations…it is not probable cause but guilt by association with certain

ideas, people, or organizations that guides the logic behind who becomes a suspect" (p. 150). In

other words, a state of exception exists for these immigrant working-classes with regards to their

rights of due process. Detention in the post-9/11 context has taken on the form of racial violence

aimed at disciplining Muslim immigrant populations. This manifests through processes such as

enhanced interrogation techniques, extraordinary rendition, and long-term detention. These

measures that are applied against immigrant populations represent violence enacted on "a

specific class of people who are racialized and normalized as illegal and criminal… it is a part of

a class-based racism in which certain migrants are at risk" (Rana, 2011, p. 155). Hence, working-

class Muslims have become targeted and are more vulnerable in the context of the War on

Terror. Similar treatment of Muslim immigrants has taken place in the Canadian context

(Razack, 2008; Thobani, 2007).

  As previously discussed, security certificates allow for the detention and expulsion of

non-citizens who are deemed threats to national security, based on secret evidence. The majority

of security certificates in the post-9/11 context have targeted Muslim men of Middle Eastern

origin. A security certificate permits:

   the detention and expulsion of non-citizens who are considered to be a threat to national

   security. Detainees have no opportunity to be heard before a certificate is issued, and a

   designated judge of the federal court reviews most of the government's case against the

   detainee in a secret hearing at which neither the detainee nor his counsel is present. The

   detainee receives only a summary of the evidence against him. Detention is mandatory

   for non-permanent residents…and there is no possibility of release unless a person leaves

Canada, or the certificate is struck down, or if 120 days have elapsed and deportation has

still not taken place (Razack, 2008, p. 26).

Additionally, detainees deported to their countries of origin as a result of a security certificate

face the possibility of torture there. These provisions strip away basic and fundamental human

rights. Muslims detained on the grounds of security certificates in the post-9/11 context include,

Hassan Almrei, Mohammed Mahjoub, Mohammed Jaballah, Mohamed Harkat, and Adil

Charkaoui. All men have languished in prison for three to seven years and have spent varying

amounts of time in solitary confinement (Razack, 2008). All five men have spent time under

house arrest with extremely strict conditions, some of whom felt the house arrest conditions were

so humiliating and difficult that they preferred to return to prison (Freeze, 2009).

This section has demonstrated how Islamophobia occurs through class and capitalist

relations, as well as political structures in light of the War on Terror. As Kumar (2012), Sheehi

(2011), and others suggest, modernity and freedom in the context of the War on Terror has

signified the implementing of neoliberal economic reforms in these countries which aim to

exploit the natural resources from these lands. As such, attending to free-market capitalism is

essential to understanding the archetype of 'civilizing European' in the War on Terror. Similarly,

race structures and organizes class and economic based-anti-Muslim discrimination because

embedded in the War on Terror are the perceptions and beliefs of entitlement to the resources of

certain classes of people due to their racial inferiority. The War on Terror has made Muslim

working-classes more vulnerable by selectively applying draconian laws which have targeted

Muslim immigrant working-classes through immigration and security policies which create a

state of exception.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the phenomenon of Islamophobia from a critical race theory perspective. Through this paradigm it has been demonstrated that Islamophobia in the post-9/11 context is structured and organized by the social relations of race, gender, and class, which are indispensable in understanding the emergence of the archetypes of 'dangerous Muslim men', 'imperilled Muslim women,' and 'civilizing Europeans'. These archetypes have sanitized and legitimized the violence of the War on Terror and have been instrumental in fomenting anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia in Western nations. Through 'race', Islamophobia manifests itself in culture talk, race thinking, and 'good Muslim' 'bad Muslim' discourses. Additionally, examining Islamophobia from the perspective of race has revealed the proliferation of camps—spaces where the suspension of the law becomes the law.

Islamophobic views were also clearly demonstrated through 'gender' in 'imperilled Muslim woman' discourses which have advocated rescuing Muslim women from their backwards and misogynistic cultures. 'Imperilled Muslim women' narratives created a space where anti-Muslim rhetoric was masked under the guise of feminist discourses justifying violence towards Muslims through the War on Terror. The most virulent of these came from native informants who advocated both imperialism and neoliberalism. When looking at Islamophobia through a lens which attends to economic and class relations it was demonstrated that anti-Muslim sentiments have been useful tools in generating support for imperialist wars through promoting the archetype of the 'civilizing European'. These wars have usurped natural resources from Muslim-majority countries. Expropriation of these resources was not solely motivated by financial and economic benefits, but also from a deep sense of entitlement to the resources of supposedly racially inferior peoples. The War on Terror has not only brought about an expropriation of resources from Muslim-majority nations but has also facilitated the

application of laws in the US and Canada in targeted ways, which has brought about class-based discrimination against Muslim communities.

Islamophobia is organized and structured by race, gender, and class all together and all at once. Any examination of these relations independently of one another results in a partial and incomplete understanding of the phenomenon of Islamophobia. It is clear from the analysis in this chapter that the War on Terror has further perpetuated the concept of the Muslim 'Other'. Islamophobic discourses surrounding race, gender, and class have been useful tools in justifying and garnering support for the War on Terror. The War on Terror has enabled unjust treatment towards Muslims by justifying the selective application of repressive laws against Muslims locally and invading Muslim-majority countries like Afghanistan and Iraq. The following chapter will attempt to further contextualize Islamophobia in this study by looking at anti-Muslim racism in Quebec, as this study will turn to examine Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools.

Chapter Three

How the Muslim 'Other' has been Conceptualized in the Quebec Context

Introduction

This chapter will provide a brief overview of Quebec history, discussing traditional norms in Quebec society prior to the 1960s and the radical societal shift during the period referred to as the Quiet Revolution. I will discuss how Quebec identity was redefined during this period through employing identity politics—an approach to politics that seeks to secure political freedom of a marginalized group within a larger political body. Quebec identity politics, as I will use the term throughout the thesis, entails political processes aimed at mobilizing the white French Quebecois majority to seek greater political autonomy and having the rest of Canada acknowledge their minority status and the uniqueness of their cultural heritage. In the post-9/11 context, Quebec identity politics have framed Muslims as threatening to traditional Quebecois culture and society. This chapter will address the notion of French secularism and how it manifests in Quebec. Thereafter, I will discuss Quebec's integration policy of interculturalism, as well as instances in Quebec's recent past which have seen a revitalization of 'Us-talk' (Bilge, 2013), such as the debates over reasonable accommodation. This exclusionary 'Us-talk' has reinforced the 'civilizing European' trope. Additionally, this chapter will discuss how Quebec secular and liberal feminist discourses have framed Muslim women as oppressed, conforming to the archetype of 'imperilled Muslim women', which in turn have manufactured fears of the 'dangerous Muslim man'. It concludes with a discussion of how Muslims and Islam have been perceived in schools in Quebec which will help lay the foundation to build my analysis of lived Muslim experiences in Quebec secondary schools.

Overview of Quebec history

Quebec society has traditionally been very influenced by the Catholic Church (Gauvreau, 2005; Rymarz, 2012; Wong, 2011), whose presence dates back to the first arrival of the French in the Americas. When Quebec was 'discovered' by France in the 16th century, French fishermen and fur traders engaged in economic relations with Indigenous Peoples. The European market for furs developed and beaver furs became a lucrative market. Consequently, the French began to develop settlements and "established a colonial society with European political and religious institutions" (Dickinson & Young, 2008, p. 26). By the 1650s, Indigenous Peoples had been decimated by war and disease. This presented an economic opportunity for French immigrants, since the Indigenous Peoples were no longer intermediaries in the fur trade. Hence, there was an influx of French immigrants. The growth of French settlements led to an eventual expansion in farming, which has been described as Quebec's pre-industrial phase in history. In this period, the Catholic Church along with the French monarchy exerted great influence on society. As Dickinson and Young (2008) observe, "churches aided the state in upholding order; the Judeo-Christian version of morality was the basis for criminal codes and for education. In return, the state used its power to back the authority of religious officials" (p. 29). This was accomplished through establishing parishes and enforcing tithe collection. As Quebec, or New France as it was called in this period, was a colony of France, the French monarch was the ultimate head of state. Seventeenth-century France accepted the king's rule as divine right. Hence, the relationship between state power and the Catholic Church was one of reciprocity. The king gave authority and power to the Church. In return the Church legitimized the monarch's authority (Dickinson & Young, 2008).

Tensions existed between France and Britain during the colonial period, as both vied to expand their colonies and the economic benefits that this entailed. These tensions reached fever pitch in the mid-eighteenth century which resulted in a number of battles between the British, French, and other colonial powers over colonies around the world, referred to as the Seven Years' War. Eventually the British gained control over New France and established the Province of Quebec in 1763. As Quebec was now under British control, attempts were made to change the social hierarchy so that Quebec reflected a more British character. This was done by encouraging British migration, French Protestant migration, as well as preventing Catholics from holding public office and barring French Canadians from holding government posts and sitting in assemblies (Dickinson & Young, 2008). However, attempts to change the social structure of Quebec were ineffectual, as there was insufficient British migration to Quebec, which was still overwhelmingly French Catholic. Consequently, the Quebec Act was passed in 1774 which restored French civil law, guaranteed religious freedom, allowed for greater political participation of francophones, and preserved the Catholic Church's social influence in Quebec society (Dickinson & Young, 2008).

Catholicism continued to be influential in Quebec until the 1960s. According to Rymarz (2012), Catholic Mass attendance just prior to the 1960s exceeded 80% in major parts of the province on any given Sunday. This slowly began to change in the 1960s as religion was perceived as impeding social progress. In the place of religion, "there evolved a robust secular mentality characterized by, among other things, a marginalization of religion to the periphery of personal and public life (Rymarz, 2012, p. 297). The erosion of the Church's influence is usually referred to as the Quiet Revolution. Although it took place in the 1960s, its roots can be traced to the *Grande noirceur* or the 'great darkness' a few years earlier, when there was a rise in

conservative ideology and clerical power. It was a period when Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis presented French Canadians as "a docile Catholic population that was reliable as an unaggressive labour force and…respectful of hierarchy" (Dickinson & Young, 2008, p. 271). Accordingly, francophones in Quebec were economically marginalized and relegated to working-class positions. This was a challenging time in Quebec society as it was being confronted with numerous changes. After World War Two there was a considerable inflow of immigrants to Canada, including Quebec. Linguistic and ethnic tensions were beginning to fester as a rising awareness of class and ethnic identity emerged. These changes helped bring about a revival of Quebec nationalism that formed the basis for the Quiet Revolution.

During the Quiet Revolution between 1960 and 1966, Quebec Liberal Premier Jean Lesage introduced a number of political reforms, transferring several key responsibilities from the Catholic Church to the government, including education (Wong, 2011). These reforms were celebrated by Quebec society as a release from the Church and economic oppression (Turgeon, 2004). The Lesage reforms brought about a re-invigoration of Quebecois identity that was "closely linked with the culture and language of the majority" (Karmis, 2004, p. 85). This neo-nationalist ideology asserted that immigrant populations should be assimilated, adopting the language and culture of the francophone majority (Karmis, 2004). Fed up with Quebec's traditional value system and social structure, francophone intellectuals began advocating "a radical separation of church and state and a new concept of social cohesion based on language and culture" (Gauvreau, 2005, p. 248). Upon being elected Premier, Lesage rallied the French Quebecois population under the mantra of *Maîtres chez nous* (masters of our own house), seeking greater political autonomy for Quebec's distinct culture and identity from the rest of Canada. During this period, francophone identity was redefined and centred on the preservation

of French language and nationalism. As Dickinson and Young (2008) mention, "[d]efence of the French language become the centrepiece of nationalism, replacing the Church and legal institutions…for the survival of francophone society" (p. 305). These transformations were especially directed towards the traditional education system in Quebec, which was under the administration of the Catholic Church. This was a classical college system which focused primarily on theology. Higher education was limited amongst French Canadians as their formal education was low and few could afford the luxury, which was primarily offered in English (Gauvreau, 2005). Therefore, French Canadians were less educated and economically disadvantaged. Inspired by notions of economic progress, the Quiet Revolutionaries brought about "a series of new educational structures that displaced Roman Catholicism from what had been a near-monopoly of clerical influence" (Gauvreau, 2005, p. 247). Hence, secularism and the French language began to define Quebec identity, which inevitably resulted in a growing desire to seek greater political autonomy.

Sentiments over Quebec nationalism have often resulted in tensions between Quebec and the rest of Canada, which have included two referenda geared towards Quebec sovereignty in 1980 and 1995. Through employing identity politics, which asserted the distinctiveness of Quebec society, as a means of political protection from being marginalized within Canada, Quebecers and nationalist political parties engaged in 'Us-talk' (Bilge, 2013). 'Us-talk' is a racially coded way of speaking aimed at preserving power and privilege. In the Quebec context it has manifested through emphasizing the distinctiveness of Quebecois culture and identity in contrast to the 'Other'. This exclusionary 'Us-talk' lost some of its political currency after Jacques Parizeau, the former Quebec Premier, made his infamous speech on the eve of the sovereigntist defeat in the 1995 referendum. In this speech, Parizeau openly blamed the

referendum results on ethnic minorities voting against separation (Bilge, 2013). However, recent

events in Quebec have seen a rehabilitation of the exclusionary 'Us-talk' reminiscent of

Quebec's past. The reasonable accommodation debates, as well as discussions over the proposed

Quebec Charter of Values, were clear examples of how divisiveness and alienation of ethnic and

religious minorities from Quebec society have come to occupy political discourses (Bilge, 2013;

Mahrouse, 2010; Wong, 2009). These discourses, which are discussed below, were emblematic

of the sensitivities surrounding the preservation of Quebecois culture through French secularism

in the aftermath of the Quiet Revolution.

Understanding French secularism in Quebec

Laicité, or French secularism as I will be using the term, can be understood as a

normative political culture in which there is a strict separation between church and state on

matters of public policy (Baubérot, 2012). It differs from the term 'secularism', which some have

described as the co-existence of multiple religious and non-religious perspectives in a given

social context (Taylor, 2007). *Laicité* has traditionally been rooted in separating Catholicism

from the state. In more contemporary times it has been geared towards dichotomizing Muslims

as 'Other' in French society. As Selby (2011) notes, "[i]f during the first half of the twentieth

century the separation of church and state was intended to displace Catholicism, in recent

decades Islam has been increasingly depicted as the new challenge for French secularism" (p.

442). Within France this dates back to the post-war era when there was a large increase of

Muslim immigrants arriving from North Africa as unskilled labourers in the 1940-1960s (Selby,

2011). The consistent growth of Muslim migrants over the decades brought about tensions, as

state discourses framed Muslims as threats to French culture and society. This was apparent in

the Stasi Commission Report published by the French government in 2003, which examined the

application of secularist principles in France. The report emphasized *laicité* as a fundamental

pillar of French society and essential for national unity and cohesion (Stasi Commission Report,

2003). However, the Stasi Commission Report positioned "Islam as overly 'political' and

'patriarchal' and describe[d] Muslim women as 'oppressed' by their religious tradition" (Selby,

2011, p. 445). Additionally, the report associated Islam with polygamy, genital mutilation, and

forced marriages (Stasi Commission Report, 2003). This report led to the French government

passing a law banning conspicuous religious symbols in public schools in 2004. The majority of

cases in which the law was applied involved Muslim women wearing the head scarf (Al-Saji,

2010). Hence, Muslims have become the direct targets of French secularism in contemporary

times through discourses of 'liberating' Muslim women from their oppressive religious beliefs

and practices. Drawing from the work of Fanon, Alia Al-Saji (2010) argues that perceptions of

Islamic symbols like the head scarf being threatening to French society dates back to the colonial

era.

In his critical essay 'Algeria Unveiled', Fanon (1965) discusses the French colonizers'

project of removing the Muslim head scarf from Algeria in the 1930s. According to him, the

colonizers perceived the headscarf as a cultural identifier, believing that by eliminating the head

scarf they would be taking steps towards destroying Algerian culture in the colony. Dismantling

Algerian culture was essential, as the colonizers viewed themselves in stark contrast to the

colonized. According to Al-Saji (2010), "[t]he representational apparatus of colonialism not only

constitutes the image of the 'native' but posits this image in opposition to a certain self-

perception of colonial society and against an implicit normalization of gender within that

society" (p. 883). It is through this dichotomizing gaze that a civilized-self emerged in contrast to

a barbaric 'Other'. This perception of the 'Other' constructed the Muslim head veil as a deviation

from French society and was therefore deemed unacceptable. Similar instances of perceiving the *hijab* as 'Other' have occurred in Quebec and have resulted in exclusionary discourses, as noted by Al-Saji (2010). She notes that, "in diverse contexts from France to Quebec, images of the veil have as their counterpart policies that enact the exclusion of veiled women" (p. 877). Hence, the Muslim head veil has come to symbolize opposition to French culture and society. Notions of French secularism have combined with discourses surrounding gender equality to frame Muslims as a threatening 'Other' in Quebec (Al-Saji, 2010; Bilge, 2012). French secularism has greatly impacted Quebec's integration model of interculturalism, which bears some similarities to Canada's model of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism, interculturalism, and managing diversity

To put interculturalism in context we should recall that multiculturalism was instituted in Canada by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau through the *Multiculturalism Policy* in 1971. This policy ensured that

> all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance gives Canadians a feeling of security and self-confidence, making them more open to, and accepting of, diverse cultures. The Canadian experience has shown that multiculturalism encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding (Government of Canada, 1971).

According to Eve Haque (2012), the *Multiculturalism Policy* as well as the *Official Languages Act* were enacted to engender a sense of belonging and to counter tensions building in Canada resulting from changes in immigration policy, Indigenous Peoples' critical responses to the Federal government's attempts to abolish the *Indian Act*, and the growth of French language nationalism and sovereignty movements in Quebec in the 1960s and 1970s. The changes in

Canada's immigration policies dramatically increased immigration. Hence the *Multiculturalism Policy* was a means to manage the changing make-up of Canadian society.

There have been a number of critiques of multiculturalism, which contend that it gives rise to the false notion that Western nations are living in a 'post-race' era. This implies that notable racial progress has been made and that we have now entered a phase in our societal development in which racism is a concern of the past (Barnes, Chemerinsky, & Jones, 2010). Consequently, some critics charge that the notion of multiculturalism ultimately masks the racist past of these nations while simultaneously cloaking the existing inequities, alienation, and prejudices that continue to impact racialized members of society (Hage, 2000, Razack, 2008, Thobani, 2007). Embedded within multiculturalism is the notion of benevolence and tolerance, both of which are problematic. The notion of tolerance suggests that some are in a position to tolerate, while others are tolerated—that there is a power relation between some who get to judge who should be 'accepted' into Canada, on what terms, and others who do not (Hage, 2000). The notion of benevolence in multiculturalism fails to acknowledge immigrant contributions to society. As Sourayan Mookerjea (2009) explains, multiculturalism was instituted to:

> obscure our significant and now growing dependence on the import of migrant labor without access to citizenship rights and to impede the formation of public class solidarities between social groups. But the neoliberal reforms of the last two decades have made it difficult to contain the contradictions (Mookerjea, 2009, p. 188).

In other words, Mookerjea argues that multiculturalism is not an expression of beneficence, but rather it is a way of masking Canada's dependence on its immigrant populations for economic growth and prosperity. Disguising this dependence through multiculturalism facilitates power imbalances. Ghassan Hage (2000) has examined the notions of multiculturalism and tolerance in

Australia, another former British colony with which some Canadian scholars have drawn

parallels (Bilge, 2013; Thobani, 2007). Hage argues that multiculturalism, as celebrated by

Western nations, is a form of 'nationalist inclusion'. This involves nationalist subjects

envisioning themselves as possessing power in society and being in a position of tolerating its

racialized 'Others'. According to Hage (2000), "the difference between those who practice

nationalist exclusion and those who practice nationalist inclusion is not one of people committed

to exclusion versus people committed to inclusion, but rather one of people with different

thresholds of tolerance" (p. 92). In other words, tolerance towards the 'Other' is only acceptable

to a point. This was apparent in the Canadian context over the *Sharia* tribunal debates in Ontario.

As mentioned in Chapter One, these debates revolved around public outcry against Muslims

using faith-based tribunals for resolving civil disputes, a right which other faith groups in

Ontario were permitted to use without problems or controversies. However, when Muslims

attempted to exercise this right, it resulted in controversy and was ultimately disallowed. The

public outcry of Muslims exercising their rights in this instance demonstrated how seeking

religious arbitration exceeded the nationalist subjects' threshold of tolerance of Muslims and

therefore was denied. Hence, multiculturalist practices, such as tolerance, fall short in giving the

racialized 'Other' a true sense of equality because there is no redistribution of power, but rather a

reliance on the nationalist subject to use their power to show benevolence to the 'Other'.

Interculturalism is Quebec's integration model for managing racial diversity. It came

about in response to Canada's implementation of its multiculturalism policies and has been

promoted and in operation officially in Quebec since the 1970s (Waddington et al., 2011).

According to Leroux (2010), the 1990 policy document *Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble: Énoncé*

de politique en matière d'immigration et d'integration best articulates the policy implications of

interculturalism which has three main principles: "French as the language of public life; a democratic society, where everyone is expected and encouraged to participate and contribute; and an open, pluralist society that respects democratic values and intercommunitarian exchange" (Gouvernement du Québec 1990, p.16). One of the key differences between interculturalism and multiculturalism is the notion of a moral contract between newcomers and Quebec society, which suggests that Quebec's common public culture is at the forefront (Leroux, 2012). The adoption of interculturalism as Quebec's official stance towards racial diversity instead of multiculturalism is rooted in the notion of self-preservation. As Waddington et al. (2011) state: "Québec's opposition to multiculturalism is grounded in the belief that the Canadian government's policy of multiculturalism is a betrayal of Québec's historical status within the Canadian federation and undermines Québec's grounds for seeking greater political autonomy" (p. 314). As there have been ongoing tensions over safeguarding language and identity in Quebec, this approach ensured its preservation as a unique minority in Canada while it also offered "a means of partial or limited integration within Canada, releasing the Québécois from the fear of loss of their linguistic culture…providing a sustainable means of remaining within Canada" (DesRoches, 2013, p. 7). Thus, interculturalism takes a more assimilationist approach to integration of racial minorities in order to safeguard traditional Quebecois culture (Talbani, 1993).

Some believe that interculturalism is conducive to social harmony. For example, Gagnon and Iacovino (2005) argue that interculturalism incorporates "immigrant or minority cultures into the larger political community [as] a reciprocal endeavour—a 'moral contract' between the host society and the particular cultural group, in the aim of establishing a forum for the empowerment of all citizens" (p. 30). Others have argued that the differences between multiculturalism and

interculturalism are political in nature and that ultimately whether one is dealing with

multiculturalism or interculturalism, both are "politicized tools for constructing national

subjects" (Leroux, 2012, p. 68). Seen through this lens, Quebec, like Canada as a whole, engages

in exaltation (Thobani, 2007), the process of attributing inherent qualities which characterize

belongingness to the national imaginary, while excluding those who are deemed not to possess

these qualities. This is evident as interculturalism promotes the notion of a "common culture",

the French white Quebecois culture being accepted as the norm and given prominence. It is a

culture which does not evolve or change. It remains constant and stagnant, fixed in a particular

construct of French culture and identity excluding those who do not fit its mould. It is a culture

that does not accept deviations and is therefore a culture of exclusion. As DesRoches (2013)

observes, "[t]he terms set out by the intercultural policy…offer only an exclusive inclusivity;

explicitly, the model boosts diversity as central to the progress of Québec, however, diversity is

only really acknowledged and promoted when it does not risk disrupting established power

dynamics" (p. 6). Hence, interculturalism has been central to discourses of preservation in

Quebec. As will be seen in the following section, the reasonable accommodation debates were a

clear example of a resurgence of Quebec nationalist identity politics in contemporary Quebec

society.

Reasonable accommodation debates and their reverberations

Some Western nations in recent years have displayed anxieties over the 'Other' and the

extent to which immigrant populations should be integrated in society and their cultural/religious

practices be accommodated (Mahrouse, 2010). Quebec society is no different, and these

concerns began to boil over in light of a series of highly publicized, and at times unsubstantiated

(Leroux, 2013), claims about incidents regarding accommodating religious minority groups

between 2006 and 2007. Reasonable accommodation (RA) in Canada is a concept derived from section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which outlines equality rights. The term is most frequently employed in Canada and the US when discussing issues relating to labour law, where employers are required to accommodate employees for religious practices, physical disabilities, or other reasons to the point of undue hardship. In Quebec, the RA debates involved discussions around the extent to which religious minority practices should be accommodated in light of the values and culture of the Quebecois majority (Mahrouse, 2010). According to Gada Mahrouse (2010), these debates were preceded by a string of highly publicized cases including a Sikh boy wanting to wear a *kirpan* to school, an 11 year old Muslim girl being disallowed by a referee from participating in a soccer match because of her *hijab,* as well as a synagogue requesting an adjacent YMCA to frost their windows so that women wearing tight fitting clothes would not be visible to members of the congregation. A few other incidents exacerbated tensions such as the Quebec Human Rights Commission ruling against a local French university, ETS, forcing them to accommodate Muslim students attending the school with prayer space, as well as cases of disputes of pregnant Muslim women requesting women doctors in Quebec hospitals (Wong, 2011). These incidents received widespread media coverage, despite representing a fraction of the RA cases in Quebec. The vast majority of religious accommodation requests in the years leading up to the RA debates, which were few in number to begin with, came from Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses (McAndrew, 2010). In relation to this point, Potvin (2010) observes, "not only was media coverage disproportionate to the actual number of cases of accommodation, but many newspapers…increased the number of incidents 'revealed', thereby setting the stage for one-upmanship and media hype" (p. 79). Media representations of these overly publicized incidents created anxieties and fueled fears over

Quebec identity being threatened by the 'Other'. Consequently, in January 2007, a small Quebec

town, Hérouxville, adopted a 'declaration of norms for immigrants' geared towards its (non-

existent) immigrant population. The declaration entailed the following:

1. At Christmas, children sing Christmas songs.
2. No stoning women.
3. No burning women with acid.
4. No ceremonial daggers in school even if you're a Sikh.
5. Boys and girls can swim in the same pool whether Muslims like it or not.
6. Men can drink alcohol whether Muslims like it or not.
7. No walking around with your face hidden except on Hallowe'en.
8. Female police can arrest male suspects even if it troubles their egos.
9. Women are allowed to dance.
10. Women are allowed to drive.
11. Women are even allowed to make decisions on their own.

 As Mahrouse (2010) has noted, a number of these declarations appear to be banning practices

commonly "associated with a perception of Muslim barbarism" (p. 86). The declaration, not so

subtly, made certain assumptions about the backwardness and incivility of Muslim immigrant

communities, while ironically white-washing gender inequality which existed in Quebec society

(Nieguth & Lacassagne, 2009). Despite the distasteful nature of the declaration, which presumed

immigrant populations—particularly Muslim immigrants—were barbaric and in opposition to

'true Quebecois' values, a number of other municipalities across Quebec adopted similar

declarations (Mookerjea, 2009). Much of the anti-immigrant fervour from the RA debates

focused particularly on Muslim women as Mahrouse (2010) observes:

> [a]lthough the debate was officially framed as being about secular versus religious
>
> values, the major preoccupation of the media reports on the Commission reveal that the
>
> overwhelming concern was not secularism per se but Muslim religious practice in
>
> Québec, in particular the wearing of the veil, which suggests that the oppression of
>
> Muslim women has come to be perceived as the greatest threat to Québec identity (p. 92).

Mahrouse (2010) further elaborates that the focus around Muslim women in the RA debates was framed around a discourse of secularism versus religions in a general sense. However, in the post-9/11 climate, these debates of secularism versus religion in Western nations have allowed for the policing of some forms of religious expression and not others (Asad, 2003). In other words, secularism is increasingly being used as a pretext to attack particular religions, the brunt of which is borne by Muslims.

As fears of the impending erosion of white francophone Quebecois culture and identity grew, political parties were able to gain ascendency by politicizing the debate over the accommodation of minorities in the March 2007 provincial elections. The Action Démocratique du Québec (ADQ), which prior to these elections was merely a fringe third party overshadowed by the Quebec Liberals and the Parti Quebecois, bolstered its reputation by being the first party to take a strong and vocal position on RA, framing it as an issue of *un*reasonable accommodation for the white Quebecois majority. The leader of the ADQ, Mario Dumont, clearly articulated his party's views regarding accommodation of minorities in his *Open letter to the Quebecois*, published by all francophone dailies on January 16, 2007. As Leroux (2010) observes, Dumont and the ADQ engaged in culture talk (Mamdani, 2005), depoliticizing the nature of the RA debates. They disseminated a discourse hinging on the notion that the Quebecois nation's racial origins, being from "European stock", were at odds with those needing accommodation (i.e. immigrant communities). Thus, accommodating immigrants and ethnic minorities was *un*reasonable from their perspective. Many of the principal points in this letter would later form important tenets of the party's platform, which according to Bilge (2013) was "among the most anti-immigrant and pro-assimilationist party platform[s] witnessed in post-1960 Canadian politics for a long time" (p. 168). Ultimately, what were initially a few isolated incidents of

religious minorities seeking accommodations in order to practice their faith became an occasion

for the media and politicians to acquire gains. As Wong (2011) states, "the media and the

politicians saw an opportunity to draw in more readers and votes, respectively, and, as a

consequence, collectively fanned the flames of racism in the public sphere" (p. 147). This was

particularly troubling given that no one spoke out against the number of white Christian requests

for accommodation, which far outnumbered the ones that were being sensationalized involving

Muslims, of which, some were not proven to have actually happened (Leroux, 2013).

The RA debates illustrated an important point; which citizens were considered reasonable

and unreasonable in Quebec society. As Wong (2011) discusses at length, these debates were

used by politicians and the media to delineate reason from irrationality. The white francophone

majority were deemed to be the possessors of reason, whereas the immigrant 'Others' who

lacked conformity to the majoritarian culture and made *un*reasonable demands were deemed to

be irrational. In order for the 'Other' to be considered reasonable and attain the status of a

'preferred' immigrant they were required to accept the norms of 'reason' as defined by the

French white majority. As Jiwani (2006) observes,

> [t]he preferred immigrant fits the mould of the reasonable person. But, unlike the
>
> reasonable person, who is most likely to be born in the country and who is White, the
>
> preferred immigrant tends to be a person of colour. This person does not bring conflicts
>
> over from her/his ancestral lands of origin…At the same time, the preferred immigrant
>
> also believes in the system, adhering to the same liberal beliefs as those of the reasonable
>
> person (p. xiv).

 Through this "discourse of domination" (Jiwani, 2006), the white Quebecois majority defined what was rational and what was not. Thus, what did not conform to notions of rationality should have been restricted, which led to the heated debates over RA.

In response to this perceived crisis over RA, the Quebec provincial government established a consultative commission in February 2007 headed by sociologist Gérard Bouchard and philosopher Charles Taylor. The commission's mandate was to:

> a) take stock of accommodation practices in Québec; b) analyse the attendant issues bearing in mind the experience of other societies; c) conduct an extensive consultation on this topic; and d) formulate recommendations to the government to ensure that accommodation practices conform to Québec's values as a pluralistic, democratic, egalitarian society (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008, p. 17).

The commission's final report was published in April 2008. The synthesis and analysis of the 300 page report concluded that the perception of Quebec identity being under threat was erroneous and that the collective wellbeing of Quebec society was not in danger (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008). On the one hand, some stated that the report produced a well-documented and thorough analysis of a number of the pressing issues relating to reasonable accommodation, as a number of Arab and Muslim groups welcomed the recommendations of the report (CAIR-CAN, 2008). However, Mahrouse (2010) argues, "in a number of subtle ways, the Commission paradoxically perpetuated the racialised hierarchies and exclusions that it wanted to overcome" (p. 88). This was most obvious in the consultation process. White French Quebecois would regularly vent their concerns over the loss of Quebec identity, nostalgically recalling the days when Quebec culture was uncontaminated by the 'Other'. Meanwhile, immigrant groups would try to alleviate the fears of the white Quebecois majority reassuring everyone that they were not

threatening and were committed to Quebec values and culture. Minority and immigrant groups

"were always on the defensive, having to justify their presence, and commitment to Quebec

values, while French-Canadian Quebecois were in a position of granting validation and approval,

in effect, acting as judges of what was tolerable and what was not" (Mahrouse, 2010, p. 89).

Thus, instead of alleviating misguided fears and paranoia of the threatening 'Other', the

consultation process served as a platform to reify positions of privilege and dominance by

bringing to the surface the fact that certain members of Quebec society were able to define who

did and did not belong.

Another way in which the Commission reinforced racial hierarchies was by shifting the

debate over RA away from strictly legal issues to being symptomatic of problems related to

Quebec's sociocultural integration model of interculturalism (Bouchard &Taylor, 2008). The

overall consequence of employing this approach led the Commission to give "greater

prominence to a general request for majority generosity and tolerance, rather than a demand that

certain minority rights be upheld" (Mahrouse, 2010, p. 90). The white French Quebecois

majority were positioned to show benevolence by tolerating practices of the 'Other' despite the

fact that freedom of religious expression was a right guaranteed in Quebec and Canada (Quebec

Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, 1976; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982).

As the statement on the report's cover—"dialogue making a difference"—suggested, the

assumptions embedded in this report were that the RA debates stemmed from ignorance and

miscommunication, and that by engaging in dialogue, these differences and problems could be

resolved. What was absent from the report was an analysis of the power dynamics which framed

the debates.

Another troubling issue which manifested in these debates was the failure to acknowledge that immigrants were contributing members to society on whom Quebec was heavily dependent for its economic growth and sustainability. Quebec's demographic weight within Canada has been steadily decreasing. According to a report by Service Canada (2012) the weak demographic growth in Quebec may possibly bring about a negative natural increase rate (births minus deaths) within two decades, in which case only a positive net migration would yield population growth in Quebec. Simply put, in the next twenty years, Quebec may be utterly dependent on immigration for its survival. Therefore, empowering immigrant populations in ways that their religious and cultural practices are *accepted* and not accommodated is essential because it may facilitate their integration and engender a sense of belonging to Quebec society. Arguably, then, Quebec not only has an obligation to accept its immigrant populations but has a vested interest in doing so, as a society so heavily reliant on immigration should "recognize that there are embodied limits to the changes people can be reasonably expected to live through in the process of immigration, since so much else of their lives is being transformed (Mookerjea, 2009, p. 194).

The fallout of the RA debates profoundly affected Quebec's political landscape. The ADQ's platform in the 2007 election brought to the forefront a number of issues which have, and in all likelihood will continue to, structure nationalist debates in the foreseeable future. The Quebecois identity politics used by the ADQ, framing accommodations for the 'Other' as threatening white francophone culture, brought about major political gains for the party in the 2007 election. However, this amounted to nothing beyond a short-lived official opposition party status. Though Dumont is no longer directly involved in Quebec politics, some argue that his platform greatly influenced the Parti Quebecois (PQ) and its platform while holding a minority

government under the leadership of Pauline Marois from September 2012 to April 2014 (Bilge, 2013). The most blatant example of this could be seen in the proposed Bill 60, more commonly referred to as the Quebec Charter of Values tabled by the PQ government in 2013. The guidelines of this charter of secularism and religious neutrality proposed that no state employee or employee of a state-funded institution be permitted to wear conspicuous religious symbols. This would prevent teachers, daycare workers, hospital staff, and government employees from wearing a *hijab*, Sikh turban, Jewish skull cap, or a large cross. Ironically, the large cross which hangs from the National Assembly would have been excluded from this ban, as the PQ government claimed that some religious symbols have become purely secular in nature and reflect Quebec's culture and not a religion (Brean, 2013). This double standard of picking and choosing which religious symbols to ban on the pretext of state secularism and religious neutrality have occurred in other Western nations. For example, in Germany seven of the sixteen state parliaments were in the process of preparing an 'anti-headscarf law' or a 'law against all religious symbols' geared towards teachers working in state funded schools. These laws would "give Christian symbols a privileged position over Islamic or others" with regards to displays of religious practice in state funded schools (Karakasoglu & Luchtenberg, 2004, p. 44). France passed a similar law in 2004 banning conspicuous religious symbols in public schools, which overwhelmingly affected Muslim women who wore the *hijab* (Al-Saji, 2010).

Public hearings on Bill 60 took place in January 2014 in Quebec City and were heard by PQ representative Bernard Drainville. As with the Bouchard-Taylor Commission consultations, at the hearings on the proposed charter, a number of white Quebecois voiced their anxieties and fears of the 'Other'. Perhaps the most virulent of these came from Claude Pineault and Genevieve Caron, a couple from a small town northeast of Quebec City. During the hearings, the

couple described how they were traumatized on their vacation to Morocco when they were asked

to take off their shoes when entering a mosque and when they saw Muslims on all fours praying.

Pineault went as far as implying Muslim dress could be a security threat as he claimed veiled

Muslims tried to steal his wallet while he was on vacation. He lamented the idea of wearing such

"disguises" in Quebec society (Blatchford, 2014). Although their testimonies were not

representative of all of the pro-charter voices, they resonated with Dumont's and the PQ's 'Us-

talk' where the 'Other' was perceived as irrational and aberrant and therefore not worthy of

accommodation. Pineault's belief that people wearing veils was 'unthinkable' in Quebec society

demonstrated his sense of power to define what was socially acceptable in Quebec. Perhaps

Genevieve Caron's experience was so 'traumatic' because she felt that bowing on all fours (in

prayer) was a complete disjuncture from her notion of Quebecois culture, while not even giving a

thought to the thousands of Quebecois Muslims who perform the same rituals. Do their practices

not form a part of Quebec culture as thousands of Muslims in Quebec identify themselves as

Quebecois? Could their practices ever be accepted as a part of Quebec culture? The RA debates,

immigration codes of conduct, and the proposed Bill 60, were all examples of the 'civilizing

European' trope, discussed in Chapter Two. These instances demonstrated how there was an

assumed backwardness inherent within immigrant, particularly Muslim communities, which

required policing and civilizing in order to be accepted members of Quebec society. The policing

of Quebec's racialized 'Others' has also manifested through secular and liberal feminist

discourses.

Racism disguised as secular and liberal feminist discourses

A number of Western nations have increasingly imagined themselves as champions of

gender equality and sexual emancipation. This view was evident when the Quebec National

Assembly adopted a Bill in the aftermath of the RA controversies which gave gender equality precedence over religious freedom through the addition of the sex equality provision in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights, even though sex discrimination was already protected against in this charter. Hence, gender equality has been given such prominence that it was the only one of Quebec's 'core values' that was "in need of additional constitutional protection (Bilge, 2012, p. 309). This situation, as described by Bilge (2012), is a manifestation of sexularism. Sexularism can be understood as:

> a contemporary discourse offering a teleological narrative of the secularisation process, believed to lead inevitably to gender and sexual equality. From the sexularist stand, religion is deemed unambiguously oppressive to women and non-heteronormative sexualities—an assumption that heavily relies on hierarchical binaries… and produces the West as the site of gender equality and sexual emancipation thanks to secularism (p. 307)

Through a sexularist discourse, Muslims are seen negatively not only because of the association with the religion of Islam, but also because a number of Muslim women wear *hijab*, which in Western societies has become synonymous with misogyny and oppression, as Mahrouse (2010) observes. She notes: "The image of the veiled woman has long been captivating to the western imagination because she epitomises the oppressive practices of the Muslim world, thereby enabling westerners to understand themselves as liberated and, perhaps more importantly, as liberators" (Mahrouse, 2010, p. 92). Gender-based prejudice against Muslims and Islam in Western discourse has been thoroughly documented by Said (1979) in his critical work *Orientalism*. Traditionally, Muslim women through orientalist thought were viewed as exotic and through a lens of eroticism, whereas in the present sexularist discourse, they are viewed as

oppressed and Islam is seen as a threatening force to the sexual freedoms of the West. Thus,

Bilge (2012) contends that sexularism is a "reconfigured Orientalism" (p. 307).

Underlying sexularist discourse is the notion that women have entered into a phase of

modernity thanks to secularism. These gains need to be protected at all costs, hence religion,

particularly Islam, is seen as an open threat to Quebec society because of perceived symbols of

oppression like the *hijab*. This became apparent in the Bouchard-Taylor Commission

proceedings in which significant negative images of Muslim women wearing the *hijab* were

circulated. Hence, these proceedings became a platform where "the figure of the veiled woman

conveniently served, once again, to position non-Muslim Quebecers as the epitome of progress

and tolerance" (Mahrouse, 2010, p. 92). What was strikingly absent from these discussions over

the oppressive nature of the *hijab* were the voices of the women whom were supposedly

oppressed. The irony of these discourses was that they claimed to centre on freedom and the

liberation of women, while marginalizing the same women who they sought to 'liberate'. This

framing of the *hijab* as oppressive, according to Bilge (2010) is typical of liberal/universalist

feminist discourses. Bilge (2010) notes that there are other feminist discourses, namely,

postcolonial feminist accounts, which frame the *hijab* in a resistance discourse. In other words,

the *hijab* symbolizes "resistance against Western hegemony, commodification of women's

bodies and post-9/11 Islamophobia" (p. 14). However, like the liberal/universalist discourses

concerning the *hijab*, this frame also fails to address the reasons given by veiled women

themselves as to why they cover—reasons involving morality, modesty, virtue, and divinity

(Mahmood, 2005).

In addition to framing Muslim women as passive and oppressed, reinforcing the

'imperilled Muslim woman' archetype, liberal feminist discourses also framed Muslim men as

dangerous and threatening. This frame was visible in Quebec society over discussions relating to

'honour-based violence' during the Shafia murder trial. In January 2012 the Shafia murders

received widespread media attention, when Mohammad Shafia, his wife Tooba Yahya, and their

son Hamed were convicted of killing Shafia's three teenage daughters and his first wife over

their alleged immoral behaviour. According to Dana Olwan (2013), the violence surrounding

these tragedies were framed as belonging outside the national imaginary, as media reports

"established honour-based violence as a foreign and imported phenomenon, driven by cultural

and ethnic manifestations of murderous patriarchal honour (p. 539). The three members of the

Shafia family who were convicted of the murder were reproduced in the media as alien to

Canadian norms and standards. As Olwan (2013) observes, "Canadian dailies thus perpetuated

the idea that the Shafias were culturally other and their familial relationships were inherently

premodern" (p. 543). The three teenage victims were portrayed as trying to fit into Canadian

society, fleeing from their oppressive backwards cultural norms. Media reports mentioned how

the teenage daughters' rebellious behaviour, which included wanting to have boyfriends, clashed

with their father's more traditional Afghan cultural norms and eventually reached an impasse

resulting in their deaths (Humphreys, 2012). As opposed to framing this case as an instance of

domestic violence, the media, the Crown prosecutors, and even the presiding Judge insisted on

this particular case being an honour-based murder (Dalton, 2012). In the aftermath, the Quebec

government mandated the Quebec Council for the Status of Women to examine the phenomenon

of honour-based crimes. After studying seventeen cases of honour-based violence in Canada

since 1991, the Council provided the provincial government with seven recommendations to help

stop honour-based crimes. These include:

1. Develop a policy to fight against honour-based violence, in consultation
   with women's groups and community organizations.

2. Develop an action plan that includes the following measures:
   o Train all workers (including youth protection officials, police, judiciaries, teachers and medical professionals) who deal with people at risk of honour-based violence, including forced marriage and genital mutilation.
   o Develop tools to help workers recognize the signs of honour-based violence and to help them evaluate potential risks.
   o Inform women and minorities affected by honour-based violence about their rights and the resources available to help them.
   o Increase funding for organizations that support women affected by honour-based violence, so that they can offer monitoring, extended accompaniment and adapted housing.
   o Develop a strategy aimed at helping youth, such as a guide on how to prevent honour crimes, or a guide on the rights of Canadians.

3. Review the strategy to fight against the practice of female genital mutilation.

4. Put mechanisms in place to protect immigrant women who have been sponsored by their spouses and inform them of their rights in cases of fraud or violence. Also monitor women sponsored by their spouses until they obtain their citizenship, in order to ensure their safety and their rights are respected.

5. Examine the laws in place to ensure that children and adults who are threatened by forced marriages are protected by our legal system and, if necessary, ask the federal government to modify its legislation to ensure those protections are in place.

6. Review the Youth Protection Act, the criteria for the evaluation and the intervention of the department of youth protection, keeping in mind the particular risks linked to honour-based violence.

7. Co-ordinate the implementation of an outreach strategy to challenge the patriarchal concept of honour at the core of some of the communities in question, and actively promote awareness about equality between men and women (CBC News, 2013).

What was troubling about the publishing of these recommendations along with a report was not that action was taken to help prevent honour-based violence against women, as violence against women is a serious social ill and problem that continues to plague society. Rather, what was problematic was that the impetus for these actions came from the Shafia murder trial. This case demonstrated how honour killings were believed to be "a foreign and imported phenomenon brought to Canada by immigrants who fail[ed] to assimilate to national and "western" ideals of gender equality, the crime [was] also viewed as an extreme form of violence that must be

managed and ultimately expelled" (Olwan, 2013, p. 533). As the terms 'honour killings' or 'honour-based violence' are frequently used when Muslims or people who come from predominantly Muslim cultures commit acts of violence against women from their communities, it comes as no surprise that these murders were labeled in this way.

Publishing a report specifically for 'honour-based violence' may have the unintended consequence of lessening the impact of violence against women that has not been categorized in this manner. It was apparent from the Shafia murders that domestic violence when categorized as an 'honour killing' received widespread media attention and government involvement. However, do similar forms of gendered-based violence enacted by other communities, including the white majority, receive as much attention by the media or the government? In August 2012, Nikolas Stefanatos, a man residing in Brossard, Quebec, assaulted his girlfriend Tanya St-Arnauld in a jealous rage. In addition to throwing several objects at St-Arnauld, Stefanatos threw a highly corrosive acid seriously burning 20% of her body (Sutherland, 2014). Media reports described Stefanatos' actions as an acid attack, an instance of domestic abuse, and a bout of jealous anger, but not as an act of honour-based violence, even though it bore the traits of such a crime. Stefanatos' actions did not usher in concerns over honour-based violence being endemic in other parts of Quebec society, which needed to be investigated by governmental bodies. Rather his actions were viewed as an isolated incident of domestic violence independent of any cultural or religious affiliations.

In the aftermath of the Shafia murders, it is striking that the Quebec government would go to the trouble of mandating an organization to study, collect information, and publish a report over 'honour-based violence'. There have only been seventeen cases of 'honour-based violence' in Canada over a span of twenty years (an average of less than one case per year), while in 2009

alone there were over 18,000 cases of domestic violence in Quebec, 82% of which involved female victims (Sécurité Publique Quebec, 2009). The result of these fixations with 'honour-based violence' is that it masks the existence of this violence when committed by men from non-Muslim communities, as well as the violence suffered by women belonging to non-Muslim communities. This is highlighted by Olwan (2013), as she notes the contradictions littering policies about honour killings in Canada, where the state has committed "over $2.8 million dollars to community projects targeting honour related violence while simultaneously stripping Native women's associations from funding crucial for their work" (p. 549). This was in reference to the federal government's decision in 2010 to defund Sisters of Spirit, an association which worked towards exposing and ending violence against Indigenous women.

Labeling forms of domestic violence specifically as 'honour-based violence' reinforces the 'dangerous Muslim men' archetype. The Council, when providing these recommendations, explicitly mentioned that honour-based violence was not exclusive to any particular culture or religion, but their recommendations repeatedly refer to female genital mutilation and forced marriages—practices often associated with Muslim cultures. They also emphasized the protection of rights of women from immigrant communities. What was clear from these recommendations was that non-immigrant communities were not particularly at risk of honour-based violence, even though honour-based violence and other forms of violence against women have the same basis, namely; power, control, the subjugation of women, male patriarchy, and a perceived sense of superiority resulting from gender discrimination (CWF, 2012).

Anti-Muslim liberal feminist discourses in Quebec also surfaced over the PQ government's proposed Charter of Values. Those championing the charter saw Bill 60 as an advancement towards eliminating perceived symbols of oppression like the *hijab* from Quebec

society. However, critics contended that this charter would have the *de facto* result of further

marginalizing women who already faced barriers to employment (Jabir, 2013). Furthermore,

after the Charter of Values was unveiled, there was a documented rise in hate crimes against

Muslim women (Garber, 2014). Ironically, this proposed legislation did nothing to liberate

Muslim women who wore the *hijab*, but served as a means of oppressing them, as many Muslim

women stated that they no longer felt safe to leave their homes by themselves as a result of

harassment they faced in the aftermath of the proposed charter (CTV News, 2014).

The Quebec Liberals also proposed a charter of values during their 2014 provincial

election campaign. This version would have allowed for religious symbols such as the *hijab*,

Sikh turban, and Jewish skull cap to be worn by government employees or employees of

government funded institutions. The only exceptions would be women who wore the 'chador'

and/or face coverings because according to the Quebec Liberal Party such clothing was symbolic

of "'submission and oppression' of Muslim women to men" (Dougherty, 2014). The chador is a

long flowing garment that covers a woman's body except for her face, and is a cultural dress

typically found in Iran. Whether there were women in Quebec who even wore this garment at the

time was unclear. However, what became clear from this Liberal discourse was that attempts to

champion human rights for Muslim women continued to perpetuate notions of Muslim women's

dress being a signifier of their perceived oppressed status, despite the fact that studies have

shown that most women in Canada who wore face covers did so by choice (O'Brien, 2014).

Given the presence of anti-Muslim biases in the RA debates, through the notion of

interculturalism, and secular/liberal feminist discourses, all of which are perpetuated by state

power within Quebec, the question arises whether and how educational institutions are

addressing these issues. More importantly, as schools are state-run institutions, would it be fair to

assume that they facilitate anti-Muslim racism as other parts of the state have done, as seen from the analysis above?

Educational institutions in Quebec

Quebec educational institutions have had a troubled past with the 'Other'. An obvious example of which would be residential schooling. Under the auspices of the Church, residential schooling became compulsory in 1920 for Indigenous children. These were schools in Quebec and across Canada, to which the state removed Indigenous children from their homes and forced them to live in dormitory-style living conditions. Numerous studies have documented accounts of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse at these schools which have scarred Indigenous communities for generations (DesRoches, 2013). The primary intent of these schools was to remove Indigenous children "from their communities for the purpose of extinguishing their language and culture" (DesRoches, 2013, p. 12).

More recent studies have examined issues relating to discrimination and racial profiling of racialized youth in Quebec schools (CDPDJ, 2011). However there are very few, if any studies which examine the experiences of Muslim youth in Quebec secondary schools. Zine (2001) has examined the experiences of Muslim youth attending secondary schools in the Canadian context, focusing primarily on youth from Ontario, as well as the experiences of Muslim students who wear the head veil (Zine, 2006). Others have examined the experiences of Muslims and schooling in the North American context, looking at both Canadian and American Muslims (Sensoy & Stonebanks, 2009). However, none of these studies looked specifically at Muslim students' experiences in Quebec educational contexts.

The educational landscape of Quebec secondary schools has changed dramatically over the past 30 years due to an increased and diverse influx of immigrants (Larochelle-Audet, Borri-

Anadon, & McAndrew, 2013). Teacher training institutions appeared to have made significant

changes to their programs in order to better equip future educators to manage ethnocultural,

religious, and linguistic diversity in the classroom and to help foster citizenship in a pluralistic

society. The *Centre d'études ethnique des universités montréalaises* recently conducted a study

to examine how well Quebec universities were addressing these issues in their teacher training

programs. According to the report, there was significant progress in the 10 years after the

educational reforms in Quebec in 2000, with 40 courses across universities in Quebec that "deal

effectively with ways of taking diversity into account in an educational milieu" (Larochelle-

Audet, Borri-Anadon, & McAndrew, 2013). These courses exposed future teachers to concepts

such as integration, prejudice, and discrimination. The courses also provided information relating

to ethnic relations, immigration to Quebec, and how to adapt educational practices for diversity.

Additionally, the report mentioned that a growing number of tenured professors were devoting

much of their teaching and research to issues relating to ethnocultural, religious, and linguistic

diversity in educational milieus.

Despite these improvements, the report also identified a number of shortcomings that

these educational institutions needed to address, namely that this type of teacher training has

developed in an unorganized manner with a lack of collaborative efforts between professors and

institutions. The report suggested that a possible cause for this problem was the lack of definitive

guidelines from the government. The report states: "This somewhat makeshift development is

also related to the often ambiguous institutional anchorage of teaching diversity, due to the

absence of clear Ministerial requirements and guidelines covering its legitimacy and the

objectives it ought to target" (Larochelle-Audet, Borri-Anadon, & McAndrew, 2013). Although

this report was well-intentioned and aimed to address important and pressing issues relating to

teacher education, one area which should have been examined to truly understand the efficacy of these programs would have been to talk to racialized youth who attended Quebec schools. Engaging in such a dialogue could explore if racialized students felt the programs with which their teachers engaged the class effectively addressed issues and problems relating to ethnocultural diversity in Quebec schools. The assumptions embedded in the report presume that if teacher training programs offer the right mixture of courses and impart the right concepts, there should be fewer problems in Quebec schools concerning racial tensions, prejudices, and interethnic conflicts. However, to better gauge their experiences, students themselves, particularly racialized youth should have been consulted.

Another study looked more specifically at issues relating to racism towards Muslims in Quebec school textbooks (McAndrew, Oueslati, & Helly, 2007). Previously, it was found that there has been significant misinformation about Muslims and Islam in Quebec textbooks throughout the 1980s which contained factual errors, perpetuated stereotypes, and which viewed Muslims and Islam from an ethnocentric perspective (Dunand, 1989; Schultze, 1994). McAndrew, Oueslati, & Helly looked at textbooks used in French secondary schools across Quebec throughout the 2003-2004 school year to examine how these texts represented Islam and Muslims. They examined 21 French textbooks to see how they presented Islam and Muslim cultures, the Muslim world at an international level (i.e. historical events, events between civilizations, and political situations), as well as Muslims in Quebec and Canada. The findings of this study were similar to those in other parts of Canada and the US which found that textbook representations of Muslims reinforced notions of 'Otherness' (Ali, 2013; Sensoy, 2009). In the 117 excerpts that were identified, they noted that there have been some improvements in the ways Muslims and Islam have been represented in textbooks since the 1980s. However, their

study revealed that "ethnocentric and stereotypical presentations, as well as factual errors, still

abound" (McAndrew, Oueslati, & Helly, 2007, p. 173). In particular, it was found that there were

problems in the covering of "historical events that largely legitimizes Western actions, a strong

tendency towards homogenizing and essentializing Muslim cultures, as well as a near total

absence of Muslims as Quebec and Canadian citizens" (p. 173). McAndrew, Oueslati, & Helly

suggested that these problems existed not due to some type of sinister intent, but rather from a

lack of expertise on the part of those writing these texts, fueled possibly by media biases against

Muslims and Islam, as well as the tendency for high school textbooks to deal with complex

issues through simplistic explanations. This study was quite insightful, as it shed light on subtle

forms of racism that existed within educational institutions in Quebec. However it did not

describe the lived realities of Muslim students who attended these educational institutions and

who were the expert practitioners of their lives (Smith, 2005). Though this study uncovered

misinformation in the materials used by educational institutions in Quebec, it fell short in

describing the impact that this could have on students, particularly Muslim students.

Conclusion

This chapter examined Quebec society's relationship with the 'Other'. This was

accomplished by discussing how anxieties have existed over the preservation of language and

identity in the aftermath of the Quiet Revolution. Tensions towards the 'Other' have become

heightened in the post-9/11 context through the notions of secularism and interculturalism, the

reasonable accommodation debates, and liberal feminist discourses, which have largely

marginalized Quebec Muslims. Sexularist discourses in Quebec have constructed visual

signifiers worn by Muslim women, like the *hijab,* as oppressive and misogynistic, under the

guise of gender equality. These discourses, which have constructed Muslim women as

'imperilled' have also manufactured the perception of the 'dangerous Muslim man'. This occurred in media and political discourses surrounding the perceived crisis of honour-based violence and honour killings in Canada. Additionally, the RA debates, the Hérouxville immigration code of conduct, as well as the proposed Bill 60 have reinforced the notion of the 'civilizing European'. These archetypes have been mediated by Quebec identity politics, state policies of interculturalism, as well as liberal feminist discourses in Quebec.

This chapter also reviewed scholarship that examined educational institutions in Quebec to understand if they perpetuated and facilitated biases towards the 'Other'. This included research on teacher training programs in Quebec, as well as studies that have examined French textbooks used in Quebec secondary schools about the way that Muslims and Islamic cultures are represented. These studies provided valuable insights relating to pressing issues involving racialized youth in Quebec schools but failed to describe the lived realities of the students. My study differs from those previously conducted, as it investigated the lived experiences of Muslim students in secondary schools in the post-9/11 context. The following chapter will address the methodological framework that was employed in this process.

Chapter Four

A Methodological Framework for Examining Islamophobia in Quebec Secondary Schools

Introduction

This study was designed to understand the lived experiences of Muslims in Quebec secondary schools in the post-9/11 context. My objectives in doing this study were three fold: (1) to explore whether or not Muslims felt they experienced discrimination in Quebec secondary schools in the post-9/11 context and what factors may have facilitated this; (2) to determine if there was a relationship between the types of representations of Muslims in popular cultural media and how Muslims felt they were perceived in Quebec secondary schools; (3) to provide Muslim students with the opportunity to reflect upon and express biases and prejudices they may have experienced as Muslims in Quebec secondary schools in the post-9/11 era. This qualitative study employed critical ethnography and textual analysis drawing from critical race theory (Bilge, 2012; Hage, 2000; Razack, 1998 & 2008; Thobani, 2007; Zine, 2009). Data collection for this research included audiotaped focus group discussions and interviews of teachers and students. The interview process involved recruiting six teachers (from the subject areas of Social Studies, Science, Fine Arts, Mathematics, and Ethics and Religious Culture) and twelve Muslims (seven males and five females) who were or had been attending secondary schools in Quebec after September 11, 2001. Participants were invited to engage in focus group discussions and interviews over a span of twelve months from May 2013 to May 2014. Focus group meetings were semi-formal and interviews semi-structured, posing open-ended questions relating to: (1) how Muslims were perceived in society; (2) if perceptions of Muslims were shaped by media representations; (3) if they had encountered racism against Muslims within educational contexts. Through a process of critical ethnography, informed by institutional ethnography, the data

collection aimed to "recogniz[e] the authority of the experiencer to inform the ethnographer's ignorance" (Smith, 2005, p. 138). As I am a Muslim teacher, my research required me to engage in self-reflexivity—the process of "having an ongoing conversation with your whole self about what you are experiencing as you are experiencing it" (Nagata, 2004, p. 139).

This chapter begins with a discussion of ethnography as an approach for sociological investigation and some of the theoretical assumptions classically associated with this methodology. Thereafter I will discuss the ethnographic approach that I employed in this study, which drew from institutional ethnography. I then address how participants for this study were selected and interviewed, as well as how focus group discussions were conducted. This chapter also discusses how I engaged in my data analysis. Finally, there will be a discussion of ethical concerns surrounding this research project and the importance of engaging in the process of self-reflexivity as the researcher.

Traditional approaches and epistemologies associated with ethnography

Traditional ethnography is typically characterized by the immersion of a researcher within a foreign culture with the intent to fully understand that culture (Fine, 2000). Often the ethnographer would be completely foreign and not speak the language of the group being observed. Classical approaches to ethnography have been problematized and critiqued, as ethnographers tended to produce "a colonizing discourse of the 'Other'" (Fine, 2000, p. 70). Many of the ethnographer's observations, analyses and descriptions of the groups being studied were constructed through a distorted lens with which the ethnographer understood the cultural group under study as being inherently inferior. The traditional ethnographic constructions of the 'Other' ushered in a "contradictory discourse of individualism, personalogic theorizing, and de-contextualization" in which the ethnographer had "inscribe[d] the Other, strain[ed] to white out

Self, and refuse[d] to engage the contradictions that litter…texts" (Fine, 2000, p. 72).

Additionally, some have argued that traditional approaches to ethnography had latent tendencies to try to capture socio-cultural totality based on observations within a segment of the social-cultural population (Rahman, 2007). In other words, socio-cultural populations were essentialized based on the observations of segments, which may not have necessarily represented the whole population.

A number of the criticisms towards traditional approaches to ethnography created possibilities of employing ethnography in more critical and strategic ways (Rahman, 2007). Hence, various theoretical traditions—post-modernist, feminist, critical, Marxist, and others—have helped further develop the field of ethnography to engage in equity, social justice, and anti-racism research. This study employed critical ethnography which was particularly informed by institutional ethnography (IE). Hence, I have employed a combination of methodological approaches within the framework of critical race theory in this research project. Richard Quantz (1992) has argued that such an approach is legitimate when conducting a critical ethnographic study. He suggests that "for ethnography to be considered 'critical' it should participate in a larger 'critical' dialogue rather than follow any particular set of methods or research techniques" (Quantz, 1992, p. 448). In other words, the focus of critical ethnography is not stringent methodological procedures, but rather approaching research that is in line with a broader critical dialogue. This critical dialogue draws on the "ability to make concrete the particular manifestations of marginalized cultures located in a broader sociopolitical framework" (Quantz, 1992, p. 462). Steven Jordan (2003) has discussed doing action oriented research and finding ways to synthesize and draw from multiple methodological approaches. He observes that participatory research which is oriented towards social change "consists of an amalgam of

methodological approaches that, together or in different combinations, have produced an

orientation to social research rather than a distinct methodology per se" (p. 188). These

approaches often draw from various theoretical strands including postmodernism, neomarxism,

critical theory, postcolonial studies, and feminist studies. Jordan argues that synthesizing

methodologies and theoretical traditions can be used to reclaim socially oriented approaches to

action research that have been co-opted and redefined in the context of globalization. Combining

various methodological approaches can be accomplished when these approaches are employed in

studies that focus on similar issues or share overarching themes. This could include synthesizing

approaches commonly used to study social injustice, racism, and oppression.

The process of synthesizing various methodologies can help enrich and elaborate a

research project, as well as build alliances between research communities (Jordan, 2003). It was

my belief that employing critical ethnography that drew from IE within the framework of critical

race theory could be a useful approach for exploring the lived experiences of racialized and

marginalized members of society in educational institutions. As discussed in detail in Chapters

One and Two, critical race theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding, clarifying,

explaining, and analyzing systemic racism in Western contexts. It describes racism as a function

of power intended to maintain white privilege and racial dominance over subordinated races of

people. It is embedded in society and infiltrates numerous social spheres including the legal

system, politics, the education system, and class relations. Critical ethnography is a research

methodology used particularly to examine peoples' experiences with social, racial, cultural, and

economic oppression and subordination (Cook, 2008). It is a methodological approach which is

in line with critical race theory, as it attempts to give voice and agency to marginalized classes to

challenge oppression and subordination. Though critical ethnography has been used to examine

issues relating to race and racism in educational settings (Carspecken, 1996), I felt that IE

provided more elaborate and sophisticated approaches for explicating relations of oppression and

subordination in educational settings, as will be discussed in more detail in the following

sections. Hence, critical race theory helped me to understand, theorize and explain why anti-

Muslim racism exists and how it manifests for this research project, while critical ethnography

and IE provided methodological tools for investigating the possible existence of anti-Muslim

racism in Quebec secondary schools. I turn now to discuss critical ethnography and IE in more

detail.

Critical ethnography

   Critical ethnography can be understood as a "research methodology through which social,

cultural, political, and economic issues can be interpreted and represented to illustrate the

processes of oppression and engage people in addressing them" (Cook, 2008, p. 148). Therefore,

this methodological approach can be particularly useful when examining oppressed or racialized

groups. Critical ethnography developed as a result of dissatisfaction towards traditional

ethnographic approaches which ignored the impact of race, class, and gender on subjects' lives

(Cook, 2008). Critical ethnography involves interviewing subjects and creating a record of

observation, collecting field notes, observing participants in social sites, as well as analyzing the

social structures with which participants interact with and which impact or influence the social

surroundings of participants (Carspecken, 1996).

   The use of critical ethnography has been taken up in the fields of sociology and cultural

studies; however it has increasingly been used in educational research (Carspecken, 1996).

Certain assumptions undergird critical ethnography when applied in the field of education. These

include the beliefs that "inequality exists in society, mainstream practices often reproduce

inequalities, oppression occurs in many forms and is most forceful when it involves hegemonic learning, and critical research should engage in social criticism to support efforts for change" (Cook, 2008, p. 148). Therefore, this methodology places emphasis on the lived experiences and agency of participants because it is through their insights that criticism and social change is possible. As this approach recognizes the authority of the participant in describing their lived realities, critical ethnographers must engage in a reciprocal process in which the researcher and participants work together in constructing their knowledge of an issue. Researchers employing this methodology engage in a reflexive process. Reflexivity can be described as the "researchers' engagement of continuous examination and explanation of how they have influenced a research project" (Dowling, 2008, p. 747). Critical ethnography has been used to examine Muslim youths' lived experiences in educational settings in the post-9/11 context (Collet, 2007; Schlein & Chan, 2010). My research is a critical ethnography informed by IE.

Institutional Ethnography

> According to Dorothy Smith (2005) IE is a process which
>
> explores the social relations organizing institutions as people participate in them and from their perspectives. People are the expert practitioners of their own lives, and the ethnographer's work is to learn from them, to assemble what is learned from different perspectives, and to investigate how their activities are coordinated (p. 225).

Therefore, as Smith (2005) observes, IE "aims to go beyond what people know to find out how what they are doing is connected with others' doings in ways they cannot see" (p. 225). IE is based on an ontological grounding of actual people's doings under definite material conditions. These doings are constantly in motion and coordinated. This implies that activities of individuals are impacted by one another through ruling relations. Ruling relations are the increasingly

textually based forms of coordination or social interactions in which "power is generated and held in contemporary societies" (Smith, 1999, p. 79). They manifest in forms such as bureaucracy, administration, management, professional organization, and the media (Devault & McCoy, 2002). The coordination of ruling relations creates divergent perspectives, realities, and experiences which form the takeoff point for sociological inquiry. Within this framework, like other forms of qualitative research, knowledge and reality are socially constructed. However, IE differs from other qualitative approaches as the overall aims of IE are to create "'maps' of the ruling relations and specifically the institutional complexes in which they participate in… [and] build knowledge and methods of discovering the institutions and, more generally, the ruling relations of contemporary Western society" (Smith, 2005, p. 51).

In contrast to more traditional approaches to ethnographic research, IE turns the ethnographic gaze onto power relations and institutions. IE is "committed to exploration and discovery. It takes for granted that the social happens and is happening and that we can know it in much the same way as it is known among those who are right in there doing it (Smith, 2006, p. 1). Ontologically, the 'social' refers to the ongoing interaction of people's activities with one another (DeVault & McCoy, 2002). Hence, this approach aims to empower participants by acknowledging their capacity to articulate their lived experiences as opposed to the ethnographer authoring views for them. Though most forms of qualitative research embrace this principle, IE provided other specific tools and approaches that were useful for my study. For example IE places emphasis on the systems of domination and subordination within institutional complexes such as education, health care, etc., and views participants' experiences as a starting point for constructing knowledge and understanding of social imbalances within these structures. From this approach, inequities exist because of ruling relations, which manifest through the

coordination of peoples' activities within these institutional complexes. The notion of 'ruling relations' provided useful insights for me to engage in my analysis, as will be discussed in more detail below.

This approach to ethnography differs from the notions of narrative and storytelling in the field of critical race theory, as discussed in Chapter Two. Narrative/storytelling in IE can be the starting point of an investigation, orienting the researcher towards the subtleties or implicit realities affecting forms of social organization within a particular setting. Whereas in critical race theory narrative is a medium through which racialized people are able to voice their lived realities to challenge dominant discourses. It is my contention that drawing from both IE and critical race theory in this inquiry is justifiable as both approaches rely the narrative of peoples' experiences. Hence, both these approaches legitimize the authority of the experiencer in describing their experiences. Additionally both these approaches have been employed when examining issues relating to oppression experienced by racialized groups (Campbell & Manicom, 1995; Razack, 1998; Zine, 2006).

Within this approach to ethnographic research, as the researcher, I aimed to be informed by the individuals interacting in an institution (i.e. secondary schools in post-9/11 Quebec) to better understand an issue or phenomenon. Smith (2006) further elaborates that IE is committed to:

> *discovering* 'how things are put together,' 'how it works.' The colloquialisms leave what 'things' are or what 'it' is undefined but establish the ideas of encountering the actualities of people's everyday lives, of research that discovers the social as the ongoing coordinating of people's activities, and of the researcher being changed in the dialogic of research" (pp. 1-2) [emphasis in original].

This approach to ethnography strips away preconceived notions of how social contexts function and focuses on exploring how social relations impact lived experiences within a given context. Preconceived conceptions are challenged through viewing participants as experts in describing their lived realities, thus informing researcher's knowledge and understanding in the study. Embedded in this approach is the belief that subjects are understood and known through social interactions defined by ruling relations and those who are coming from positions of privilege (Campbell & Manicom, 1995). For example, when examining the social organization of a secondary school, teachers educate their students through a pre-defined educational curriculum. The curriculum is usually mandated by the government, which is composed of privileged political elites. The government's ideological convictions infuse the curriculum as they decide what texts can be used and what content is to be taught. This curriculum is disseminated to schools through a textual medium, such as an education policy document. In this circumstance the educational curriculum can facilitate relations of ruling if it produces biases, inequality, and subordination because the coordination of social relations within a secondary school is organized through this textual medium. IE is an approach that has been employed to investigate racism within institutional settings (Campbell & Manicom, 1995), which directly relates to my study.

The problematic and emergent ruling relations

An important concept in IE that I draw from is the notion of the problematic. According to Smith (2005), the problematic "sets out a project of research and discovery that organizes the direction of investigation from the standpoint of those whose experience is its starting point" (p. 227). In other words, a problematic is an issue which emerges as the researcher begins their inquiry. It is a primary issue that guides the researcher in discovering what is happening in the everyday social practices of individuals. Through interactions and discussions with participants,

it is the researcher who determines the problematic in a given research undertaking (Campbell &

Gregor, 2008). This becomes evident to the researcher from the accounts of the participants.

Using the notion of the problematic in IE, I engaged in discussions with teacher and Muslim

student participants as a starting point for my investigation. By orienting my research around the

expertise of my participants, I was informed by participants to help me develop a problematic,

which related to racism and prejudices faced by Muslim students in Quebec schools after the

September 11 terrorist attacks. Prior to doing this study, I had preconceived beliefs about how

Muslims were perceived in Quebec secondary schools from my personal experiences. These

views were enriched and evolved based on these discussions. For example, I became cognizant

of how many Muslims in secondary schools experienced racism in subtle and less overt ways,

which relates to how Islamophobia can be experienced in the realm of perceptions and not

always through actions. I also learned that most Muslims I spoke to, though acknowledging the

existence of racist treatment, generally felt positively about their secondary school experiences.

Employing IE was particularly useful in better understanding the social context under study, as

this approach discusses the existence of ruling relations, which are organized through social

interactions within institutional complexes. Through the notion of 'ruling relations' I was able to

better understand how participants' interactions within educational settings systemically

produced experiences of anti-Muslim racism. Employing aspects of IE helped me to better

understand and analyze the experiences of participants through the notion of the 'problematic' as

well as how IE describes the social organization and coordination of ruling relations.

From the accounts of participants it was clear that Muslim students in the post-9/11

context have faced numerous challenges including racist behaviour from other students and at

times prejudicial treatment from teachers. The racism experienced by participants was complex

and influenced by different factors, which I felt required exploring the phenomenon of Islamophobia from different angles and points of view.

I examined anti-Muslim racism in Quebec schools from different perspectives by speaking to male and female, former and current Muslim students, as well as to Muslim and non-Muslim teachers. These participants occupied different social locations and had different perspectives which shed light on the issue of racism experienced by Muslims in Quebec secondary schools in the post-9/11 context. Campbell and Gregor (2008) contend that speaking to a range of participants coming from various perspectives is valuable because "[d]ifferent people in a situation will have different experiences of it. All such accounts are useful in developing a problematic and should be collected" (p. 48). These differing insights helped construct a more holistic understanding of the context and shed light on the ruling relations which operated in the schools attended by participants. In gathering participants for this study I did not exclusively rely on current Muslim students attending secondary schools in Quebec. As the study progressed in its infancy stages it became clear to me that to develop a more comprehensive understanding of Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools in the post-9/11 context, it would be useful to speak with participants who were in high school during 9/11, as well as participants who attended high school after these attacks to get a range of views. I felt that it was important to see if students attending secondary school in the years following this tragic event still felt that it had a direct impact in the type of discrimination that they may have experienced, and if so, to what extent. This is consistent with Campbell & Gregor's (2008) belief that interviewees should be chosen in IE "as the research progresses, and as the researcher learns more and more about the topic. She will see what she needs to know and will find out who would know it" (p. 77).

As the problematic becomes apparent through entry-level data such as the interviews, the researcher's next step is "to go looking for data that will explicate it" (Campbell & Gregor, 2008, p. 60). This is referred to as level two data. Level two data aims to make clear the ruling relations through a process of investigating "the connections across and beyond the boundaries of the setting and how…they [are] enacted by actual people" (Campbell & Gregor, 2008, p. 61). This is done by analyzing comments of participants and not necessarily through directly engaging with them. The relations of ruling often function and are organized outside the knowledge of participants, as they exist beyond the setting in which participants interact. For example, in my study, interviews revealed that ruling relations manifested in various ways. Some participants' comments suggested that ruling relations emerged through state institutions and policies, while others alluded to how various media formed a web of relations through which ruling occurred. Some of the interview responses demonstrated specific ways in which state power and US/Canadian/Quebec media were connected, while others insinuated forms of media acting independently of state power as a ruling relation, as will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

Context, participants, and recruitment

The thesis makes reference to a number of educational levels in Quebec, which should be clarified from the outset to avoid confusion. In Quebec there are four levels of schooling; primary school, secondary school, Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEP), and University. Primary school runs from kindergarten to grade six. Secondary school in Quebec is the equivalent of 'high school' in other Canadian provinces. In Quebec there are five levels of secondary school. Secondary one corresponds to grade seven, and secondary five corresponds to grade eleven, which is the final year of high school in Quebec. Within secondary school, years

one and two are designated as cycle one, and years three, four, and five fall within cycle two (MELS, 2008). Hence the 'senior' years of high school are levels three to five. This research project only involved current and former students from secondary four and five. Post-secondary education in Quebec begins with CEGEP. CEGEP is a general and vocational college system. Students in Quebec are usually required to obtain credits for classes in CEGEP before they are eligible to attend universities. CEGEP programs vary between two year university preparatory programs to three year career programs. The university system is the next level of education, which is similar to university systems across Canada.

I interviewed teachers as well as former and current Muslim students who have attended English and French secondary schools in Quebec in the post-9/11 context. Attention was given to which participants attended French schools and which participants attended English schools to see if any major differences occurred in participants' experiences. I drew student and teacher participants from 18 schools in total; eleven of which were English schools and seven French. Student participants were drawn from the Montreal and the Greater Montreal Region. The reason I did not limit my student participants to one specific area within Quebec was because I wanted to be informed by Muslim experiences in secondary schools in a general sense and did not want to limit participants to a specific school board or region of Quebec. Muslim participants were recruited through contacts that I had within mosques and Muslim community organizations in the Montreal and Greater Montreal Region, as well as personal contacts through friends and family. The reason for drawing participants from these two areas was because I had good contacts with community organizations in these areas and both of these areas were within a reasonable distance of my residence, which facilitated data collection. Hence, I employed convenience sampling. At the time of recruitment, I was in contact with three youth groups that

regularly participated in activities in mosques in Montreal and the Greater Montreal Region.

These youth groups had members whose ages ranged between 15-19 years old and were thus

ideal candidates to participate in this study. The teacher participants were drawn from amongst

my colleagues who taught in various schools in the Greater Montreal Region that I had come in

contact with as a result of my experiences working in the Quebec educational system. All of

these teachers described themselves as being strongly committed to social justice.

    All student and teacher participants resided and attended or worked in schools in

Montreal and the Greater Montreal Region. Four of these schools were located in Montreal,

while the other fourteen schools were located in suburbs or neighborhoods outside the city. All

participants resided in middle-class socioeconomic neighbourhoods. There was a total of seven

Muslim male student participants. The pseudonyms I used for Muslim male student participants

were as follows: Yusuf, Malik, Ismail, Ahmad, Adam, Zaid, and Ali. Yusuf, Malik, Ismail, and

Zaid were of Pakistani origin; Adam and Ali were of Indian origin, and Ahmad was Algerian.

All of the male participants were born and raised in Quebec and their parents immigrated to

Canada before they were born. There were five female Muslim student participants. The

pseudonyms of the Muslim female student participants were: Sarah, Maryam, Noor, Ayesha, and

Amina. Sarah, Maryam, and Amina were of Pakistani origin, Ayesha was Syrian, and Noor was

French Canadian. All five of the female student participants were born and raised in Quebec. The

four non-French Canadian participants had parents that immigrated to Quebec before they were

born. There were six teacher participants, three of whom were Muslim and three of whom were

non-Muslim. Of the three Muslim participants there were two men and one woman, whose

pseudonyms were Hamza, Ibrahim, and Alia respectively. Hamza was of Indian origin, but was

born and raised in Quebec. Ibrahim was from Pakistan and immigrated to Quebec when he was a

university student, and Alia was of Pakistani origin and was born and raised in Quebec. There were two women non-Muslim teacher participants and a third participant who was a male, their pseudonyms were Laura, Jessica, and Jeff respectively. Jeff was of Italian origin, Laura was of Greek origin, and Jessica was French Canadian. All of the non-Muslim teacher participants were born and raised in Quebec. More details relating to each participant will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Ideally I wanted to interview the same number of male and female Muslim student participants to have equal representation. I felt this was important because the experiences of Muslim women in educational contexts have been very distinct from Muslim males' experiences (Razai-Rashti, 2005; Zine, 2006). However, after a lengthy recruitment process the male to female ratio was slightly unbalanced as I had seven Muslim male student participants and five Muslim female student participants. Male participants were very forthcoming through my contacts in the youth organizations from Montreal and the Greater Montreal Region. Female participants were not as enthusiastic about participating in this study. After requesting volunteers for my study through these youth groups I was unable to find any female volunteers. As I was encountering difficulties with finding female participants, I was able to send out an email describing my study to a massive Muslim emailing list in the Montreal region to solicit female participants. The mailing list consisted of over 1,000 members and was used to alert Muslims in the Montreal region about community events or news involving community members. This effort did not have as much impact as I had hoped for, but I was still able to find two female participants through this process. Additionally, a Montreal/McGill community based radio station, CKUT 90.3 FM, which has a Muslim/Arab community radio show called 'Caravan' heard of this study through the email and invited me on as a guest to explain my project. Finally,

I began searching for participants through personal contacts including friends and family and after these combined efforts, I managed to find a total of five female participants. A possible implication of interviewing friends and family was that the nature of the relationship between the participants and interviewer could have somehow impacted or compromised the interview. However, it was my observation that there were no major behavioural inconsistencies between participants that I knew prior to the interviews or met for the first time when I interviewed them. I believe whatever impact there may have been was arbitrary or minimal, as I strongly emphasized that my study sought to be informed by their experiences and from their point of view. I have no reason to believe that participants, whether I knew them before the interview process or not, were disingenuous or untruthful in describing their experiences. In order to develop a genuine research relationship of trust and respect I allowed for participants to determine a location for the interview which they felt most comfortable with. This involved giving student participants a choice to partake in a focus group discussion or individual interviews. I also discussed with the participants why I was undertaking this study, my motivations, and my intended outcomes, prior to engaging in the interviews. I provided all participants with my personal contact information and emphasized that they could contact me whenever they wanted to regarding the progress of the research, if they wanted to follow-up with the study, if they wanted to withdraw participation from the study, or if they wanted to listen to the audio-recordings and read through transcripts.

I cannot say for certain why I had such difficulty in attracting female participants for this study. However, it may relate to sensitivities that often accompany narratives of Muslim women in educational institutions (Mossalli, 2009; Rezai-Rasti, 2005; Zine, 2006) and reluctance to want to share such sensitive information with a stranger. Another possible explanation could

have been that some of the Muslim women who were approached through the community

organizations may have felt uncomfortable being interviewed by a male interviewer because of

their religious interpretations (Abbas, 2006).

Ultimately, I decided to limit the number of Muslim student participants to a maximum

of twelve for reasons of feasibility, as I wanted the interviews to go into as much depth as

possible and allow for follow-up interviews where necessary. Hence, my study provided rich

detailed data to draw from, which may not have been attainable if I conducted shorter interviews

with a larger number of participants. As I only interviewed a total of twelve student participants,

my study did not intend to draw generalizing conclusions for all Muslim students in Quebec

secondary schools. Rather, as this study was a critical ethnography drawing from IE, my focus

was to understand the lived experiences of marginalized members of society (Campbell &

Gregor, 2008; Smith, 2005; Zine, 2006). Any generalizations drawn from my analysis related to

the experiences of these twelve participants only. When considering participants, I searched out

students who were or had been students at the secondary four to five levels in the post-9/11

context. In other words, current Muslim students were no younger than the secondary four level,

whereas other participants may have already graduated from high school. The reason for limiting

this segment to the senior levels was because by secondary four and five all students will have

taken a range of courses (Ethics and Religious Culture years one to three, World History, and

Contemporary World) that may have sensitized them to issues relating to race, gender, power,

equality, globalization and religion (MELS, 2008). Such themes were relevant for helping

provide a context for the students participating in the study.

A concerted effort was made to find participants who attended or graduated from high

school in different years since the 9/11 attacks. In other words, participants were not all the same

age and I was able to acquire a range of insights from participants who were at high school at various intervals in the years after 9/11, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. This was done to examine if attitudes towards Muslims in Quebec secondary schools remained consistent in the post-9/11 era or if there have been variations over the past thirteen years. It may not seem immediately obvious why former Muslim students were interviewed in such a study, as IE typically examines experiences of people as they are experiencing them in a context (Campbell & Gregor, 2008). However, it is my contention that the lived experiences of Muslims who have attended high schools in Quebec in the post-9/11 context are fairly recent and therefore they could easily recall their encounters during this time. Some have criticized relying on memories when conducting ethnographic research, claiming this to be subject to one's present perspective, malleable, and susceptible to inaccuracy or loss (Davis & Starn, 1989). However, as Frank Pignatelli (1998) has observed, memory has the potential to enrich a critical ethnography and can bind "the rich potential of the narrative to fascinate, seduce, and draw us closer to the practical, activist intentions of a critical ethnography" (p. 407). In other words, relying on memory or the use of telling stories is in line with some of the foundational principles of critical ethnography, which is to give voice to socially marginalized members of society. Hence, these narratives are relevant even if they rely on memory. From this perspective, memory is not simply a "repository from which memories can be retrieved…Memory is active, always in the present, and a construction, transaction, and negotiation, as opposed to a reproduction" (Roberts & Roberts, 1996, pp. 17; 29). Despite the concerns raised by Davis and Starn, I believed that relying on the memories of participants helped provide reflective responses about their experiences. Through narrating their stories, I argue participants engaged in an introspective process, which may have brought to light understandings of issues that were elusive while living

through these moments (Roberts & Roberts, 1996). These former students still possessed

valuable insights about perceptions of Muslims in Quebec educational contexts in the aftermath

of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The fact that they were no longer secondary students should not have

disqualified or devalued their contributions and insights into these issues (Stonebanks, 2010,

Zine, 2001). Participants from the perspective of IE "are understood to be experts in what they

do. Researchers rely on learning from them" (Campbell & Gregor, 2008, p. 66). Being former

students did not preclude them from their expertise of their experiences. Additionally, it became

increasingly clear through the interview process that perceptions and experiences were

significantly different amongst the participants in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 compared to

participants who attended secondary schools over a decade after these events, which was

something that I wanted to understand and investigate in this research project. Hence, I felt it was

justifiable to avoid some of the restrictions of IE, such as interviewing only current students, thus

relying on participants' memories.

I also recruited teachers for this study to invite their views, beliefs and insights about

Islamophobia within educational contexts in Quebec. The reason for inclusion of this segment

was because educators are often privy to experiences in their classrooms that can provide

invaluable insights, especially in regards to racist attitudes towards Muslims (Razai-Rashti,

2005; Sensoy & Stonebanks, 2009). Teachers are located differently from students and their

differing perspectives can provide a more holistic understanding of the context being studied

(Campbell & Gregor, 2008). I was able to recruit a total of six teachers for this study. Attempts

were made to have a diverse range of teachers who taught core subject areas. Hence I was able to

interview one Social Studies teacher, one Science teacher, one Fine Arts teacher, one

Mathematics teacher, and two Ethics and Religious Culture teachers. Teachers made reference to

their experiences in relation to their subject areas as well as from their perspectives as members

of their school communities. Teacher participants were limited to six due to feasibility, time

constraints, and accessibility to participants. I felt that teachers from diverse subject areas would

have different types of interactions with their students as a result of the subject matter that they

were teaching and therefore could provide insights from differing perspectives. Both Muslim and

non-Muslim teachers participated in this study as both had valuable insights into the issues

surrounding this research. Efforts were made to include an equal number of male and female

teacher participants. As such, there were a total of three male and three female teacher

participants. Below is a table summarizing my participants by category, gender, location, and

language.

Type of participants	Gender	Area	Language spoken
Teachers	• 3 male • 3 female	• 6 from Greater Montreal region	• 5 English • 1 French
Muslim students	• 7 male • 5 female	• 4 from Montreal region • 8 from Greater Montreal region	• 6 from French Schools • 6 from English Schools
Total	18	18	18

Focus groups and interviews

Through the process of interviewing, the researcher is able to gain access to lived

experiences that would otherwise remain inaccessible. The researcher becomes privy to interior

experiences and gains access to interpretations of participants' perceptions, which opens up

doors to jarring new realities. Interviewing strategies and epistemologies have evolved over the

years (Fontana, 2003). At its inception "[t]he interview emerged only when specific information-

gathering roles were formalized" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003, p. 22). In other words,

qualitative/positivist approaches to interviewing assumed an inherent power imbalance in which it was understood that the researcher was coming from a privileged position of knowledge, authority and power, and that the interviewee was simply providing data. Another characteristic of traditional interviewing involved establishing "a priori categories and … pre-established questions aimed at capturing precise data that…[was] categorized, codified, and generalized" (Fontana, 2003, p. 53). These techniques assumed that there was a set of known realities and facts that could be learned in the social world. Hence, the epistemological frameworks associated with the concrete sciences permeated the social sciences. Some critics of this approach, such as Cicourel (1964), observed that in this process interviewers may overlook the many judgments that they make.

In more contemporary times, through qualitative approaches, the interview has been "reconceptualized as an occasion for purposefully animated participants to *construct* versions of reality interactionally rather than merely purvey data" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003, p. 32). In qualitative, participatory, and collaborative research approaches, interviewees are viewed as "virtual *practitioners* of everyday life who work constantly to discern and designate the recognizable and orderly features of the experience under consideration" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003, p. 32). Thus, the power dynamics have been recalibrated to some degree, acknowledging and distributing power to the participant. This was important for my research as part of my aims in doing this study were to encourage students to challenge negative perceptions of Muslims they may have encountered in secondary schools, as well as to give voice and agency to Muslim students who felt that they were misperceived by society at large. Interviewing from an IE perspective does not seek to "generalize about the group of people interviewed, but to find and describe social processes that have generalizing effects" (DeVault & McCoy, 2002, p. 753). In

other words, IE investigations seek to find organizational practices which affect the activities of participants. Each participant is able to provide a piece to the puzzle which forms an overall narrative of lived experiences of people interacting within an organizational structure.

Some have argued that observation is a more appropriate method when children or adolescents are one's research participants (Corsaro, 1997; Prout & James, 1997). However, Eder and Fingerson's (2002) findings suggest that interviewing can yield successful results. Some of the apprehension about interviewing children and adolescents revolves around power dynamics, as Eder and Fingerson (2002) observe, "children are a socially disadvantaged and disempowered group, not only because of their age but because of their position in society as the 'researched' and never the 'researchers.'" (p. 182). Thus, researchers need to be sensitive to these power imbalances and take measures to ensure the redistribution of power. Some feminist researchers argue that through the process of participatory action research (PAR) some of the power imbalances that may exist between the researcher and those being researched can be alleviated. This occurs when researchers take a more collaborative approach and participants are "invited to join in defining research questions and designs" (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001, p. 343). However, these methods have raised a number of practical problems including participants' willingness to participate in these activities and their level of interest in the research project (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001).

Others have suggested more pragmatic strategies to try to minimize power imbalances when interviewing children and adolescents. For example, Eder and Fingerson (2002) argue that "the adult researcher's power can be reduced while making the interviewing context more natural [when] children are interviewed as a group rather than as individuals" (p. 182). This approach helps minimize power differentials with children and adolescents, as participants may

feel more relaxed in a setting with their peers and have a stronger sense of comfort when they

outnumber the adults (Eder and Fingerson, 2002). Eder and Fingerson (2002) also argue that

group interviews, or focus groups "elicit more accurate accounts, as participants must defend

their statements to their peers, especially if the group is made up of individuals who interact on a

daily basis" (p. 183). Hence, I gave all Muslim student participants the option of being

interviewed individually or in a focus group. These options were available to potentially avoid

feelings of discomfort from being interviewed one-on-one, while at the same time taking into

consideration that some participants may not want to discuss their experiences with a group

given the sensitive nature of the interviews. Furthermore, as I am a teacher in a Quebec public

secondary school, I did not interview any student participants that I taught. This was to avoid

possible conflicts of interest or discomfort that may arise for participants.

As previously mentioned, part of the aims of this study were to encourage students to

challenge negative perceptions of Muslims and give voice and agency to Muslim students who

may have experienced racism and prejudice. As such, interviewing the Muslim participants

involved in this study and allowing them to express their views in their own words was

paramount because it gave "voice to their own interpretations and thoughts rather than rely[ing]

solely on our adult interpretations of their lives" (Eder & Fingerson, 2002, p. 181). In other

words, as a researcher I may have had insights into my participants' lives through my personal

observations. But my interpretations independent of their insights would amount to nothing more

than authoring my views about them as opposed to empowering them to express their

experiences as they lived them. As my research project at its core involved issues of social

justice and empowerment, I strived to enable my participants to express their experiences as they

interpreted them. This was facilitated through asking open-ended questions and allowing for

participants to discuss their experiences in as much detail that they felt comfortable elaborating on. As discussed by Jenny Kitzinger (1994), using focus groups when dealing with sensitive issues or marginalized communities is important because they attempt to give priority to "the participants' hierarchy of importance, *their* language and concepts, *their* frameworks for understanding the world" (as cited in Liamputtong, 2011, p. 109). I conducted one focus group interview consisting of four Muslim male participants. One of the four participants in this focus group was an adolescent who was still in secondary school, while the other three participants were recent high school graduates. All of the participants of the focus group were members of a youth organization who would regularly meet on Friday nights at a local Muslim community centre. As all members of the focus group were friends, they opted to be interviewed together. They felt comfortable with each other and thought it would be less awkward than being interviewed individually. All other student participants indicated that they preferred to be interviewed individually and were thus not a part of a focus group discussion.

Tammivaara and Enright (1986) argue that it is essential to ask non-directed, open-ended, and inclusive questions when studying children and adolescents. Eder and Fingerson (2002) state that when questions are open-ended, "children will have more opportunity to bring in the topics and modes of discourse that are familiar to them" (p. 184). Non-directed questions are also useful in group interviews because they enable youngsters to "collaborate in their answers and to expand on the responses of others…[which] is typical of the discourse styles in many peer cultures and is reflective of children's natural way of developing shared meanings" (Eder & Fingerson, 2002, p. 184). Therefore, my study employed non-directed and open-ended questions during focus group discussions and individual interviews. This approach seemed logical when doing a study drawing from IE, as interviewing "in IE is perhaps better described as "talking

with people"" (DeVault & McCoy, 2002, p. 756). An effective way to "talk with people" in IE interviews is to inform participants what the researcher is interested in hearing about rather than asking a set of specified questions. This technique opens the door to engage in conversational style interviews rather than simply engaging in questions and answers, and often take the form of participants engaging in storytelling (Diamond, 1992). This proved to be an effective method for exploring participants' lived experiences.

Interviews of the six teacher participants employed non-directed and open-ended questions. However, these interviews were all conducted on an individual basis and the option was not given to participate in a focus group discussion. The reason for conducting individual interviews rather than group interviews with this segment was because there was less of a concern about power imbalances, as the participants being interviewed were all adults and volunteers. As I knew the teacher participants prior to the interview process and had positive relationships with them, I felt that by doing individual interviews their responses would be more candid and honest.

Questioning in focus groups and individual interviews commenced upon establishing a non-threatening and non-evaluative environment in order to encourage participants to "feel free to speak about their issues and concerns openly without having to think whether their perspectives would be agreed upon by other members of the group" (Liamputtong, 2011, p. 74). This was accomplished by conducting interviews in a familiar location determined by participants in which they felt comfortable, as well as by mentioning at the outset of the interview process that their views and perceptions were framed by their experiences. As such, there were no right or wrong answers. While interviewing female Muslim teacher and student participants, caution was exercised to facilitate the participants' preferences as much as possible,

as more conservative members of the Muslim faith may prefer segregated environments (Mirza & Bakali, 2010). This involved giving Muslim female student and teacher participants the option of having other females or family members present in the interview process or conducting the interviews through Skype. Two female participants were interviewed over Skype, two others were interviewed in their homes with other family members present, and two participants were interviewed individually and in person. All individual and follow-up interviews were between 35-45 minutes long. The focus group discussion was 65 minutes long and did not involve follow-up interviews. The interviewing of the three categories of participants did not follow a particular sequence. I interviewed Muslim female and male participants, along with teacher participants as they became available. Interviewing and recruiting of participants was simultaneous. That is to say, I was conducting interviews while still actively searching out more participants.

The types of questions that were asked in both focus groups and individual interviews to facilitate "talking with" my participants related to how participants felt that Muslims were perceived in society. They were also asked if they felt these perceptions were informed by popular cultural mediums, and if these representations, positive or negative, had any effects in educational contexts in Quebec based on their lived experiences. The questioning in the focus group and individual interviews included introductory questions aimed at garnering general knowledge of the perspectives of the participants. It also included transition questions to focus in on issues more narrowly, thereafter moving on to focus questions relating to the research questions, and summarizing questions followed by a concluding question (Liamputtong, 2011). Prompting and probing questions were also asked to acquire more in-depth explanations and meanings (Conradson, 2005; Davidson et al., 2010). Examples of some of the types of questions that were asked in individual and focus group interviews included: Tell me about your

experiences as a student/teacher in Quebec secondary school; How do you feel Muslims are perceived by society? Have you ever encountered any issues relating to racism in your secondary school experiences?[4] Interviews and focus group discussions were audiotaped while I took notes and attempted to observe any non-verbal responses. This was done to provide insights that could help to further elaborate and understand interview responses.

Transcription and analysis

The interviews were then transcribed which served as data to be analyzed. As Mishler (1997) observes, "[t]here are an endless number of decisions that must be made about the re-representation of speech as text…which although apparently mundane, have serious implications for how we might understand the discourse" (p. 261). In other words, the methods employed to transcribe interviews have rhetorical functions. Therefore, in transcribing interviews, a conscious effort needs to be taken to represent the discourse in a manner which reflects the participants' views and beliefs. Transcription was done in rounds with various features of talk recorded in each round. I began by focusing on what was said and then in subsequent rounds tried to record gaps in speech and intonation. As there is no "one standard, ideal, and comprehensive mode of transcription" (Mishler, 1997, p. 271), I transcribed the interviews to accurately purvey the perceptions and responses of the participants to the best of my ability. This included using italics to indicate emphasis in participants' intonations, as well as repeatedly listening to audio files of the interviews and comparing them with transcripts to ensure the meaning of participants' comments were clearly communicated in the transcripts. Additionally, I took field notes relating to each question asked in the interviews to help facilitate any points of confusion while transcribing. Transcription of interviews only occurred upon completing all the interviews of all

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[4] See appendix for the question guide used throughout the interview process to facilitate discussions

the categories of participants (i.e. Muslim male students, Muslim female students, and teacher participants). I transcribed all the interviews by participant category and analyzed each category separately.

I employed inductive analysis for coding data (Thomas, 2006) with the intent of constructing my understanding of participants' experiences of racism and prejudice in schools. This involved detailed readings of the data to derive concepts and themes. Hence, the interviews were coded after listening to the audio-recordings and reading each transcript multiple times. Close readings of the transcripts helped me identity meaningful units, which enabled me to derive categories and emergent themes from the text. In total I came up with four major relevant themes that re-occurred in the data. The category labels for these themes were: (1) experiences/perceptions of racism in society; (2) experiences/perceptions of racism in schools; (3) experiences relating to 9/11; and (4) experiences/perceptions relating to media representations of Muslims. Identification of these themes through colour coding facilitated data reduction and analysis. Below I present an example of how I engaged in thematic analysis by presenting a section of a transcript:

> *Naved*: OK, and not necessarily linked to a specific school or an educational setting, how do you feel Muslims and other minority groups are perceived by society here in Quebec?
>
> *Participant*: *I would say it's more and more with…I don't know if caution is my word, increasingly with negativity that people that are from different backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, maybe the perception is becoming more and more that it's not adding to the culture of the province but in some instances, at least, some voices that are a bit prominent, it's a negative, or taking away from the cultural values of the majority.* **So that's maybe increased in the last few years. I'm feeling that from certain media or**

political bodies, less so with my everyday interactions with people in at least popular culture and media I would say that that voice is more prominent than it was 10, 15 years ago.

In the above excerpt, after listening to the audio-recordings and reading transcripts multiple times, I was able to identify two themes from this short section of the transcript. The first theme, which is represented in italics, related to experiences/perceptions of racism within Quebec society. The participant described how he believed Muslims are increasingly being viewed with suspicion as a threatening 'Other' to Quebec society. The participant then linked his beliefs of how Muslims were perceived in society to political and media discourses. Hence the second theme that emerged, highlighted in bold script, was experiences/perceptions relating to media representations of Muslims. Another participant's response demonstrates the theme 'experiences with racism in schools':

Naved: Being a visible minority in Quebec secondary schools, I just want to know what you're experiences were like

Participant: Well first of all, well you know at [participant names a specific school] there's not many minorities at school. You're basically surrounded by, well basically you can say, the white community…At school you notice that people see you differently, they see you as someone else. But the way I made my character at school there was nothing really bad seen towards me. At some points you do get those comments but that didn't really bother me. I just looked aside from them and didn't let that be a distraction towards my studies and what I had to do.

In the above excerpt, as with the previous one, I listened to audio-recordings and read transcripts multiple times to identity themes. The above participant framed his experiences as a visible

minority in Quebec through his high school experiences. He described feeling surrounded by the white majority and being perceived as 'Other' within his secondary school experiences. Hence, the theme that emerged from this excerpt, represented by underlined text, was experiences/perceptions of racism in schools.

As there was not a large number of participants in this inquiry, I reduced and collapsed the codes manually using the physical transcripts. Through continual revision and refinement of the category system, I selected "appropriate quotations that convey[ed] the core theme or essence of a category" (Thomas, 2006, p. 242) for this inquiry. Upon completing my data analysis, I began to write up my findings.

Ethical considerations and reflexivity

I received approval from the McGill Research Ethics Board prior to engaging in interviews of participants. As this study explored issues that may have been sensitive and potentially embarrassing for some of the participants, measures were taken to ensure that the participants' identities remained anonymous. Efforts were also made to ensure informed consent of the participants, as well as participants under the age of eighteen having their parents sign consent forms in accordance with the Research Ethics Board's requirements. Despite efforts to ensure anonymity, Murphy and Dingwall (2001) have observed that "participants and informants will remain identifiable to themselves… [which] raises the possibility that publication will cause private (or community) shame" (p. 341). In light of this possibility it was clearly communicated to participants, when trying to ensure informed consent, that they could discontinue participation at any point in the study. Given the sensitive nature of a number of the issues that this research touched upon (experiences of racism, biases, prejudices, etc.) participants were informed that they did not have to answer any questions that they did not want to. Additionally, transcriptions

of interviews were made available for participants upon request to read and confirm that their views and interpretations were properly expressed.

Another consideration that came up was to be cognizant of my positions, beliefs and perspectives. As I am a Muslim secondary school teacher, and given the nature of this study, it was inevitable that I would encounter moments in which subjectivity would be entangled in my interpretations and analyses. As Russell and Kelly (2002) observe, a number of influences surrounding the researcher may "serve to create a type of external subjectivity that privileges or discounts certain areas of exploration." Therefore, through the process of self-reflexivity, which "makes clear the researcher's own beliefs and objectives" (Gilbert, 2008, p. 512) I was able to acknowledge that my personal beliefs and opinions would influence how I perceived the context which I was studying. Reflexivity can be understood as a "process of self-examination that is informed primarily by the thoughts and actions of the researcher" (Russell & Kelly, 2002). Furthermore, "[t]he goal of these activities is 'to turn the researcher's gaze back upon oneself for the purpose of separation and differentiation'" (Hawes, 1998, p. 100). There are a number of strategies at the disposal of the researcher to engage in self-reflexivity. I used self-reflective diaries, examined my personal assumptions and goals, and attempted to clarify some of my individual belief systems and subjectivities (Ahern, 1999). Self-reflective diaries were written immediately after interviews and before transcription. This process helped me identify my assumptions as well as how I understood and interpreted participants' comments. Upon identifying my assumptions I was able to examine them as well as my goals. This involved reflecting on my diaries and notes, as well as the research project as a whole. I engaged in this process throughout the various stages of this study (i.e. interviewing, transcription, data analysis, and writing of the thesis). I felt that discussing my research project with others, including my

supervisor, other professors, family members, and friends helped me in the process of clarifying my personal beliefs and assumptions. When discussing my research project with others, they were able to point out some of my assumptions that were not apparent to me while reflecting on my notes and diary entries. I also found referring back to audio-recorded interviews and transcripts upon completing my preliminary data analysis helped me to be more cognizant of my assumptions. Through this process, it occurred to me that in some instances I was overstating and reading too much into participants' comments. A possible reason for this may relate to my personal experiences with anti-Muslim racism in Quebec society and secondary schools.

I believe that engaging in self-reflexivity greatly enriched my analysis of the interviews, as it helped me to be more critical of my work. Given the nature of my position as a Muslim researcher as well as a teacher working in Quebec educational institutions, reflexivity was paramount in my study, as it required that I position myself in relation to my participants. This was needed in my work because

> there is no neutral place for a researcher to stand…we participate in the relations of ruling
> when we undertake certain jobs and community responsibilities. Understanding *that*
> helps us decide what kind of stance we can or will take …Not understanding it means
> that we may be 'doing ruling' in spite of our intentions to work 'on the side of the
> oppressed'" (Campbell & Manicom, 1995).

Through this dialogue with the self I hoped to make myself visible in the text that I was writing (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001) and by doing so, recognize my inability to separate myself, my biases, and my beliefs from my interpretations.

Conclusion

This chapter described the methods and methodologies employed in this research project, which examined the lived experiences of Muslim students in Quebec secondary schools in the post-9/11 context. In engaging in this inquiry I combined and synthesized theoretical and methodological approaches. I believe this reflects my pragmatism and subjectivities as an educator and academic, as I did not want to limit and confine myself in methods and approaches. Rather, I felt that a combination and synthesis of approaches was the most useful and practical way to engage in this inquiry. Additionally, relying on and synthesizing these theoretical and methodological approaches is indicative of how I have positioned myself ontologically in this research project. As this study was a qualitative study, drawing primarily from theories and methods relating to critical theory, my knowledge and understanding of these issues were being constructed as I engaged in this inquiry. Synthesizing these theoretical and methodological approaches facilitated my exploration of these issues as well as help to clarify how I interpreted my findings. Having laid out the methodological framework and approaches utilized in this research project, the next chapter will explore the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools since 9/11. The chapter will provide a portrait of the 'realities on the ground' by drawing from interviews from current and former Muslim students who attend(ed) secondary schools in Quebec with the intent of uncovering the ruling relations which may have facilitated anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia in their schools.

Chapter Five

Data Analysis: Unveiling the lived realities of Muslim students in Quebec secondary schools

Introduction

This chapter will discuss and analyze the interviews that I conducted for this study. The overall goal of this chapter is to uncover the ruling relations that may have facilitated Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools since 9/11. As noted in the previous chapter, I interviewed three categories of participants; Muslim female students, Muslim male students, and teacher participants. Muslim female and male students were considered two different categories because I wanted to see the differences and similarities between these two groups. This was of particular interest to me because all of the female participants wore the *hijab* while attending high school and were therefore visibly identifiable as Muslim. All participants are identified by pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. The Muslim female and male students comprised Muslims who attended Quebec secondary schools in the post-9/11 context. That is to say, some of the participants were currently high school students during the interview process, whereas others had already graduated from high school at some point after 9/11.

The analysis of the interviews was done by looking separately at each category of participants. Within the discussion of the categories there was a brief description of the participants to help contextualize their comments and views. The analysis of the categories was done thematically to see what issues emerged within each of them. Upon completing my discussion of each of the groups' interviews, I identified similarities and trends and concluded with a discussion of the relations of ruling in the lived experiences of Muslims in Quebec

secondary schools. I turn now to begin my analysis by examining the experiences of Muslim female students in Quebec secondary schools in the post-9/11 context.

Muslim women's experiences in Quebec secondary schools

The participants. All of the female student participants were interviewed individually and attended different high schools in Montreal and the Greater Montreal Region. Only one of the five Muslim women interviewed was still in high school at the time of interviewing. All five women were from middle-class socio-economic backgrounds. Two of the participants attended French public secondary schools and the other three attended English public secondary schools. As previously mentioned, the names used for the Muslim female participants in this study were Sarah, Maryam, Noor, Ayesha, and Amina. All women wore the *hijab* in high school and continue to do so. All identified as practicing Muslim women. Sarah was a high school student in secondary five at the time of the interview. There were only a handful of Muslim girls at Sarah's school, who like her wore the *hijab*. Consequently, Sarah was one of the only visible Muslims in her school. Maryam was a university undergraduate student at the time of the interview. She was not in high school during 9/11. Therefore, Maryam, like Sarah, was a high school student in Quebec secondary schools in the aftermath of 9/11. Maryam was an activist who worked with grassroots organizations within her community to help organize Muslim events.

Noor, Ayesha, and Amina were older than the aforementioned participants and were all attending secondary school at the time of 9/11. Noor grew up in Montreal and was a convert to Islam who took the *shahada* (formal declaration of accepting the Islamic faith) when she was fourteen years old. She was in secondary four when 9/11 happened. Noor's husband was born in Pakistan and immigrated to Canada when he was 19 years old. Noor's husband and children were all Muslims. However, Noor's parents and extended family were all non-Muslims at the

time of the interview. Ayesha had recently graduated from university at the time of the interview. She was in secondary one during 9/11. Her family was not always very religious, but after 9/11 there was a shift in her and her siblings' outlook which caused them to incline towards and identify more with Islam. Amina completed her university studies three years prior to the interview and had worked for the federal government. However, once she had children she decided to become a stay-at-home mom. She was fifteen years old and in secondary four during 9/11.

Societal perceptions of Islam. During the interview process I asked the female student participants to tell me how they felt Islam and Muslims were perceived by Quebec society at large in addition to their experiences in secondary schools. I felt it necessary to hear their thoughts on how they believed society perceived them because my assumptions in doing this research were that schools are a microcosm of society and the types of perceptions that people have of Muslims in society may resonate with the way they were perceived in a school setting. As I contend in Chapter Three, a number of state policies and institutions in Quebec have anti-Muslim biases. My research seeks to understand if these biases were perceived by participants in Quebec society as well as in secondary schools. All female participants felt that there were some levels of racism towards Muslims within Quebec. Based on their experiences, some felt racism was much less apparent in their daily lives than others. Noor, for example, felt that some of the anti-Muslim racism in Quebec was exaggerated by the media:

> I think some people are ok with Muslims, some people are not, but most of the people I
>
> meet are nice. But I know there are people who don't like Muslims, but mostly we see
>
> that in the media and I don't see that much. But I did when I was in Montreal in the metro
>
> and those things. Yeah, there you felt bad.

Noor described how her interactions with people in Quebec did not seem negative. However, she still acknowledged that anti-Muslim sentiments existed in Quebec society. It may be possible that Noor felt she had experienced less discrimination than the other participants who believed that anti-Muslim racism clearly existed in Quebec society, as Noor was a white French Quebecois convert to Islam. What was interesting about Noor's comments was that despite feeling that racism towards Muslims was not too bad, she had personally been targeted by people in Quebec for her Muslim appearance while taking public transportation. Noor went on to explain these incidents that took place in the metro in more detail:

> *Noor:* They would sometimes insult you and say *'go back to your country'* and stuff like that. Like, I could have answered, I am in my country, but I didn't used to answer anything when things like that happened. But it wasn't nice I didn't like to take the subway but I used to take it all the time.
>
> *Naved*: so in some parts when you were living in Montreal you felt that there was some kind of negative impression of Muslims?
>
> *Noor*: *Yeah*, yeah, for sure. Once someone started throwing *eggs at me* from a window in an apartment building.

Though Noor did not feel that she was discriminated against openly in her secondary school setting, she was clearly being discriminated against when taking public transportation to get to school. Despite Noor's Quebecoise origins, she had been verbally abused with taunts telling her to "go back to your country", which was indicative of how wearing Muslim symbols like the *hijab* placed her outside of her culture of birth and signified her as 'Other' to some members of Quebec society. Abo-Zena, Sahli, & Tobias-Nahi (2009) have noted that Muslim women who wear the *hijab* often "experience marginalization caused by hate speech such as being told to "go

back to your country"" (p. 13). In this instance, the nationalist subject envisioned themselves in a

position of spatial power in which they possessed the right to determine what belonged within

the norms of society and what needed to be expelled. Islamic symbols such as the *hijab* in the

case of Noor, despite her Quebecoise ancestry, brought about a situation in which she was

marked as contaminating the nationalist space and was told to leave. This episode was an

example of race thinking, as Noor's Islamic faith was racialized and thus disqualified her from

occupying the status of an exalted nationalist subject. Noor never experienced this type of verbal

abuse prior to wearing the *hijab.* Therefore, Noor's experiences indicated that her perceived

belongingness to Quebec society was contingent upon her conformity to the majoritarian culture.

Once she veered away from Quebec societal norms, she was told to "go back to your country",

casting her in the realm of 'Otherness'. In addition to facing verbal taunts, Noor also experienced

instances of being physically abused when she had eggs thrown at her. The graduation from

verbal taunts to physical forms of abuse and violence such as throwing objects at a person for

their appearance and perceived beliefs is an example of nationalist subjects feeling they are

entitled to manage the space of the nation. As such, they are raising their hands against the

'Other' believing that they are nationally empowered to do so (Hage, 2000). One can draw

parallels between these experiences described by Noor and events in Quebec history such as the

RA debates and the proposed Bill 60. These events also demonstrated how some members of the

majority culture in Quebec felt as though they were in a position to define what did and did not

belong within the nationalist space. Noor's experience with physical assault was not an

experience shared by the other participants.

Ayesha never received taunts and verbal abuse in face-to-face encounters in Quebec.

However, she did experience Islamophobia indirectly through online forums:

People in Quebec tend to be more secretive about these things [negative perceptions of

Muslims] so on the surface it looks like everybody is really happy but then, you know

that there's a lot of wrong messages in peoples' heads. For example, when I was in

university classes we would have these discussion forums online and sometimes they

would be anonymous or even not anonymous. People in class would not speak out but

then all of a sudden their Islamophobic tendencies came out of these [online forums]

because they are hiding behind a screen, so they don't feel that they're putting themselves

too much out there.

Ayesha described how people in Quebec had Islamophobic views and beliefs but would not

express them in face-to-face encounters. However, when an opportunity presented itself to voice

these beliefs in an indirect manner, Islamophobic discourses emerged. This incident was an

example of a type of dormant Islamophobia—alluded to when Islamophobia was defined in

Chapter One—which was a common theme with a number of participants. Dormant

Islamophobia occurs when Muslims feel or believe that people in their everyday interactions

have certain animosities, biases, and preconceived notions towards Islam and Muslims.

However; they do not readily express these animosities openly. These Islamophobic perceptions

emerge when circumstances facilitate anti-Muslim discourse and actions, such as "hiding behind

a screen" through an online forum. Being able to express these views in an indirect manner was

far less confrontational than in a classroom setting where students would be required to defend

their positions. Hence dormant Islamophobia graduated into explicit forms when a facilitating

agent, like the discussion forums, was present.

Other participants described how dormant Islamophobia took on explicit forms when

events portraying Muslims in a negative light occupied public and media discourses. Hence,

events like the reasonable accommodation debates, discussions over the Charter of Values, and

terrorist attacks committed by Muslim extremists facilitated overt or explicit expressions of

Islamophobia in the lived experiences of participants. These incidents occurred at the hands of

members of society, who, prior to these events, did not display such tendencies towards the

participants. Some participants discussed how the Quebec Charter of Values enabled dormant

Islamophobia to emerge in explicit forms. Ayesha briefly commented about the Charter of

Values, and suggested that it became an issue of public debate in Quebec because of perceptions

that secularism was at odds with people practicing their faith. Ayesha alluded to how Islam was

perceived as a threat to Quebec's secularism, perpetuating the notion that Islam is threatening to

the core values of Quebec society (Bilge, 2013). Maryam, however; viewed discourses

surrounding the charter in a more positive light within the Montreal region:

> I think in Montreal because of the whole *Charte* thing…I think people still respect us, I
>
> think that respect is growing. I think especially after the whole *Charte* thing…it's created
>
> a platform for people to learn more about Islam and *who these 'Muslims'* are, especially
>
> after 9/11.

Maryam, the university undergraduate student, felt that discussions about the charter have

created a space where Muslims can voice their views about issues in Quebec, and consequently

Quebec society at large can learn more about Muslims. In other words, Muslims have been able

to capitalize on this issue and through the debates and discussions about the charter have been

able to exercise agency. Consequently, Muslims were being respected more, as people were

sympathizing with the plight of Muslim women who would have been negatively impacted by

the charter. Maryam believed that the 9/11 terror attacks had cast the Muslim community in

Quebec in a negative light and the discussions and the debates over the Charter of Values helped

Muslims in Quebec improve their public image, possibly because they were being perceived as victims of injustice, as opposed to the usual depiction of Muslims being violent aggressors. Maryam's comments implied that, notwithstanding the negative sentiments whipped up by media and political elites, people were critical of discriminatory actions and proposed legislations. In general, the female Muslim student participants felt that biases towards Muslims existed in Quebec. Some believed that these biases were more implicit. Others experienced them in explicit forms through taunts and verbal and physical abuse. Similar types of incidents occurred with Muslim women participants in educational settings.

Experiences in secondary school. Some female participants experienced overt forms of racism and bias, while others did not feel they were openly discriminated against in secondary school. All of them generally described their experiences in secondary school in a positive manner, while still facing occasional challenges related to how they were perceived because of their faith. As the *hijab* is often a signifier of the 'imperilled Muslim women' archetype in media and public discourses in Quebec society (Bilge, 2010; Ramachandran, 2009), having a generally positive experience throughout high school was a refreshing surprise to some of the participants:

Well in general, I would say I had a pretty good high school experience. I was the only girl in my school to wear the *hijab* and to be a *real* visible minority. I mean there were minority cultural groups at my high school but no one really stood out other than myself and I think I was the first one to ever even wear one [*hijab*]. I looked at graduation photographs from previous years and I never saw anyone wearing a *hijab*, so I would say I was the *real* first *visible* minority in my high school. But overall I had a pretty good experience, I didn't feel like I was singled out.

Amina felt it important to emphasize that despite her visible difference, not only at her grade

level but within her school's history, that she had a generally positive experience in secondary

school. Amina's emphasis on the *hijab* within her school setting was indicative that she felt that

she stood out within her student body, yet this was not a major setback for her attending

secondary school. Other participants had varying degrees of positive experiences, which is not to

say that within the overall positive atmosphere there were not instances of discomfort.

Ayesha attended a high school that she described as being very multicultural with a

number of Muslim students. However, she felt that without a visible signifier indicating her

religious/cultural identity she blended into the majoritarian culture in her secondary school,

which is something she wanted to change:

> I only had one friend that actually wore the *hijab* in my grade, and I wore the *hijab* when
>
> I was in grade nine in the middle of the year because I was just sick of not being
>
> identified as Arab [i.e. students thought she was of European descent].

Ayesha was able to pass as a white Canadian student despite having an Arabic name. She felt at

odds with the notion of passing (Bell, 2009), discussed in Chapter One, and wanted to assert her

Arab identity. For Ayesha, the *hijab* was a visible signifier that gave access to her Arab identity

within the secondary school system. This raised an interesting point—based on Ayesha's

experiences, the *hijab* is what signified Arabness in her school culture. In other words, a student

in her school was not recognized as an Arab unless they were displaying a conspicuous

religious/cultural symbol like the *hijab*. Ayesha's donning of the *hijab* also suggested that in

some ways she was entangling her religious and ethnic identities, as not all Arabs are Muslim

and the *hijab* is an Islamic garment. Some scholars have discussed how Arabs and Muslims are

rarely differentiated in media representations of Islam (Salaita, 2006; Shaheen, 2008), however

these are reductionist and over-simplified representations. It would seem that Ayesha in some ways was complicit with these reductive stereotypes as she affiliated this religious signifier with her Arab identity. This experience also relates to the racialization of the Islamic faith as Ayesha equated religious symbols with ethnic affiliations. Hence, Ayesha's comments revealed some of the complexities and interrelations between ethnic and religious affiliations. It would appear that through a process of racialization, Ayesha may have been exercising some form of agency as she wanted to be acknowledged as Arab through this religious signifier. Upon wearing the *hijab,* Ayesha experienced unintended consequences where she felt she had to be a spokesperson for Islam:

> You know, when you're a teenager you feel the world is always staring at you. And you know there were random things that happened here and there but overall it was smooth, except for the fact that I felt that I had to be a spokesperson for the *entire* Muslim *ummah* of the world. Like every time there would be a debate that would happen in class everyone would just sort of look to me and I was 14, I was supposed to justify everything!

Wearing the *hijab* brought about some instances of stares and other uncomfortable situations within Ayesha's school setting but nothing that was unbearable for her. The only issue which Ayesha seemed to be annoyed with was that she had to be the Muslim representative voice whenever there were discussions about Islam or Muslims in her classes. Though it may seem that Ayesha was viewing all Muslims to be homogeneous as she makes reference to the "Muslim *ummah*" (i.e. the Muslim community), however this term can be used to describe the Muslim community in a general sense taking into consideration the differences of cultures and ethnicities of Muslims around the world. Rather, I believe Ayesha's comments suggested how others

assume homogeneity amongst Muslims worldwide. Such perceptions enabled her to be a representative voice, which came about through a visual signifier, associating *her* with *them.* This was not the case for Ayesha prior to wearing the *hijab*. These comments revealed a subtle irony relating to the intersection of Ayesha's multiple identities. Ayesha used veiling to identify herself as Arab, essentially exercising agency through racializing her faith, while expressing distaste for being 'Othered' when she sarcastically reflected on having to be the spokesperson for the international Muslim community when she started wearing the *hijab*. The anxieties described by Ayesha were possibly exacerbated as the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq took place while she was still in high school. The situation described by Ayesha is what some have termed "spotlighting", which refers to when "students of minority religious, ethnic, or cultural groups…[are] spotlighted to speak for or otherwise justify what "their group" thinks or what members of their group do" (Abo-Zena, Sahli, & Tobias-Nahi, 2009, p. 8). In subtle ways spotlighting reproduces the myth that Islam and Muslims are monolithic (Said, 1979) and that there is not a diverse range of views within the Islamic faith regarding world affairs and conflicts. This is hardly surprising given that Ayesha could not even be identified as a Muslim until she visibly wore an Islamic symbol which has often been associated with notions of misogyny and the oppression of Muslim women. In essence, spotlighting asks Muslim students to explain why other Muslims engage in acts of terror assuming that they understand the motivations of terrorists or that they could speak on their behalf (Abo-Zena, Sahli, & Tobias-Nahi, 2009). This may result in feelings of guilt by association as spotlighting with regards to the 9/11 attacks assumes that the reasoning for them is somehow explained through the common faith shared by the students and the perpetrators. Ayesha felt a great sense of discomfort when class discussions and debates relating to Islam and Muslims would focus attention on her,

because as an adolescent she felt the need to "justify everything" (i.e. the actions of Muslim extremists) even though she did not agree with these actions.

In one instance described by Ayesha she mentioned how one of her teachers through a class discussion reproduced notions of 'culture talk' (Mamdani, 2005):

> I remember people were talking about Iraq and what not. It was the Iraq—the US had just invaded Iraq and the teacher was trying to be real open minded and she was a very nice person but she still said *'I think we need to understand the Arab mind'* and then the whole class looked at me. And I was like supposed to explain the Arab mind. So there was always that pressure to represent everybody at the same time and I still didn't know who I was.

Ayesha's teacher felt that there was a certain essence or characteristics that were essential to being Arab. Logically then, if there was an "Arab mind" Ayesha was qualified to speak about it because she was one of *them*. Clearly this was troubling for Ayesha because she was still trying to understand who she was. She did not identify with the notions of Arabness as understood by her teacher and classmates, yet she was signified as one of *them*. In this instance, Ayesha's teacher reinforced the perception of "Muslims as a monolithic group, all of whom [are] devout worshippers and therefore suitable representatives and authorities of their religion" (Khan, 2009, p. 30). The unintended actions of Ayesha's teacher—reinforcing notions of Muslims being a monolithic group in which all Muslims, or in the case of Ayesha, all Arabs, are painted with a broad brush possessing innate qualities or a common mindset—can be traumatizing to Muslim students in a secondary setting and can result in teasing, bullying, and possibly even discord within the family unit (Abo-Zena, Sahli, & Tobias-Nahi, 2009). Statements and actions by teachers in which there are subtle forms of racism or prejudice are not always based on an intent

to paint a negative image of the 'Other' in a classroom setting. Often these incidents occur out of

a genuine misunderstanding, as their knowledge of conflicts or other cultures may be

misinformed. This can be damaging, as Kincheloe (2005) observes: "[w]ithout an understanding

of these specific dynamics, teachers are too often unable…to protect students from the

radioactive fallout of hidden structures of racism, class bias, patriarchy, homophobia,

colonialism and religious prejudice" (p. 35). Consequently, teachers who are misinformed may

be disseminating stereotypes to their students. In relation to discussing conflicts such as the War

on Terror, as Ayesha's teacher did, this will inevitably taint students' perceptions of their

Muslim classmates even if they are their friends (Mossalli, 2009).

When Maryam started wearing the *hijab*, she experienced a similar type of phenomenon,

where she suddenly became the gatekeeper of knowledge of Muslims and Islam in her secondary

school:

> I didn't really have that many weird experiences in high school but after I started wearing
>
> *hijab* in secondary two, mostly people were still respectful but there were a lot of
>
> questions that were asked. So I think it was a very *big* shock for me… they would ask me
>
> a lot about all those stereotypical things in our religion. So they always needed
>
> clarifications. That happens even now.

Maryam experienced a similar type of situation as Ayesha when she started wearing the *hijab*, as

her relationship with her peers and teachers changed. Instead of just being a regular student, she

had to become a spokesperson for the Islamic faith and for Muslims. Some studies suggest that

often questions faced by Muslim women in educational settings are "in the context of epithets

propagated by the media" (Abo-Zena, Sahli, & Tobias-Nahi, 2009, p. 15). In other words, the

assumption of 'Otherness' underlies these questions (Khan, 2009). This was the case with

Maryam as she described the types of questions that she was asked as originating from stereotypes associated with Islam. These stereotypes, according to Maryam, included questions relating to *sharia,* beheadings, and forced marriages, all of which are tropes in the dominant Western discourse about Islam, as seen in our discussion of Hérouxville in Chapter Three. Hence this was an example of dormant Islamophobia manifesting and becoming explicit. A number of Maryam's peers had biased and contrived notions of Muslims and Islam. Once Maryam began wearing the *hijab* she fit the description of the 'imperilled Muslim woman' in Quebec society, which clearly was not the case before when she was a regular *hijab*less student unqualified to answer questions. Wearing the *hijab* provided her with the credentials to discuss 'Islam', or rather the students' stereotypical views of Islam because she now fit the stereotypical mould. In addition to having to answer questions relating to stereotypes associated with Islam, Maryam also faced taunts and teasing about wearing the *hijab*:

> Some of the students, I think back then they would call me—just to make fun of
>
> me…that was actually *pretty rough*, they would call me Saddam. So stupid things like
>
> that, like Kaddafi, so stupid things like that, but as a joke, I never took it seriously.

Though Maryam did not take the taunts of other students very seriously, it is still indicative of how the *hijab* became a means to change how she was perceived by her peers. Upon donning the *hijab* she had nicknames thrown at her of two violent tyrannical leaders of Muslim countries. Similar to the findings of Byng (2010) discussed in Chapter One, Maryam's wearing of the *hijab* in the eyes of some students indicated affiliations to radicalism and violence. Hence, media discourses linking the *hijab* with violence and terror resonated with perceptions held by students at Maryam's secondary school. In Maryam's experiences, students were not the only ones who held stereotypes of Muslim women who wore the *hijab,* since teachers also had prejudices.

Maryam recounts how she had a history teacher who would make a number of false presumptions about Maryam based on her physical appearance:

> I remember in grade 11 or grade 10 at the beginning of the school year, I remember I had a professor, he was our history teacher. And I remember one of my first experiences with him, I think he didn't have too many *hijabis* in his class before and he had this preconceived notion that we were out to get him or something. So once I was like dozing off in his class or something, he came up to me and he kind of accused me of not paying attention and thought that I had headphones under my *hijab.* And he made this whole fiasco in front of the class and I was like what are you talking about. And it was really interesting to see and I kind of told him off too. I was like, that's kind of *rude*, first of all you accuse me like that and I don't know where you're getting these notions from.

Maryam's early encounters with this teacher were not very positive, as she felt he was biased towards her because she wore the *hijab*. She believed the teacher felt that women wearing the *hijab* "were out to get him". His prejudices surfaced when Maryam was day dreaming in class. Instead of telling her to pay attention, he accused her of hiding headphones in her *hijab*. Maryam felt this accusation was unwarranted and disrespectful as she was being accused of something without any evidence to support the accusations. The actions of Maryam's teacher implied a distaste of her wearing the *hijab.* In most instances within a secondary school setting, wearing headphones and listening to music, especially during a teacher's lesson, violates rules and protocols of the school. In doing so, he implied that Maryam was using her *hijab* to 'break the rules'. This relates to the notion of exaltation (Thobani, 2007), as the nationalist subject, in this instance, the high school teacher, perceived the *hijab* as an aberration that was used to break the rules and therefore had no place in his classroom. In other words, he envisioned himself in a

position to be able to determine what was and was not acceptable within a state institution. I contend that similar to opinions expressed by Claude Pineault, discussed in Chapter Three, the teacher viewed the *hijab* as a type of disguise that was being used to dupe the nationalist subject.

Shaza Khan (2009) has noted that in circumstances where teachers have concerns with students who wear visible religious signifiers like the *hijab,* it is best to address these concerns privately with the student. Students may be offended and feel marginalized in a classroom environment in which the teacher makes a spectacle of the *hijab* in front of the whole class. When discussed privately, many of these tensions can be alleviated (Khan, 2009). In the case of Maryam, this episode marked a confrontational relationship with her teacher which could have very easily been avoided by speaking privately with the student. Maryam's relationship with this teacher evolved over the course of the year and she felt that as the teacher got to know her better through personal contact, his perceptions changed. So much so that she felt a number of his misconceptions of Islam were clarified through their interactions. Ayesha echoes a similar sentiment as she believed in order for perceptions surrounding Muslims in secondary schools to change, Muslims themselves need to take the initiative:

> I think that Muslims need to slightly get out of their comfort zone and reach out to people because as a Muslim community I think we just wait for people to understand us without trying to make ourselves understood.

Ayesha felt that Muslims needed to proactively engage in dialogue with the school community and society at large in order to be understood. This is similar to findings in studies which suggest that knowing and having interactions with Muslims can bring about a positive shift in perceptions of Muslims and Islam (Khan, 2009; Esposito & Mogahed, 2007). Ayesha's comments implied passiveness amongst Muslims in secondary school and Quebec society, in

which Muslims were the object of others' interpretations. This could be problematic, given that media and political discourses have contributed to casting Muslims in a negative light, as seen in previous chapters. However, Ayesha's comment suggested that she believed Muslims were in a position to counter the dominant discourse about Muslims. In order for perceptions to change, she believed Muslims needed to exercise some degree of agency. A number of the Muslim female participants discussed how 9/11 impacted their experiences in Quebec secondary schools.

As mentioned earlier, three of the five participants attended secondary school during the 9/11 attacks. Despite the fact that this tragic event took place on US soil, its reverberations were felt by some of the participants in a direct manner in Quebec secondary schools. Some of the effects of the 9/11 attacks included losing friends, being bullied, and concerns for safety. Amina discussed how these events affected her relationship with a close friend in secondary school:

> There was one incident where after 9/11 that I recall very strongly. There was this guy that I was pretty good friends with. We used to take the bus together and pretty much right after, the day after [the 9/11 attacks], he just completely stopped talking to me. He actually posted something *really* derogatory [about Islam] in his locker and a teacher had reprimanded him for that and had him remove it. And after that he never spoke to me, after 9/11, and before that we used to take the bus to and from the school together and we were pretty good friends.

9/11 changed the way Amina was perceived amongst her friends. Some have noted that events like 9/11 can cause "students who feel pain or threat, particularly over something out of their direct control… to experience frustration and resentment towards the social groups they blame for their feelings (Liese, 2004, p. 65). As Amina described it, her friendship with a good friend effectively ended because of 9/11, as if the student was trying to punish Amina for these attacks.

The assumptions embedded in this student's response were that these actions committed by a

fringe group of Muslims were representative of the religion of Islam as a whole. As previously

discussed, a number of stereotypes relating to the experiences of Muslim women in secondary

schools revolved around the idea that all Muslims held homogeneous understandings and beliefs.

According to this logic, the ideology of the Muslim terrorists who committed these acts would be

shared by all Muslims. Amina being rejected by her friend in the aftermath of the terror attacks

for no apparent explanation was indicative that he believed sharing a common religion with the

perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks in some way signaled her acceptance of these acts. It could be

said that Amina's friend categorized her as a 'bad Muslim' (Mamdani, 2005) whose values were

incompatible with his. Amina experienced a type of guilt by association which inevitably

resulted from this friend's monolithic understanding of Muslims and Islam. Amina also

described how understanding Muslims and Islam as homogeneous affected her brother who

attended the same school as her during the 9/11 attacks:

> It was very closely after 9/11, and me and my brother we took the bus together to and
>
> from school. And after school some of the older kids had started picking on him and
>
> calling him Bin Laden's son and asking him, *where's your father*? Pretty much they just
>
> kind of used the same joke. I guess they were trying to bug him asking him where his
>
> father was and saying he's Bin Laden's son.

In this instance Amina's brother was being bullied because of his supposed affiliation with

Osama Bin Laden. There was no reason to assume that Bin Laden was in any way related to

Amina's brother. However, once again, there was an assumption operating within these taunts.

All Muslims, whether they were terrorists or innocent high school kids were held to share the

same beliefs, views, and in the case of Amina's brother, were biologically connected. His Islamic

faith was categorized as a race, as the taunts implied that he and Bin Laden were somehow related by virtue of both being Muslim. This incident was also indicative of the existence of dormant Islamophobia. Amina's brother, prior to this incident, was never picked on by these boys on the bus. Their targeting of him only came about because of their racist associations of terrorism with Islam. These students knew Amina's brother, they knew about his religious affiliations, yet their racist tendencies only manifested when an opportunity (i.e. terror attacks) presented itself.

In the case of Amina, it was not clear if her head veil was what elicited views of guilt by association. However, Ayesha clearly did feel that the *hijab* was a symbol which was indicative of affiliation with terrorism and the 9/11 attacks:

> One of my friends, she was the only *hijabi* in the grade, the only Arab besides me, so people just started surrounding her. And they weren't trying to bully her, but they were just very curious, right, because they saw *her* people—she's Lebanese—but they saw *hijabis* on TV and they said, you know, did your people do the 9/11? And she's like, those weren't Arabs, those were Afghans. She was in grade seven so she just, she automatically, like swallowed what the news said as well but she like carefully pinpointed it to Afghans. She didn't mention anything about it being Muslims or non-Muslims.

Ayesha at this time was not wearing the *hijab* but her friend in secondary one was. Consequently, students immediately came to Ayesha's friend to understand more about 9/11. As Ayesha's friend wore the *hijab* and the news media was inundated with images of *hijab* clad Muslim women after the attacks—some of whom were being depicted as celebrating the attacks (Kincheloe, 2004)—students came to her wanting to understand the motivations of these acts.

Logically, some of the students thought, if they (i.e. Muslims on the news after attacks) wear the *hijab*, and Ayesha's friend wears the *hijab*, they must be the same people. Hence, the students questioned if it was "your people" behind these attacks. In other words, these students assumed Islam was a race. Ayesha's friend perceived the events differently. She believed it was Afghans and not Arabs who were behind the attacks. So she did not make any mention of Muslims or the Islamic faith. She understood, based on media reports, that Afghanis were in some way involved in these events and she identified the supposed terrorists according to ethnicity and not religion. This episode demonstrated how there was a clear distinction in how a Muslim student perceived these attacks and the supposed perpetrators and how non-Muslim students reacted to the same events. The Muslim student perceived the perpetrators according to ethnicity because she was a Muslim and her belief system was apparently incompatible with the acts of terrorism on September 11. Hence she clarified that it was not 'her people', which in her view refers to ethnic affiliation. The perception from the non-Muslim students was quite different. They saw certain Islamic symbols, like the *hijab,* and understood these symbols as representative of ideologies and actions related to the terrorists and the 'Islamic race'.

Noor described how her parents and those of some of her Muslim friends who wore the *hijab* had serious concerns for their daughters' safety at school in the aftermath of these attacks:

> *Noor*: I have a friend who stopped going to school for some time because her parents were scared for her safety when she takes the bus going to school. So she stopped. A few of them stopped I think. But because they didn't want to take off their *hijab*, so they just stayed home. My parents told me to take off my *hijab* right after 9/11 but as soon as I got out of the house I would wear it without them knowing. So I did wear it to school but I don't remember anything that happened.

Naved: So there were a lot of concerns for safety?

Noor: *Yeah*, the parents, mostly the parents were scared for their kids. You did hear about things that happened in the subway. Some people had their *hijab* taken off by other people, stuff like that.

According to Noor, parents of Muslim girls who wore the head veil had serious concerns for their daughters' safety after 9/11. The concerns, as expressed by Noor, were specifically over their daughters wearing the *hijab*. It would seem that these parents understood that the *hijab* was an Islamic symbol in the eyes of the public that signified sympathies or affiliations with terrorism. This occurrence, like Amina's, resonates with Mamdani's (2004) theories relating to 'good Muslims' and 'bad Muslims'. Bad Muslims are those who are perceived to be anti-modern and "refuse the westernization of their bodies and minds" (Thobani, 2007, p. 238). Bad Muslims are those on whom the War on Terror was being waged. By continuing to wear the *hijab* immediately after the 9/11 attacks, parents were concerned that their daughters would be perceived as the 'bad Muslims'. While Noor said she did not experience any problems; parents' safety concerns were warranted, as she pointed out some women were having their *hijab*'s pulled off in the metro.

The act of pulling off the *hijab* in the context of a supposedly multicultural nation and what it entails has been discussed at length by Hage (2000). According to him, the nationalist subject expresses belonging to the nation in two different ways; 'passive belonging' and 'governmental belonging'. Passive belonging is the expectation of benefiting from the nation by virtue of being a part of the nation, whereas governmental belonging involves being in a position to manage the nation so that it remains uncorrupted. Consequently, Hage describes the act of tearing off a woman's *hijab* as nationalist violence rather than racist violence because it is an act

of preserving the nationalist space. As we have previously discussed when commenting on participants' experiences wearing the *hijab* while attending secondary schools, the *hijab* after the 9/11 attacks has been perceived as a symbol of affiliation with violence and terror. When people believe their nation—in this case, Quebec—is being contaminated by people who share a similar ideology as the perpetrators of 9/11 (i.e. women wearing the *hijab*), nationalist subjects will sometimes take it upon themselves to enact their privilege of governmental belonging and purify the nationalist space by pulling off the *hijab*.

Effects of media on Muslim female participants. Muslim female student participants believed that the media played an important role in constructing knowledge of Muslims in Quebec society, as well as in Quebec schools. When questioned about how the media impacted perceptions in Quebec society, Sarah discussed how it could "brainwash" people:

> *Naved*: Do you think popular culture, so things like movies, TV, and news media, do you think that that affects how people perceive different groups in society?
>
> *Sarah*: Yeah, because everyone is like kind of brainwashed by it all because it's everywhere, you can't get away from it.
>
> *Naved*: Have you ever seen any forms of media, either TV programs, movies, or news stories or anything like that that had Muslims in them?
>
> *Sarah*: Yeah, but usually it's in a negative way.
>
> *Naved*: And how were they depicted negatively?
>
> *Sarah*: Well they're usually bad guys, or the person they're [protagonist] after is them [Muslims].
>
> *Naved*: What are the types of images you see in that type of medium, like if they are the bad guys how are they the bad guys, are they just mean people?

Sarah: No, they're like bombers and explosions and all that.

Naved: So generally they're represented as terrorists and stuff like that.

Sarah: yeah.

Sarah mentioned how the media could have a "brainwashing" effect because of its pervasiveness in society. With regards to how the media portrays Muslims, Sarah described how the media perpetuated the 'dangerous Muslim man' archetype. She believed that the way Muslims were represented in the media influenced how Muslims were perceived in educational settings. Sarah stated these types of representations can lead to distrust and that students may go as far as thinking that Muslim students may commit acts of violence like blowing up the school. Concerning stereotypes of Muslims perpetuated by the media, Tahir Abbas (2011) argues that "[t]he managed reality that is depicted by the media is transferred on society. When interacting with Muslims, Westerners will automatically perceive them as the stereotypes formulated by the media regardless of the way Muslim people actually are" (p. 71). In other words, the media is instrumental in forming perceptions of Muslims, even if this contradicts the actual beliefs and actions of the vast majority of Muslims. Like Sarah, Amina believed the impact of popular cultural mediums, such as TV and movies cannot be understated:

> That's something that kids in secondary school are most exposed to; TV, movies, you know, these are the type of things that they watch. Especially like movies, that's where, you know, a lot of kids spend a lot of their extra free time, watching movies and their ideas do come from this type of medium. It's not just something they're reading about, it's something they're seeing. It's a visual clip. Kind of a snapshot of what Muslims are.

Amina believed that the visual nature of film and television had a major impact on how Muslims were understood. Media representations of Muslims can have a particularly strong impact in a

high school setting because according to Amina's experiences, much of students' spare time was spent watching television and movies. Since Muslims are a minority in Quebec, students may not be overly exposed to Muslims and Islamic beliefs. As such, television and films could possibly be important sites of knowledge production for students with regards to how they understand Muslims, because according to Amina they provide a "snapshot of what Muslims are". Stuart Hall (2011) has made similar claims through his examination of issues relating to race representation in the media. He believes that "media are especially important sites for the production, reproduction and transformation of ideologies" (p. 82). Ideologies, according to Hall (2004) refer to "images, concepts and premises which provide the frameworks through which we represent, interpret, understand, and 'make sense' of some aspect of social existence" (p. 271). In other words, media can influence how we construct our knowledge of various aspects of our lives. This is not to say that there is only one conception of race in the media which reproduces the dominant ruling class interpretation of the 'Other'. Rather, there are varying degrees of racist constructions which are reproduced through different mediums such as films, television shows, or news media. Racist portrayals in the media can be *overt* and at times more subtle through *inferential* racism. *Overt* racism in the media is when openly racist views are given legitimacy by people who are in the business of advocating a racist agenda. *Inferential* racism is a type of unconscious racism that stems from certain unquestioned assumptions imbedded within media (Hall, 2011). Both these types of racism are operational in representations of Muslims in the media (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008; Shaheen, 2001 & 2008). However, one must exercise caution in over-emphasizing the influence of media in knowledge production of Muslims, as people are not just passive receivers of whatever messages are disseminated through popular cultural media. Jiwani (2010), in her examination of representations of Muslim women in

Canadian media, warns against viewing these representations in an over-deterministic fashion, assuming audiences lack agency. Nonetheless, she believes that negative representations of Muslims in the media "legitimize certain actions and inactions, authorize particular ways of seeing the world, and lend credibility to specific interlocutors" (Jiwani, 2010, p. 64). As I have a personal interest in examining and critiquing representations of Muslims in popular cultural media, this point required me to struggle with my assumptions and biases throughout this research project so that I not overstate the influence of media in participants' experiences. This was particularly challenging because a number of participants discussed how they felt there were biases against Muslims in the media. I had to be critical of this point because most participants were unable to identify any specific forms of media (i.e. films, news stories, television programs), which had racist portrayals of Muslims in them. Similarly, with the exception of two male participants who will be discussed in the next section, most interviewees did not link any specific forms of popular cultural media being shown in schools to Islamophobic experiences.

Media representations of Muslims according to all of the participants tended to be one dimensional characterizations that revolved around the archetypes of the 'imperilled Muslim woman' and 'dangerous Muslim man', as Maryam stated:

> They're pretty much type cast [i.e. Muslims in the media]. I don't really see them in American media besides things like terrorist plots or movies about terrorism. So they're represented very one dimensionally. And I never see Muslim families in everyday life going to school or things like that.

Maryam lamented how Muslims were rarely ever portrayed in the media as regular people doing normal activities in everyday life and being contributing members of society. This can be problematic as Hall (2004) argues that our understanding of race and the meanings that race

carries are particularly constructed through the media. Hence, perpetuating these negative

stereotypes could possibly impact how people in society and schools think of Muslims. Maryam

did not articulate in great detail the stereotypes of Muslims in the media besides mentioning the

prototypical Muslim male terrorist. However, others have documented that typecasts of Muslims

in the media disseminate a number of different tropes relating to race, gender, and class

(Alsultany, 2012; Kincheloe, Steinberg, & Stonebanks, 2010; Shaheen, 2001 & 2008).

None of the Muslim female student participants pinpointed a specific media outlet or

example that had influenced perceptions of Muslims and Islam in Quebec society and secondary

schools; rather they mentioned various forms of popular cultural media in a general sense. One

study conducted by Ross Perigoe (2007) documented a number of the media biases against

Muslims in Quebec English newspapers after 9/11. Perigoe's analysis of *The Gazette*, the largest

English language newspaper in Quebec (the eighth largest in Canada), immediately after the 9/11

attacks found that journalists disseminated ideas and frameworks which cast the Muslim

community in a negative light. *The Gazette* perpetuated ideas of Muslims from Muslim-majority

countries as being backwards, oppressive and misogynistic, whereas their coverage of Muslims

from the West was centred on the unavoidability of a backlash. According to Perigoe, framing

Muslims from Western countries in this manner created the expectation that attacks against them

"were not only inevitable, they were also justified—since even the Muslims themselves expected

them" (p. 329). Ironically, *The Gazette* did not document any acts of violence perpetrated against

Muslims from September 18 to September 30 despite the fact there was evidence suggesting that

such attacks were taking place (Perigoe, 2007). According to Perigoe, *The Gazette*'s coverage of

9/11 constructed an image of these events which justified a reaction of retribution and war. These

sentiments resonated with experiences of some of the participants, one of whom discussed how

Muslim women were being targeted in the Montreal metro and having their *hijabs* pulled off

immediately after 9/11. Another respondent discussed how these events led to losing a friend and

her brother being bullied on the bus ride home from school. These responses suggested how

some members of society perceived Muslims as 'Other' and not belonging to Quebec, as if they

were somehow affiliated or associated with these attacks.

     Some participants did mention specific instances or events that were highly publicized

by the media, which helped fuel anti-Muslim racism in Quebec society:

> Like for example, reasonable accommodation. You know, halaal meat comes up anything
>
> that they [media] can pick on they'll just start picking on it and as I said, for me that's
>
> where I see it [anti-Muslim bias] the most; in the media. When I'm outside going places I
>
> don't feel anything wrong so it feels like I'm in a different world. Because when I'm
>
> reading the comments under the news [articles] on the internet it's all crazy stuff, they're
>
> all against Muslims but when I meet people they're all nice.

Noor mentioned how the reasonable accommodation debates, and issues raised in these, like

meat slaughtered in accordance with Islam, were used by the media to "pick on" Muslims. Noor

also alluded to how dormant Islamophobia took on a more explicit character through comment

postings on online news articles. Noor expressed how news articles, when they negatively

portrayed Muslims through events like the reasonable accommodation debates, fanned the flames

of Islamophobia. Noor felt shock over this because when she met people face-to-face she did not

have such negative experiences. Noor described a paradoxical situation where despite people

being nice to her in face-to-face interactions, she still experienced sentiments of discrimination

and hatred towards her faith. Noor also mentioned in her interview how a local Imam of a

mosque was misquoted by a francophone Quebec newspaper, claiming that he advocated the

implementation of the *sharia*. According to Noor, the story was concocted and purposely

misquoted the Imam to frame him as a 'dangerous Muslim man' who wanted to apply the *sharia*,

which has been equated with oppression, lapidating, and the severing of limbs in Quebec

(Mookerjea, 2009). Having completed my discussion of female Muslim students' experiences, I

turn now to consider those of Muslim men who have attended secondary schools in Quebec. This

category of participants described a number of issues relating to anti-Muslim racism which share

some commonalities with the experiences discussed in this section.

Muslim men's experiences in secondary schools in Quebec

       The participants. Of seven Muslim men participants for this category, only one was a

high school student at the time of the interview. All of them attended high school in the Greater

Montreal region and like the female interviewees, all came from middle-class socio-economic

backgrounds. Three of the males attended English public schools, three attended public French

schools, while one attended a private French school. All identified themselves as practicing

Muslim men while they were in high school. As discussed in Chapter Four, the names used for

the Muslim male student participants were Yusuf, Malik, Ismail, Ahmad, Adam, Zaid, and Ali.

Yusuf, Malik, and Ismail were interviewed individually, while the other four participants were

interviewed together in a focus group discussion. The reason for interviewing Ahmad, Adam,

Zaid, and Ali in a focus group discussion is because all four were a part of a Muslim youth group

who met at a local community centre on a weekly basis. They were given the choice to do the

interviews individually but they felt more comfortable to do so through a group discussion

format. Some were less vocal than other participants, however all members of the focus group

did participate in the interview and responded to issues that they felt comfortable answering.

There was a possibility that the less vocal members may have responded to more questions had

they been interviewed individually. But, it was important to me that I establish a non-threatening and comfortable space for participants. For the focus group participants this was more attainable through a group discussion format. Yusuf was in his second year of CEGEP during the time of the interview. He was the sole participant who had attended a private school throughout his secondary education, which had only a few Muslim students. Malik was a third year CEGEP student at the time of his interview. He was one of the only Muslims in his entire secondary school. Malik felt that he was very visibly Muslim while he attended secondary school as he had a Muslim sounding name and a "big beard" which he felt visibly identified him as Muslim. Ismail was a first year CEGEP student at the time of his interview. Like Malik, he attended a school where there were very few Muslims. So he felt he was clearly identifiable as a Muslim in his school. Ahmad was completing his final year of high school during the focus group discussion and he attended a school that had many different minority groups including a number of Arabs and Muslims. Adam and Ali were both completing their final year of CEGEP and Zaid was an undergraduate student during the time of the focus group discussion. All three of them attended high schools that had a number of Muslim students.

Societal perceptions of Islam. As was the case with the Muslim female student participants, I also questioned the Muslim male participants about how they felt Muslims and Islam were perceived by society before delving into their high school experiences. Some of the participants in the focus group felt that there were very negative and biased views towards Muslims in Quebec society:

Ahmad: They think Muslims are like a *monster*, or some *bacteria*. The way they see

Muslims in Quebec in general, they don't like outside cultures. They're too into North

American culture. They're closed. They're not interested in other cultures to find out

what is Islam, what is Christianity, what is Judaism, particularly with Islam because the

media negatively promotes Islam. For example, if there's an American or a Quebecois

who beats their kid 42 times there's some kind of mental sickness associated with that

person, but when it's an Arab who kills someone he's a terrorist. When it's a Muslim he's

a terrorist when it's a white person, a Christian, it's a mental disorder. But if it has

something to do with a Muslim or a Muslim country in general, it's automatically labeled

terrorism. It's [Islam] something really bad, untreatable, needs to be expelled. People are

very misinformed here in Quebec.

Adam: I think we tend to generalize, just like how they generalize *us*, obviously there's

people who understand us. Some people go out of their way. In schools the pure hard

core Quebecois usually are more understanding of our different ways, from my

experience. You can't just generalize on them like how they generalize on us.

Ahmad: that's right there are nice people out there, most my friends are Quebecois

because they understand Islam, but in general, I'm generalizing here, but the majority I

find they have a negative view of Islam.

The comments by Ahmad indicated that he felt strongly that there were biases against Muslims

in Quebec society. He felt that Islam was perceived as a type of threat to the majoritarian culture

which needed to be expelled. He used language that described Islam as a "bacteria", implying the

faith was perceived as a contaminant that could infect society. Consequently, being Muslim or

adhering to Islam was likened to a sickness which was "untreatable" and therefore "needs to be

expelled". Ahmad's response suggested that he felt Quebec society engaged in culture talk by

assuming a certain biological essence which predisposed Muslims to violent behaviour.

Therefore, if a Muslim committed an act of violence, there was no analysis seeking to understand

why these acts were committed. Rather, they were understood to be manifestations of inherent

tendencies towards violence which would be labeled as terrorism. According to Ahmad, similar

types of violent actions were constructed as aberrations and exceptions when committed by

members of the dominant culture. Hence, such behaviour would be explained away through

mental illness because actions of violence and abuse were not viewed as essential to the make-up

of the white majority. Ahmad's comments also related to the notion of exaltation (Thobani,

2007), as he alluded to a certain set of imagined qualities present in the nationalist subject.

Because Muslims were perceived as 'Other' and outside the nationalist imaginary, when

Muslims engaged in violence it could not be understood to arise from mental illness. Such acts

were believed to be a natural consequence of *their* culture, excluding them as nationalist

subjects. A similar situation to what Ahmad described occurred in Quebec in the murder trial of

Guy Turcotte. Turcotte was a cardiologist from Quebec who murdered his two children aged

three and five years old, in February 2009. Turcotte, a member of the white Quebecois majority

obtained the sympathies of a jury who were unable to find him guilty of mercilessly killing his

own children. His violent behaviour could only be understood as a result of a mental lapse or

deficiency (CBC News, 2014).

Of all the members in the focus group discussion, Ahmad felt most strongly that Islam

was negatively constructed and understood in Quebec. Some other members seemed to agree

with Ahmad's comments through non-verbal cues such as nodding their heads in approval of his

statements. However, Adam felt that he was making generalizations. This, according to Adam

was unfair because it engaged in a similar type of essentializing discourse which was often

targeted at Muslims. However, despite Adam's views that Ahmad was generalizing, he did not

voice disagreement over what was being said. There was a type of implicit acknowledgement

that there was truth in what Ahmad was saying as Adam himself mentioned how "they

generalize on us". In other words, Adam did acknowledge that there were generalizing

stereotypes of Muslims. He felt that Ahmad's statements should have been clarified, not

implicating all Quebecois with such views. Some participants discussed concrete examples of

discrimination that they faced in Quebec due to their 'Islamic' appearance.

For the Muslim female participants, it was clear that visible signifiers such as the *hijab*

identified them as 'Other' within Quebec. For some of the male participants, having brown skin

and a beard brought about a similar type of 'Othering', as described by Malik:

> I was in McDonalds once and this old lady came up to me, and back then I had the *big*
>
> *beard*, and she came up to me and she said you should shave that beard, it reminds us of
>
> what happened at 9/11. And I'm thinking to myself, how do *you* know they have big
>
> beards? Most of the time when you see the pictures [of 9/11 terrorists] most of them don't
>
> have big beards, they have small beards, but why is *big beards* attached to terrorism, you
>
> know?

This experience had some similarities with those of Noor who mentioned how Muslim women

were having their *hijab's* pulled off shortly after 9/11. Malik described how a large beard worn

by a brown skinned man had a similar effect of a nationalist subject wanting to exercise a

perceived sense of spatial power by defining what did and did not belong in Quebec society.

Malik's experience was arguably the closest equivalent to having a *hijab* pulled off that a

Muslim male could experience. However, the question arises, what makes the beard so

threatening? When non-Muslim men have large beards does it garner such a response? Malik

found this instance troubling and confusing, as he pointed out that the 9/11 terrorists were for the

most part either clean shaven or had small beards. Malik was the only male respondent who

mentioned having a beard throughout secondary school, which was a means of identifying him as a Muslim. Malik's experiences suggested that similar to how the symbol of the *hijab* came to signify oppression and the plight of the 'imperilled Muslim woman', a "big beard" signified radicalism and the 'dangerous Muslim man' archetype to some in Quebec who felt that his beard reminded them of what happened on 9/11.

Ismail also felt that there were a number of reductive stereotypes in Quebec society that associated Muslims and Islam to violence:

> Well because of the media and everything that's always being portrayed towards Muslims, like, we're seen as –like I don't really know how to explain this but you know that whole *terrorist* scenario/stereotype sort of thing. That's what comes into my mind. Because at school that's the jokes that would come upon me and people of my kind. That's all I see how people see us. They see us as something like…how can I explain this, more like people just wanting to murder and kill and that whole concept of jihad. It's basically a portrayal which is actually not true and wrong in many ways.

Ismail, like Ahmad, felt that Muslims in Quebec were perceived as villainous. Ismail suggested that the dominant frame of Muslims was that of the 'dangerous Muslim man' who was out to harm the Westerner. Ismail believed that the identity of his "kind" was reduced to the singular figure of the Muslim terrorist as he exclaimed "that's all I see how people see us". Ismail's comments painted an image of an almost inescapable characterization of Muslims. They were perceived as people who just wanted to engage in indiscriminate violence and murder. Ismail alluded to how these stereotypes trickled into his experiences in secondary school. Ismail discussed how the taunts that he came across in secondary school exclusively revolved around affiliations to terrorism because of his religious background. Similar to Amina's accounts of her

brother, Ismail suggested that his classmates in secondary school were categorizing him as one of the 'bad Muslims' because of an assumed biological affiliation with terrorism and terrorists, as his faith was perceived as a race. In some ways it would seem that Ismail himself racialized his Islamic faith as he referred to his co-religionists as "people of his kind". Arun Kundnani (2014) observes that "since all racisms are socially and politically constructed rather than reliant on the reality of any biological race, it is perfectly possible for cultural markers associated with Muslimness (forms of dress, rituals, languages, etc.) to be turned into racial signifiers" (p. 11). It would seem that facing a constant racialization of the Islamic faith through his experiences, Ismail himself had begun to view his religion as a race. Other participants discussed similar challenges in their experiences throughout secondary school.

Experiences in secondary school. Most of the male participants, like the females, generally felt that their overall experience in high school was positive. However, all the participants felt that there were some levels of racism against Muslims in their secondary schools. Yusuf, like Ayesha and Maryam, felt tremendous pressure to represent Islam when he was a secondary student:

Well going to school—I went to a private French high school—I have to say, we weren't *just* a minority, there were barely any Muslims in that school. The thing, going to such a French school, people don't really know a lot about Muslims. So as a Muslim over there, a teenager, you feel obliged to represent your religion and sometimes it's kind of hard because you're at that age where you're not only trying to find out who you are but you're trying to fit in as well. So sometimes you leave out some of the things of Islam so that you could just tell people what they want to hear maybe, and not necessarily show the right image of Islam. And that's mainly it for the students, but I mean like for the

teachers, a lot of times they're going to show videos and stuff that might not necessarily

be for [Islam], but you don't have any choice but to accept it. Like one of the videos I had

seen in my high school it had to do with Muslim sisters praying behind men, and that was

just one mosque that they used in the video but they kind of made a general image of how

women are inferior to men in Islam, which isn't the case. But at that age, like, you don't

really know how to say your thoughts, how to be against it. So you're better off just

keeping your mouth shut.

Yusuf described how being a high school student was a time of self-exploration. This was

difficult for him because of certain assumptions associated with Muslims and Islam in his

secondary school, which he did not ascribed to. Yusuf was cognisant of his 'Otherness' in his

high school setting as well as the types of understandings people had of Muslims and Islam.

Hence, he would feel the need to try and "fit in", suggesting that being an accepted member of

the student body was not a taken-for-granted situation for him. Rather, he needed to make efforts

to be perceived as 'normal' even if this meant telling students "what they want to hear" at the

expense of misrepresenting his faith. Some studies have shown that within educational

institutions, students have been able to assert their Muslim identity through participation with

Muslim student groups formed within the school, as these help ease tensions relating to peer

pressure and prevent marginalization (Khan, 2009; Zine, 2001). Unfortunately in Yusuf's school

such an organization did not exist.

The challenges of being a Muslim minority in school were compounded with further

difficulties when teachers would show materials casting Muslims in a negative light. Yusuf's

comments suggested that he would be at odds with the types of media portrayals of Muslims

presented by his teacher, as he described a video that was shown to his classmates gave off a

"general image of how women are inferior to men in Islam". Such imagery of Muslim women in the Canadian context have been documented in depth by Jiwani (2010), who contends that "[t]he tendency within the news media and current affairs programming has been to project representations of the veiled woman as essentially an abject and victimized Muslim figure" (p. 65). Yusuf felt that in his classroom setting he had no "choice but to accept" the types of portrayals of Islam that were disseminated to the students despite the fact that he felt such information was casting his faith in a negative light. Instead of the classroom being a space where Yusuf felt comfortable to express himself, his identity, and his beliefs, he described feelings of alienation, 'Otherness', and was forced to accept prejudicial discourses about his faith. Yusuf described how the archetype of the 'imperilled Muslim woman' was perpetuated through media presented to his class. Despite disagreeing with these portrayals, he felt the need to regulate his views and beliefs about the issue. Perhaps he did not want to engage in a confrontation with his teacher, as doing so would potentially draw more attention to his Islamic faith and in such a situation could further create feelings of alienation with his peers. Abo-Zena, Sahli, & Tobias-Nahi (2009) observe that children in educational settings often have fears and anxieties over being disliked because of their religious affiliations. Such a situation not only inhibits social adjustment and causes marginalization, but can also affect school performance. The tensions described by Yusuf were similar to those described by other participants.

Participants from the focus group discussion mentioned that school curricula in Quebec, as well as teachers in some instances, facilitated anti-Muslim biases:

> *Zaid*: The only problem that would come up, especially in Ethics class or religion class, where debates would come over different religions and then people had their opinions and what not. Other than that high school was ok.

Naved: And what kind of things would come up in those discussions that you can recall?

Zaid: Well we'd compare other religions like Christianity to Islam and all the other religions and then there would be discussions to that. So there would be people who would agree and disagree and that would cause debates and *even* fights. I remember once we were talking about Islam and comparing it to Judaism and there were a few people who got offended and there was a Muslim and a Jew and they began to fight in class. And they started fighting after class as well. But it got better afterwards. But it shows that this religion class caused more tension.

Ali: I think they want politically correct answers as well. Like a lot of times if you say what you want, what you believe in, you won't get the full marks. They want you to say what the media says.

Adam: The most *secular* response.

Ali: yeah, exactly.

Ahmad: The school I went to, some kids had problems with other religions, because it was a school where the Quebecois were a minority maybe 20%. Everyone else was Arabs, Chinese, Afghan, and all other cultures. It wasn't the students that had issues; I found it was the teachers. For example, once in physics class I was balancing a book on my head and the teacher said, *Ahmad, stop praying*. He thought it was funny and a good joke, but I didn't appreciate that and the students understood that. Or for example, just because I would pray at school, when I go to school I observe the afternoon prayer. I pray outside. But I've never encountered a student—they will ask me questions, but never in a negative way, but the way the teachers view it, when you talk about your religion [in a positive way], they're against that. It's like you said before, you won't get full grades if

you're not 'with the teacher'. For example, my Ethics teacher, he's not educating people

he's *mis*-educating people by not giving information that is precise and neutral. When it

comes to Christianity, Judaism it's fine but with Islam he chooses information against

Islam and he presents this to students as if it's normal but it's not something that's

normal.

Zaid discussed how his Ethics and Religious Culture class at times would be a source of tension

in his high school, particularly when religions were discussed. These tensions involved debates

within the classroom and on one occasion even escalated to a violent confrontation outside of the

class. It seems problematic that a course which is intended to introduce various religions and

cultures with an overarching intent of creating an atmosphere of respectful dialogue (MELS,

2008) could result in a violent encounter. Zaid did not specifically imply that his teacher was

responsible for the confrontation. However, other participants in the focus group discussion felt

that teachers facilitated tensions towards Muslims and Islam.

Ali's comments suggested that teachers wanted students to regurgitate dominant media

discourses even if these contradicted their own beliefs and understandings of issues. Therefore,

Ali's understanding of what "politically correct" arose from what was being said in the media.

Adam added to these comments and stated, "the most secular response", to which Ali agreed.

This was an example of how the students were identifying how the state policy of French

secularism, as discussed in Chapter Three, infused media discourses. These comments also

demonstrated how a state institution, like a secondary school, reproduced dominant Quebec

media discourses and state policies, as teachers seemingly wanted students to mimic these if they

were to receive "full marks". Not conforming to state policies and media discourses carried the

penalty of not getting "full marks". These comments suggested that some of the participants

perceived their classrooms as apparatuses of state indoctrination, as they felt obliged to give "the most secular response" even if this was at odds with their Islamic beliefs. As was the case with Yusuf, other participants also felt the need to regulate their speech with regards to their beliefs within a classroom setting. A similar pattern has been noted by Sunaina Maira (2014) in her study of Arab, South Asian, and Afghan communities in the US. In this study it was found that Muslim youth felt their right to free speech was restricted in the context of the War on Terror because they believed they were under constant surveillance. It would appear that in the post-9/11 context Muslim youth in this study as well as in other contexts feared reprisals for their beliefs and thus regulated their speech.

In Ahmad's experiences some teachers not only expected students to accept state policies and media discourses but also engaged in the process of misinforming their students about Islam and Muslims. Ahmad described how one of his teachers singled him out as on object of ridicule because he was an observant Muslim student who prayed the afternoon prayer in school. Ahmad described how students around him did not bother him when he would observe prayers, and would ask questions which he did not perceive as demeaning. However, he felt a sense of conflict and tension towards his teachers when he would speak about his religion in a way that contradicted state policies and media discourses. Ahmad felt a strong bias from his Ethics and Religious Culture teacher when discussing Islam. He felt that his teacher would pick and choose what to present about Islam, thus creating a distorted picture of his faith. Ahmad described how his Ethics and Religious Culture course facilitated constructing his Islamic faith as 'Other'. Once again, the Ethics and Religious Culture course was implicated in causing tensions for a Muslim student. Ahmad specifically identified his teacher as being the cause of these tensions through presenting the Islamic faith with his own bias. He felt that his faith was being unfairly presented

and if he wanted to get "full grades" he would have to be "with the teacher". In other words, he was indirectly being forced to accept dominant media and state discourses about Muslims within his Ethics and Religious Culture class. If he did not do so, he felt that he would be penalized.

An important reoccurring theme that came up with Muslim male participants when recounting their high school experiences was the archetype of 'dangerous Muslim men' which would regularly appear in different forms within their secondary school settings. As mentioned previously, Muslim male students would sometimes have taunts thrown at them relating to violence and terrorism. Some of these stereotypical views towards Muslim men manifested within the school culture during dress-up days like Hallowe'en:

Zaid: Well, in high school, especially around secondary four and five, we had two classes one of them was Ethics and we were talking mainly about Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and that stuff and also in our Contemporary World class, we were talking about the war between Palestine and Israel. So the topic of Islam was *pretty* popular in secondary four and five. So one Hallowe'en, I guess you can say there was a Hallowe'en party or Hallowe'en day at school, and a few people—a group came dressed up as the so called 'Muslim' with the turban and beard and what not. So they came to school like that, and as people saw they also took their gym clothes and made a turban and found, I don't know paper or what not, and made a beard and that was their costume for the day.

Naved: And why would they dress up as Muslims for Hallowe'en, what were they trying to show by wearing the turban?

Zaid: I guess they were trying to be unique but they weren't. I don't think they were trying to offend us. I guess mostly the purpose of Hallowe'en costumes is to look *scary*, so I guess they were trying to show that as being terrorists or Muslims.

Zaid discussed how the topic of Muslims and Islam came up in some of his courses, namely the secondary five Contemporary World class and the Ethics and Religious Culture course, as he attended secondary school during the height of the War on Terror. Though Zaid did not directly indicate that these courses negatively depicted Muslims, his comments did suggest that through these courses students in his school received exposure to Muslims and the Islamic faith. Hence "the topic of Islam was pretty popular" in the senior levels of the school that Zaid attended. So on Hallowe'en, a group of students thought it would be a good idea to come to school dressed up as Muslims. Zaid's comments link the instruction in his Contemporary World and Ethics and Religious Culture classes with this incident. This suggested that the information that students obtained about Muslims and Islam in these courses was consistent with media and state discourses which consistently reproduce the image of the 'dangerous Muslim man'. This archetype employs a number of visual signifiers including the beard and clothing items such as the turban (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008), which is what students wore to embody this archetype. Zaid mentioned how in his Ethics and Religious Culture class other faiths were also discussed, specifically mentioning Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism. However, of the faiths discussed, only Islam and Muslims were identified as threatening figures worthy of imitating on Hallowe'en.

The presence of the 'dangerous Muslim man' archetype is further confirmed when Zaid discussed why he thought non-Muslim students would think that dressing up as Muslims on Hallowe'en would be an appropriate costume: "the purpose of Hallowe'en costumes is to look scary". Therefore, it would be logical to assume that if students were dressing up as Muslims on Hallowe'en it was because they perceived a certain type of 'Otherness' in the Muslim faith which was threatening and dangerous, much like how students wear costumes depicting vicious

killers, monsters, or other intimidating figures on Hallowe'en. Zaid's description of this episode was very telling. He stated that a group of students came dressed up as the "so called Muslim". Zaid did not state that the students came dressed as violent terrorists. The students came dressed as the 'Muslim', or at least how the figure of the 'Muslim' has come to be known in Western discourse. Zaid mentioned how he felt that the intent of students was not malicious, indicating that the students wearing these costumes did not feel that such a depiction was in any way offensive. Rather, this incident demonstrated the students' understanding of what it meant to be 'Muslim'. According to Zaid, their understanding of 'being Muslim' on Hallowe'en embodied the tropes of violence and intimidation, as the purpose of the attire was to "look scary". Like discourses and practices relating to culture talk, this incident revealed how there were certain taken-for-granted characteristics associated with Muslimness, as if they are biological or inherent traits which define their essence. A number of the incidents described by the participants above alluded to how media representations of Muslims impacted how they were perceived in secondary schools.

Effects of media on Muslim male participants. All of the Muslim male student participants felt there were biases in how Muslims were represented in popular cultural mediums such as television programs, Hollywood films and the news media:

I think the media of our time, things like La Presse, TVA, FOX News, CBC all these media never give neutral information. They never just give the news as it is, nothing more, nothing less. It is always opinionated and this has an effect on people's perceptions with Muslims. I can recall when I was in high school, every morning I would come in between 7:50 and 8:50. One day I came around 8:20 and I was having a coffee with some of my friends and some Quebecois and we'd always get into arguments because they

would always say things against Muslims that they were getting from the media. If we

look at acts of terrorism, 94% of them are committed by non-Muslims. *Only 6%* are

committed by Muslims, but we never hear about the *other 94%.* We only hear about acts

of terrorism by Muslims. And when people keep on hearing the same message over and

over again through the media it will eventually have an impact on how they view

Muslims.

Ahmad was the most forthright of all the participants in his belief that media negatively depicted

Muslims and about how this affected perceptions of Muslims by the general Quebecois

population. Ahmad discussed how in his secondary school experiences he would routinely

confront Quebecois students with stereotypes that come from the media. These students were his

friends and he therefore felt comfortable discussing their perceptions of his faith. Ahmad

specifically discussed how Quebecois students felt there was a connection between terrorism and

Muslims. Ahmad's comments implied that in his discussions with these students, there was an

assumption that all acts of terrorism were committed by Muslims, whereas the groups that

committed the majority of terrorist acts were never discussed. Ahmad did not specifically

mention where he got this information from, but a report published by the Federal Bureau of

Investigation (FBI) confirmed his statements. This report documented all terrorist acts committed

in the US from 1980 to 2005. According to the FBI's database the vast majority of crimes in the

US that were considered to be acts of terrorism were committed by Latinos and extreme left

wing groups. Acts of terrorism committed by Muslims accounted for only 6% (FBI, 2005).

Ahmad believed that the disproportionate media coverage of Muslims who committed

acts of terrorism created an erroneous understanding of Islam amongst the Quebecois students

that he associated with in secondary school. Their understanding of Islam was constructed

through the media archetype of 'dangerous Muslim men', which Ahmad felt was illogical as most acts of terrorism were committed by other groups in society. Ahmad's comments infer that media biases from Quebec, the US, and Canada as a whole portray similar types of messages, which negatively depict Muslims and perpetuate stereotypes of 'dangerous Muslim men'. Similarly, Muslim male participants who mentioned specific popular cultural mediums that negatively depicted Muslims often mentioned Hollywood films and US televisions shows, which were easily accessible in Quebec.

Another respondent discussed how biased media representations of Muslims were shown in his school and how non-Muslim students linked these representations to Muslims in his classes:

> There was a funny [incident] in class. We were watching a movie and I don't remember what movie it was but in the first scene there was this white man, he was in jail and he was making a movie. So he starts off, hi my name is this and he stutters and he closes the camera, then he starts again, starts recording again and says, hi my name is…closes again. And he does it three times and he closes. And then at the end he goes in the name of Allah the Most Merciful and the he says my name is, and he says a Muslim name and I'm a terrorist and then the movie starts. And it's funny because like only two Muslims in the class and *everybody* looked at us laughing.

Zaid described how a film which depicted Muslim terrorist stereotypes was shown to his class. Zaid did not recall the name of the film, although what he described resonates with a Hollywood film called *Unthinkable* (2010) directed by Gregor Jordan and starring Samuel L. Jackson and Michael Sheen. In the opening scene of *Unthinkable*, similar to what Zaid described, the viewers are presented with a white male who is making a video tape describing how he has placed three

nuclear bombs in US cities and that he will detonate them if his demands are not met. The

opening scene of this film is very telling as it shows a man, Steven Younger, struggling to speak

about his terrorist plot. After attempting numerous times to describe his plot unsuccessfully, he

finally begins his message by asserting his Muslim identity starting with the common phrase

uttered by Muslims whenever beginning an act of worship, "In the name of Allah". Instead of

introducing himself as Steven Younger, as he previously did, he now introduces himself through

his Muslim persona of Yusuf Atta Muhammad. Unsurprisingly, the character is now able to

discuss his plans without any difficulties as he has openly abandoned his non-Muslim identity,

which was the only thing holding him back from describing his violent mission against the West.

Zaid discussed how his non-Muslim classmates automatically linked this scene with the

two Muslims in the class. Once again, this episode demonstrated how the racialization of

Muslims is a seemingly normal experience for Muslim students in secondary schools in Quebec.

The terrorist in the opening scene of the film was a white male and yet simply because of his

affiliation with the Islamic faith, students watching the film automatically made a connection

between the terrorist and the Muslim students, who aside from their faith, had nothing in

common with the character. Zaid's comments suggested that the racialization of Muslims was

not perceived as something abnormal, as he was not offended by this association and felt that it

was a funny incident. Similarly, other participants who regularly faced taunts and jokes

associating them with terrorism did not take much offence to such distasteful actions:

> You know at first when I came into high school, I had the joke, oh, when are you going to
>
> *blow up* the school? Or, how about you bomb that person. Just those jokes which refer to
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> terrorism because that's how we're seen as because that's how we're portrayed as in the
>
> media. And for me, I would just take them as jokes. I'm like, well ok that doesn't really

bother me—go ahead, you know. And what I would do is, I would go along with the

joke, and eventually—which that's something they didn't expect—and eventually they

stopped making any jokes at all.

Ismail would regularly have taunts and jokes relating to terrorism thrown at him because of his

faith. Similar to what was described by Sarah, students would ask Ismail "when are you going to

blow up the school?" Ismail felt that stereotypes associating his faith with violence and terrorism

were a result of media representations of Muslims, as he mentioned "that's how we're seen as

because that's how we're portrayed as in the media". Ismail described how he coped with these

taunts by telling his peers "that doesn't really bother me—go ahead". Luckily for Ismail this

behaviour from his peers eventually stopped. But for other students that is not always the case.

J'Lein Liese (2004) discusses how there are levels of discrimination that occur in

educational settings. The first level of discrimination relates to slurs based on stereotypes. Often

slurs can be used to "*dehumanise* another person or social group to justify a violent act" (p. 67).

In other words, racial slurs directed at students can eventually escalate into forms of physical

violence. In the context of the War on Terror, racial slurs such as 'terrorist' have been employed

to "justify retaliatory actions post 9/11" (Liese, 2004, p. 67). This has occurred through the wars

in Afghanistan and Iraq, as these nations were described as supporting terror and were a part of a

supposed 'Axis of Evil'. Hence the term 'terrorist' is synonymous with groups of people who are

enemies of the state in the War on Terror and warrant violent policing. If students are being

labelled as 'terrorists' in Quebec secondary schools, it should not simply be taken as a joke and

should be seriously addressed by teachers and by the school.

Ismail did not mention that any teachers or administrators within his school came to his

defence when he was ridiculed in this manner; rather he simply treated these incidents as a joke

and did not let these taunts get to him. This type of reaction is similar to Noor's responses, where she felt that racism against Muslims was more of a perception manufactured by the media, even though she had repeatedly experienced racist incidents on her commute to school. Zaid was also seemingly untroubled by how a film which depicted a Muslim terrorist was immediately linked to him and another Muslim student in his class. In all three cases, the Muslim students did not feel that the racism they were experiencing was troubling or something that needed to be seriously addressed.

When considering student responses discussed along with Chapters Two and Three, which theorized Islamophobia and examined anti-Muslim racism in Quebec, a clearer understanding emerges of how state practices and policies, combined with political and media discourses have enabled manifestations of Islamophobia. French secularism as well as interculturalism have facilitated the construction of an exalted nationalist subject in Quebec. Muslims have been excluded from this status as 'Muslimness' carries with it associations with a religion (i.e. the Islamic faith) as well as presumptions of misogynistic treatment and oppression of women. These perceptions associated with Muslims and Islam oppose the 'core values' of secularism and gender equality in Quebec society. This related to experiences of participants who discussed how they were expected to give the "most secular response" to issues in their class discussions. Students described how they would be penalized for non-conformity to these norms, even if it contravened their faith. Muslim women wearing the *hijab* became visibly marked as 'Other' and were racialized and discriminated against as the *hijab* carries with it assumptions of backwardness and oppression in Quebec society (Mahrouse, 2010; Mookerjea, 2009). The 'Otherness' associated with Islam in Quebec political and media discourses as seen in the RA debates and the proposed Bill 60 also resonated with participants' experiences. Some

participants discussed how they were told to "go back to your country" or that their beard had no place in Quebec society. These instances, like the RA debates and discussions over the proposed Bill 60 involved exalted nationalist subjects who felt empowered to exclude Muslims from the nationalist space. Teacher participants also noted a number of racist incidents in Quebec secondary schools against Muslims.

Teachers' perceptions of Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools

I drew from six teacher participants in this study, three of whom were Muslim and three non-Muslim. All of these teachers were interviewed individually and worked in the Greater Montreal region. Muslim teacher participants had insights on anti-Muslim racism from two perspectives; racism that they had observed towards Muslim students within their secondary schools and racism which they themselves had experienced as Muslim teachers.

Muslim teachers' experiences with racism. Of the three Muslim teacher participants, two were male and one was female, Hamza, Ibrahim, and Alia. Hamza had been teaching in secondary school for eight years at the time of the interview. He was a Social Studies teacher and identified himself as a practicing Muslim man. Ibrahim was in his third year of teaching secondary school at the time of his interview. Ibrahim was a Mathematics and Technology teacher and like Hamza, identified himself as a practicing Muslim. Alia was on maternity leave at the time of the interview. She had worked in the secondary school system for seven years and was planning on returning to teaching upon completing her maternity leave, resuming her position as a Science teacher. Throughout Alia's experiences as a secondary school teacher, she was visibly identifiable as a Muslim as she wore the *hijab* while at work. In addition to providing insights about Islamophobia faced by Muslim students in secondary schools, these participants

also discussed how they were perceived by their students. Ibrahim felt that he experienced prejudice from his students because of his faith:

> The event that happened last year, with one of the kids taking a picture of me and posting it on his Facebook page and putting a picture of an airport, the map of an airport, right next to it as if I was planning to blow it up. That was *totally racist* and judgmental. He took a picture of me teaching in class and he said 'terrorist Math teacher?' was the comment that he put there. So that was something *very* racist that happened. Other than that, in the same class, one of the students who was later expelled from the school because of bullying, he used to make planes in the class and throw the planes and he would say, 'sir are you going to destroy that plane' something like that. And I would say, no I won't, I don't believe in that but still he kept on bullying me. But they [other students] were quite impressed they were really surprised how I didn't used to get mad at them and just laughed off their stupidities. They were expecting me to get completely angry, but I told them what you are perceiving is completely false.

Ibrahim described how a student targeted him as an object of ridicule by taking his picture and posting it on his Facebook page and linked his image to terrorism. As was the case with student participants, there was no basis to assume that Ibrahim was going to commit an act of violence or terrorism. However it was assumed that he may go about doing such an act by virtue of his faith. Similarly another student indirectly associated terrorism with Ibrahim by asking him if he was going to "destroy that plane". Ibrahim's comments suggested that he felt the student was trying to make a joke linking him to terrorists who blew up planes, as was the case with the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This student, as described by Ibrahim was a bully. However; his bullying was not limited to students and was also directed towards Ibrahim. The bullying

experienced by Ibrahim involved linking him to the trope of the Muslim terrorist. In both examples mentioned by Ibrahim, his students felt empowered to "bully" and ridicule him because of the perceived 'Otherness' associated with his faith.

Ibrahim mentioned how his other students expressed amazement that he was not angered by the student who would throw paper airplanes in his class. Ibrahim suggested that his students who did not openly hurl taunts and engage in racist acts towards him still made assumptions about him. Those assumptions entailed predisposition to anger. Ibrahim mentioned that his students were expecting him to "get completely angry", but that was not the case. Ibrahim's comments suggested that he felt his students had preconceived notions of him and harboured dormant forms of Islamophobia. When discussing this account with Ibrahim in detail, it was clear that he believed that his students felt he was pre-disposed to anger. According to Ibrahim "they were all on board" with regards to the assumptions they had of Ibrahim as a 'dangerous Muslim man'. Ibrahim's accounts described a range of students expressing Islamophobic tendencies. Some students expressed their perceptions of Ibrahim explicitly through bullying or unlawfully taking his picture and ridiculing him on the Internet, while other students engaged in microaggressions with Ibrahim. Microaggressions can be understood as regular exchanges between people that send racist or condescending messages to individuals because of their ethnic, racial, religious, or cultural affiliations (Paludi, 2012). In another instance, Ibrahim described how two female students claimed that Ibrahim unfairly sided with male students over them in a class dispute. Ibrahim stated how these girls openly claimed he was being "sexist". Ibrahim believed that these claims of sexism were rooted in the perception that Muslim men are misogynistic and unfair to women. Hence, these microaggressions assumed Ibrahim was a 'bad Muslim' pre-disposed to anger and oppressive towards women.

Alia described similar experiences of being bullied by students because she wore the *hijab* while teaching. Alia also experienced bullying by other members of her secondary school community:

At another school there was a teacher that was basically bullying me. She would bring up things like, *oh, your religion allows men to beat other women*. She would bring up these random things, and I'd be like, *are you kidding me?* And finally one day she basically—I was sitting at my desk and she was standing over me pointing her finger in my face and yelling at me things like, *if you claim Muslims are so misunderstood why aren't Imams going on national television speaking up for your religion*. And I remember thinking—obviously when you're being verbally attacked your brain turns off—after I remember thinking, *what TV do you watch?* There's people on the TV all the time and she was trying to allude to the fact that she felt 'you people need to change yourselves when you come to Canada'.

Alia, like Ibrahim, described that she was being "bullied", but in this incident the perpetrator was a teacher. The incident that Alia was discussing took place while the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan were ongoing throughout 2006. The type of bullying that Alia experienced involved the archetype of 'imperilled Muslim women', which was regularly employed in media and political discourses throughout the War on Terror (Razack, 2008), as her colleague clearly felt that Muslim men were enacting violence on Muslim women. Alia would regularly try and explain how Muslims were misunderstood and misrepresented in the media. However, her attempts to change this teacher's perceptions fell on deaf ears as she continued to harass her while she worked at that particular school. Alia felt that this colleague who was bullying her was implying that she did not fit into Canadian society. Her statements were

troubling for Alia, as she was born and raised in Canada. Hence, Alia's beliefs and appearance signaled a type of 'Otherness' which excluded her from membership of the nation. This incident was an example of a nationalist subject reaching her threshold of tolerance (Hage, 2000), as Alia's perceived 'Otherness' could no longer continue without her voicing opposition to it. Alia mentioned how this particular colleague had friends from other ethnic groups such as an East Asian friend. However, Alia's difference was deemed unacceptable to tolerate, as her 'Otherness' was irreconcilable with this colleague's conceptions of nation. In other words, Alia needed to change herself because she was not welcome in *her* country. As was the case with other participants, Alia was being confronted with a member of the majoritarian culture who felt she possessed a sense of spatial power permitting her to determine who belonged and who did not.

Hamza's experiences as a secondary school teacher did not involve any incidents of being bullied by students or staff members. However, he did feel that in the post 9/11 context, Muslim students have experienced challenges relating to how they have been perceived by other students:

I think with some young kids it's a *lot* for them to deal with when all their friends aren't Muslim and sometimes it's hard to stand up and say I am Muslim and they get a bit more timid. One story that comes to mind was once there were two Muslims in our school and one of them asked the other if he was Muslim because he wasn't sure. But the other one was with a bunch of friends and he kind of denied it and said, no I'm not. And later when we saw the two of them together, one of the students asked the other, well you said you weren't Muslim before and he [the other student who denied being Muslim previously] kind of mentioned that sometimes when he's around his non-Muslim friends he didn't

want to admit that. Or he felt that whatever shame or embarrassment and wasn't up for

admitting that he was Muslim in front of his non-Muslim friends. And the other Muslim

student was kind of confused by that. Another story I can think of is there's a Muslim girl

in our school, she wears the *hijab* and she was actually a victim of racist insults from a

student who even tried to rip off her *hijab* and thought it was a funny joke. And she was

obviously *very very* shaken by that event. But she had confidence, she continued to wear

it and she was the only one in the school who was wearing it and I've seen other cases

where other girls have one day I just didn't notice her wearing it [girl stopped wearing

hijab]. So I can kind of see that pressure as well, especially for girls who are *very very*

visible when they wear their veil, their *hijab*. When they wear their scarf and become an

automatic target sometimes for people who don't know much better than to make fun of

that or to pick up on the stereotypes they pick up in the media or wherever else that they

are, for whatever reason.

At the school that Hamza was working at, there were very few Muslim students. Hamza noticed

that the few Muslim students he interacted with faced challenges. Hamza mentioned how one of

the Muslim students at his school was conflicted with his Muslim identity when he was around

his non-Muslim friends, so much so that he denied being a Muslim around them. This student

was selectively expressing his Muslim identity. Around Muslims, in the confines of a secure

space he would acknowledge his Islamic identity. Presumably this student felt that being

identified as Muslim would cause him some type of social marginalization or to lose his friends.

Abo-Zena, Sahli, & Tobias-Nahi (2009) discuss how Muslim students may engage in such

behaviour "in order to minimize the apparent differences between themselves and their non-

Muslim peers. Muslim youth may feel pressured to keep secret, deny or even abandon their

Muslim faith in an attempt to blend in" (p. 9). This may have been the case with the student described by Hamza, as Hamza mentioned this student felt "shame" or was possibly even "embarrassed" to acknowledge his Islamic identity and what would result from that.

Hamza also recounted how a Muslim female student was verbally and physically harassed by another student in his school. Within a secondary school setting, the action of pulling off a woman's *hijab* is usually preceded by less abrasive forms of abuse over an extended period of time and does not usually occur as an isolated incident (Liese, 2009). Hence it would be conceivable that this student may have faced repeated lesser forms of abuse from students related to her appearance prior to this incident. Hamza discussed how wearing the *hijab* in his secondary school posed a major challenge for Muslim women who may have been inclined to do so. Some Muslim female students would come to the school wearing the *hijab* and at some point later in the year stopped wearing it. Hamza associated these events with the social pressures and anxieties that arise from wearing the *hijab* as a signifier of the 'Other' within his secondary school. He mentioned how the *hijab* makes a Muslim student "*very very* visible" which resulted in becoming an "automatic target". Hamza believed that students who wore the *hijab* were perceived as 'Other', which resulted in stereotypical understandings of them. Not wearing the *hijab* or choosing to stop wearing it could possibly prevent this categorization. Hamza also briefly mentioned how some students may pick up stereotypes through media representations of Muslims. As discussed earlier, media representations of Muslims often employ tropes of oppression and backwardness through visible religious signifiers like the *hijab*. Hamza's comments were consistent with student responses suggesting that media discourses about Islam may have some influence in how Muslims in Quebec secondary schools were perceived.

Hamza also expressed how some of his non-Muslim students felt conflicted between their perceptions of Muslims through their interactions with Muslim teachers, and how that contradicted discourses surrounding Muslims in Quebec:

I guess the average teenage kid who is exposed to news bits throughout the day or whatever news flashes they get or whatever information they get from mum, dad, from brothers and sisters is only those few little bits about Islam and Muslims being either committing violent acts, being wars in their countries, news items coming from there about various actions of people in those countries. So that becomes what their exposure is to Muslims and I think it was made evident to me recently because a student of mine mentioned—he didn't know that I was Muslim, I don't really mention that in my class, but he asked me just the other day because he knew that there were some Muslim teachers in the school and he wanted to know if I was one of them. And he had said that he was speaking to his grandma—who was, I guess, a Francophone Quebecoise— mentioned that Muslims are bad, not contributing much to society, kind of feeding into some of those things [stereotypes]. And he had mentioned to her I have one or two Muslim teachers in my school that I've had and they've been very positive, very good interactions, and very positive experiences. So they kind of—I think that kind of illustrates that for his case that he's wrestling with what maybe people are telling him, what the media is telling him, and what his real life interaction is and he's finding a difference between reality and perception.

Hamza discussed how a typical student is inundated with negative perceptions of Muslims and Islam through media, family, and society. For one of Hamza's students, there was a disparity between the messages that he received about Islam from a family member and his personal

experiences with Muslims who were his teachers. Hamza felt that the perceptions that were held

by this student's grandmother were based on stereotypes in Quebec society. Hamza described

how the student felt confused by this because the teachers who he knew were Muslims did not fit

into the mould described by his grandmother. This incident described by Hamza revealed how

the perceptions of Muslims in a secondary school environment, in some instances, were

influenced in a positive manner through positive interactions with Muslims, which did not

conform to dominant media and state discourses surrounding Muslims in Quebec. This was

similar to sentiments expressed by Maryam and Ayesha, who both felt that perceptions of

Muslims in secondary schools can change when Muslims express agency and counter stereotypes

through their interactions with the non-Muslim majority. However, As Hamza described, the

student felt somewhat conflicted between his experiences with Muslims and the messages that he

had been exposed to about Muslims and Islam. This was indicative that positive experiences with

Muslims alone are not enough to change perceptions. As Chris Wilkins (2006) observes, simply

having exposure to people of different ethnicities does little to challenge perceptions, and

"without an understanding of the social structures which create the individual prejudice through

which racism is manifested, teachers are unlikely to play a major part in challenging racism" (pp.

16-17). Positive interactions with Muslims may result in students questioning dominant

discourses about Muslims, but more actions are required in order for students to understand that

'Muslim' and 'Islam' are not simplistic terms that can easily be categorized as 'good' or 'bad'.

The danger of simplistic understandings and categorizations of Muslims can possibly result in

'good Muslim'/'bad Muslim' discourses (Mamdani, 2004), which creates the perception that

Muslims who are judged to be 'Islamic' are bad, while Muslims who are 'Western' are good.

Non-Muslim teacher participants also discussed how Islamophobia occurred in subtle and overt instances in their secondary school experiences.

Non-Muslim teachers' perceptions of anti-Muslim biases. There was one male, Jeff, and two females, Jessica and Laura, in this category of participants. At the time of the interview, Jeff was in his fifteenth year of teaching, and primarily taught Ethics and Religious Culture courses. Jessica was in her sixteenth year of teaching. Most of her work-load consisted of teaching French and Ethics and Religious Culture courses. Laura had been teaching for almost twenty years, primarily in the Arts department of her school. Laura felt that the association of Muslim men and terrorism was a common stereotype that manifested in her school. In some instances this was perpetuated by Muslim students themselves:

Even here I see the Indian [Muslim] kids being called a terrorist and the Indian kids laugh it off. I mean it's for jokes right, but is it? I guess they play along [Muslim kids], and the good ones, the *really* good ones, the popular kids who can handle it, they play along, I mean they do play along. I mean, I teach comedy, and in comedy, yeah, we will use visible—I always tell them, use your visible, physical characteristics in your comedy it helps the comedy. You know, so the blonde will play the dumb blonde, you're going to go for stereotypes like that for the purpose of laughter. I can't say that the brown skinned kids that I've taught haven't enjoyed playing the terrorist, *they have*. They enjoy it, they laugh about it, they have their whole costume and they'll go full tilt. They'll bring in like strapped bombs and stuff, it's for comedy and there's a purpose and we'll all laugh, you know. The black kid will be the rapper with the grill, and in comedy you're encouraged to use your physical type as a part of your comedy. The fat kid will, you know, come in with the Doritos and it makes me happy that they're using their body type in a way that

I'm ok with this, I'm ok with this. But in a classroom, in an *English* classroom or a

French classroom and, you know, someone says '*give this to the terrorist over there*'

well that's a whole different ball game and it's happened, I've heard it's happened, I've

heard that it happens.

In Laura's experiences as a teacher she had observed how students used terms such as "terrorist"

as a joke with Muslim students. Often the response, similar to those discussed earlier, involved

the Muslim students themselves laughing off the comments. However, Laura suggested that such

comments were not really jokes and promoted subtle forms of racism. Laura discussed how the

"popular kids" could handle these types of incidents. Her comments implied that using such

terms towards Muslim students can potentially be marginalizing and offensive. If a student is

"popular" or has a lot of friends in the school, they can "handle it" because there is less fear of

being socially marginalized. However, Laura's comments suggested that this type of behaviour

could be damaging to a student who is not as socially adjusted.

Laura distinguished how students using the Muslim stereotype of 'terrorist' could

potentially be productive in an educational setting. She alluded to how Muslim students used

their physical appearance in her drama classes as a type of satirical device and would act out the

'dangerous Muslim man' archetype. Muslim comedians in the post 9/11 context have used

similar techniques to demonstrate the existence of racism towards Muslims in society by

embedding their comedy routines with their "experience of exclusion and victimization" (Morey

& Yaqin, 2011, p. 198). The overall intent is to entertain the audience, while simultaneously

getting the message across that certain groups in society are stereotyped and experience racism

and bias. By employing the archetypal image of the Muslim terrorist, Laura believed that the

students may have been trying to portray images in their drama routines that had a broader

appeal to the class. Some, like Laura, may argue that this is an example of how Muslim students are exercising forms of agency within their school setting as opposed to passively being victims of abuse and taunts that associate their faith with violence and terror. Hall (1996) disagrees with this line of thinking. According to Hall (1996), using racial jokes within one's own racial community is unlikely to denigrate a race, as these jokes form a part of the self-consciousness of that community. However, using racial jokes across racial lines "reinforces the *difference* and reproduces the unequal relations because, in those situations, the point of the joke depends on the existence of racism" (p. 166). Thus, this approach may not have had as beneficial an outcome as Laura intended in her drama class. Nonetheless, Laura's comments suggested that she felt there was a fine line between perpetuating stereotypes and exercising agency. Using a derogatory slur like "terrorist" in an English class, where such a stereotype is not serving any type of satirical purpose, is a blatant form of racism.

Jeff and Laura both felt that media representations of Muslims, especially after 9/11, had been extremely negative and contributed towards creating negative perceptions of Muslim students. Both believed that anti-Muslim sentiments in their secondary schools manifested in subtle forms more often than overtly:

> *Jeff:* I don't know many Muslims students here, I've just heard through hearsay that a couple of students here were harassed because they were wearing *hijabs* and comments were thrown their way. But, and I'm assuming here, you know I wonder even though they [non-Muslim students] may not say anything because you know in our school it's not politically correct to say anything—you know you will be reprimanded for it—but how many times have they [Muslim students] been looked at in a negative way just because of what we're seeing in the news. Recently with the law passed in Quebec where

kids can't wear a *hijab* while playing soccer. And how many kids agree with that. We had

a discussion in class and they look at an Arab person here, a Muslim person here thinking

eh, you know…looking down on them because this law was passed in Quebec. So what is

said and what is *thought* could be two different things. I don't necessarily see it too often

in terms of outwardly things being done to the [Muslim] kids besides what little I hear

about comments being passed at their expense but I don't hear much of it.

Naved: So if there is racism towards Muslim students you feel that it's more implicit as

opposed to explicit?

Jeff: Yeah, for sure. Just by their [non-Muslim students] comments that we hear in class.

Even the jokes. Kids don't realize that racist jokes *are racism* and how many jokes are at

the expense of especially black people, Muslims, you know?

Jeff's comments inferred that a lack of racist incidents in his school did not necessarily mean that

students did not hold racist views towards Muslims. Jeff described how students often harboured

negative views towards Muslims which manifested in subtle ways such as "being looked at in a

negative way". Jeff suggested that there was dormant Islamophobia present in his school, where

students perceive Muslims negatively, primarily through representations of Muslims in the news.

As previously discussed, dormant Islamophobia often evolves into explicit and more overt forms

of Islamophobia when a situation presents itself.

Jeff's comments also suggested how media and political discourses have reinforced

negative views towards Muslims in his class. Jeff referred to highly publicized incidents in

Quebec relating to how Muslim girls who wore the *hijab* were prevented from playing soccer,

citing concerns relating to safety. The topic of religious headgear being permitted in soccer

matches has occupied media and political discourses in Quebec's recent past. The issue came up

again in the summer of 2013 when the Quebec Soccer Federation announced a ban on the Sikh turban, which was supported by Pauline Marois, the Quebec Premier at the time (Peritz, 2013). Jeff felt that incidents in Quebec which related to the banning of religious symbols facilitated negative views and comments towards Muslims. Hence, enabling Islamophobia to emerge in the realm of perceptions (dormant Islamophobia) and in actions (explicit Islamophobia). His comments suggested that state policies policing religious minorities, whether intended or not, reinforced negative perceptions of those groups in an educational setting. This was similar to comments discussed in the previous sections where Muslim students and teachers discussed how state and media discourses were perpetuated in educational settings. In both instances, state policies and practices along with negative depictions of Muslims in political and media discourses were reinforced in educational settings through teachers exhibiting anti-Muslim bias or through course content.

Teachers' views on challenging Islamophobia in Quebec schools. On a number of occasions throughout the interview process Muslim and non-Muslim teachers alluded to or provided insights as to how the officially government mandated Quebec Education Program (QEP) could potentially challenge Islamophobia in secondary schools in Quebec. All of the teacher participants believed that there were a variety of courses that could include content to challenge dominant discourses surrounding Muslims. Overwhelmingly, teacher participants felt that the Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) course could potentially be used as a tool towards this end.

The QEP consists of a number of subject areas such as English, Math, History, and the ERC program, which have each been elaborated on "with reference to common overarching objectives, a set of cross-curricular competencies, and what the Ministry [has] referred to as

"broad areas of learning"" (Morris, 2011, p. 191). The broad areas of learning "deal with major

contemporary issues…[and] contribute to the development of a broader world-view" (MELS,

2008, p. 465). They include health and well-being, career planning and entrepreneurship,

environmental awareness and consumer rights and responsibilities, media literacy, and

citizenship and community life (MELS, 2008). The QEP employs a competency-based approach

to learning and defines a competency as "a set of behaviours based on the effective mobilization

and use of a range of resources" (MELS, 2001). Therefore, students are expected to acquire the

knowledge and skills necessary to effectively address salient social issues. In addition to the

competencies of each of the subject areas, the QEP also has cross-curricular competencies which

cut across subjects and go beyond the limitations of the subject areas (Morris, 2011). The cross-

curricular competencies "are rooted in specific learning contexts, which are usually related to the

subjects [in the QEP]" (MELS, 2008, p. 466). They include the following: uses information,

solves problems, exercises critical judgment, uses creativity, adopts effective work methods, uses

information and communications technology, achieves his/her potential, cooperates with others,

and communicates appropriately (MELS, 2008). The QEP is mandated by the Quebec Ministry

of Education and is taught across public and publically-subsidized private schools across Quebec

(Boudreau, 2011). Students are required to take ERC courses in four out of five of their

secondary school years (MELS, 2008). The main objectives of the ERC program are: "the

recognition of others" and "the pursuit of the common good" (MELS, 2008, p. 2). The objectives

of this program are rooted in a number of principles, which includes fostering living in harmony

with others (MELS, 2005). These objectives form the backdrop of the three competencies of the

program: reflects on ethical questions, demonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of

religion, and engages in dialogue (MELS, 2008).

Ibrahim cautioned that in order for Quebec educational curriculum to challenge negative

perceptions of Islam, certain courses need to be given more emphasis:

Naved: Do you feel that the Quebec Education Program can be used as a tool to engage

students in discussion about Islamophobia?

Ibrahim: Yes it can, but it has to be given its proper perspective. I mean like, the Ethics

and Religious Culture course is not given much importance, which the idea is good, it's

dialogue. That's the basis behind it. But it should be given *more* importance. Even

teachers who talk about Ethics, it's like oh I'm teaching Ethics, as if they're not an

important teacher, as opposed to science and math, which are considered important

subjects. I personally think things like ethics would go far in a person's life to make them

better humans, compared to math which won't. So those subjects should be given more

importance, people should take it more seriously. The Ethics course is a *very* marginal

course, and the vast response from the Quebec society has been negative teaching their

kids these things.

Ibrahim's comments suggested that the potential to question dominant discourses surrounding

Muslims existed within the QEP through courses like the ERC program. However, the

effectiveness of these courses was limited because they were not given much importance and

teachers teaching these courses had negative attitudes towards them. Other teacher participants

described similar beliefs about the possibility of challenging anti-Muslim racism in Quebec

secondary schools. Jessica, an ERC and French teacher mentioned her experiences:

Naved: do you feel that the QEP can be used as a tool to engage students in discussions

about issues of race, Islamophobia? Do you feel there's a space within the QEP to engage

in these discussions?

> *Jessica*: I do it *all the time*. All the time. I'm constantly using current events bringing
>
> them in my class addressing different issues about whether it be Muslims, or the
>
> separation of Quebec, or the perception of the body, or whatever. I actually thrive on
>
> teaching like that because it makes it much more real for the kids and it gives me the
>
> opportunity to show them the other side of the story which often they don't see.
>
> *Naved*: And you're able to use the framework of the QEP to be able to do that in your
>
> class?
>
> *Jessica*: I teach French and Ethics and both disciplines are *really really* easy, it's easy for
>
> me to integrate it in those two subjects. Yeah.

Jessica believed that engaging in conversations relating to Islamophobia created a charged

environment in her classroom, which made the learning experiences "more real" for her students.

Furthermore, she felt that she customarily engaged in such conversations in her classes. Hamza

described how various courses within the QEP could potentially discuss issues related to

stereotypes and racism in Quebec secondary schools:

> *Hamza:* If anything, in the curriculum which is taught, there are opportunities I guess in
>
> different subject areas to give a fair and balanced approach or to speak to some of these
>
> misconceptions that exist. And I guess it depends on the subject area and I guess the main
>
> thing is that as teachers and educators we need to inform ourselves because it's difficult
>
> for me to talk about Sikhism if I don't know about it or about Judaism, or about
>
> Christianity, or about any other group that I may have a limited knowledge about. So I
>
> need to be cautious about what I say and I think. With Islam and Muslims, those issues
>
> come up in current events classes. Come up in any class basically when there's some
>
> literature being read or whatever and a lot of the current contexts refer to maybe parts of

the world where Muslims live or some of the novels the kids are reading. So I think it's

important that kids get a fair exposure to it. And if we, as educators, don't know, we have

to inform ourselves. And maybe that's the role of a Muslim teacher in helping to form the

narrative that is discussed about us accurately in classrooms from a pedagogical

standpoint.

Hamza believed that within the QEP there was space to engage in anti-racism education. A

superficial understanding of various ethnic and religious groups is not sufficient. Detailed

knowledge of ethnic and religious minority groups in Quebec society is necessary. This needs to

be combined with "a deeper understanding of the social processes that create and reinforce

racism. Teachers clearly need this understanding in order to challenge it through their teaching"

(Wilkins, 2006, p. 18). The findings amongst teacher participants provided differing insights

from a number of student participants discussed earlier, who often described how Islamophobia

was perpetuated through courses and teachers in their secondary schools. Some Muslim student

participants alluded to how curriculum content such as the ERC program was used by teachers as

a means to misinform students about Islam.

Educational and curriculum theorists have discussed how school curricula can be used to

maintain and perpetuate dominant ideologies and subordination in schools. For example,

Michael Apple (2000) has argued that schools are sites in which both explicit and hidden

curricula are disseminated. The explicit curriculum is what is formally being taught in schools

through the various courses and programs that are offered. The hidden curriculum refers to

societal imbalances perpetuated through the process of schooling when teachers are uncritically

teaching the curriculum. As Tarra Yosso (2010) observes, "[c]urriculum then has multiple layers,

including structures, processes, and discourses, each of which combine to present knowledge that

align with formal (overt) or informal (hidden) outcomes (p. 94). Hidden curricula exist because

of power imbalances within educational structures. These power imbalances or 'unequal power',

as referred to by Apple (1991), afford privilege to some members in society to define what

knowledge is accepted as 'official' and worth disseminating, and what forms of knowing are to

be ignored and deemed irrelevant. Without altered power relations, critical and responsive

educational curricula are unattainable (Apple, 1991). In other words, teachers need to exercise

agency within their classrooms and educational institutions in order to challenge dominant

ideologies.

Critical race theorists have similarly argued that racism and subjugation are perpetuated

and maintained through educational curricula. David Gillborn (2009) observes that policy-

makers imagine education policy as evolving over time in a rational and linear fashion,

implementing changes to reflect diversity with the best of intentions. However, such perceptions

are a means of sanitizing educational policies and curricula, as it assumes they function

independently of race and politics (Gillborn, 2009). This view reinforces the notion of seeking

school-based solutions to school-based problems, while ignoring existing historical and

structural relations of dominance (Gillborn, 2009). Critical race theorists argue that addressing

systemic and structural inequities through educational curricula is ineffectual as these are

underscored by devices aimed to preserve cultural privilege and dominance. Hence, there is an

inability for traditional educational curricula to be transformative. As Michelle Jay (2010) notes,

transformative educational curricula threaten "those dominant groups in our society who have a

vested interest in the perpetuation of the mainstream academic knowledge that supports the

maintenance of dominant structures, long-present inequities, and the current power

arrangements…to subordinate racial minorities" (p. 5). Some have described the process of using

educational curricula to maintain cultural privilege and dominance over subordinated groups as a form of hegemony. Hegemony, as described by Gramsci (1971), is a power relationship in which dominant groups are able to maintain dominance over subordinated groups. Hegemony is preserved by universalizing consensus that the dominant group's interests coincide with society's interests. Hence, domination is undetected and therefore perpetuated through consent of the subordinated groups (Gramsci, 1971). Within educational contexts, Hall (1986) has argued that the state does not perpetuate the superiority of dominant groups forcefully. Rather, this is achieved through ongoing negotiations and the granting of concessions to subordinate groups to maintain their acquiescence. This can occur through allowances such as 'multiculturalism days', 'international days', and other events which momentarily encourage superficial cultural exchange and dialogue, while masking structural inequalities (Jay, 2010; Yosso, 2010). Such allowances are exercises in developing 'tolerance' rather than taking concrete actions towards racial equality.

Despite criticisms of educational curricula maintaining and perpetuating white supremacy, some critical race theorists have suggested ways to challenge and engage students in fruitful discussions about racism within educational institutions (Helms, 1992; Leonardo, 2009; Tatum, 2009). One such approach that I believe can facilitate critical discussions about Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools is by working towards a critical race curriculum. Yosso (2010) has discussed incorporating critical race theory concepts within educational curricula to challenge racial subordination and inequalities within schools, which she terms critical race curriculum (CRC). CRC (Yosso, 2010) has five central tenets, which I contend provide useful insights that can inform critical discussions about anti-Muslim racism within schools. These include the following: (1) acknowledging the central and intersecting roles of

racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination present within curricular structures

and discourses; (2) challenging dominant social and cultural assumptions in relation to the

'Other'; (3) directing the formal curriculum toward goals of social justice and critical

consciousness; (4) developing counter discourses through storytelling, narratives, chronicles,

family histories, scenarios, and biographies, which draw on the lived experiences racialized

students in the classroom; and (5) drawing on historical and contemporary analysis to explicate

the connections between educational and societal inequality (Yosso, 2010). Although these

principles are intended as a foundation for an educational curriculum centred on social justice

and anti-racism, I believe they can also be useful for providing a framework for teachers wishing

to express agency within existing educational structures and curricula to challenge racism.

The question of teachers exercising agency in Quebec classrooms closely relates to the

notion of using one's professional judgment, which is required of teachers in Quebec (MELS,

2006). According to the Ministry of Education, a teacher's professional judgment "is a factor

throughout the evaluation process. It serves in planning for evaluation, choosing evaluation

methods and tools, and making decisions about student learning" (MELS, 2006, p. 3). In other

words, teachers need to decide what forms of student learning can help achieve the objectives of

programs in the QEP. Furthermore, based on the Ministry of Education's Policy on the

Evaluation of Learning, it is stipulated that teachers are entitled to select methods of their

choosing for evaluations (MELS, 2006). These methods and judgments need to contribute to the

intellectual development of students, be of quality, justified, and relevant to the course

competencies evaluated (MELS, 2006).

Teacher participants discussed in this section strongly felt that Quebec educational

curricula, in particular the ERC program could be used as a potential tool to counteract

Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools. Yet, this is not without its contradictions since a number of Muslim student participants described how anti-Muslim racism was perpetuated through their ERC courses. Engaging in and understanding these contradictions was beyond the scope of this study. However, this finding creates opportunities and insights for further studies relating to the possibilities, potentials, and limitations of engaging in anti-racism and anti-Muslim racism education within Quebec secondary schools.

Conclusion: social relations, trends, differences, and ruling relations that emerged from the interviews.

   Social relations. Chapter Two of this thesis discussed how Islamophobia is structured and organized in North American societies through the social relations of race, gender, and class, and has been mediated through the War on Terror. The purpose of discussing these social relations was to provide a theoretical framework for thinking through anti-Muslim racism in this study. Since the archetypes of the 'dangerous Muslim man' and the 'imperilled Muslim woman' regularly surfaced in participants' experiences it would be fair to say that the War on Terror has fundamentally affected the experiences of Muslims in Quebec secondary schools, as the War on Terror has been justified through these archetypes. These archetypes have been further reinforced and given meaning through anti-Muslim racism in Quebec relating to sexularist discourses, state policies of secularism and interculturalism, as well as anti-immigrant/Muslim sentiments expressed in political and media discourses. While one can situate participants' experiences within the broader context of the post-9/11 age and the War on Terror, quite importantly, their experiences resonated particularly with racism and discrimination prevalent in Quebec political and media discourses. Synthesizing the global meta-narrative of anti-Muslim racism within the local context of these participants provided a more nuanced and salient

understanding of their experiences. Hence, challenges to the racism experienced by these participants must be directed at the broader post-9/11 culture of fear, but also as importantly directed at the local Quebec context. Participants' comments suggested a consistent racialization of the Islamic faith, which presumed innate qualities or characteristics associated with 'Muslimness'. Male participants' comments suggested that racialization of Islam associated Muslim men with violence and terrorism. Racialization for Muslim women occurred through the presence of a visual signifier, the *hijab,* identifying these women as 'Other'. Hence an appreciation for the relations of race and gender were essential in examining Islamophobia experienced by the participants, as male and female participants experienced racialization differently based on their gender.

Similarities between participants and participant categories. A number of common themes and issues emerged from the data analysis of the interviews. The most obvious of these trends was that most participants experienced, directly or indirectly, some form of anti-Muslim racism and prejudice in Quebec society and in their secondary schools. However, there was a wide range in how participants interpreted the racism that they experienced. For example, Noor described how she felt that Islamophobia existed in the realm of media representations of Muslims and not necessarily something that manifested in Quebec society. She held these views despite the fact that she experienced a number of instances which demonstrated that Islamophobia was very real in Quebec, as she was told "go back to your country" and even had eggs thrown at her because of her 'Islamic' appearance. There was a similar type of perception amongst male participants like Zaid and Ismail who both described racist incidents, in which their classmates associated them with terrorism, as not being a very serious issue. Zaid and Ismail described these incidents as "funny" or as "jokes". It is my contention that this attitude

exemplified by some participants demonstrated how racism was seemingly normalized in the day-to-day experiences of some of the participants. These participants were not attuned to how they were experiencing racism, as they were not offended and seriously concerned over these issues. In a way, it would seem that they had unconsciously accepted this type of treatment and categorizations. This may have been caused by the negative representations and perceptions prevalent in state policies and practices—as alluded to by participants—as well as political and media discourses in Quebec.

Most participants described how the archetype of 'dangerous Muslim man' as represented by the figure of the Muslim terrorist was regularly perpetuated through the media. Participants also described how they encountered this affiliation to terrorism in Quebec society as well as in secondary schools. Muslim women were confronted with the 'imperilled Muslim woman' archetype. However, some female participants alluded to how the type of racism they experienced was through associations or affiliations with terror as well. This occurred with Amina, when she discussed how she lost a good friend the day after 9/11 because her friend associated her 'Muslimness' with this event. Hence, Muslim women described how they were susceptible to Islamophobia in multiple ways. In some instances wearing a visual signifier like the *hijab* created feelings of 'Otherness' or reinforced the trope of 'imperilled Muslim woman'. However, in the aftermath of 9/11 the *hijab* was also a symbol that seemed to be associated with violence and terrorism in the experience of some of the participants.

Maryam and Ayesha also noted that once they started wearing the *hijab,* their relationships with their classmates changed. Ayesha felt that the *hijab* put her in the spotlight and consequently she had to be the "spokesperson for the entire Muslim *ummah*", which she found very challenging as she was trying to carve out her own identity and did not feel she fit the

archetypal mould of the 'Muslim woman' that was associated with the *hijab.* Maryam was

inundated with stereotypical questions relating to 'imperilled Muslim women' once she started

wearing the *hijab,* because this symbol signaled her 'Muslimness' to her peers, which was not

the case before she wore the *hijab.* Wearing the *hijab* and being recognized as 'Muslim' entailed

that Maryam was one of *them* and could now answer questions about (their perceptions of)

Islam. The questions Maryam was asked were filled with distortions, yet her peers felt

comfortable asking her these questions because she fit the description of 'Muslim woman' and

could now speak authoritatively about 'Islam'. The closest thing male participants described as

visually signifying their 'Muslimness' was a big beard. For Malik, being brown skinned and

having a big beard brought about unwanted attention and falsely signaled his affiliation with

terrorism in the eyes of some members of society. Like the *hijab,* Malik's big beard was deemed

incompatible with Quebec values by some people. Hence, perceptions of some participants were

constructed through visual signifiers of 'Muslimness'. In doing my analysis, I was unable to infer

differences between Muslim student participants who attended French secondary schools and

those who attended English secondary schools, possibly because of the small sample size.

Participants from both described positive and negative experiences in their secondary school

experiences.

Muslim teachers, like Muslim students experienced similar types of racist incidents

within their secondary schools. Ibrahim encountered explicit and implicit forms of racism from

his students. One student went as far as posting an image of him on his Facebook page with the

caption "terrorist math teacher?" Alia also experienced racism from students. But her most

severe encounter with racism came from another teacher. This teacher regularly "bullied" Alia

and associated the archetype of 'imperilled Muslim woman' with Alia and her faith. Therefore,

like Muslim student participants, Muslim teachers also faced racism from students and teachers. I believe this was indicative of the pervasiveness of Islamophobia in the schools of the student and teacher participants.

Differences. One of the key differences that I noted while analyzing the interviews was that Muslim men did not face a barrage of questions associated with their faith, whereas some of the women described how questioning was central to their experiences as a Muslim in secondary school. This occurred when Muslim female participants started wearing the *hijab* in their schools. This finding was similar to those of Nawell Mossalli (2009) in her study of Muslim teens in the US, where she observed "Muslim boys...in comparison to their female counterparts…were rarely asked questions related to their religion" (p. 57). Maryam alluded to how being asked a lot of questions was empowering, as she was a gatekeeper of knowledge of her faith. Hence, one can argue that wearing the *hijab* gave her an opportunity to teach her peers about Islam (Khan, 2009). I believe Maryam's experience runs counter to discourses of Muslim women being passive and oppressed, and that perhaps it reveals that some Muslim women have the potential to challenge stereotypes about Muslims and Islam in Quebec secondary schools.

Another important difference between Muslim male and female participants that I encountered was the differences in the types of racisms that these groups faced in secondary schools. Muslim male participants often described concrete instances of racism in which they or their faith were ridiculed or "joked" about. Some of the male participants discussed how they faced taunts and racial slurs associating them with terrorism and violence in their schools. They also described how at times they felt the need to regulate their speech in a classroom setting fearing reprisals for their beliefs. Muslim female participants also discussed concrete forms of racism in the form of verbal and physical abuse. However, these instances occurred in their

interactions outside of their secondary schools. The types of racism described by most Muslim female student participants in secondary schools involved how they were perceived by their peers. They often described subtle or more implicit forms of Islamophobia. This manifested in how Muslim female students would be asked questions relating to "stereotypes" when they started wearing the *hijab.* This also occurred when there were class discussions about 9/11 and the War on Terror and teachers and students focused undue attention on these students. The underlying assumption here was that these students were privy to 'insider information' as the *hijab* visually marked them as 'Other' and was a symbol associated with a monolithic Islamic entity.

Some of the Muslim female student participants discussed the impacts of 9/11 in their experiences as secondary students, whereas Muslim male students did not mention that this event affected their high school experiences. I believe the main reason for this disparity is because three of the Muslim female participants were students in secondary school during the 9/11 attacks, whereas none of the Muslim male participants were in secondary school during that time. From this I have inferred that major events which occupy state and media discourses impacted the experiences of Muslim students in secondary schools. When 9/11 occurred, Muslim students who were in secondary school at the time described how their educational experiences were affected by this event. Throughout the War on Terror, Muslim students' responses alluded to how the invasions and occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq affected their experiences in secondary school. This occurred through class discussions relating to terrorism and "understanding the Arab mind" as well as facing verbal taunts and name calling. Hence, major events that involved Muslims and occupied media and state discourses had influenced the experiences of the participants in this study.

Ruling relations. As previously mentioned, ruling relations are textually based forms of coordination or social interactions in which "power is generated and held in contemporary societies" (Smith, 1999, p. 79). In doing this study it became evident that there were a number of factors which impacted the experiences of Muslims as students in schools, and in Quebec society after 9/11. The ruling relations which emerged in this study included state practices and policies, as well as media and political discourses surrounding Muslims and Islam in Quebec within the context of the War on Terror. Drawing from van Dijk (1989), Wong (2011) contends that in racist and nationalist contexts the mass media reproduces ethnic ideologies, which frame ethnic relations in an *us* versus *them* dialectic. As such, "the convergence of the media with other institutions such as the state and, by extension, political parties, can create a powerful force in the public sphere" (Wong, 2011, p. 156). In my analysis of experiences of Muslim students in Quebec secondary schools, the convergence of state practices and policies combined with political and media discourses formed a web of relations through which ruling occurred.

As discussed in Chapter Three, central to Quebec's core values are the notions of secularism and gender equality. These values and official state policies have been used to frame Muslims in Quebec as 'Other' (Bilge, 2012; Mahrouse, 2010; Mookerjea, 2009). Participants described how this 'Othering' manifested in their secondary schools, while at the same time implicating media representations as a means of perpetuating Islamophobic perceptions. Muslim student participants described how they were confronted with the archetypes of the 'dangerous Muslim man', the 'imperilled Muslim woman', and Islam as a monolithic entity by both their classmates and teachers, which regularly occur in state and media discourses surrounding Muslims. Muslim male students expressed how they felt the need to regurgitate secular discourses or they would be penalized by not receiving "full marks" in their classes. Muslim

female students discussed how their teachers and classmates understood them as 'Other' and

being outside of the nationalist space.

Muslim student participants often explicitly mentioned how they felt media

representations of Muslims impacted how they were perceived in their secondary schools. They

were less explicit in mentioning state practices and policies influencing perceptions of Muslims

in secondary schools. It is my contention that to simply point the finger at the media as being

responsible for bringing about stereotypes in the experiences of participants does not fully

account for the phenomenon of Islamophobia in their secondary schools. Media representations

of Muslims in popular culture mediums such as films, television programs, and news media have

been given a more impactful influence in Quebec society due to official state policies and

discourses surrounding Muslims. North American popular cultural mediums have been

inundated with archetypal portrayals of Muslim terrorists and oppressed Muslim women

(Kincheloe, 2004 & 2010; Shaheen, 2000 & 2008; Steinberg, 2004 & 2010). These

representations have been reinforced through state policies and political discourses emanating

from the RA debates, the proposed Charter of Values, and sexularism, which have portrayed

Muslims as 'Other' and threatening to Quebec society and values.

Conclusion

Summary

This thesis has examined the lived experiences of Muslims in Quebec secondary schools in the post-9/11 context. In part, this was accomplished by examining the literature on anti-Muslim racism in Western societies. Critical race feminist scholarship was indispensable in helping me develop a framework for examining the phenomenon of Islamophobia. I explored how Islamophobia manifested in North American societies through the socially constructed power relations of race, gender, and class. I also demonstrated how Islamophobia was enacted, perpetuated and justified through the War on Terror. Therefore, I contended that discussions about experiences of Islamophobia in the post-9/11 context were inevitably linked to the War on Terror. To further contextualize my study, I examined the Quebec context to explore how and why Islamophobia has manifested in Quebec society. After explaining the methods and methodological processes I used to engage in this study, I examined the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools in the post-9/11 context. I employed critical ethnography drawing from an institutional ethnographic approach to examine former/current Muslim students' as well as teachers' experiences in Quebec secondary schools. The overall intent of conducting these interviews was to shed light on the experiences of Muslims in Quebec secondary schools and to determine the relations of ruling, which may have contributed to racist and biased treatment experienced by the participants in the schools that they attended.

The interview process revealed that most participants felt some levels of anti-Muslim racism in Quebec society and secondary schools. Some participants' comments suggested that racism was normalized in their day-to-day experiences, as they were not attuned to the racism that they were experiencing. Muslim female participants described being racialized via a visual

signifier identifying them as Muslim (i.e. the *hijab*). This occurred through being perceived as having sympathies and affiliations with terrorism, being viewed as 'Other', and exposure to 'imperilled Muslim woman' discourses. Muslim male participants described how their faith was racialized and how this resulted in perceptions which associated them with violence and terror manifested through the 'dangerous Muslim man' archetype. Some Muslim teachers also described how they were "bullied" by staff members or students because of their faith, which I felt was indicative of the pervasiveness of Islamophobia in participants' secondary schools. Teacher participants clearly felt that anti-Muslim racism existed in Quebec secondary schools and suggested that these negative perceptions of Muslims could be challenged through the QEP. The specific relations of ruling that emerged through the interview process were a combination of state practices and policies with media and political discourses which influenced the experiences of these participants.

Engaging in self-reflexivity

Prior to my research I held certain beliefs and assumptions of how Muslims were perceived in Quebec society and secondary schools, as well as what factors may have influenced perceptions of Muslims and Islam in Quebec. I strongly believed that popular cultural media representations of Muslims in the post-9/11 context would have been the primary factor in defining the experiences of the Muslim participants in this study. With these assumptions and biases, earlier drafts of my thesis were underscored and embedded with an over-deterministic view of how media representations of Muslims impacted the lived experiences of Muslim students in this study. Though some participants shared that they felt media representations of Muslims had influenced how they were perceived in Quebec society and in their secondary schools, I now believe that media is one of a number of factors which helps explain anti-Muslim

racism experienced by participants. By having others read my previous thesis drafts and extensively revisiting interview transcripts it became clearer to me that I was overstating the impact of media in my participants' experiences. When re-examining interview transcripts I had noticed that participants rarely discussed specific forms of media and would make generalizing statements about how the media perpetuated biases against Muslims. Often when asked what news stories in the media they were referring to, or television programs/films had these biases that they described, participants were not able to clearly pinpoint any specific material. Thus, it became difficult to justify my arguments that media was a primary factor influencing the participants' lived experiences, as they were not clear about what forms of media and how exactly these media impacted their experiences. Therefore, I began to question my assumptions and came to the conclusion that media along with political, historical, and social factors combined together to form relations of ruling in my participants' experiences. All these factors are interrelated and were discussed by the participants in articulating the Islamophobia that they experienced.

When conducting interviews and doing data analysis, I also needed to be careful not to overstate participants' experiences with racism. As a Muslim secondary school teacher, my experiences with Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools influenced and impacted the way I viewed this study. Over the years, I have become very attuned and aware of the existence of anti-Muslim racism within Quebec educational institutions. This does not necessarily mean that all Muslims in Quebec schools have similar experiences and beliefs about this issue. In order to avoid overstating experiences of racism in my interpretations of participants' comments I asked other people including my supervisor, friends, and family to read my analysis of comments to gauge if they felt I was overemphasizing or exaggerating my analysis of these experiences. This

was a helpful process as it forced me to listen again to interviews and re-read transcripts from a more critical perspective. This process of review of my work also suggested that I may have been overstating the assimilationist interests of Quebec secularism and French language culture in some portions of the thesis. This required me to re-examine my situatedness as an English-speaking researcher in Quebec and the impact that this may have had on my analysis. Through this critical self-examination, I revised and removed sections of the thesis.

Another tension that I had to struggle with while doing this study was acknowledging some of the shortcomings of interviewing participants who were no longer secondary school students and who relied on their memories when discussing their experiences. One's memories are always susceptible to compromise and can be influenced by later experiences in one's life (Davis & Starn, 1989). I understood this limitation and proceeded with interviewing former students anyway. I felt that despite these problems there was still valuable information to be gleaned from recollections of these experiences. I feel that narrative is an extremely powerful tool to express and articulate racism and biases that I and others have experienced. As we narrate our stories it forces us to engage in an introspective process which can possibly enrich and bring to light understandings of issues that may not have occurred to us as we were living through these moments (Roberts & Roberts, 1996). I acknowledge that relying on participants' memories and narratives was underwritten by subjectivities, however I still examined them critically. When analyzing the transcripts of former secondary students who were discussing incidents of their past, I avoided drawing from issues that were not clearly remembered by the participants. Rather, I only incorporated stories and incidents that stood out for the participants and were therefore clearly articulated.

Limitations of this study

A total of twelve Muslim student participants were interviewed for this research project. This may seem like a small number of participants, but given that this study was a critical ethnography drawing from IE, I was less concerned with the sample size and more focused on engaging in a critical dialogue involving the experiences of marginalized members in society (Quantz, 1992). I wanted to learn about the lived experiences of my participants, to shed light on whether they have experienced racism, discrimination, and Islamophobia within the Quebec secondary schools that they attended, and if so, how it manifested and what factors facilitated this. By interviewing a smaller number of participants, this inquiry was able to provide rich contextualized data unattainable in a larger scale inquiry. Having a smaller number of participants allowed for detailed and reflective responses to questions and inquiries, as well as the possibility for engaging in detailed follow-up questions and interviews. A number of studies drawing from similar theoretical and methodological approaches have also relied on smaller sample sizes to examine issues relating to racism, inequality, and oppression within institutional settings (Campbell & Gregor, 2008; Zine, 2006).

Participants all resided, attended or worked at schools in the Montreal and Greater Montreal Region. I was unable to travel around other parts of Quebec during the data collection stage of my research. Consequently, I did not interview a large number of participants and my participants all lived and worked within a specific region of Quebec. This study lacks generalizability and is only reflective of the participants that were interviewed. Yet, I contend that its findings re-affirm a number of other studies mentioned throughout this thesis. I acknowledge the limitations of this study and feel that given its scope and purposes, my findings provide valuable and important insights into the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Quebec society

and secondary schools. Through this study, my personal beliefs and understandings about anti-Muslim racism have expanded and become enriched. This study has illustrated some of the complexities of understanding Islamophobia in Quebec in the context of the War on Terror and how it is influenced at the state/domestic level in the lives of individuals. By understanding some of these complexities and the multifaceted nature of Islamophobia in the lived experiences of individuals it creates opportunities for further exploration of this phenomenon through nuanced perspectives.

Implications, further areas of study, and final thoughts

I found that Islamophobia experienced by participants in this study was a multifaceted phenomenon organized by political, social, and historical processes and relations. Additionally, Islamophobia described by the participants was influenced by both local and global factors. On a global/international level, this study described how participants experienced Islamophobia through discourses and national policies relating to the global War on Terror. Participants also described how Islamophobia occurred through domestic state practices and policies specific to Quebec. This would imply that anti-Muslim racism can be experienced in multiple ways. For example, Islamophobia can arise through tensions, political discourses, and legislations relating to international conflicts, which includes the 'clash of civilizations' thesis. It can also occur through localized narratives, such as notions of Islam and Muslims threatening traditional Quebecois values. In some instances, anti-Muslim racism includes a combination of both domestic and international factors. This could involve the archetypal depictions of the 'dangerous Muslim man' and 'imperilled Muslim woman' who are perpetrators and victims of honour-based violence—a practice which is whitewashed from the collective memories of Quebecers and North Americans in general.

As the research findings in this study suggested that Muslim male and female participants experienced Islamophobia differently, a further study could examine Islamophobia in Quebec secondary schools focusing only on women, and a separate study examining the experiences of Muslim men. Another potential study could examine the experiences of Muslim teachers, as my research revealed how they can also be victims of Islamophobic perceptions and practices. Additionally, research could focus on interviewing only current high school students, or only interviewing former high school students within a specified time frame. This study contributes to the body of Canadian critical race scholarship, since it examined experiences of race and racism of Quebec Muslims after 9/11. Furthermore, this study also provided insights relating to critical race educational scholarship by examining anti-Muslim racism in educational institutions.

Findings from Muslim and non-Muslim teacher participants also provided insights for further study. Muslim and non-Muslim teacher participants felt that there was space within the QEP to challenge Islamophobic perceptions and engage in anti-racism education. As a Quebec secondary school teacher I have found ways of engaging in fruitful class discussions in which perceptions and preconceived notions surrounding religious and ethnic groups have been challenged. Through courses like the ERC program I have been able to teach students how to be critical of media representations of gender, religion, and race. I have used this program to question the legitimacies of conflicts around the world as well as to question dominant discourse about them. Other teachers and researchers have also described varying levels of success in helping to promote mutual understanding and acceptance of various groups in Quebec society through this program. For example, Eric Van der Wee (2011), a pioneer in implementing the ERC program in Quebec English schools discusses how he experienced positive results through this program. Van der Wee (2011) explains his success through developing "a space where the

student is free to express him or herself without fear of judgment, where constructive dialogue can take place, and where the instructor is a neutral facilitator for such a process" (p. 246). By taking such steps, he described how he used the ERC program to challenge perceptions of Muslims in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Recounting this, he mentions:

> Shortly after the World Trade Center destruction on September 11th, many news broadcasts showed Palestinians dancing in the streets, rejoicing over what was seen as a decisive blow against an enemy. Many students reacted angrily to this, publicly espousing racial epithets against Muslims everywhere. They were using their ''individual voices.'' Although disturbing, it was, in a sense, fortunate that they felt they could do so, because a great discussion ensued, with the end result being the ''group voice'' challenging and finally correcting the individual voices. The students became more critical of how the media can easily distort an event, especially when it comes to religion (p. 246).

Through creating a respectful environment where students felt they could share their views, the students were able to exercise their individual voices. As differing views emerged through the class discussion the facilitator helped in pointing out the logical fallacies in some of the individual arguments, thus allowing for a group voice to emerge challenging erroneous or simplistic perceptions. The process of fostering students' individual voices which are respected and discussed also creates opportunities for Muslim students to share their views and perceptions. As Ann-Marie De Silva (2011) mentions based on her experiences, "students who follow minority religions in Québec, such as Islam or Hinduism … [have] an opportunity to validate and share a piece of their religious identity that was previously denied by the school curriculum" (Morris, Bouchard, & De Silva, 2011, p. 259). Empowering students to share their

individual voices allows for counter discourses to emerge. Such a process gives opportunities for Muslim voices to challenge dominant views from their perspectives, which are seldom heard in media and state discourses in Quebec. However, student participants' comments in Chapter Five suggested otherwise. Muslim student participants in this study described how their classes and teachers in Quebec secondary schools did very little to challenge stereotypes and often reinforced negative perceptions of Muslims and Islam.

The contradictory views expressed by student and teacher participants on challenging anti-Muslim racism in Quebec secondary schools is an area which warrants further examination and analysis. One possible study could examine courses within the QEP, such as the ERC program to better understand the potentials and limitations for engaging in critical dialogue to foster anti-racism education. Another study could examine if there is systemic bias and racism embedded within the QEP, which has brought about feelings of marginalization and 'Otherness' of racialized and Muslim youth in Quebec schools. All of these are important areas of concern and research which can build from the findings of this study.

As I conclude my thesis, I am reminded of a saying attributed to Malcolm X (1965), "if you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything". In other words, if one does not stand up for one's beliefs and principles, one will accept anything, including subordination, oppression, and social structures that maintain and perpetuate inequities. As an educator, I refuse to passively accept racist attitudes, beliefs, and practices to continue unimpeded in Quebec secondary schools. Through my research, in drawing from, and engaging with existing critical scholarship, I have attempted to stand up for my beliefs, values, and my commitment to social justice. It is my hope that this work will contribute towards social change and equality in Quebec society and secondary schools, as well as my praxis in social justice education.

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Appendix one: Interview/Focus group Guide Topics (for teachers and students)

How are Muslims perceived in society?
- Tell me about your experiences as a student/teacher in Quebec secondary school
- Do you feel you were visibly identifiable as a Muslim in secondary school? If so how/why? (only for student participants)
- How do you feel Muslims are perceived by society?
- How do you feel other minority groups are perceived by society
- How do you feel you were perceived by your peers in secondary school (only for student participants)
- Did 9/11 have an impact on your experiences in secondary school? (For teacher participants modify to: based on your experiences, do you feel 9/11 had an impact on Muslim students? Do you have stories/examples?)
- Have you ever encountered any issues relating to racism in your secondary school experiences?

Popular cultural mediums
- Tell me about what you think of when I say 'pop-culture'
- Do you feel popular culture affects how people are perceived by society? If so how/why
- Have you ever seen any TV programs or Hollywood films that had Muslims in them? If so, what programs/movies?
- How were Muslims depicted in these programs/movies? Do you feel this is good or bad and why?
- How do you feel Muslims are represented in the news media? Examples?
- Tell me what thoughts/ideas come to mind while watching this video clip? (show a video clip)

Pop-culture and educational contexts
- Do you feel Hollywood films, TV, and the news, affect how people perceive racialized groups? If so how/why? Can you provide examples?
- Do you feel these popular cultural mediums affect how Muslims are perceived in secondary schools? If so why/how? Tell me about any stories that come to mind
- In your opinion, do you feel the experiences of Muslims in secondary schools are positively, negatively, or not affected at all by how Muslims are represented in the media? Why/why not?
- Do you feel the QEP can be used as a tool to engage students in discussions about Islamophobia (teachers only)
- Have you every addressed any biases against Muslims in schools? If so how?
- Based on our discussion, is there anything else that you would like to share with me?

Appendix two: Participant Consent Forms

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM (Former Students 18+)
McGill University

Title of Research: Addressing Islamophobia through a cross curricular approach: Towards a framework for engaging students in critical discussion

Researcher: Naved Bakali – PhD Student (Educational Studies), Department of Integrated Studies: Cultural and International Studies in Education

Supervisor: Dr. Aziz Choudry; tel.: 514-398-2253, e-mail: aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca

Contact Information: Tel.: 450-800-1282
e-mail: naved.bakali@mail.mcgill.ca

Purpose of Research:

Dear Participant,

My name is Naved Bakali, I am a PhD student at McGill University in Cultural and International Studies in Education. In this coming year I'll be doing a research project that will explore the phenomenon of Islamophobia in pop-culture and its effects in schools. My goals in doing this study are: (1) determine if there is a relationship between the types of representations of Muslims in pop-cultural media and how Muslims are perceived in Quebec educational contexts; (2) explore whether or not Muslims and other groups experience discrimination in Quebec educational settings; (3) provide Muslim students with the opportunity to express biases and prejudices they may have experienced as Muslims in Quebec educational contexts in the post-9/11 era.

While I have already looked at existing educational research on the topics above, it is important that I examine Quebec educational contexts as very little research is available about these issues within Quebec. To this end I am inviting you to participate in an audio-taped interview (30 minutes) in which you will share your thoughts and insights relating to how you feel Muslims are perceived in society, if you believe perceptions of Muslims are shaped by media representations, and if you have personally encountered biases against Muslims. This interview will only take place once and will be held at a location that is most convenient for you. The interview will consist of open-ended questions that you will answer by reflecting on your experiences as a Muslim high school student in Quebec. I believe that this research project will be an extremely enlightening experience for you as well as for me and other educators. I assure you that if any questions make you uncomfortable you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to and you can stop and may withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature below means that you agree to participate in my study. Should you or your parents wish to withdraw your consent at any point, I will immediately delete any comments that you have made from my data sets.

Before analysing my data, I will also play our discussions back to you, and any comments which you do not feel comfortable with will be deleted. Additionally, after I have completed analyzing our conversations, I will verify my observations with you. The findings of this research study may appear in my thesis, publications, and conference presentations. If your conversations are chosen to be included in my thesis, publications, or conference presentations they will be identified by a pseudonym (a fake name). The school you attended will not be identified in any way. My pledge to confidentiality also means that the only other person who will have access to the data, which will not be identifiable, is my McGill supervisor, and this will be for analytical purposes only.

Please note that this research project is in no way affiliated with any school or school board.

If you have any questions or concerns about your welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Research Ethics Office at 514-398-6831

Agreement:

I have read and understand the above **agreement form**, and, by signing my name, I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in the study.

 I agree to be tape-recorded during this interview (results may still be used without a recording).   Yes_____   No_____

Date: _____

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Thank you, in advance!

RESEARCH AGREEMENT FORM (High School Students)
McGill University

Title of Research: Addressing Islamophobia through a cross curricular approach: Towards a framework for engaging students in critical discussion

Researcher: Naved Bakali – PhD Student (Educational Studies), Department of Integrated Studies: Cultural and International Studies in Education

Supervisor: Dr. Aziz Choudry; tel.: 514-398-2253, e-mail: aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca

Contact Information: Tel.: 450-800-1282
e-mail: naved.bakali@mail.mcgill.ca

Purpose of Research:

Dear Student,

My name is Naved Bakali, I am a PhD student at McGill University in Cultural and International Studies in Education. In this coming school year I'll be doing a research project that will explore the phenomenon of Islamophobia in pop-culture and its effects in schools. My goals in doing this study are: (1) determine if there is a relationship between the types of representations of Muslims in pop-cultural media and how Muslims are perceived in Quebec educational contexts; (2) explore whether or not Muslims and other groups experience discrimination in Quebec educational settings; (3) provide Muslim students with the opportunity to express biases and prejudices they may have experienced as Muslims in Quebec educational contexts in the post-9/11 era.

While I have already looked at existing educational research on the topics above, it is important that I examine Quebec educational contexts as very little research is available about these issues within Quebec. To this end I am inviting you to participate in an audio-taped focus group discussion (1 hour) in which you will share your thoughts and insights relating to how you feel Muslims are perceived in society, if you believe perceptions of Muslims are shaped by media representations, and if you have personally encountered biases against Muslims. This Focus group discussion will only take place once and will be held at a location that is convenient for all participants. The focus groups will be segregated based on gender. The participants will all be between 15-17 years old and there will be approximately 4-5 participants in the focus group discussion. The focus group discussion will consist of open-ended questions that you will answer through group discussions. I believe that this research project will be an extremely enlightening experience for you as well as for me and other educators. I assure you that if any questions make you uncomfortable you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to and you can stop and may withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature below means that you agree to participate in my study. Your parents' consent is also necessary for your participation in this study. Should you or your parents wish to withdraw your consent at any point, I will immediately delete any comments that you have made from my data sets.

Before analysing my data, I will also play our discussions back to you, and any comments which you do not feel comfortable with will be deleted. Additionally, after I have completed analyzing our conversations, I will verify my observations with you. The findings of this research study may appear in my thesis, publications, and conference presentations. If your conversations are chosen to be included in my thesis, publications, or conference presentations they will be identified by a pseudonym (a fake name). The school you attend will not be identified in any way. Before conducting the focus group discussion I will make it clear to the other students that what is said in the focus group should remain private, however I cannot guarantee that someone else in the group will not repeat what is said. My pledge to confidentiality also means that the only other person who will have access to the data, which will not be identifiable, is my McGill supervisor, and this will be for analytical purposes only.

Please note that this research project is in no way affiliated with any school or school board.

If you have any questions or concerns about your welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Research Ethics Office at 514-398-6831

Agreement:

I have read and understand the above **agreement form**, and, by signing my name, I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in the study.

 I agree to be tape-recorded during this interview (results may still be used without a recording).   Yes_____   No_____

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Thank you, in advance!

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM (Parents)
McGill University

Title of Research: Addressing Islamophobia through a cross curricular approach: Towards a framework for engaging students in critical discussion

Researcher: Naved Bakali – PhD Student (Educational Studies), Department of Integrated Studies: Cultural and International Studies in Education

Supervisor: Dr. Aziz Choudry; tel.: 514-398-2253, e-mail: aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca

Contact Information: Tel.: 450-800-1282
e-mail: naved.bakali@mail.mcgill.ca

Purpose of Research:

Dear Parent,

My name is Naved Bakali, I am a PhD student at McGill University in Cultural and International Studies in Education. In this coming school year I'll be doing a research project that will explore the phenomenon of Islamophobia in popular cultural media and its implications in educational settings. My objectives in doing this study are: (1) determine if there is a relationship between the types of representations of Muslims in pop-cultural media and how Muslims are perceived in Quebec educational contexts; (2) explore whether or not Muslims and other groups experience discrimination in Quebec educational settings; (3) provide Muslim students with the opportunity to express biases and prejudices they may have experienced as Muslims in Quebec educational contexts in the post-9/11 era.

While I have already consulted existing educational research on the topics above, it is imperative that I examine Quebec educational contexts as very little research is available about these issues within Quebec. To this end I am inviting your son/daughter to participate in an audio-taped focus group discussion (1 hour) in which they will share their thoughts and insights relating to how they believe Muslims are perceived in society, if they believe perceptions of Muslims are shaped by media representations, and if they have personally encountered biases against Muslims. This Focus group discussion will only take place once and will be held in a location that is most convenient for the participants. The focus groups will be segregated based on gender. The participants will all be between 15-17 years old and there will be approximately 4-5 participants in the focus group discussion. The focus group discussion will consist of open-ended questions that students will answer through group discussions. If there are any questions that make your child uncomfortable, they don't have to answer them and they can stop and may withdraw from the study at any time. I believe that this research project will be an extremely enlightening experience that will help shed light into issues relating to citizenship, discrimination, equality,

and social justice—all of which have important implications in our increasingly multicultural society.

Your signature below attests to the fact that your child agrees to participate in my study and that you, as a parent, consent to this. Should you wish to withdraw your consent at any point, I will immediately delete any comments that your child has made from my data sets.

Please note that this research project is in no way affiliated with any school or school board.

Before analysing my data, I will also play our discussions back to the students, and any comments which they do not feel comfortable with will be deleted. Additionally, after I have completed analyzing our conversations, I will verify my observations with the students. The findings of this research study may be disseminated through my thesis, publications, and conference presentations. If your child's conversations are chosen to be included in my thesis, publications, or conference presentations they will be identified by a pseudonym. The school your child attends will not be identified in any way. Before conducting the focus group discussion I will make it clear to the students that what is said in the focus group should remain private, however I cannot guarantee that someone else in the group will not repeat what is said. My pledge to confidentiality also means that the only other person who will have access to the data, which will not be identifiable, is my McGill supervisor, and this will be for analytical purposes only.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Research Ethics Office at 514-398-6831.

Consent/Agreement:

I have read and understand the above **consent form**, and, by signing my name, I indicate my willingness for *my child* to take part in the study.

 I agree that my child may be audio-taped during this interview (results may still be used without a recording).   Yes_____   No_____

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Thank you, in advance!

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM (Teachers)
McGill University

Title of Research: Addressing Islamophobia through a cross curricular approach: Towards a framework for engaging students in critical discussion

Researcher: Naved Bakali – PhD Student (Educational Studies), Department of Integrated Studies: Cultural and International Studies in Education

Supervisor: Dr. Aziz Choudry; tel.: 514-398-2253, e-mail: aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca

Contact Information: Tel.: 450-800-1282
e-mail: naved.bakali@mail.mcgill.ca

Purpose of Research:

Dear Colleague,

As you may know, my name is Naved Bakali, I am a PhD student at McGill University in Cultural and International Studies in Education. In this coming school year I'll be doing a research project that will explore the phenomenon of Islamophobia in popular cultural media and its implications in educational settings. My objectives in doing this study are: (1) determine if there is a correspondence between the types of representations of Muslims in popular cultural media and how Muslims are perceived in Quebec educational contexts; (2) explore whether or not Muslims and other groups experience discrimination in Quebec educational contexts; (3) provide Muslim students with the opportunity to express biases and prejudices they may have experienced as Muslims in Quebec educational contexts in the post-9/11 era.

While I have already consulted existing educational research on the topics above, it is imperative that I examine Quebec educational contexts as very little research is available about these issues within Quebec. To this end I am requesting your participation in a 30 minute long audio-taped interview in which you will be asked about how you believe Muslims are perceived in society, if you believe perceptions of Muslims are shaped by media representations, and if you have personally encountered biases against Muslims. This interview will only occur once and will take place at a location that is most convenient for. The interview will consist of open-ended questions in which you will have the opportunity to discuss the above issues. I believe that this research project will be an extremely enlightening experience that will help shed light into issues relating to citizenship, discrimination, equality, and social justice—all of which have important implications in our increasingly multicultural society.

Your signature below attests to the fact that you are willing to participate in my study and that you are consenting to this. Should you wish to withdraw your consent at any point, I will immediately delete any comments that you have made from my data sets. I am aware that my

role as your colleague may cause you to feel obligated to participate, but I assure you that *your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your consent at any time.*

Before analysing my data, I will also play our discussions back to you, and any comments which you do not feel comfortable with will be deleted. Additionally, after I have completed analyzing our conversations, I will verify my observations with you. The findings of this research study may be disseminated through my thesis, publications, and conference presentations. If your conversations are chosen to be included in my thesis, publications, or conference presentations they will be identified by a pseudonym. The school that you work for will not be identified in any way. My pledge to confidentiality also means that the only other person who will have access to the data, which will not be identifiable, is my McGill supervisor, and this will be for analytical purposes only.

Please note that this research project is in no way affiliated with any school or school board.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Research Ethics Office at 514-398-6831

Consent/Agreement:

I have read and understand the above **consent form**, and, by signing my name, I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in the study.

I agree to be tape-recorded during this interview (results may still be used without a recording).   Yes_____   No_____

Date: _____

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Thank you, in advance!