

**Addressing Multiculturalism in the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism
Policy and in the Everyday Lives of Muslims in St. John's, NL**

by

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Abstract

Since 2005, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador has developed a number of initiatives and social policies to increase immigration and improve immigrant retention. At the same time, minority religious groups have grown, slightly increasing the province's religious diversity. This thesis examines the 2008 provincial Multiculturalism Policy alongside the experiences of Muslims living in St. John's to consider how multiculturalism is lived within this particular context. Interviews with Muslims living in St. John's capture experiences of multiculturalism outside of the context of government policies and services. More concretely, the thesis focuses on the challenges faced by Muslim participants in requesting religious holidays off from work. I conclude that, although the existing provincial multiculturalism policy facilitates certain services and programs, comprehensive issues like equal access to time off from work and school to celebrate religious holidays could be better addressed. One step in this direction is a broader definition of multiculturalism in the policy that might better define secularism and more concretely address participants' challenges and concerns with religious equality.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis examines a small but vital Muslim community in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. Due to low immigration rates and a related racially and ethnically homogenous population, religiosity in Newfoundland and Labrador has historically been characterized by Christian groups. Yet, since 1967, like the rest of Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador's population has experienced significant religious diversification. The adoption of the "points system" contributed to diversifying Canada's religious populations, including those in Newfoundland and Labrador.¹ These amendments meant that the country and the province's immigration policy moved away from a preference for British Protestant immigrants and resulted in the growth of non-Christian religious traditions. The population of these religious minorities groups has thus grown through historical and recent immigration and, to a lesser extent, through conversion.

These non-Christian communities have settled in urban centres, particularly in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, a geographical focus mirrored in contemporary social scientific scholarship that has emphasized the settlement experiences of these immigrants (Nayar 2000, Dib, Donaldson and Turcotte 2008, Dossa 2009, Yousif 2008, Korteweg and Selby 2012). Receiving less attention, another portion of the country's religious minorities and immigrants live in the nation's smaller cities. Like other prairie and Atlantic provinces that have put in place various government initiatives and policies (i.e., Manitoba Department of Labour and Immigration 2003), the government of

¹ The point system selected immigrants based on a point tally that was made up of factors such as education, occupational demand, age, health, and destination in Canada (Dewing 2009).

Newfoundland and Labrador has similarly developed a number of policies and initiatives over the last decade to attract immigrants, including the provincial Multiculturalism Policy (2008).

This thesis examines how multiculturalism is articulated and interpreted within the context of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador in relation to this document. With reference to qualitative interviews with Muslims living in St. John's, I aim to reflect on the challenges of multiculturalism that exist outside of the current program and services delivered under the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008). I argue that although the policy addresses issues such as cross-cultural communication, comprehensive issues remain that could be better addressed through an enhancement of social practices. One potential initiative I focus upon is the extension of statutory holidays to non-Christian minorities. To support this suggestion, I reference the experiences of Muslims living in St. John's.

This chapter introduces the fundamental concepts at the heart of this project. Beginning with an overview of the history of Islam in Canada, I turn more specifically to Islam in St. John's. Secondly, I describe immigration in the province and the overall socio-economic character of Newfoundland and Labrador to which a largely socio-economically elite Muslim population has arrived. Thirdly, I examine multiculturalism discourses as they pertain to Canada and more specifically Newfoundland and Labrador, with an emphasis on some of the existing challenges and arguments surrounding notions of multiculturalism. Fourthly, I consider some of the contextual challenges of religious diversity with Newfoundland and Labrador's Christian-focused history, exemplified by

the former denominational school system. Finally, I introduce the current study, including a description of the research questions and hypotheses that guided the qualitative research.

1.2 Islam in Canada

Over the latter half of the 20th century, particularly since 1990, the traditions of Islam have become more visible in Canada. Changing immigration policies in Canada, as well as a heightening of threats of war in predominately Muslim countries have been influential in increasing the immigrant population of Canadian Muslim communities (Yousif 2008). The first record of a Muslim population in Canada goes back to 1871, when the Canadian Census reported 13 Muslim residents in Alberta (Abu-Laban 1983, 76). By 1901 there were approximately 300 to 400 Muslim immigrants living in Canada, equally divided between Turks and Syrian Arabs (Abu-Laban 1983, 76). Over the next ten years this population more than tripled, surpassing 1,500, the majority of whom were of Turkish origin (Abu-Laban 1983, 76). The initial growth of the Muslim community in Canada was disrupted by World War I due to politics that classified them as enemy aliens; many Turkish Muslims returned to their country of origin (Abu-Laban 1983, 76). As a result, from 1911 to 1951 the Canadian Muslim community experienced slower growth. After 1951, the population grew again because of changing immigration policies. It is estimated that following 1951 the Muslim population was between 2,000 and 3,000, the majority of whom were of Syrian-Arab decent (Abu-Laban 1983, 78).

The aforementioned introduction of the points system in 1967 reflected a significant shift. This change was created in order to encourage the immigration of candidates with strong language skills, employability and other important factors

dependent mostly on economic needs, rather than emphasizing the previously desired British Protestant subjects (Dewing 2009). This policy change, along with increased post-war immigration, contributed to the creation of a more ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse Muslim population in Canada.

As previously mentioned, Muslim groups historically settled in urban centres in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia, with the majority of Muslims settling in Toronto and surrounding areas. In the 1980s approximately 50,000 Muslims lived in Ontario, 15,000 in Quebec and 15,000 in Alberta, with another 20,000 spread throughout smaller, less central parts of Canada (Abu-Laban 1983, 79).

In 2001 there were just over 579,000 Muslims living in Canada, which was approximately 2% of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada 2001). This number doubled the previous result from the census on religion in 1991, making Islam the fastest growing religion in Canada and North America (Statistics Canada 2001). As a result, a number of Muslim organizations, schools and mosques developed throughout Canada. The majority of these are located within the Greater Toronto Area: Given that 5% of Toronto's population are Muslim, it has the largest Muslim population per capita in North America (Statistics Canada 2001). The Muslim Canadian Congress, the Muslim Association of Canada and the Canadian Muslim Union are just a few of the organizations that support growing Muslim populations, while also providing different resources and perspectives.

Since 9/11, alongside the growth of the Muslim population in North America, Islamophobia and debates highlighting religious difference have increased in Canada. Some contested issues include Ontario's Family Law Arbitration debate (2003-2006),

Quebec's Reasonable Accommodation debate (2008) and long-standing tensions on the wearing of Muslim garb such as face veils and headscarves. These issues have influenced popular Canadian perceptions on Islam and complicated notions of Canadian multiculturalism. Jasmin Zine highlights how negative perceptions of Canadian Muslims have been created and spread through sensationalized media attention, consequently ignoring the real challenges faced by Canadian Muslims (Zine 2012; see also Shryock 2010, Korteweg and Selby 2012). A number of Canadian Muslim communities have responded to these politically charged debates. For example, the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) has conducted extensive research on media representations, tracking national newspapers' use of anti-Islamic coverage and language in their papers. Their research suggests that pre-9/11 media perceptions of Islam had improved by 17% however, following the events of 9/11, negative media images have been dramatically inflated (Canadian Islamic Congress Website 2013). CIC's research rated the *National Post* as the worst in media representations of Islam. This pejorative media representation continues to present challenges for Muslims, academics, politicians and media thinkers as the Canadian Muslim population is projected to reach 2.6 million by 2030 (PEW 2011).

1.3 Islam in Newfoundland

The Muslim community in Newfoundland and Labrador has a more recent history than in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. In 2001 the Canadian census reported there were approximately 630 Muslims in Newfoundland and Labrador. Due to the cancellation of the mandatory long-form census in 2011, reliable statistical data is no longer available; nevertheless, even without clear quantitative data, it is clear that in the last decade there

has been substantial growth. Currently, the Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MANAL) suggests on their website that there are approximately 200 Muslim families living in the province (MANAL website). Although Muslims only make up approximately 0.12% of the provincial population, they constitute the second largest religious group in the province after Christianity, which represents 97.13% of the province's religious population.

One of the first known Muslims in Newfoundland and Labrador was Dr. Mohammad Irfan, who came to St. John's as a physics professor in 1966. In 1976, Dr. Irfan and Dr. Aziz Rahman, another faculty member at Memorial University of Newfoundland, launched the Muslim Student Association at Memorial University (MSA-MUN). Currently, the MSA-MUN is the university's largest student group and is made up of approximately 500 Muslim students (MSA-MUN website).

Larger than the MSA-MUN, MANAL is the primary association and support network for Muslims living in St. John's. The Association began in 1982 and was responsible for coordinating the building and the 1990 opening of the province's first and only mosque, the Al-Noor mosque (MANAL website). Prior to MANAL, the MSA-MUN was the sole existing Muslim-related organization. MANAL and MSA-MUN are thus the only official Muslim associations in the province.

The Al-Noor mosque faces a number of challenges. Along with a growing population, the location of the mosque is in the city's outskirts. As a result, the MSA-MUN has negotiated with Memorial University's on-campus chapel, St. John's Chapel, in order to hold weekly Friday prayers. Until 2006 the chapel had been solely for Roman Catholic students; it is now utilized as a multi-faith space to accommodate non-Catholic

students and faculty. This transition has made it easier for students and faculty to attend Friday prayers, since the mosque is a twenty-minute drive away from campus and not along any direct public transit lines. While the MSA-MUN arranges school buses for students to be able to attend the mosque for events and prayers if they choose, having access to the on-campus chapel has also relieved some of the challenges they were facing due to the limited space. MANAL is looking into building a larger Islamic community centre that includes a larger mosque, but as of yet have not had success receiving a building permit for the land they own (CBC 2012).

Both MANAL and the MSA-MUN host discussions, events, and bake sales in part to engage with non-Muslim communities. For example, MANAL has been a part of the St. John's "Doors Open Days," a community event put on by the City of St. John's that allows people to go into historic or private buildings and associations that would normally not be open to the public (NL Historic Trust Website). During Doors Open Days the organization welcomes the general public to come tour the mosque as well as ask and learn about Islam. Other examples of maintaining good public relations have been seen through the efforts of the MSA-MUN who hosts similar events such as Fundraising for the Janeway Children's Hospital.² MSA-MUN also works closely with the university community to educate and share about Islam by hosting on-campus events and lectures, such as an Islamic Awareness Week. The majority of their events are publicly advertised and open to all students and faculty.

Within Newfoundland and Labrador there have not been many publicly controversial issues surrounding Islam in the way there have been and continue to be in

² See: MSA <http://www.mun.ca/msa/> and MANAL <http://manal.ca/>.

Ontario and Quebec. More comparably, in Prince Edward Island in the fall of 2012, a series of threats and hate crimes were targeted at the local mosque and Muslim community in Charlottetown (CBC 2012). In St. John's the challenges have been on a smaller scale, such receiving permits to build a new mosque and establishing space for a Muslim cemetery. Cemetery grounds were recently approved by the City of St. John's and development will go ahead (CBC March 2013). Overall, until now, the challenges of the St. John's Muslim community have more to do with the growth and diversity of the community, rather than overt issues of prejudice from outside the Muslim community, as is the case in many provinces in Canada.

Moreover, should any controversy emerge, members of MANAL's executive typically become involved. For example, a remark in May 2013 in the provincial legislature was made that some suggested was offensive to Muslims and therefore retracted. A Liberal Member of the House of Assembly (MHA) referred to the Tories as the "ayatollah of education" (CBC May 2013). Other members of government suggested that he should apologize for his remark and that it was an offensive term to use and pejorative reference to Shi'ism (CBC May 2013). In response to the remark, the current MANAL president, Dr. Syed Pirzada, stated that he did not think the statement was offensive and went on to add that, "as a member of the community I feel that, when we are given any position of importance no matter in the community or in the government we have an obligation to be responsible in our actions, behaviours and public speaking" (cited in CBC May 2013). Dr. Pirzada thus subtly implied the importance of his response to the comment, while also pointing out that the MHA who said it may also need to do the same. This example suggests that the Muslim community in St. John's is conscious of

managing its public image.

1.4 Immigration and Demographic Challenges in Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador has a long history of economic and demographic peaks and valleys. This section will focus on some of the current economic and demographic conditions of the province, as well as provide an overview of provincial immigration challenges as they relate to the Muslim community.

Historically, Newfoundland and Labrador has had low immigration rates, much like the rest of Atlantic Canada. Although the Atlantic provinces represent 7.6% of Canada's population, they attract 1.2% of all immigrants to Canada (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005). As a result of these low immigration rates over the last decade, premiers from the Atlantic provinces have created a number of immigration initiatives and strategies. In 2004 Prince Edward Island initiated its "People Project" and in January 2005 Nova Scotia launched an immigration strategy aimed at improving the province's retention rate. Low immigration rates have remained relatively stable in Newfoundland and Labrador, with the average rate of immigration being approximately 0.2% from 1991 to 2006 (Statistics Canada 2006).

Memorial University of Newfoundland plays an influential role in attracting and retaining skilled immigrants because of professional programs such as medicine, pharmacy and social work. However, these students often leave the province after completing their programs. The provincial government suggests that this out migration could be due to a lack of welcoming communities, employment opportunities for spouses

and family members, and effective programs and services to serve the diverse needs of immigrant groups (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005). I suspect that low retention rates of religious minority immigrants may be affected by everyday challenges such as receiving religious holidays off from work. These quotidian experiences will be explored further in Chapters Four and Five.

Historically, in conjunction with low immigration rates, Newfoundland and Labrador has had a relatively homogenous ethno-religious population. In 2005, the majority of immigrants to the province came from China, the United States and the United Kingdom (Akbari, Lynch, McDonald, and Rankaduwa 2005). Chinese immigrants have historically represented the ethnic and cultural diversity of the province, dating back to the arrival of the first two Chinese immigrants in 1895 (Higgins 2008). Chinese immigration was not without challenges as Chinese immigrants faced high head taxes, both in Canada and eventually, in 1906, in Newfoundland, which imposed a tax of \$300 for each Chinese immigrant (Higgins 2008). Overall, ethnic and religious diversity has remained relatively limited within the province with only 1.14% categorized as a visible minority (Statistics Canada 2006). This factor might explain why the provincial government was the last Canadian province to create a provincial multiculturalism policy. However, as the economy grows and the desire to increase the overall diversity and size of the population, the Newfoundland and Labrador government, like that of other Atlantic provinces, has placed more emphasis on improving immigration policies and programs.

In 2005 the government of Newfoundland and Labrador released a report that outlined support for its newly released immigration strategy. First, it argued that immigration would enhance the economic growth of the province. Second, it stated that

the Newfoundland and Labrador immigration strategy would support post-secondary institutions and primary schools in attracting larger numbers of international students (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005). Third, immigration would be helpful in addressing demographic challenges such as low birth rates and high out-migration rates. Fourth, immigration would also address issues such as skilled labour shortages, enabling economic growth (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005).

Two factors from the above list are relevant to this research project: demographic challenges and out-migration. Newfoundland and Labrador has increasingly been under greater pressure demographically as the birth rate continues to decrease and out-migration increases. Across Canada during the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were dramatic decreases in fertility rates, as more women took up full-time careers and family sizes became smaller after the previous baby boom. However, most provinces saw steady increases in their populations over the subsequent twenty years, in part thanks to immigration. Newfoundland and Labrador was one of the few Canadian provinces that did not bounce back as quickly. For instance, in 2006 the province's fertility rate was approximately 1.3 children per childbearing aged woman, the lowest in Canada and below the required rate to maintain the existing population levels (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005). Furthermore, the population of the province is aging at a faster rate than the rest of Canada. The percentage of the population over the age of 65 is projected to increase to 59.6% between 2005 and 2019. At the same time, the population between the ages of 15-29 is expected to drop to 23.6% (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005). Overall in Canada by 2023 the majority of population increases are

expected to be a direct result of immigration (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005) and NL hopes to follow suit.

A second challenge that is unique to the province is the continuing out-migration, which has been on the rise since 1994. Due to the employment conditions in the province, heightened since the fall of the fishing industry in 1992, young people have often migrated for work opportunities, most often to Northern Alberta (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005, 15). More recently, as the economy in NL has grown, out-migration has decreased somewhat, with some residents returning for work (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005). Regardless, population declines are expected to continue, but at a more modest rate as immigration is expected to increase along with the developing economy.

Another point relevant to this overview of the province's immigration history is that although there has been economic growth, the majority of this growth has been in the oil and gas sector in engineering and other highly-skilled labour areas (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005). This limitation is reflected in the high unemployment rate of the province. The unemployment rate in Newfoundland and Labrador in May 2013 was reported at 11.3%, while the Canadian unemployment rate was 7.2% (Statistics Canada 2013). More specifically; St. John's unemployment rate for May 2013, was 6.2%, substantially lower than the provincial rate (Statistics Canada 2013). However, the economy in St. John's remains similar to the rest of province in that it relies on skilled labour and natural resources to continue its growth. Much of the provincial out-migration has been a result of seeking employment opportunities in other Canadian provinces; although the economy is growing and out-migration declined, unemployment is still a

prominent issue in the province. Regardless, due to the character of the existing economy there is still a large demand for skilled labour jobs, particularly in the area of engineering, which continues to attract highly educated immigrants for work and to Memorial University's Engineering department. As a result of the population decline and the changing economic landscape, immigration has become a greater necessity for the province.

For these reasons, immigration initiatives and strategies have included the introduction of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) in 1999. The PNP focuses on addressing skill shortages and labour market requirements through recruitment based on the particular needs of the province. In other words, immigrants and international students are recruited based on their skill sets. Since 2008 the PNP's parameters have broadened to encourage permanent residency among international graduates who have graduated from a provincial post-secondary institution like MUN (Tremblay and Bittner 2011). Furthermore, the government launched the Graduate Incentive Program as a part of the PNP in December 2010. Through this program, the province offers recent international student graduates a one-time payment ranging from \$1,000-\$2,000. Their aim to retain skilled labour within the province through incentives in order to support local economic growth.

Recruitment by Memorial University has thus also contributed significantly to immigration and the cultural and religious diversification of the province. There are approximately 1,500 international students from over 90 countries. The group has more than doubled since 1998 with the most growth occurring since 2003 (NL Government Immigration Strategy 2005, 21). Competitive programs and affordable tuition costs

continue to draw a highly educated immigrant population to the province (Tremblay and Bittner 2011, 6). Further incentive for international student recruitment was created in 2008 when the Newfoundland and Labrador government extended provincial health insurance to cover international students residing in the province (NL Government News Release, June 2007).

Additionally, Memorial University has conducted student recruitment in the Middle East through funding initiatives that support faculty and student and staff exchange programs (Tremblay and Bittner 2011, 6). Memorial University thus plays an active role in the growing Muslim and immigrant population of Newfoundland and Labrador. This was reflected in this research sample as only two participants were born in Canada and the majority had at least one university degree. In sum, many of the participants were either attending Memorial University or were taking English as a Second Language classes with the Association for New Canadians.

Lastly, in April 2007 the government opened the first provincial Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism. The development of this government branch, along with the existing Canadian Immigration and Citizenship office, led to the publication of the “Policy on Multiculturalism: The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador” in June 2008. Overall, the Newfoundland and Labrador government has made significant changes and contributions to immigration initiatives within the province. As a result of these initiatives, there have been some measurable successes, demonstrated by provincial data. For example, since 2004 there has been a 61% increase in immigration most likely as a result of the introduction of the PNP.

However, as I explore further in this thesis, other statistical data highlight a lack of diversity within the province that requires further attention. For example, in 2006 Statistics Canada indicated that only 1.14% of the provincial population consider themselves to be a visible minority. This lack of visible diversity (and religious diversity, as previously mentioned) highlights the need for further development in discourses of multiculturalism. The next section will explore multiculturalism as it pertains to Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador, while also introducing some of its complexities.

1.5 Defining Multiculturalism

Canadian multiculturalism in its simplest form can be defined by the presence and persistence of diverse racial and ethnic minorities (Dewing and Leman 2006).³ Phil Ryan's book *Multicultiphobia* (2010) explores some of the more controversial and challenged notions and meanings of multiculturalism. Ryan problematizes the way in which multiculturalism has come to be understood and misunderstood, while suggesting that there is an overall irrational fear of multiculturalism, which he labels "multicultiphobia". However, Ryan's has some flaws, which will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

Ryan's breakdown of the various associations that can be ascribed to multiculturalism relates to this thesis in two ways. His work highlights how discussions and debates on multiculturalism can be challenging due to a lack of a cohesive definition

³ Religious minorities can arguably be a part of this definition. This point will be explored further in Chapter Two with reference to the work of Will Kymlicka (2010, 2012).

of the term. This challenge highlights an important question: how will multiculturalism be defined for the purpose of this research and located within the lives of the interviewed participants? As previously mentioned, multiculturalism will be defined and understood as a government policy and initiative. This explanation will be achieved through a textual analysis of the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008). In addition to understanding multiculturalism as a government policy, I also define it as a social practice. Defining multiculturalism as a social practice for the purpose of this research means understanding and recognizing the way that multiculturalism plays a role in the daily lives and social practices of individuals. In this case, I do so through the lens of interviews undertaken with members of the Muslim community in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. For this research multiculturalism is situated within political policies and social practices. The next section will explore multiculturalism as it pertains directly to Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador both historically and currently.

1.6 Multiculturalism in Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador

In the broader Canadian context, multiculturalism can be traced back to Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. During his time as Prime Minister (1968-1979, 1980-1984), Trudeau focused on multicultural issues as they pertained to bilingualism and as they later extended to include issues of race and ethnicity. Trudeau's government introduced the first federal Multiculturalism Policy on October 8th, 1971 (Forbes 2007, 47).

Multiculturalism in Canada has adapted and developed through different stages, as theorists Will Kymlicka (2008) and Marc Leman and Michael Dewing (2009) have mapped. Leman and Dewing neatly set out three developmental stages of multiculturalism as a federal policy. They first illustrate the Incipient Stage (Pre-1971) and suggest that this point in the history of multiculturalism can be understood “as a time of gradual movement toward acceptance of ethnic diversity as legitimate and integral to Canadian society” (Dewing and Leman 2009, 3). Following the incipient stage is the Formative Stage (1971-1981), which focused greatly on the integration of ethnic groups as fully participating Canadian citizens. This stage saw great developments in relation to multiculturalism as a policy and the development of its goals and objectives as a federal policy. Lastly, the Institutionalization Stage (1982 to Present) resulted in the institutionalization of multiculturalism within Canadian social institutions. In 1982 multiculturalism became a part of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in section 27, thus making it an integral part of Canadian policy, culture and identity.

Will Kymlicka examines the development of Canadian multiculturalism in a different sense. In a 2008 talk titled “The Three Lives of Multiculturalism,” Kymlicka explores the changing character and discourses of Canadian multiculturalism from its inception to its current use. He suggests that multiculturalism initially dealt with issues of language and ethnicity (Kymlicka 2008) and was used to mobilize challenges of race and racism. He argues that today Canadian multiculturalism is best suited for dealing with issues of religion, religious accommodation and tolerance as is the case in other countries

(Kymlicka 2008).⁴ However, he notes that this transition will take time, as many are not ready to understand multiculturalism beyond its original character (Kymlicka 2008, 16). Kymlicka concludes that with growing Canadian religious diversity, multiculturalism will be necessary to deal with religion and challenges of religious diversity.

Currently all Canadian provinces have separate multiculturalism policies, which draw from the aforementioned federal policy. Saskatchewan was the first province to develop a provincial level multiculturalism policy in 1974. Each province has set up different ways of pursuing their policies, either through the creation of a multiculturalism council or by delegating the policy initiatives to existing minister positions (Dewing and Leman 2009, 12). Notably, some provinces have “policies”, whereas others have “acts.” Multiculturalism acts and policies differ in the way that they set out these difficulties, which can affect the way they are experienced. For example, acts are bills that have been legally passed by parliament making them a law (Dictionary of Law 4th ed., s.v. “Act”), whereas a policy is a government initiative that has no legal ramification or grounding, characteristically making it a government ideology that is set out in writing. The government can put forth policies such as the multiculturalism policy without approval from parliament or other governing bodies. Regardless of provincial acts or policies, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act equally binds all Canadian provinces.

As mentioned previously, the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy was released in June 2008, just over a year after the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism opened. Sean Skinner was the MHA behind the policy, and at the time

⁴ The terms religious accommodation and tolerance are problematic in that they create an ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy that further instills power relations. Kymlicka chooses to use these terms; however I find Lori Beaman’s (2011) problematization of these terms useful.

was the minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. The provincial policy is a two-page document that can be found on the Newfoundland and Labrador Government website (see Appendix A). The overall policy is inspired by the federal policy with a focus on terms including culture, respect, equality, collaboration and inclusive citizenship. The policy emphasizes cross-cultural understanding and community, as well as a desire to create and support educational community-based programs that enhance public awareness and cross-cultural sharing. The category of “religion” is used twice within the document, with regards to discrimination and equality. As stated, the policy is based on a review of existing Canadian multiculturalism policies, including elements from the other Atlantic Provinces (NL Human Resources, 2008). The overall vision of the policy aims to create a province that is culturally diverse and inclusive, and to inspire self-reliance and prosperity (NL Human Resources, 2008). Furthermore, the provincial government hosts an annual multiculturalism week in March, where “cultural sharing” is promoted through food vending, dancing and other cultural events as ways to promote and enact the policy.

After the release of the Provincial Multiculturalism Policy in June 2008, the government hosted a total of sixteen focus groups, three of which focused primarily on Francophone organizations, women’s groups, and education stakeholders. The sessions were held during the months of September and October 2008. Their goal “was to ensure the policy would become “a living document” effectively supporting services, improving retention, and promoting cultural vibrancy and harmony across the province” (NL Human Resources 2009, 3). The focus group research outlined eight suggestion points for improvement. Overall, the results suggested that participants were supportive of the

multiculturalism policy and anticipated that policy would be beneficial to the vitality of the province (NL Human Resources 2009, 11).

This section has focused on the descriptive and historical aspects of multiculturalism through an examination of the development of Canadian multiculturalism as a political and legal framework, as well as a brief overview of the genesis of the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008). The next section will briefly overview the history of Newfoundland's joining Canada, as well as the denominational school system, as they both speak, even if not causally, to the later development of the province's Multiculturalism Policy.

1.7 The Denominational School System

This section aims to situate the policy historically, while referencing the social significance of religion within the province. This section will briefly explore the history of the denominational education system in Newfoundland in order to shed light on the local institutional influence and character of Christianity.

The decision to become a part of the Canadian Confederation in 1949 came with stipulations: Canada would take on 90% of Newfoundland and Labrador's existing debt and allow it to keep the existing surplus it had accumulated, totalling \$28.8 million (Cadigan 2009, 236). Furthermore, Newfoundland and Labrador would be able to maintain the existing denominational education system, which had been in place since the 1843 Education Act (Cadigan 2009, 116).

Prior to 1843, religious institutions were heavily involved with the running of schools and education within the province. Debates about the unfair subsidizing of Catholic schools from Protestant groups (Cadigan 2009) led to the 1843 Education Act, which granted public funding to Catholic and Protestant-run schools, ensuring that they were equally supported by the government. The passing of the 1843 education act meant that the Catholic schools would have to divide up the funding due to pressures on the government to support Protestant schools. This denominational school system was abolished in 1997. Since maintaining the denominational school system was a part of Newfoundland's terms of Confederation with Canada, it took some constitutional changes in order to remove the system. Furthermore, the decision to abolish the denominational system came with a great deal of public debate in the 1980s and 90s. Many were divided over the future of education related to religiosity in the province, which was exemplified by the close results in the 1995 referendum vote.

In September 1995 a referendum vote was held in support of changing the provincial education to an inter-denominational system, which would seek to include a variety of religious denominations. Although the majority (54.4%) supported this decision, in 1997 a group comprising of Roman Catholics, Pentecostals and others challenged the decision in the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador (Higgins 2011). The inter-denominational education system was thus put on hold. As a result, the provincial government held a second referendum vote, which proposed a non-denominational school system. This vote resulted in a 74% majority supporting the non-denominational school system (Higgins 2011). As of September 1997 the provincially-funded denominational school system was abolished and replaced with a non-denominational public system.

Until 1997 children who attended public schools attended either a Protestant or Catholic-run school. The denominational school system in Newfoundland was the longest running publically funded religious school system in Canada, with the exception of Catholic schools in Ontario that continue to be publicly funded (Selby 2012b). I suggest in Chapter Four that the denominational school system may have influenced the historically low immigration and retention rates of religious minorities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Furthermore, although the denominational school system was officially terminated in 1997, it has been removed slowly, with some fragments still existing. This section examines some of the transformations that have taken place since the abolishment of the denominational school system, as well as some of the remaining components from the previous system.

Through an examination of the provincial curriculums, I suggest that remnants of the Christian denominational school system remain evident in the curriculum of the 2000s. I briefly examined elementary curriculums, from kindergarten to grade six, from 1997 to 2009, in order to understand the changes that have taken place since the inception of the non-denominational education system. For example, the 2000 general curriculum for grade four, five and six states “it will focus primarily on the life of Christ as presented [by] the Gospel writers...students will also examine God’s Word in these texts” (NL Department of Education 2000-2001, 46). Even in 2000-2001, the curriculum focused on Christianity and raising Christian children through the education system, rather than employing a more neutral approach of teaching non-Christian world religions as well as removing all Christian education. In addition, the 2005-2006 kindergarten curriculum focuses on “socializing students with God” in a way that is representative of Abrahamic

religions. This curriculum is based on young people building a relationship with “God’s beauty” (NL Department of Education 2005-2006, 12). These portions of the curriculum highlight the history of the province’s education system, with a focus on raising good Christian students, rather than teaching about religion and religious traditions in more general terms.

Of course, there have also been changes to the public school curriculum that are more representative of a more religiously neutral non-denominational education system. This approach is highlighted in the 2008-2009 curriculum for kindergarten that focuses on teaching about celebrations of eight different religious traditions. Even if the ‘Beginners Bible’ is still taught, which could be argued to be pushing forth Christian ideologies, changes have been made that emphasize teaching about religions, rather than socializing children into Christianity alone.

In addition, recent debates have arisen about existing symbols that reflect the province’s former denominational system. In May 2013 a St. John’s parent filed a complaint with the Eastern School Board about a crucifix that was hung on the outside of her child’s school (Telegram 2013). The Eastern School Board is investigating her complaint and a decision has not yet been made regarding whether to remove the crucifix. The parent’s complaint generated discussion and debate surrounding the issue, since most, if not all, public schools in Newfoundland have crosses and symbolic Christian names, thus reflecting the previous denominational education system. At the time of writing, the school board has not made any official changes or further responses to the issue, with crosses remaining inside and outside public schools (Telegram 2013). In closing, the relatively recent abolishment of denominational education within Newfoundland and

Labrador has had some lasting effects on the province. This section has outlined the history and challenges of Confederation and education within Newfoundland and Labrador and their relationship to the overall context and character of religion within the province, to situate the current study and research.

1.8 Current Study

The current study examines the outreach and the implications of the Provincial Multiculturalism Policy (2008) through analysis of narratives that chronicle some of the experiences of Muslims living in St. John's. These narratives will be used to shed light on the provincial multiculturalism policy, in order to highlight some of the existing comprehensive issues that exist within the daily lives of Muslim citizens that the policy should be revised to address. Details regarding participants and the qualitative methodology of this thesis are outlined in Chapter Two.

Hypotheses

I initially hypothesized that, due to the abolishment of the denominational school system in 1997 and the general social prevalence of Christianity, the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) failed to adequately incorporate notions of religion within its policy objectives. With reference to the interviews cited in Chapters Four and Five, I now argue that although the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Multiculturalism Policy (2008) addresses certain issues, comprehensive issues

remain that could be better addressed through an enhancement of more tangible social practices focused on workplace policies. More precisely, I examine participants' challenges with receiving religious holidays off from work and school, similar to Christian statutory holidays related to what the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) promises.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The previous chapter sought to contextualize my thesis research. This chapter will examine pertinent literature on multiculturalism and religion in Canada used for this research, with attention to the contributions of Charles Taylor (1992), Paul Bramadat (2008), Will Kymlicka (2007, 2010), Himani Bannerji (2000), Tariq Modood (2007), Elizabeth Nayar (2012), Jennifer Selby (2012) and Lori Beaman (2008, 2012). In the first section I will outline the philosophical literature on multiculturalism that has been influential in the greater field of multiculturalism. In the second section, I will examine the Canadian context and related research and literature. In the third section, I will discuss literature that links the notion of secularism with Christianity in the West. Lastly, I will consider ways in which notions of equality and multiculturalism are challenged through existing social structures.

2.1.1 Philosophical Theories on Multiculturalism

“Multiculturalism” has come to encompass a philosophical body of thought that aims to answer how society should or can deal with religious, cultural, ethnic and racial diversity. Philosophical theories often consider political, social and historical factors, but in many ways do not deal with more quotidian lived experiences of individuals, as this research will aim to include. This disconnection will be taken up further throughout this literature review.

One of the main scholars referenced by in the field of multiculturalism is Charles

Taylor because of his theoretical approach. Taylor's work, *The Politics of Recognition* (1992), is focused mainly on the notion of identity and its recognition through politics; he posits that people perceive their identity based on the way it is recognized in formal politics, more specifically in government policies, reforms and debates. Taylor suggests that non-recognition or misrecognition of one's identity can inflict harm by "imprisoning" a person in a false mode of being (Taylor 1992, 25). This notion perpetuates a cycle of stereotypes, causing the victims of stereotypes to enact them. Specifically, Taylor argues that dialogical relations with others – in both the private and public spheres – are integral to the politics of recognition. Taylor concludes that a *politics of difference* is the best method for dealing with identity politics, especially when looking at multiculturalism policies in order to maintain a cohesive society.

Although many scholars studying multiculturalism reference Taylor's work, his theory of recognition does not reflect the experiences of my interlocutors. His theory is rooted in a patriarchal mind-set that dates his theory. Specifically, Taylor fails to recognize that "equality" does not place everyone into the same strict mould and that equality based on difference is more desirable and better suited to multicultural societies. Furthermore, he suggests that equality based on difference would create more dialogue between minority and majority groups, thus offering a better version of equality. However, as many other scholars have argued, this way of recognizing equality places the power of recognition and dialogue in the hands of the majority, who have less at risk and are already recognized in society (Bannerji 2000). For example, Christians already experience a great deal of accommodation, so much so that it is not typically considered an accommodation to give someone a holiday off from work or school on Christmas day.

In contrast, for Muslims to receive Eid as a recognized holiday typically requires them to pursue different avenues of negotiation in order to be granted the day off. Taylor's "Politics of difference" does not effectively recognize the existing privileges and suggests that if minority groups want equality they need to spearhead it themselves, rather than expect equal treatment. I will examine and problematize this further in Chapter Four.

Next, Himani Bannerji is one of the many scholars critical of Taylor's work. She argues that he sets up difference as a dualistic approach to multiculturalism. She compares Taylor's notions of identity and recognition to Hegel's master-slave parable (Bannerji 2000, 147). Bannerji problematizes Taylor's theory of recognition as it is directed at the master rather than the slave's identity; she argues that these difference-based relationships create inherent dualistic power, in which the master informs social recognition of the slave. In most cases the majority have nothing at stake so it is not essential to their daily lives and experiences to recognize minority differences (Bannerji 2000). Bannerji argues that Taylor's theory fails in many ways to recognize the autonomy and rights of minorities, further adding to white male privilege as a cornerstone of Canadian liberal society. It is left up to the majority whether minority rights are considered through modes of accommodation and dialogue.

Bannerji's criticism captures one of the objectives of my project. I also see identity politics as serving the majority and maintaining the status quo, which normalizes mainstream Christianity and other minority religions, such as Islam. More tangibly, I argue that a more comprehensive understanding of multiculturalism extended through pro-active programs and services would recognize existing privilege while extending rights to other religious groups. In other words, the creation of a multiculturalism policy

is not enough to ensure minority rights in Newfoundland and Labrador, as it does not include concrete ways to dislocate privilege. Specifically within the context of Newfoundland and Labrador, the majority society is Christian, which makes non-Christian religious diversity and multiculturalism a less pressing quotidian issue.

Bannerji is also critical of Will Kymlicka's multiculturalism theories, which I explore in the next sub-section. Bannerji argues that both Kymlicka and Taylor ignore civil society, community, hegemony and ideology:

(N)either of these unambiguous liberals nor the conservatively inflected liberal Taylor consider how social relations of power, spelling inequality, can form the ground for political organization of the national state. Thus issues of class, gender, and "race," are unimportant for Taylor...[and] the liberal polity of Will Kymlicka (Bannerji 2000, 146).

In other words, she suggests that they both overlook the political and historical in their multiculturalism theories. Bannerji opposes Taylor's politics of recognition, which she sees as an elitist recognition of acceptance and difference; in contrast, she supports recognition based on respect and autonomy. To conclude, she calls for an overall recognition of the existing power relations within theories and ideologies of multiculturalism.

Overall, Bannerji's critiques are relevant to my research findings in that she calls for a recognition of existing power relations. I will apply this perspective in Chapter Four as it speaks tangibly to participants' challenges in receiving religious holidays off from work compared to their Christian co-workers. Furthermore, I take up her argument that Canadian multiculturalism has a Christian character in order to examine participants' experiences and challenges with the economic capitalist undertones of secularism.

Like Bannerji, Phil Ryan's *Multicultiphobia* (2010), explores some of the negative and positive understandings of multiculturalism. Aforementioned, Ryan makes it clear that he is not taking a position. Some of Ryan's arguments are less germane to my analysis. Ryan draws examples from non-academic writers, such as Neil Bissoondath's novel *Selling Illusions* (1994). That Bissoondath's work is non-fiction and that his specialization is in literature and nothing specifically to do with multiculturalism or social policy does not discredit Bissoondath's argument, but causes Ryan's comparisons to be inconsistent in some ways as the other works he examines are academic. Bissoondath's piece is more of a personal argument against multiculturalism based on his own experiences as an immigrant to Canada. Although his experiences have something to offer, the non-academic character of his book make it less suitable for the overall analysis that Ryan is trying to achieve.

Furthermore, Ryan problematizes how multiculturalism has come to be understood and misunderstood, while suggesting that there is an overall irrational fear of multiculturalism, which he labels "multicultiphobia." He makes it clear that he does not want to pick any particular side of the argument, either for or against multiculturalism, but rather he wants to consider reasoning and rationales behind multicultiphobic positions. This includes so-called multicultiphobic work of Neil Bissoondath (1994), Reginald Bibby (1990), Richard Gwyn (1992) and Jack Granatstein (1998). Ryan explores all four authors' positions and provides a summary of problematic uses of multiculturalism. He then categorizes their multicultiphobic interpretations under harms to individuals, to cultures and to society as a whole (Ryan 2012, 41). I do not seek to argue against multiculturalism. Rather, I argue that even if the Newfoundland and Labrador

Multiculturalism policy addresses certain issues an enhancement of social practices, such as extending statutory religious holidays to religious minorities, could improve the existing policy.

Although the arguments against multiculturalism are important to consider, in this section I would like to focus on Ryan's discussion on defining multiculturalism as it pertains to my research in St. John's. Ryan problematizes the way multiculturalism is undefined in many ways by both its proponents and opponents. After reviewing the work of what he considers to be the opponents, he immediately points out that these four authors work from different definitions and understandings of multiculturalism. This highlights one of the major challenges that exists within debates about multiculturalism: often times neither side of the debate is working within the same definition. Ryan references Zuhair Kashmeri (1991), who also explores the lack of a common working definition of multiculturalism in Canada. Kashmeri states that "the most curious part of the Multiculturalism Act is that it does not define multiculturalism" (cited in Ryan 2010, 9). Kashmeri and Ryan's work both suggest that in some ways this lack of definition within the Multiculturalism Act may have been intentional, as it allows different political figures to employ multiculturalism in ways that are most suitable. They also argue that this tactic avoids getting into the crux of the matter and generating potentially provocative debates.

Like Ryan, I do not aim to argue for or against multiculturalism. My argument works from the acknowledgement that multiculturalism exists legally within Canada via the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and as an extension of that in Newfoundland and Labrador through the provincial policy.

Will Kymlicka seeks to understand and address some of the critics of multiculturalism in his chapter in the edited volume, *Multiculturalism Backlash* (2010). He does this through an historical exploration of the rise and fall of Canadian multiculturalism over the last forty years (Kymlicka 2010, 34). His overall argument and goal is to set up an alternative framework for responding to the critical arguments against multiculturalism (see also Bissondath 1994, Alibhai-Brown 2000, Ryan 2010). Kymlicka outlines the common criticism that multiculturalism entirely ignores economic and political inequality by trivializing the “safe” cultural practices such as music and food, while ignoring the real challenges of difference such as forced marriages, which he problematically attributes only to non-western groups (Kymlicka 2010, 36). By keeping with the safe values, multiculturalism trivializes culture in order to “avoid the real challenges of difference that cultural values and religious doctrines can raise” against traditional Western values (Kymlicka 2010, 35).

Secondly, he suggest that multiculturalism may be intended to encourage people to share their differing cultures and values, but this sharing ignores processes of adaptation and may reify difference. In addition, the conception of multiculturalism ignores group diversity and encourages a conception of culture that is static and unchanging: “This process is argued to reinforce the perception of minorities as “Other”” (Kymlicka 2010, 24).

Thirdly, another criticism of multiculturalism as outlined by Kymlicka, is the way in which multiculturalism can endorse power inequalities and restrict minority groups within. In deciding what traditions are “authentic” and in the displaying and trivializing of them only elites of such groups are generally consulted (Phillips 2009, Selby 2013). This

promotes gatekeepers, who then have more power in pushing forward their agendas. Gatekeepers generally situate themselves as authoritative and are (mis)understood as representative of all group members (Phillips 2009). Furthermore, gatekeepers tend to be male conservative members therein undermining the voices of women and/or less conservative members (Phillips 2009). Thus the propensity of having a gatekeeper of specific cultural or religious groups results in an ignorance of the true diversity within a group. These three major flaws are what anti-multiculturalists generally use to support their argument that there has been a retreat from multiculturalism or that multiculturalism is no longer a useful social model.

Kymlicka responds to these criticisms stating that they are effectively caricatures of multiculturalism. They distract us from the real issues that need to be addressed. Referencing the Ottoman Empire, he suggests one can see that multiculturalism has had peaks and valleys. Moving onward to Canada in the 1960s, multiculturalism emerged in the post-war era drawing on the human rights revolution and ideologies of equality of races and peoples (Kymlicka 2010, 35). He breaks Western multiculturalism into three modes in history, which have emerged out of a liberal democracy with the goal of breaking away from previous hierarchal relations and exclusions (Kymlicka 2010, 37). Kymlicka's account of multiculturalism focuses more on the 'citizenization' unlike the anti-multiculturalist account that sees multiculturalism as displaying and consuming difference. Most interestingly he argues that the critics of multiculturalism often turn to multiculturalism to deal with inequalities. Such inequalities exist outside of multiculturalist contexts, however multiculturalism comes to be blamed for them.

Kymlicka's work is relevant to my engagement with multiculturalism in St. John's because of the way he examines and responds to criticisms of multiculturalism. His overall argument that supports multiculturalism initiatives and moves them forward supports my argument that the existing Multiculturalism Policy in NL needs be developed further to include more comprehensive issues, such as facilitating religious holidays off for those who request them. More specifically, Kymlicka examines the argument that suggests multiculturalism has become trivialized through the identification of particular cultural traits as authentic and inauthentic within Canada.⁵

2.1.2 Participants' Experiences

Although a more detailed description of participants is undertaken in Chapter Three, in brief, this research involved interviews with Muslims living in the St. John's at the time of the study. Interviews were conducted one on one, with a few group interviews with family members. Participants came from diverse backgrounds, with the majority being born outside of Canada and having university degrees. In total 37 participants were consulted for this thesis research from a larger pool of 55 interviews (see section 3.1 for more on the larger project).

These interviews enabled a look into some of the experiences of local Muslims on a daily basis. Specifically, some participants expressed frustrations with the notion of

⁵ This critique is also explored by Stanley Fish in his article "Boutique Multiculturalism" (1997). Fish problematizes the cultural showcasing of multiculturalism that includes annual festivals, as they avoid the real challenges and cultural differences that exist and focus on more superficial elements like food and clothing (Fish 1997).

“cultural showcasing,” where certain cultural practices are deemed “safe” and authentic for the public sphere like those which takes place during the province’s annually sponsored Multiculturalism Week. Alina, a forty-three year old married woman and mother of three children, elaborated about how her perception of multiculturalism changed when she started wearing a hijab in the city. At the time of the interview she had been living in Newfoundland for eight years and worked full-time outside her home. She references a “jargon” of multiculturalism when she responds to negative comments about her decision to wear a hijab:

You know, like, I refer that, I refer that, you know, well I...I thought that Canada is a multicultural society. Canadian society is a multicultural one. It welcomes diversity and difference. Isn’t that the case? And things like that, you know, sometimes that also helps um to, to ease the tension and to uh encourage them to uh reflect on what they have just done, you know. Whether it’s like to question whether this is really consistent with the, you know, with the Canadian identity. So it’s like, it’s uh sort of, these are some minor strategies I use to negotiate.

Alina highlights the way that the concept of multiculturalism can be a useful tool to negotiate and interact with people who comment on her decision to wear a hijab. She goes further to explain that her experiences prior to wearing a hijab created a false sense of security or neighbourliness in what she understands as Canadian multiculturalism. Neighbours changed their opinions of her once she started wearing a hijab; this caused her to rethink her understanding of multiculturalism and see it less positively:

I’m still happy with uh being a Muslim living in Canada. Uh but I found subtle differences. Uh pre and like after hijab, you know, experiences. For instance, I, I, I, came here as a lady um who did not, was not again visually uh identified as a Muslim in the public sphere. So my neighbours, I had a very warm welcome from my neighbours, from the colleagues of my husband, from other friends I met on different occasions. Um so uh and that also helped me to further develop a kind of romanticized perception of Canadian

multiculturalism. Like I was like, I know that I was different but I was still welcomed so I was happy with that. But the only thing that I did not know that I wasn't visibly different all these years. So once I started becoming visibly different like a lady who is not wearing scarf, who's wearing a scarf then uh I started experiencing uh different ranges of uh you know uh encounters.

Her decision to start wearing a hijab caused Alina to reflect on her existing perception of multiculturalism, which she suggested was a "romanticized perception." Although she claims she is happy living in Newfoundland, she explains that her experiences and understanding of multiculturalism changed when she started wearing a hijab. Alina's narrative highlights two significant factors: First, that she understood multiculturalism as a widely known concept and strategy in negotiating difference. Second, experiences of multiculturalism can be dynamic and changed for her when she became more visibly Muslim. Overall, multiculturalism was a concept that was viewed both positively and negatively for Alina. She was one of the few participants to go into great depth about the notion of Canadian multiculturalism. Alina, akin to the theorization of Kymlicka and Ryan, observes both positive and negative features of multiculturalism. Similar to Fish and Kymlicka, she touches on the romanticized perception of multiculturalism that often blinds people from the real issues at hand.

These criticisms provide a stepping-stone for the analysis portion of this project, which will primarily take up the multiculturalism policy and experiences of multiculturalism, as well as other provincial government initiatives related to multiculturalism. Although this research does not solely focus on a theory or philosophy of multiculturalism, it aims to add to the on-going conversation on Canadian multiculturalism focused on a specific context.

Next, Tariq Modood's notion of political multiculturalism in *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea* (2007) asks whether multiculturalism is appropriate for the twenty-first century. His theory references 20th century Canada, the United States, and France and England. Through an overview of multiculturalism in history, Modood, like Kymlicka, notes that multiculturalism is not a recent phenomenon and that it was present throughout the Ottoman Empire. Muslim leaders of the Ottoman Empire recognized Jewish and Christian communities based on their separate socio-cultural identities (Modood 2007, 28). However he suggests that multiculturalism is a new political idea, as it "arises out of the context of liberal or social democratic egalitarianism and citizenship whereas earlier manifestations of similar political ideas were in the absence of political citizenship, where the minorities and majorities alike were subjects of the Crown Emperor" (Modood 2007, 6). From here, Modood makes a distinction between his work and other theories of multiculturalism, suggesting that his theory is a "political multiculturalism" and not a philosophical multiculturalism. Compared to other theorists examined here that are more theoretical, Modood's work is more applicable to my own research due to my more empirical focus on a specific socio-political context.

Modood differentiates his project from Kymlicka's by stating his theory is based on other philosophical ideologies. Kymlicka's focus on liberalism is used to compare and contrast Modood's characterization of his theory as democratic multiculturalism. Although in many ways Modood supports Kymlicka's notion of liberalism, he also problematizes aspects of it, labelling it as "liberally biased." For example, Modood is critical of the way that Kymlicka develops his notion of state neutrality through liberalism, which is inherently based on the separation of church and state. Further, Kymlicka

recognizes and suggests that a liberal state cannot be neutral as “the state unavoidably promotes certain cultural identities, and thereby disadvantages others” (Kymlicka 2005, 108). Kymlicka suggests that “the idea of completely characterless and value-neutral public space is completely incoherent” due to the need to agree on languages, holidays and so on (Modood 2007, 25). Modood agrees with Kymlicka’s two points against a neutral state; however he is critical of the way in which Kymlicka continuously avoids religion with regards to state neutrality.

Indeed, Modood is critical of Kymlicka’s work as it does not take seriously the needs of religious minorities to the same level and extent as he does with cultural and ethnic needs. He suggests that Kymlicka’s use of language exemplifies his lack of consideration for religious minorities. When it comes to religious minorities’ needs, Kymlicka uses the word ‘exemption’ rather than ‘accommodation’; in contrast, when he discusses cultural and ethnic needs he frames them as needing government support and democratic participation (Modood 2007, 27). Modood states that “we seem therefore to have a certain blindness here; something we might characterize as a secularist bias” (Modood 2007, 27). He goes further in the next chapter to develop the idea of secularism as it pertains to multiculturalism. Modood’s criticism of Kymlicka’s work is accurate, I argue, and in many ways highlights an overall bias that exists within the Canadian context of multiculturalism, which problematically ignores the role of religion. Modood’s idea of democratic multiculturalism based on citizenship and participation is applicable to this research in terms of how it can evaluate the existing multiculturalism policy and lived experiences of non-Christian minorities like Muslims.

Modood argues that recognition of religious identity and in particular Muslim identity “is seen as an attack on the principle of secularism, the view that religion is a feature, perhaps uniquely, of private and not public identity” (Modood 2007, 70).

Modood compares and describes three countries’ types of secularism – the United States, England and France. He draws out their histories and secularisms. Modood concludes that:

We can all be secularists then, all approve of secularism in some respect, and yet have quite different ideas, influenced by historical legacies and varied pragmatic compromises, of where to draw the line between public and private (Modood 2007, 77).

He emphasizes that religious minorities and majorities amongst themselves will view the placement of this line in a variety of ways based on the varying ways of understanding secularism (Modood 2007). For example, not all Muslims will want to be publically or politically involved, similar to some non-religious citizens may argue for religious space to be accepted in the public sphere. As such, Modood urges for an understanding of secularism as situational, much like that of people’s identities. He emphasizes that identities are multifaceted in the factors that create them, such as socioeconomic status, religion, ethnicity, education, etc. These identities create difference among groups, which requires that we understand diversity within them. I apply this portion of Modood’s work in Chapter Four as it relates to participants’ experiences receiving religious holidays off from work and the challenge of conceptualizing secularism in St. John’s.

Lori Beaman similarly examines differences in approaches for dealing with diversity in France, the United States and Canada (Beyer & Beaman, 2008). Beaman

problematizes the Canadian approach of tolerance and accommodation. She argues for recognition of what secularism means in the Canadian Christian influenced context in an effort to achieve true equality. Beaman analyses Canadian secularism historically through examples from France, England and the United States. Each of these countries has its own unique and dynamic history, resulting in their current character of secularism.

Articulations of secularism affect how religious diversity is understood and the overall ideology of multiculturalism within Canada.

Secularism in the Newfoundland and Labrador context is important to consider when understanding and questioning multiculturalism. Modood's argument that multiculturalism needs to be active in supporting cultural and religious differences is a central theme in the findings portion of this thesis. His work is taken up further in Chapters Four and Five in order to critically analyse multiculturalism within Newfoundland and Labrador. Furthermore, Beaman's argument for a clearer application of secularism within Canada in order to achieve a true equality is closely applied to the experiences of participants.

2.2 Research on Canadian Multiculturalism

There has been a limited amount of research looking specifically at multiculturalism within Canada. This sub-section will highlight and explore the existing research on multiculturalism in Canada. To begin, Paul Bramadat's article "Religion and Public Policy in Canada: An Itinerary" (2008) illustrates the current relationship between multiculturalism and religion in Canada, while highlighting current research trends in

Religious Studies scholarship. The article focuses on three preliminary questions: i) how is religion currently framed by existing Canadian laws and policies? ii) is there evidence that policy makers are actually interested in academic perspectives on religion? And, iii) which problematic issues might attract and merit policy attention in the near future (Bramadat 2008, 124)?

Bramadat examines 546 projects funded by the Federal Multiculturalism Program between 2000 and 2004. He concludes that only 19 out of the 546 projects legitimately dealt with or were directly related to religion. However, Bramadat suggests that interest is on the rise since 9/11. He points to a need for research on religion and public policy in Canada, emphasizing their relationship with the Canadian legal system. Bramadat concludes by setting out future questions that, he argues, need to be further explored by researchers in the field of Religious Studies. To this end, Bramadat offers a useful overview of how religion is framed and understood within public policy.

Kamala Elizabeth Nayar's *The Punjabis in British Columbia: Location, Labour, First Nations, and Multiculturalism* (2012) provides insight into qualitative research looking at multiculturalism in Canada contexts. Her work focuses on some of the changing forces that have influenced Punjabis in British Columbia over the last forty years. Nayar discusses two main themes that are relevant to this project. First, she looks at cultural synergy that was created and has evolved between Punjabis and other cultures in the Skeena Region near Smithers, B.C. Cultural synergy is defined as two cultures coming together to pool together their strengths and social roles. Secondly, she explores the emergence of power in setting up of social space for the Punjabi community and what effects this struggle had on their experiences of multiculturalism.

As a result of gaining greater economic influence in the region through their involvement in the labour market, consisting mostly of forestry-related work, Punjabis in this region have gained public space and trust. Nayar argues that this space was extremely influential and powerful in the aforementioned development of cultural synergy, as well as in allowing them to maintain and protect their culture, language and religious traditions in the context of a Christian-influenced and majority public sphere.

Nayar's qualitative study is one of the few that addresses multiculturalism in Canada.⁶ Although it examines a different religious group, it parallels the questions that were asked throughout my research. Her work on cultural synergy is interesting, but I am not entirely convinced that common discourses of multiculturalism can be attributed to this success. Nayar's work may overlook the processes in which community members took part while developing their community and identities together over time. Multicultural discourses may, in fact, be a by-product of cultural synergy, rather than its cause. Nonetheless, Nayar's work serves as a good example of qualitative work examining multiculturalism in a Canadian context.

2.3 Defining Secularism

This section will explore notions of contemporary secularism in the West. There is confusion between the expectations of multiculturalism and the reality of a distorted notion of secularism that exists in Canada. Pertinent to my research, it is this confusion

⁶ While more quantitatively focused, Abdie Kazemipur (2009) similarly examines multiculturalism and religion in Canada.

that causes many of the challenges participants expressed about receiving religious holidays off, if desired. This examination turns to the works of Casanova (2011), Selby (2012) and Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2008), all of whom problematize notions of contemporary secularism in the West.

To begin, Casanova's chapter "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms", in the edited volume *Rethinking Secularisms* (2011), looks at what he refers to as the secular, which he argues has become a central modern category to construct what is different from religion. He suggests that secularization constitutes a history of patterns of transformation from the religious to the secular (Casanova 2011, 54). Lastly, secularism refers to the broad range of modern ideologies concerning religion (Casanova 2011, 66). Throughout the chapter, Casanova elaborates on each of the three terms, while exposing some of the problematic assumptions of each.

Casanova explores the Christian connections with secularism and secularization, while problematizing the way in which they are often perceived as devoid of religion. He exemplifies this problem with the Christian notion of perfection as defined as bringing the religious life out into the secular world (Casanova 2011, 56). The original Christian theological aim of 'secularization' was to abolish the dualism that existed between the religious and the secular world in medieval Christendom (Casanova 2011, 56; Taylor 2007). As the notion of secularism and secularization developed, to be secular meant to be modern, which thus meant to be non-religious, or at the very least less religious. Casanova's exploration of the historical roots of secularism and the processes of secularization points to the Christian character of secularism. His work is relevant to this research as I argue that these false notions of secularism often impede a more robust

multiculturalism and religious equality from being fully achieved. I apply this notion within the findings chapter in order to understand and problematize the way secularism in the West or, in this case, in NL, favours Christian traditions over minority religions.

Next, Jennifer Selby's chapter "The Shifting Boundaries of *Laïcité*" (2012) explores the history and relationship of Christianity with notions of secularism. She highlights the Christian origins of the term and argues against the perceived neutrality of secularism (Selby 2012a, 71). She begins by briefly exploring the term with a closer look at its Christian influences. In a basic sense, secularism is understood in layperson's terms as a separation between church and state, situating the religious outside of political and public spheres (Selby 2012a, 72). Specifically, Selby explores a number of influential Christian philosophers. These writings highlight the Christian roots of secularism and in the current context problematize secularism as a religiously neutral tool for dividing the public and private.

Examining Augustine's theology in *The City of God*, Selby points out his "separation of the heavenly city and the earthly city as corresponding to the separation of the sacred (religious) and profane (political)" (Selby 2012a, 73). As a result, one can see Augustine as contributing to early notions of secularism and its inherent relationship with Christianity. Selby's work goes further to highlight similar notions of Christian secularism that are present in the writings of Aquinas, Rousseau and Schmitt, all of which were influential Christian thinkers over varying historical periods. Her work contributes to my argument by highlighting the Christian heritage of secularism.

Furthermore, this connection between liberalism, modernity and the secularism is explored by Selby and argued as contributing to the characterization of secularism as neutral. For example, secularism has historically been situated and framed within discourses of modernity, democracy and nationalism (Selby 2012a, 78); through these associations, secularism falsely comes across as neutral and unaligned with any one religion. Her work examines how formations of the secular in France, or *laïcité*, are positioned as a guarantors of women's rights; however Selby argues, that *laïque* discourses have other goals and fail to fully recognize and protect religious women, particularly Muslim women in France (Selby 2012a). Selby's work resonates with the findings of this research: in both cases the application of notions of secularism prevent or negate equal rights.

In the analysis and findings portion of this research I use Selby's work extensively in order to problematize and understand the relationship between Christianity and secularism. These arguments and theories are applied throughout Chapter Four in order to understand the challenge of defining secularism and the term's Christian roots and character.

Lastly, *Secularisms* (2008) edited by Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini argues beyond the notion that secularism is religion in disguise to claim that its market-based incarnation presents a strictly Protestant form of secularism in the contemporary United States (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008, 3). Their chapter aims to uncover many of the assumptions of secularism in the United States that fail to recognize the implications of its Protestant roots. Jakobsen and Pellegrini outline how elements are set up as binary opposites; these binary contradictions suggest that to be secular is not to be religious.

Universalism is understood as progressive and universal, and religion as unprogressive (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008, 7). Jakobsen and Pellegrini argue “that because it works through oppositions, the traditional secularization narrative does not establish the meaning of secularism, and consequently makes claims about the meaning of religion” (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008, 7). As a result, a traditional Protestant model became the secular definition of religion, which means that other religions must conform to meet this definition. This narrow definition favouring Protestant Christianity is damaging to non-Protestant religions that cannot assimilate into this particular categorization of religion (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008). They propose that the secular/religion binary needs to be recast in order for secularism is to be understood in a pluralistic sense, rather than in a singular sense that favours Protestant Christianity in particular.

In the findings chapter I cite Jakobsen and Pellegrini’s work in order to highlight the way the economic structure of Canada tends to normalize Christian holidays regardless of multiculturalism policies. Furthermore, in Chapter Four I will use their problematization of a singular secularism, which creates narrow definitions of religion, to explore some of the participants’ challenges in receiving religious holidays off.

2.4 Equality, Symbols and Culture

Throughout this research project I have consulted Lori Beaman’s work on deep equality and reasonable accommodation. “Deep Equality: moving beyond tolerance and accommodation” (2012a) and “Reasonable Accommodation: Managing Religious Diversity” (2012b) highlight some of the challenges of so-called reasonable

accommodation in moments of multicultural interaction. In both chapters, Beaman problematizes the use of terms such as ‘reasonable accommodation’ and ‘tolerance’, as they generally tend to favour the majority over the minority while continuing to uphold existing power relations. Her overall argument suggests that within the Canadian context tolerance and accommodation are not good enough to achieve and maintain equality and multiculturalism (Beaman 2012a). She recommends “deep equality” as an alternative to reasonable accommodation and tolerance.

Deep equality calls for a recognition of existing power differentials and privilege (Beaman 2012a, 3). It requires a careful examination of context, which within Newfoundland and Labrador implies an understanding and awareness of its Christian character. Beaman is critical of the way in which Canada is assumed to be secular when in fact it favours Christianity socially and politically. She argues that in order to achieve deep equality, mainstream Christianity must be acknowledged as a hegemonic force that has informed and continues to inform Canadian social and political norms (Beaman 2012b, 218). In sum, Beaman suggests that by learning about people’s negotiations and everyday experiences of religious accommodation, we will learn more about what deep equality entails (Beaman 2012a, 3).

Most importantly for this research, Beaman’s work speaks to the importance of turning to participants’ everyday experiences to understand the workings of equality and secularism within society. Her argument urging for a closer examination of existing structures that serve mainstream Christianity is essential in my examination of Muslims’ experiences in receiving statutory religious holidays while living in St. John’s.

Beaman's article, "Battles Over Symbols: The "Religion" of the Minority versus the "Culture" of the Majority" (2012c) problematizes how mainstream Christianity is reassigned as "cultural" rather than as "religious." In this article, Beaman compares and examines two cases: 1) the March 2011 Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights decision that the crucifix hanging at the front of the classroom did not violate the right to religious freedom; 2) the Quebec debate about the existence of the crucifix and a sacred heart statue in the National Assembly, alongside the mayor's wish to continue beginning council meetings with a prayer. In both cases, the public presence of Christian symbols was debated. Overall, Beaman explores the ways in which so-called religious symbols have become redesigned as cultural symbols and how the preservation of mainstream Christian symbols as culture undermines minority religions (Beaman 2012c, 68).

In other words, Beaman's work highlights how Christianity is often understood or interpreted as culture rather than as religion, which allows it to function uncritiqued as mainstream or normative. When Christianity is understood outside of religion, then its embeddedness within secularism is not challenged. As a result, Christianity is not held up to the same standard of secularism as minority religions, or less mainstream religions. This understanding of Christianity as culture as argued by Beaman creates and maintains unequal divisions and treatment of other religious groups. Beaman's argument is applied throughout the findings chapter in order to examine the ways in which Muslim participants experience living in St. John's and the challenges they face in negotiating and interpreting secularism and Christianity.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to shed light on the on-going debates and discussions surrounding religion, multiculturalism and secularism in contemporary Canada, and achieving equality in the presence of all three. The work of leading scholars in the fields of multiculturalism, secularism and equality was explored. First, I turned to the more philosophical ideologies surrounding multiculturalism, highlighting the contrasting work of Taylor (1992) and Bannerji (2000). While their perspectives spoke to some of the philosophical challenges of defining multiculturalism, Modood's work examined some more current quotidian issues and challenges through what he labelled political multiculturalism. Next an overview of Canadian research on multiculturalism was considered and spoke to the relevance of this research. I then examined literature on secularism as it relates to the findings portion of this thesis. Following that section, Beaman's theory of deep equality was considered as it pertains to this research, highlighting the importance of everyday lived experiences, as well as the challenges of existing power relations that favour mainstream Christianity under the assumption of secularism. In closing, this literature review speaks to the research presented throughout this thesis, while situating it within the greater context of work focusing on Canadian multiculturalism.

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter outlines the methods and approach I took in gathering qualitative data for this thesis. I also introduce my participants, outline my research design, and discuss potential limitations of the research.

3.1 Methodological Approaches

This qualitative research project took a two-pronged methodological approach employing textual analysis and qualitative research. Textual or document analysis is a method in which a document is studied through a close reading of the textual content to understand the particular information and character of the document (Davie and Wyatt 2011). The Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) was the primary document under analysis. Other documents such as Provincial Education curriculums, newspaper articles and news releases were also analyzed using document analysis. They were treated as secondary sources.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008, see Appendix A) is a three-page policy created for the general public in 2008. It states the general goals and vision of the provincial government for achieving multiculturalism. The document suggests that the point of the policy is to provide citizens a clear map of the province's values and goals in relation to multiculturalism. Since it is a government policy, and not an act, it is a statement of the government's goals or ideals and has no legal or social ramifications should the goals not be met.

As part of my document analysis undertaken in Chapters One and Four, I considered the overall inclusion of the notion of religion within the document. Religion is mentioned once within the policy as a part of list of identity signifiers, upon which people will not be discriminated (NL Human Resources 2008, 2). However, religion does not emerge within the policy objectives or policy implementation guidelines, as explored in Chapter Two. Next, the policy objectives of the document were analyzed in order to hypothesize about their overall goals. After completing document analysis of the policy, I utilized a second approach to access and contextualize the successes and/or shortcomings of the provincial policy.

The second approach used to complete this research was undertaking qualitative interviews. Qualitative interviews were conducted with the aim of gaining insight into participants' everyday lived experiences of religiosity as Muslims in St. John's. Memorial's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) approved the interview schedule. The interviews were a part of a larger study titled "Religion in the Everyday: Negotiating Islam in St. John's, Newfoundland," led by Dr. Jennifer Selby from the Religious Studies Department at Memorial University, Dr. Lori Beaman from the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa, and Dr. Abdie Kazemipur formerly of the Sociology Department at Memorial University. This broader study focused on gaining insight into the experiences of Muslims living in St. John's and their negotiations of everyday lived religion, which included questions, among others, regarding finding and purchasing halal food, accessing prayer time and space at work or school, and their overall experiences living in Newfoundland.

Following completion of the interviews, I manually coded them to look for themes such as holidays, alcohol consumption/ abstinence, food, extra-curricular activities, and marriage and practices. Overall, the goal in this coding was to examine the degree of comfort participants had in everyday life in being themselves. In other words, were the goals of the multiculturalism policy being lived out in day-to-day life?

More theoretically, both the textual and qualitative approaches are based on James Beckford's understanding and definition of religion. In *Social Theory and Religion* (2003), Beckford proposes a moderate constructionist approach, arguing that the social sciences' task rests in the study of the social construction of religion (2003, 7). He breaks his idea of religion into two parts: 'first order' and 'second order' notions. Beckford suggests that first order notions of religion are made up of lived aspects that actors set out daily (2003, 19). The second order notions are constructs that serve analytical purposes (2003, 19). Although both first and second order notions are integral to his theoretical understanding of religion, he clearly gives priority to the first order or the everyday lived experiences of individuals, organizations, groups and institutions within a religious tradition (2003, 20). Like Anne Phillips' argument that culture is flexible and changing, Beckford argues that religion is socially constructed and subject to change due to the effects of time and space. More specifically, his definitions influenced the questions I posed, which specifically asked participants about their everyday experiences as religious individuals living in Newfoundland as opposed to second order questions, which would have focused on their religious beliefs and philosophies in a more theological manner.

3.2 Participants

Fifty-five participants were recruited for qualitative interviews based on their self-identification as Muslim. This qualifier meant that some participants understood themselves as “non-practicing”, where others considered themselves as “fully practicing”, and still others called themselves “cultural Muslims” having been born into a Muslim family, but practicing fewer of the religious aspects of Islam. A “cultural Muslim” take part in larger more culturally and secularly characterized events and practices (Ruthven 2000). As I will describe, the 37 participants who were a part of my sample represented a wide range of ages, places of nativity, and religious practices, with all participants self-identifying as Muslim.

My research analyzed 34 of 55 interviews, referencing the ones that were conducted after the first 21.⁷ These 34 interviews include 37 participants, due to three group interviews. The median age of my participants was 34 and the average age was 35.7, with an age range of 18 to 71 years old. In keeping with ICEHR guidelines, participants were over the age of 18. The majority my participants (96%) were born outside of Canada, having immigrated to Canada for work and/or educational opportunities. Only two interviewees were born in Canada. However, there were three who are part of the 1.5-generation, as they spent their adolescence in Canada. The range of time that participants had been living in Newfoundland varied from 1.5 months to 27 years, but at the time of the interview, participants on average had been living in Newfoundland for 4.63 years. Out of the 37 participants referred to in my research

⁷ Caitlin Downie’s thesis examined the first 30 participant interviews (see Downie 2012).

findings, 20 identified as female and 17 as male. Furthermore, the majority of participants, approximately 87%, were highly educated, having one university degree or more and were almost all were working outside the home. This factor is unique to the context of Newfoundland, more specifically St. John's, as in many city centers such as Toronto, Muslims have the highest rate of unemployment compared to other religious groups (Yousif 2008; Moghissi, Rahnema and Goodman 2009).

3.3 Recruitment

This section outlines the methods that were used to gather qualitative data and recruit participants. Interviewing was the primary tool used to gather information about Muslims' experiences of living in St. John's and more specifically, how these experiences speak to their understandings of multiculturalism.

Recruitment of participants was conducted using a variety of methods in an effort to attract a diverse body of participants. One method used in recruiting participants was attending Friday *ju'muah* prayers and *khutba* (sermon) organized by the Muslim Students Association starting in June 2012 at Memorial University's St. John's Chapel. This collaboration was struck in order to make attending Friday Prayers more accessible for Muslim students and faculty (MSA website), given the distance and lack of accessible public transportation to the Al-Noor Mosque in the outskirts of the city. Prior to this new prayer location, the MSA had arranged transportation for students to attend via a rented school bus. However, due to limited space at the mosque, the MSA-MUN arranged the use of the on-campus chapel. After attending the chapel, Caitlin Downie, a Master's

student from the University of Ottawa also acting as a research assistant for the broader project, and I met with potential participants outside of the chapel. We were able to socialize with potential participants and tell them about our research project. The project was explained to them verbally and in writing through a research information pamphlet (see Appendix B). After informing potential participants about the research, they were given our contact information if they wanted to meet for an interview. In some cases, if participants showed interested in participating, they were asked for their contact information immediately. From here, either Caitlin or I were in contact with them to set up an interview.

Other venues for recruitment included community events put on by the MSA, such as gatherings like the Eid Family Fun Day.⁸ Announcements about our combined project were also made at the local mosque. We were also able to recruit through Memorial's English as a Second Language program and the Association for New Canadians (ANC). Both organizations allowed us to come to their classes and explain our project to students and leave our research pamphlet. Students were then given the option to get in touch with us or to leave their contact information for us to get in touch with them to set up an interview. Participants were also recruited using the snowball method. This involved asking participants who had already been interviewed to pass along our information to any friends or family that may also be interested in taking part in the research. Generally, participants were contacted a few days after their interview to touch base with them about any other contacts they may have. Lastly, Dr. Jennifer Selby had an

⁸ MANAL held an Eid Family Fun Day in October 2012. It took place in the gym of a local elementary school and featured games and a bouncy castle for children. Tickets could be purchased there or at the mosque. There was food available, as well.

existing network within the Muslim community in St. John's, from which she was able to recruit and network. This was a help to the study and brought in a number of participants.

After recruiting participants, we conducted one-on-one interviews, as well as three group interviews with families, couples and friends. Participants identified as Muslim and lived in or had previously lived in St. John's. Interviews were conducted within the city of St. John's by Lori Beaman, Jennifer Selby, Caitlin Downie and I. The majority took place during the fall of 2012, with some preliminary interviews conducted by Jennifer Selby in October and November 2011.

The interviews took place at various locations chosen by the participants. The interviews were guided by nine open-ended interview questions that were followed by sub-questions. The questions inquired about participants' everyday experiences living in St. John's as Muslims in places such as grocery stores, and asked about workplace experiences and strategies for negotiating potential challenges (see Appendix C). As a result of asking primarily open-ended questions, the length of the interviews varied from thirty minutes to a couple of hours. All of the interviews were recorded and later downloaded as encrypted mp3 files for transcription. They were then manually coded.

3.4 Analysis

After the audio interviews were transcribed, I coded 34 interviews for themes including prayer space, equality, multiculturalism, education/awareness and food and drink. I selected these codes as they pertained to the research questions, but more importantly they were evident themes that emerged from reading the transcriptions. I

wanted to be especially careful in the way that the coding was conducted to ensure that participants' experiences were accurately represented in my thesis. In order to fulfill the goals of this research, the textual analysis portion was brought together with the transcripts to consider how religion is represented and more importantly experienced within the context of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Initially, I chose three points from the Newfoundland Multiculturalism Policy statement, which pertained to the findings in the transcripts. They focused on equality, workplace experiences, public awareness and education. However, in an effort to keep the findings concise I focused upon the notion of access to holidays in the workplace. I then cross-referenced this coding with the chosen policy statement. This cross referencing acted as a way to test the multiculturalism policy and its projected goals related to experiences of local non-Christian minorities in St. John's. Furthermore, after exploring the challenges and existing holes in the policy, I analyzed these challenges referencing the work of Lori Beaman (2012), Tariq Modood (2007, 2009), Jennifer Selby (2012), Janet Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini (2008), and Himani Bannerji (2000), among others, to guide my analysis. This scholarship helped me to identify and engage with the underlying issues and challenges as expressed by the participants. Understanding and exploring these strategies aimed to ensure that participants' experiences and stories were told in a way that was representative of their narratives.

3.5 Limitations

Like most qualitative studies, there are limitations to this research study and data collection that need to be taken into consideration. To begin, using a questionnaire to

guide the interview effected the data collected. The questionnaire is designed with certain ideas and questions in mind and therefore shaped the answers and stories that participants shared. Our questions were focused on everyday experiences and the negotiating that participants did or did not undertake within their daily lives. The questions were open-ended and did not include specific questions about participants' direct lived experiences with multiculturalism, but rather their overall experiences living in St. John's, which were then analyzed to understand their experiences of the broader idea of multiculturalism. The questionnaire acted as a guide to ensure consistency among responses (Flick 2007).

The external validity and potential triangulation in this study is limited due to its specificity on Muslim experiences in St. John's. Findings cannot be generalized to explain the experiences of all minority religious groups in the city (Flick 2007). A number of other factors impact comparison with Muslims in other Canadian centres. First, most participants in this study have a university education or higher and are working in the professional sphere. However, according to 2001 Statistics Canada data, Muslims represent the second highest unemployment rate of any other religious denomination in Canada at 14.4% (Statistics Canada 2001). Thus, unlike studies that have taken place in more urban cities that have larger Muslim populations, St. John's does not provide a context that allows for a straightforward comparison. Most immigrated to the city to work in specific jobs, which is why the unemployment rates for Muslims in St. John's is low. Second, while the second largest religious group in numbers, Muslims make up only 0.12% of the population (Statistics Canada 2001). Thirdly, this study is one of few done of the Muslim population living in St. John's, meaning it is not possible to cross check the study's findings with previous or existing studies for consistencies and discrepancies.

However, despite these shortcomings, given its acceptable sample size, it still provides insight into the experiences of the local Muslim community, and may influence further research questions and projects in the province and Canada.

Additionally, the St. John's context appears to differ from comparable small urban setting of Charlottetown, where the Muslim community has recently experienced threats aimed at the mosque (CBC 2012). As discussed in the first chapter, Newfoundland and Labrador has a unique religious history and demographic challenges that play a role in the outcomes of this research, making it challenging or even impossible to completely replicate or accurately test my findings with data gathered elsewhere. Although it has some limitations, valuable description of the lives of Muslims living in St. John's was the primary goal of the research.

I too experienced challenges with the research process, which may have had a role in the research outcomes. Going into the research I had few connections with the greater community here, as I myself had only been living in St. John's for a year and was not a member of MANAL or the MSA. I did not have any existing social connections with the Muslim community, which meant that I did not have an existing reputation. I was still trying to situate myself within the greater St. John's community, which at the time I was finding it difficult as a 'mainlander.' Lacking any real connections within the community placed me far outside my comfort zone when it came to recruiting. The process of going to the university chapel for *jumu'ah* prayers was a good learning experience for me that pushed me outside of my comfort zone. It was the first time I had attended Muslim prayers and, by my own choice, I wore a scarf over my hair. Fortunately, I was able to speak to potential participants and set up and undertake interviews.

The interview process went well, however my inexperience with interviewing was sometimes apparent. In the end I completed interviews and learned more about conducting interviews and become more comfortable with the overall process. Following these stages came the analysis portion of the research, which I also found challenging in that I wanted to ensure the research and findings presented would be academically sound and representative of the participants' experiences.

In the coding stage, I located themes that connected the narratives. After reading the transcripts numerous times, I was able to narrow down seven broad themes. These initial themes were basic - holidays, prayer space, multiculturalism, drinking, recreation, food and Islamophobia - but allowed me to find connections throughout the data set. Each theme was made into a file, some bigger than others, and then analyzed. From there I was able to see what consistencies and inconsistencies existed between individual transcripts and experiences.

James Clifford's *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986) did not comfort these fears, but allowed me to have a more articulate understanding of my role in shaping the findings. Clifford states, "ethnography is actively situated between powerful systems of meaning" (Clifford 1986, 2). His statement highlights the ethnographer's role (or in my own case, the interviewer's) in creating culture or research findings in this case. I do not see myself as powerful, but recognized that, as author, I wanted to create data that reflected the everyday experiences of Muslims in St. John's. It is no surprise that since 9/11 Muslim communities in the West have been very careful about managing their image (Dehanas and Pieri 201; Bolognani and Statham 2013; Selby

2013). The St. John's Muslim community also appears to undertake efforts to create a positive image, while also reaching out to the greater community.

Lastly, another challenge I ran into during the analysis portion of the research was dealing with inconclusive data. In our questionnaire we had a question that asked participants what they thought of multiculturalism (see appendix C). I naively thought this line of questioning would be a goldmine for my thesis. However, I was disappointed during my first few interviews when I asked the question and got very little response. As I read over the transcripts I thought maybe other participants would have had more to say about multiculturalism. I was wrong again. For the most part, participants had very little to say about multiculturalism, with a few stating, "yeah, it's good" and others asking, "multi-what?" I came to realize that while they initially appeared inconclusive, these responses nevertheless provide insight in that they highlight problems with the translation and recognizability of the concept. Participants' lack of response to the question possibly signifies that multiculturalism and the provincial Multiculturalism Policy do not play active roles in their lives, and in many ways are insignificant, compared to other questions that received more attention from participants such as the challenge in attending social functions that involved consuming alcohol. I will return to this discussion in Chapter Four. Overall, using qualitative interviews directed by mostly open-ended questions meant that certain responses came more naturally to participants. This format naturally effected the research findings.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methods that were employed to conduct this research. I have sought to summarize my research process, beginning with participant recruitment and interviews, and noted some of the limitations of the overall research. Next, the methods of analysis were examined, highlighting the way in which the research findings were constructed. In closing, this chapter has sought to shed light on the overall processes involved in gathering the participants, coding data, and analyzing my findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

In June 2008, the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial government launched the Policy on Multiculturalism, the first provincial multiculturalism policy for Newfoundland and Labrador. The policy was one among a number of government initiatives put forward to increase immigration and immigrant retention in the province, as discussed in the first chapter. It was introduced at a moment where, in the broader Canadian context, challenges of reasonable accommodation and “religious tolerance” of minorities were highly visible. These challenges include the Bouchard Taylor Commission in Quebec in 2008, the Family Law Arbitration Debate in Ontario, which began in 2004, and the Multani Supreme Court case in 2004 (see Beaman and Lefebvre 2014, Korteweg and Selby 2012, Bouchard and Taylor 2008, Côté 2008, and McKay-Panos, Ellis and Hird 2005). These examples and challenges acquired the attention of academics and politicians with regards to how immigrant and minority differences are managed in Canada. With these non-Christian minority-focused issues in the public eye, the notion of Canadian multiculturalism thus remains relevant. While, as I described in Chapters One and Two, many argue that the Canadian multicultural model is flawed and disadvantageous (Bannerji 2000, Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010), there are others who believe it still has something to offer in response to such challenges (Beaman 2012, Modood 2007, 2008 and Kymlicka 2007, 2012).

Whether one agrees or disagrees with notions of multiculturalism, it is a part of Canada's legal and social framework. As such, this chapter examines what multiculturalism looks like within the context of Newfoundland and Labrador while highlighting some of its existing challenges. These challenges arguably speak to the character of multiculturalism within the province, while also revealing some of the comprehensive issues that the provincial multiculturalism policy could address. In other words, I consider what multiculturalism looks like through an examination of the everyday lived experiences of Muslims living in St. John's, as well as using textual analysis to understand the goals and programs of the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008).

I argue that although the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) addresses certain issues and challenges through its policy and programs, there are certain comprehensive issues that still need to be addressed beyond the policy in order to affectively implement multicultural initiatives. This point is exemplified through Muslim participants' restricted access to time off from their employers and public institutions like schools and hospitals to celebrate religious holidays. I argue that the primary roadblock within notions and policies of multiculturalism is that there are implicit Christian values that have become a problematic and normative way in which multiculturalism is understood and enacted. This implicit unnamed Christianity exists within so-called secularism or religiously neutral provincial governmental directives, thus hindering religious minorities' experiences of multicultural equality, especially in the case of access to religious holidays. The work of Tariq Modood (2007) and Lori Beaman (2012) will be

referenced to speculate on some of the root causes of this challenge of access as it pertains to secularism and equality in St. John's.

4.1 Muslim Holidays

Prior to looking at the experiences of participants requesting time off from work and public institutions to celebrate religious holidays, I provide a brief description of Muslim religious holidays and celebrations. It is important to understand that there are significant variations of religiosity amongst Muslims. Religious identity is flexible and fluid; not everyone who identifies as Muslim will take part in traditions, practices and rituals in the same way.

Islam is often interpreted as guided by “five pillars.”⁹ The second of what are known as these pillars is *salat*. *Salat* refers to the official daily prayers that most Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims perform. For Sunnis the majority of these prayers occur five times daily, generally at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and evening. They punctuate the day. In predominately Muslim countries, each prayer time is alerted by the *adhan*, a traditional siren that alerts followers of the time (Gwynne 2009, 280). In St. John's these daily prayers can take place anywhere, but there is an emphasis on ritual purity and ablutions in Islam. These requirements mean being free of pollutions from the body such

⁹ Robert Hefner (1998) problematizes this oversimplified way of understanding Islam, among other religions. Hefner argues that within modern contexts, religions, specifically Islam, can be experienced in a variety of ways within the same social and cultural avenues. He emphasizes the fragmentation and objectification that can exist within Islam, moving away from a pluralized understanding of Islam. Safet Bectovic (2012) also calls into question recent scholarship's tendency to focus on structures and functions of Islam, while never including many Muslims within this discourse on Islam.

as bodily secretions, touching animals, sexual activity and so forth (Ruthven 2012). Every week on Friday afternoon many Muslims participate in congregational *jumu'ah* prayer (Esposito 2006). In St. John's on Fridays the MUN-MSA has historically arranged for school buses to take students and faculty to the only mosque in the province, which is located in the outskirts of the east end of the city. However, some participants do not attend the mosque on Fridays because of its location and a lack of accessible public transport to the wider community. Students and faculty at MUN have the option of attending Friday prayers on campus at the Chapel, due to a recent agreement made between the MSA and the chapel administration. This arrangement has made attending *jumu'ah* prayers more accessible to many student participants, as described in Chapter Three. During this research, I attended the chapel for Friday prayers in order to recruit participants for interviews. During the prayers women and men are separated, with women required to stay behind some bookshelves and curtains that had been put in place temporarily for this use. Meanwhile, at the local mosque during prayer times, women congregate on a separate floor with a one-way mirrored window. Some female participants expressed frustration about this recent change as it meant that they were not able to hear the prayers as well as men who pray on the main floor of the mosque.

Muslim religious observers follow a different calendar than the Western Gregorian calendar. The Muslim calendar is based on a lunar year that consists of twelve lunar months ranging from 29 to 30 days, a difference of eleven days every year from the Gregorian calendar (Gwynne 2009, 312). The Islamic year begins on *Muhhartram*, which is the first day of the first month of the lunar calendar. For Shi'ite Muslims, ten days after their New Year is *Ashura*, an event that remembers the suffering of the grandson of

Muhammad (Gwynne 2009, 313). Ashura is a national holiday in many Muslim countries such as Afghanistan and Iran (Farah 2003).

There are two main annual feasts that most Muslims celebrate. The first is *Eid al-Adha* (the Feast of the Sacrifice), which commemorates the end of the tenth day of *haji*. This date is celebrated by pilgrims and Muslim families everywhere, typically through the ritual sacrifice of a sheep, which is then shared through a gathering of friends and family, along with the less fortunate (Farah 2003, 168). The second feast is *Eid al-Fitr* (the Feast of ending the fast of Ramadan). Ramadan, during which Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, begins one month before the second feast. The breaking of the fast, or Eid, takes place on the first of the *Shawwal* according to the Muslim calendar, which is the tenth month (Farah 2003, 169). Another feast observed by Muslims is *Mawlid*, which is the Prophet's birthday and takes place during Rabi I, the third month of the Muslim calendar (Farah 2003). I have provided this brief background of Muslim celebrations and rituals to set the context for Muslims' negotiations in St. John's. As with any religion there are variations that occur depending on individuals, time, geography, location and conservatism; due to these factors, not all participants in this research project celebrate and experience Islam in the same manner.

4.2 Participants' Experiences in St. John's

This section examines the varying experiences of participants in receiving religious holidays off from work and school like a statutory holiday, like many Christian holidays. While participants expressed a variety of opinions about negotiating time off for

holidays, there were several who experienced challenges. I frame these challenges expressed by participants as comprehensive issues that the existing policy and programs fail to address. I will argue that the provincial Multiculturalism Policy overlooks providing equalized access to religious holidays for minority religions and does not formally acknowledge that a number of statutory holidays are Christian-based. Out of the six provincial statutory holidays, two of them are based on Christian holidays – Christmas Day and Good Friday. St. Valentine’s Day, Easter Monday and St. Patrick’s Day are also Christian holidays celebrating various Christian saints that are publically celebrated through various commercial means throughout the province, but are not statutory holidays. Furthermore, provincial government employees receive St. Patrick’s Day and Orangemen’s Day off as statutory holidays, both of which have Christian significance.

Muslim participants’ access to religious holidays was often described as a desire for equality alongside their other colleagues. In this sense, equality means to have the same access and accommodations made for their religious holidays as are made for statutory Christian holidays such as Easter, Good Friday or Christmas. By “normalized” Christianity in these holidays I am alluding to the traditional Protestant and Catholic groups that have existed within the Canadian context since its colonial inception. However, it is important to note that not all Christian groups and denominations experience the same or similar levels of advantage or disadvantage. Lori Beaman details and introduces examples of Christian normativity in her book *Defining Harm: Religious Freedom and the Limits of the Law* (2008). Referring to the work of Eric Mazur (1999), Beaman highlights the socio-political power that mainstream Christianity has had in Canada. This monopoly can be damaging to other religious denominations, including

other Christian denominations; these smaller Christian denominations consequently end up being placed within the margins of society (see M. H. Ogilvie 2002; Beaman 2008, 46). Beaman shows how any group outside of mainstream Christianity is likely to have less legal and social protection when their beliefs do not interlock with those of the mainstream (Beaman 2008, 46). This notion of hegemonic mainstream Christianity is what I am referring to when discussing normative Christian holidays. Many participants referenced this normalized view of Christian holidays. None of the participants suggested that Christian holidays should not be celebrated, but rather that they also wanted to be able to express and celebrate their religious holidays with breaks from school and work granted by their employers.

Participants' Experiences with Religious Holidays

I now consider the narratives from Muslim participants' interviews in order to understand the challenges they have faced in receiving time off for Muslim religious holidays. I first turn to Dina, a twenty-one year old female student attending Memorial University in her last year of an Engineering undergraduate degree. She was born in Ethiopia and at the time of her interview in October 2012, which took place on campus at the University Centre, she had been living in Newfoundland for three years. Dina stated that she would like to see religious holidays more widely granted to religious minorities, even though she recognizes the challenge that this accommodation could create:

At least make your employers aware and we can have that day off and you know work, you work over your weekend I dunno, you know, something else

but at least to get that day off. Or whatever things like that. Or even from classes too. You know. But for classes too they could be like, yeah. And and I know it gets really difficult. There's [sic] a lot of different religions and different holidays but at the same time you know we do get like Christmas off and things I mean we get other things off so it would be nice if we could get two days off, those two days off [for *Eid-Al Fitr*].

Dina recognized that allowing Muslims and other religious minorities to have religious holidays off from work and school would present a challenge to existing social structures, in this case Christmas. I suggest that the role of the multiculturalism policy should be to act as a directive for dealing with such requests by providing strategies and tools that allow religious minorities to receive their religious holidays off with ease.

In a second instance, Daria expressed similar feelings regarding how Christian holidays are normative and the challenge that this situation creates within so-called equality-based multicultural settings. Daria attends the Association of New Canadians (ANC) for English as a Second Language classes. She is twenty-seven years old and married with one child. She has a degree in public relations, which was granted in Sudan. At the time of the interview Daria had been living in Newfoundland for three years. Born in Khartoum into a practicing Muslim family, Daria explained that she can get days off for religious celebrations because the ANC teachers grant them. When asked if she feels the government treats all religious groups equally, however, she expressed concern for the unequal treatment of religious holidays by the federal government:

D: I think [sic] is equally, but there is one thing we don't have official holidays for our um, I don't know. But in our school if you have um, your religion you can take off.

Interviewer: Take the day off?

D: Yeah.

I: So they're okay with it here?

D: Yeah, but we don't have the official holidays from the federal government, no.

At the same time when she was asked whether she thinks the Canadian government treats all religions equally, Daria responded "yes", but she went on to say that she would like to see religious holidays granted to all religious groups. While she is able to get the day off from school, this provision is not granted to all Muslims in the province, making it challenging for her to celebrate with her husband who works full-time, and in the future with her son, who will be in public school and likely unable to celebrate at home with his family. In the future when she completes her English language classes at the ANC and enters the workforce, she may face further challenges of negotiating religious holidays off from work. She recognized the short-term nature of the ANC arrangement.

A third participant, Mandisa, a thirty-three year old Egyptian male graduate student at Memorial University, articulated practical concerns such as work deadlines that prevented him from requesting time off for Eid off from his supervisor. Mandisa works as a research assistant in the engineering department, where he is completing his doctoral degree. Mandisa lives in St. John's with his wife and two children. When asked how his religious expressions had been affected since moving to Newfoundland, he replied that he thought that the celebration of Eid was something that had changed:

M:Mhmm it's not so much no, um- here most of the time I'm busy with my study maybe I can't, I can't say it's effecting something exactly. Maybe the life here is um, for the Eid you know. Eid ah, this is the only thing affecting because sometimes I have to work on those days and in my home country we take it off and we can visit us, and the, we go to pray together. Here we also go to pray, Eid prayer, but maybe it's the only thing, ah.

I: So are you able to get it off with work usually?

M: I don't think so, it's ah..cause for example the next it will be on Friday and ah I think I will go to work on this day.

I: Mhmm..

M: This is the only thing.

I: And can you ask for it or?

M: Actually I can ask but I know that there's, we have some work to do and we have a deadline, so...

Mandisa felt that he is technically able to leave his office to attend prayers on Eid, but acknowledged a pressure to go back to his office afterwards in order to meet work deadlines. Because of these obligations he misses out celebrating holidays with friends and family. Balancing both commitments -- meeting work expectations and celebrating with family -- is a challenge for Mandisa.

A fourth participant highlights how some participants have to remind co-workers and friends alike that not everyone celebrates Christian holidays. Ifra expressed concern for the way that her co-workers perceived Christian holidays. Ifra is a forty-two year old married woman with two children; she was born in Pakistan and came to Canada when she was six months old. Ifra moved to St. John's just under five years ago, after growing up in Toronto. She grew up in a Hindu and Muslim mixed family, but identifies as a cultural/political Muslim. She does not wear a hijab like her two sisters and her mother, all of whom live in Canada. Ifra explained that she pointedly reminds people at her workplace that not everyone celebrates Christian holidays:

So, so I remind people that not everybody celebrates Christmas. And I don't do it in a way that's saying, you know, "thou shall not celebrate Christmas", but, but, I do, I do remind people.

She sees Christmas as something that is normalized at her workplace and finds herself reminding co-workers that not everyone chooses to take part in Christian holidays even though they are common religious celebrations.

When asked about her religious background, Ifra pointed out in her interview that she considers herself to be partially Christian since she grew up in Canada and attended public school.

I came to Canada when I was six years old. So in that - six months old sorry - so in that way I'm also kind of Christian. I've been schooled in Christian ways for sure.

Ifra understood her identity as partially Christian because she grew up in Canada. This acknowledgement highlights the way that Christianity is a major part of the social structure of Canada that often goes unnoticed by the majority culture that is favourably served by these implicit structures. These participants did not mind this bias but sought to acknowledge it.

A fifth informant confirmed this sentiment of Christian normativity. Nadya articulated similar feelings by using Christmas as a comparison point for Eid. Nadya is a thirty-four year old female who is married with one child. She was born in Indonesia and has lived in St. John's for nine years. Nadya works full-time as a medical assistant. During her interview in her home in October 2012, she expressed that Christmas in her workplace is a holiday that is granted no matter what one's background, but for her to receive Eid off it would require her to ask each year:

I'm just hoping that more people getting to know our, our [Muslim] Christmas day because that's what I explain to my co-workers I always say, "my Christmas day". You know that they know that we have our own

celebration for example and then, then um we get [sic] day off. Like the employer knows like I don't have to tell my boss say "hey I tomorrow is my"- I would love for her to be able to know "Oh Nadya have [sic] a celebration coming."

Nadya's experiences at work highlight the previous discussion of a reluctance to ask for religious holidays off.

For some participants, Christian holidays meant that as religious minorities, they ended up working over the Christmas break in order to relieve co-workers who celebrate Christmas. Nadya explained the importance of her religious holidays by comparing them to Christmas. She would like to see the same type of recognition at work by her employer and co-workers of her religious holidays, so that she does not have to ask for a special exceptions to celebrate, like Christian co-workers who naturally just receive the time off in her medical office. She went on to explain that it is sad when friends show up at the mosque for prayer on Eid, but then cannot stay to celebrate with friends and family because they have to get back to work. Nadya explained that it would be "lovely if from coast to coast" everyone in Canada knew that it was a commonly practiced Muslim celebration. In this scenario, her boss and co-workers would know, without her having to ask for time off, that it is a special day for her and her family. Earlier in her interview she expressed that she was not comfortable asking her boss for different treatment, as she did not want others or her boss to think that she felt she was entitled to different accommodations. She also stated that she was not comfortable wearing a hijab at work or around her in-laws who are Christian Canadians, as she was unsure of how people would react to it. Overall, Nadya was reluctant to share too much of her religious identity

publically, not wanting her religious identity to overshadow her relationships with non-Muslims.

Aadil went further than Nadya, and described his experiences at work as “unfair.” Aadil is fifty-two and a married male with five children. Aadil has lived in St. John’s for eight years and works as a physician. He was born in Iraq, where he completed his bachelor and master’s degrees in medicine. Aadil said that Muslim employees like himself fill in over Christmas happily, but when it comes to Eid celebrations, he felt that his employer and co-workers do not return the favour. These days require a greater level of negotiating for him to receive the time off than it does for Christian co-workers to receive Christmas day off:

Because when you talk to the local boss he said, “oh well I have no authority to give a day free”. They approach that because we as Muslims we are taking the responsibility for all the calls during Christmas time. So it is not a big deal for you guys to take a call for us one day. Right? Even if you take a one day service for me. It is one day in a year, two days in a year, for *Eid-al-fitr* and *Eid-al-adha*. So it is not a big problem to solve. But when you go to the first he said “No. I am not authorized to give you that. You have to go higher and higher”....We know, we know, we want this day free of service. And even you can’t compensate for that day it is not a big deal. But at least that our family, our children, they will feel something related to our religion to celebrate. Right? And uh I think it was only for one year and then they forgot it and they are not allowed [to grant accommodations].

Aadil and Nadya’s experiences highlight that equality in receiving religious holidays rests on them to negotiate. Aadil did receive Eid off one year after many negotiations with his employer and managers, but then it was forgotten the following year and he had to make the request again. Unless one is self-employed or in a managerial position, to receive religious holidays off takes a great deal of effort. Furthermore, Aadil works shifts over the Christmas break, when his kids are on holidays, in order to help out celebrating co-

workers, but does not receive the same in return. There is no guarantee that the participants described here will receive Eid off. Instead their requests require a high level of patience and negotiation with their employers and colleagues.

Akbar is a thirty-five year old married male who was born in Bangladesh. He has lived in Newfoundland for sixteen years, initially coming for educational purposes. In 2006, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in computer science from Memorial University. Akbar currently works in St. John's as an IT professional. Akbar discussed an alternative possibility of "neutralizing" holidays, which would mean that all holidays would be civic holidays that have no religious ties to any religious group. Otherwise he suggested that all religious groups holidays should be recognized:

So for me it's like uh having uh labour holiday is fine. Because it has nothing to do with the religion or background. Uh having Canada Day, having those days are fine, Victoria Day, Civic Day, those are Fine...[but] St. Patrick's day and Easter. So what's happening [to] the other faiths? They start feeling that "Today's my, why I'm not getting holiday?" ... Yeah. But the thing is most of them, there are is most of the Christians, they don't even follow but they are getting the benefit of it. So either you make it neutral, okay, or you celebrate everybody.

Akbar explained the inequalities that exist within the honouring of Christian holidays, and suggested that holidays become religiously neutral or secularized. Everyone would be required to take off their desired individual religious holidays, and that non-religious holidays, such as Labour Day and civic holidays, would be granted to everyone equally.

Lastly, recall Alina from the previous chapter, who spoke directly about the issue of secularism in her interview, describing the way in which Christian holidays are perceived

differently than other religious holidays. Alina has lived in Canada for eleven years, eight of those in St. John's. She has a PhD from a Canadian university:

A: Um... so for instance it's only Christian holidays that you know, work place and schools get to be closed and public spheres such as parks and malls to be decorated. Uh and more importantly it's mostly Christian holidays that they're promoted through [the] school curriculum.

I: Mhmm.

A: Even if it's, if it's, the whole classroom consists of maybe students of Muslim background it's still you know, the same given the curriculum. Anyways um what I find it more interesting it is that this Christian religiosity is expressed in the public sphere not through it's, not through means of like, not as [a] sign of spirituality but like a cultural showcase and contributing to the economy. Like, you know you go around for Christmas or Easter, Easter, like you, there's no doubt that it's religion is there but only with this rather secular and market-oriented aspects.

Alina offered an alternative analysis into the way that Christian holidays are normalized through secular and economic characterization, rather than through religious ideologies.

Alina pointed out the way that Christian holidays have become a part of the greater economy, making it seem like a cultural economic celebration, rather than a religious one, in line with Beaman's argument regarding the acculturation of Christianity. In sum, Alina and the other respondents examined here question the Christian normative structures that exist within the Newfoundland and Labrador context. As a result, I contend that the status quo impairs religious minorities' access to religious holidays and thus is a comprehensive issue that is not adequately addressed through the provincial multiculturalism policy and programs.

4.3 Secularism, Multiculturalism, Equality and Religion

Challenges in receiving religious holidays off from work or school, as was just outlined through participants' narratives, arguably suggest that the existing Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy and government programs need to be extended to address more comprehensive issues such as holidays for religious minorities. In this section, I argue that a number of factors play a role in the unequal treatment of granting time off for Muslim religious holidays, both paid and unpaid.

First, I suspect that articulations of normative secularism contribute to reinforcing implicit Christian structures, which deny equal access to religious holidays for Muslim participants. In order to highlight this point, I consider the work of Jennifer A. Selby (2012) and José Casanova (2011). I then explore the connection between secularism, Christianity and the economy in the contemporary West through the work of Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini (2008) and Max Weber (1905). This connection between the economy and secularism is discussed as it pertains to multiculturalism and the economic characterization of multiculturalism, which will be further examined alongside the theories of Himani Bannerji (2000) and Stanley Fish (1997). I briefly explore two Canadian newspaper columns that exemplify the way in which secularism is often an assumed notion within Canadian print media sources. Finally, Lori G. Beaman's (2012c) work on normative Christianity as cultural rather than religious will be engaged more concretely as it pertains to participants' experiences. I seek to highlight the ways in which secular ideologies impede the equal treatment of religious minorities within the framework of multiculturalism. I conclude by arguing that Lori Beaman's theory of deep equality (2012) and Tariq Modood's conception of multicultural equality (2007, 2009) address the comprehensive issue of receiving holidays off from work and school for

religious minorities, and could act as a viable solution within the policy to the challenges expressed by participants, creating a more comprehensive mobilization of multiculturalism in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Defining Secularism

The work of Jennifer A. Selby is useful to sketch the historical background of secularism in the contemporary West, as well as outlining some of the inherent challenges that exist within determining common ideologies of secularism. As described in Chapter Two, Selby defines secularism by its Christian roots and problematizes its origins as they are often erroneously described as neutral (Selby 2012a, 71). Secularism has traditionally been understood as a political and legal separation between the state and religion, more specifically Christianity in Western contexts (Taylor 2011, 3). This understanding of secularism is charted by Selby as stemming from Christian roots, with reference to the writings of Augustine de Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Carl Schmitt (Selby 2012a, 73).

In Selby's ethnography, she examines the use of *laïcité* in France and its application in Republican France as a guarantor of agency and areligiosity (Selby 2012a, 83). Selby's work highlights the overt Christian influences of French secularism and also provides an historical and contextual backdrop for Modood's ideas on secularism and multiculturalism. Although Canada does not have any official policies or laws delineating secularism, there are still contextual ties to secularism that arise out of the historical

Christian influences (Beaman 2008). I argue here, in relation to the data examined for this thesis, there exists a false notion of secularism within Canada that is often bolstered in challenges of accommodation and tolerance, such as the religiously-based family law arbitration debate in Ontario in 2003 or Quebec's Bouchard Taylor Commission in 2008. I now exemplify these false notions of secularism through two newspaper articles, which reference ambiguous notions of Canadian secularism. They highlight the way in which Canadian secularism is often assumed within media sources, which I suggest reflects a broader trend that has informed Canadian multiculturalism policies. These newspaper articles reflect this false notion of Canadian secularism, which often ignores its Christian character. I chose these newspaper articles to highlight this idea as they both refer to "secular Canada" and are recent. They are not meant to be statistically representative.¹⁰

The first article comes from the daily *Victoria Times Colonist* printed on February 7th, 2007. Columnist Juliet O'Neill describes Stéphane Dion and Stephen Harper's reactions to the 2007 Hérouxville Code of Conduct. Hérouxville is a small rural town in central Quebec with a population of 1,338 (Beaman 2008, 1). In January 2007 the town council shared a code of conduct that banned stoning women to death and the covering of women's faces, among other actions, all of which were subtly aimed at minority religions, specifically Muslims and Hindus. Outcry at this proclamation eventually led to the Bouchard Taylor Commission (2008). Both Dion and Harper, in reaction to this event, commented on the secular values of Canada, while also referring to Canadian multiculturalism. Dion is reported as saying "minorities sometimes must be told

¹⁰ These articles were chosen by searching for key words from local Canadian papers' search engines and are opinion or journalist pieces that express assumed notions of secular Canada.

we live in a secular world” (Times Colonist 2007). Harper remarked on Canada’s “enviable record of integrating newcomers [...] by embracing diversity, while at the same time insisting upon equal treatment of all men and women” (Times Colonist 2007). In response to the Hérouxville code of conduct, both politicians focused on multiculturalism, diversity and secularism as pillars of Canadian identity.

The second article is from the *Ottawa Citizen* printed on September 3, 2004. It is an opinion piece reacting to the Family Law Arbitration debate in Ontario. The author, James McNulty, argues that Canadian law must be secular. He states, “Canada when it comes to government and the courts, is properly a secular nation” (Ottawa Citizen 2004). The author goes on to argue that in order to maintain multiculturalism, secularism is essential. Both of these articles highlight the mainstream discourse of secularism that is often referred to in Canadian media sources and by Canadian citizens. This secularism discourse is often assumed to be a part of Canadian politics and society and I suggest this creates a false understanding of what it means to be secular, with no recognition of the Canadian Christian influenced context.

Finally, I draw upon an example from Newfoundland and Labrador. As discussed in the introductory chapter, Newfoundland and Labrador had the last completely denominational school system in Canada, with the exception of publicly funded Catholic schools in Ontario. This meant that until 1997, various Christian denominations ran all the educational institutions of the province (Cadigan 2009). On the CBC radio program *This Morning* on July 2, 1997, host Avril Benoit announced and discussed the referendum vote to remove the denominational school system in Newfoundland. I chose this media

piece to highlight the government's reaction and support for the referendum decision, that again highlights the desire for a "modern secular" province. The description of the referendum vote was framed as a decision to become secular, to be in favour of secularism (CBC Radio 1997). Then-Premier Brian Tobin stated in response that, "the old system was losing value with the coming millennium and within a modern society and age it was time to move forward" (CBC Radio 1997). His statement and those of others, who called in to the show to share their opinion, underscores the way the referendum decision was framed as a step forward into modernity. The referendum decision was influenced by other factors that should not be ignored, such as a desire for consistent education throughout the province and the reality of public funding of religious organizations. However, this example can be situated in relation to the work of Casanova and Selby by highlighting the assumptions and privileges that notions of secularism create. Specifically, Tobin's use of "modernity" as justification for the secular system to be put in place, as well as a desire to get with the times, speak to the work of Casanova as well as Pellegrini and Jakobsen, who will be explored later in this section, all of whom explore the relationship between the notion of modernity and secularism.

The above three examples, all from Canadian media sources, show notions of secularism that exist within common Canadian discourse. Notably, all three news pieces refer to secularism as though it legally exists in Canada, even though it does not. Even more important to my argument here, the articles refer to secularism as safeguarding Canadian multiculturalism and as thus essential to Canada. This idea relates back to Selby's discussion on the perceived neutral character of secularism as damaging. Based

on my research, I suggest that the perceived notions of Canadian secularism impede an equal recognition of the religious needs of religious minorities, in this case Muslims, to those of Christians when it comes to receiving holiday time off. This complicated and misunderstood understanding of secularism in Canada thus impedes discussions and considerations of religious minorities within the framework of multiculturalism. I suggest that this contributes to Muslim participants in St. John's challenges in receiving religious holidays off from work and school.

4.4 Alternative Theories on Equality

This section examines secularism further so as to examine some of the complexities and challenges of equality and multiculturalism in relation to secularism. Firstly, I explore the work of Tariq Modood (2007, 2009) on secularism, multiculturalism and equality, and relate this to the experiences of participants. Secondly, I examine Lori Beaman's notion of deep equality as it pertains to my argument on the implicit Christian structures that exist within concepts of multiculturalism. To conclude, I argue that both Modood and Beaman's theories on equality could help to better address the comprehensive issues that remain within concrete articulations of multiculturalism in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Tariq Modood examines the challenges of secularism for multiculturalism in *Multiculturalism* (2007). Modood argues that the liberalism born out of multiculturalism creates divides between what are considered public and private identities. This binary is problematic and contradictory as multiculturalism encourages difference, but liberalism

wants citizens to be blind to difference, or at the very least to opt to ignore identity differences. As a result, identity differences such as religion are categorized as private matters and not suitable for the public domain (Modood 2007, 70). Modood argues that this happens increasingly with religion, as opposed to sexuality and race. Notions and ideologies of secularism are used to defend against recognizing religious minorities' identities. Religion is then ignored in relation to multiculturalism as it is seen as an optional aspect of one's identity (Modood 2007, 71).

Beaman similarly argues this idea in her work on deep equality. She states, "religious believers are understood as outside of reason and naturally unreasonable" (Beaman 2012b, 211). Modood and Beaman point out that religious minorities are often treated with less respect as they are assumed to be brainwashed or irrational due to references to their religious beliefs. Beaman's book *Defining Harm; Religious Freedom and the Limits of the Law* (2008) explores the challenges and treatment of religious citizens within the legal system in Canada. As a consequence, ideologies of secularism continue to push forward agendas that are ignorant of the needs of religious practitioners, particularly those who are not a part of the majority religion, in this case Muslims. Secularism, Modood argues, needs to be taken seriously in order to understand the ramifications and biases that exist within related frameworks, especially in the name of equality and multiculturalism. As I have argued, this is a prominent challenge within the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) and is reflected by participants' experiences as narrated in the interviews conducted.

Modood (2009) argues that the erosion of the distinction between public and private spheres, which comes out of Western liberal secular thought, would enable a

better version of equality. This version of equality has three demands: Firstly, he calls for no religious discrimination. For example, someone should not be discriminated against due to his or her religious beliefs or dress. Secondly, he shows the necessity of “even handedness in relation to religions,” which means religious minorities should get at least some of the same social and in some cases financial support that longer-established religions do (Modood 2009, 170). Lastly, “positive inclusion of religious groups,” more specifically religious identity, should be a category by which the inclusiveness of social institutions is judged (Modood 2009, 172). For examples of locations of this suggestion would be found in employer hiring practices, as well as workplace accommodations more generally. These three demands are rooted in versions of equality coming out of classical liberal responses to difference, as well as identity politics. Identity politics come from sociology and humanities work, which focus on social identity challenges, movements and experiences of social groups that are considered marginalized in some way or another (Bernstein 2005). More specifically, identity politics have been characterized based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, but have often failed to include religious identities. Modood argues that all of these factors are essential to multiculturalism. Although many point to the downfalls of liberal citizenship in the name of multiculturalism and identity politics, Modood does not suggest that liberal citizenship be completely erased or that existing systems be demolished. Rather, he argues that simple renovations and improvements are needed. At the same time, Modood’s notion of equality does have some implications for liberal citizenship. Most importantly it breaches the liberal public-private identity distinction and recognizes all identities, rather than being blind to some and privileging others. Central to this response is the negotiating of secularism, which

relates back to the scholarship explored earlier in this chapter (Casanova 2008, Selby 2012a).

Again secularism is argued by Modood as being at the heart of challenges facing liberal multiculturalism. He describes how secularism, or the distinction between public and private spheres, is something that is up for interpretation by each individual. For example, the line drawn between private and public is quite different for each of us, regardless of our religious identities. Not all Muslims or Christians would necessarily agree on the placement of this line. In this way he argues that everyone can subscribe to secularism in some way, but that it becomes problematic when we try to agree on the boundaries between public and private spheres (Modood 2009). In response to this challenge Modood suggests that the “appropriate response is pluralistic institutional integration, rather than an appeal to radical public-private separation in the name of secularism” (Modood 2009, 180).

Modood calls for “multicultural equality,” which he characterizes through three main points. First, equality must be reconceptualised from sameness to an incorporation of a respect for difference. Second, secularism needs to be reframed from “concepts of neutrality and the strict public-private divide to a moderate and evolutionary secularism based on institutional adjustments” (Modood 2009, 180). In other words, he is suggesting that secularism as a concept needs to become more fluid and flexible, moving away from the traditional understanding of secularism as public versus private. In essence this would encourage social institutions to make adjustments based on a common secularism, that works outside of the strict mould of the public-private divide. Thirdly, a pragmatic negotiations approach should be employed for dealing with conflict, rather than relying

upon strict ideological methods. This approach of multicultural equality calls for institutional changes that would incorporate Islam and other religious minority groups. As a result of institutionally incorporating minority groups, specifically Muslims, their experiences of equality would be increased through engagement with multiculturalism, due to the changed context. More specifically, I argue that Christianity has been buttressed by secularism and made a part of the implicit structure of multiculturalism, which prevents Muslim participants in St. John's that I interviewed from receiving equal treatment regardless of the overarching goals of the provincial Multiculturalism Policy (2008). The next section, which considers Lori Beaman's notion of deep equality, suggests that an acknowledgement of context is central to creating real time conditions to mobilize these ideas. I propose that through combining her and Modood's concepts of equality that highlight the importance and challenges of context, the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) would be more successful in delivering its goal of equality for all, therein making the province more welcoming to non-Christian minorities.

Lori Beaman describes deep equality against the backdrop of reasonable accommodation and tolerance, which she argues are concepts that only continue to perpetuate binaries such as 'us' and 'them' (Beaman 2012b, 208). This binary is exemplified within participants' narratives that compare their desire for religious holidays off from work and school with Christian holidays that are already legally granted. The privilege that Christian holidays 'naturally' receive can be understood as further perpetuating 'us' and 'them' dichotomies. With this observation, Beaman coins the idea of deep equality as the appropriate approach to use within a diverse multicultural context.

Deep equality requires moving beyond the law and considering an ethic that is inclusive of everyday life challenges, like granting holidays to all religious minorities (Beaman 2012b, 213). Beaman suggests that, properly defined, multiculturalism can act as a vehicle for achieving this deep equality.

In addition, central to achieving deep equality is an understanding and an evaluation of the existing barriers and structures within a particular context. In the case of the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy it means recognizing the implicit Christian social structures that exist, as many of my participants have done. Having an understanding of the ways in which Christianity has historically and is currently favoured socially and politically within the province would allow for an acknowledgement of the needs of religious minorities living in the province. Furthermore, Beaman touches on the challenge that the perceived secularism of Canada creates for deep equality:

As courts struggle to make sense of religious practices that do not fit within Christianity, they often employ the cultural toolkit that is created in the social context of a notion that has been built as a Christian nation. Simply renaming the state and society as secular does not make it so (Beaman 2012b, 217).

Acknowledging the implicit and sometimes explicit role of Christianity in Newfoundland and Labrador culture and in its government services and policies is essential to achieving deep equality, whether it is in court cases that are dealing with issues of tolerance or reasonable accommodation, or in this case granting holiday time for religious minorities. Incorporating deep equality into the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) would create a more productive version of equality that would better serve the needs of religious minorities, by creating an awareness of the implicit Christian social structures and granting them social space for a variety of religious celebrations.

4.5 Secular Economy

Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2008), Bannerji (2000), Fish (1997), and Beaman (2012c) show how Christianity is implicitly subsumed under culture and capitalist economies. Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini (2008) speak directly to economic connections. They argue that in the contemporary U.S. secularism is a “dominant market-based incarnation of Protestantism” (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008, 3). This point relates back to Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), where he observes that religious freedom and the freedom of the market were inherently related to reformed Protestantism. Jakobsen and Pellegrini reference Weber’s work on rationalization where he suggested that the “economic sphere would rationalize through the organization of commercial practices by means of technical rules calculated to produce profits by the use of rational accounting methods and by control and regulation of the workday” (cited in Morrison 2006, 280).

Jakobsen and Pellegrini seek to undo the traditional binary of religion and the secular, which fails to see the intricacies of religion, which are often neutrally subsumed within secularism. Referencing their characterization of secularism, one can see that the contemporary North American economy falls into the category of secular, especially when we consider the economic character of holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Valentine’s Day and even St. Patrick’s day. Regardless of religion itself, the economy celebrates these Christian holidays through marketing and sales of various themed gifts, foods, etc.

Bannerji also speaks to the economic character of Canadian multiculturalism. Although her work does not focus on the influence of mainstream Christianity on the economy directly, she speaks to the economic nature of multiculturalism in Canada. Bannerji calls attention to the entry of Canadian multiculturalism in the 60s and 70s by then-Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau as inherently tied to the economy (Bannerji 2000, 30). Multiculturalism's more open door policy on immigration, Bannerji argues, was influenced by the prediction of large capitalist industrial growth to come. Recall Alina's comments on the cultural economic showcasing of Christian holidays. In the public sphere, Christianity is thus mobilized in economic terms, rather than religious ones, which then protects it from the discourses of secularization.

Multicultural fairs and festivals put on by the government often place a focus on the commodities of multiculturalism, such as food and crafts. Bannerji speaks to the commodification of diversity discourse. She points to the way that since the 1990s the term 'diversity' has become commonplace within business, academic and government sectors (Bannerji 2000, 35). As a result, diversity has become a power-enshrined term, which inscribes power relations. In other words, through the use of diversity discourse in multiculturalism, government bodies push economic agendas forward. The commodification of Christianity through economic means continues to support implicit Christian structures that exist within the Canadian context. Cultural economic space is created through the use of diversity discourse for religious-cultural minorities within the policy, as well as through government-funded diversity celebrations.

An example of the economic character of the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy is clear in a recent news release from the provincial government

regarding an annual weeklong multicultural celebration. On March 19, 2013, Joan Shea, the Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of Advanced Education and Awareness, made an announcement in the provincial legislature regarding Multiculturalism Week, which ran from March 18th to the 24th, making it the 14th annual celebration. In this announcement Shea refers to the economic needs of the province as a reason for supporting the week's events. She states:

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador is facing very real challenges related to our population and demographics in the coming years. In fact by 2020 we will need 70,000 skilled people to ensure we can take maximum advantage of the economic opportunities before us. Through our recently announced Population Growth Strategy, we will build on the work of the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism and keep attracting new Canadians as part of our plan to address these challenges (Newfoundland and Labrador Government Press Release, 2013).

This statement vividly characterizes the economic concerns behind fostering the multiculturalism policy. Newfoundland and Labrador's demographic and economic conditions are outlined as needing support from immigrant populations and thus call for supporting the provincial Multiculturalism Policy (2008).

Alina speaks even more closely to the commodification of Christianity when she describes what she believes to be the difference between public expressions of religiosity for Christianity compared to Islam:

A: So when, for instance non...people from non-Muslim background [sic] are also willing to express their religiosity in the public sphere, they're expected to do the same. So like Christians, you know? They're like "you can express you religiosity?" We are allowed to, we are allowed to express our religiosity in the public sphere only if you use it to express more uh cultural, more secular aspects of our religion.

I: Mhmm.

A: Um such as exotic food or dancing and what, you know, you name it. So I believe the Canadian multiculturalism rests very much on such secular and market oriented uh understanding of religious expression in the public sphere.

Uh the problem is is Islam by definition and by practice it's uh, has a rather different understanding of religious expression in the public sphere. Religious expression. Because there is no strict divide.

Alina highlights the economic character of multiculturalism through what she describes as a “market-oriented” religious expression. Her narrative takes the discussion back to the implicit Christian character of multiculturalism, which we can also see as inherent to the economy and masked under seemingly neutral understandings of secularism.

Stanley Fish's article, “Boutique Multiculturalism, or Why Liberals Are Incapable of Thinking about Hate Speech” (1996), captures the economic and cultural showcasing that occurs through what he calls *boutique multiculturalism*. Boutique multiculturalism, according to Fish, is the multiculturalism that is experienced through ethnic fairs, restaurants and weekend festivals (Fish 1996, 378). It recognizes other cultures and religions, but falls short of “recognizing the legitimacy” of them (Fish 1996, 378). For example the majority culture, in this case Western Christian culture, creates boundaries of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable for minorities or other cultures to publically share and do within the greater culture (Bramadat 2001). It fails to take seriously the core values of the other culture or religion, and stops short in fully recognizing the validity of others' identity choices (Fish 1996, 380). Fish goes on to argue that strong multiculturalism, compared to boutique multiculturalism, is a more suitable version to employ. Strong multiculturalism references Charles Taylor's “politics of difference” (1992), which I briefly discussed in Chapter Two. Fish's notion of boutique multiculturalism is applicable to Alina's narrative, particularly where she expresses that exotic foods and dancing are acceptable within the public sphere, but there is a line drawn

when it comes to religious expression. Her narrative and Fish's conception of boutique multiculturalism speak to the superficial capitalistic expressions of multiculturalism. These superficial expressions of multiculturalism that place emphasis on the cultural showcasing of religions and cultures is a problem within the Newfoundland and Labrador case, as expressed by Alina, but also through examples of government initiatives that are focused on fairs, festivals and the economy, rather than lived human identity and equal opportunity.

Returning to Beaman's article, "Battles Over Symbols; The "Religion" of the Minority versus the "Culture" of the Majority" (2012), which examines the 2011 Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights decision about the Italian crucifix case and the Quebec legislature decision about religious symbols following the 2008 Bouchard Taylor Commission Report, we can see how the presence of Christian crucifixes in public spaces are justified through government and court decisions as representing cultural symbols that are symbolic of so-called heritage. Here the specifics of each case are not relevant. However, what is useful for this discussion is Beaman's exploration of the religious symbols of the majority as defined as culture and religious symbols of the minority as religious, and therefore a threat to secularism.

Beaman examines how in both contexts the cases argued that Christian religious symbols are cultural symbols that need to be protected out of respect for the "heritage" of the socio-political landscape (Beaman 2012c). She argues that the transformation of a religious symbol to a cultural symbol allows for the preservation of a Christian majority hegemonic power (Beaman 2012c, 68). Furthermore, this cultural understanding of

Christianity implies universal agreement on the religious values of such symbols. Beaman points out that two things have happened:

Religious minorities and the non-religious have sought to enforce their rights. First, there has been pressure to secularize or to remove religion from the public sphere. Second, there has been an increase in religious diversity that has made existing religious hegemony more obvious (Beaman 2012c, 78).

In closing, Beaman points to how minority religious groups have tried to use culture in the same way that Christians have in the cases in Italy and in Quebec. However, minority religious groups seem to be stopped short of holding the power to construct and control the symbolic meanings of their religion in the way that Christianity or majority religions can (Beaman 2012c, 102). This intertwining of culture and religion has proven to be less successful, as Beaman stresses, in cases dealing with the wearing of religious symbols such as the burqa, hijab or turban. More specifically, if a hijab-wearing Muslim argues that it is a cultural symbol, they are no longer protected under the freedom of religion argument. Here we can see that there is a different standard for minority and majority religions, which is rooted in hegemonic power relations.

Bringing these ideas back to the participants' narratives and challenges in receiving religious holidays off, one can see that Christmas -- reflecting a Christian religious belief and set of rituals -- is often framed in common discourse in a cultural and economic way, rather than as religious, and as a result contributes to false notions of religious neutrality, as discussed in the previous section. Alina's comment on the cultural commodification of Christmas or Ifra's observation that co-workers forget that not everyone celebrates Christmas speak to the way in which Christmas has become classified as cultural, rather than as religious. However, when participants need or request

time off for their religious holidays, namely for Eid, it is often not equally granted like Christian holidays, nor are their requests given significance as culturally- relevant days. This blending and intertwining of the religious and cultural within traditionally Christian societies impedes equality within multiculturalism. The Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) needs to be further developed to address comprehensive issues such as granting religious holidays off to religious minorities in a manner that is equal for all.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

My research began with a desire to critically assess participants' everyday lived experiences following the introduction of the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008). In collaboration with participants' experiences in which many expressed feelings of inequality compared to the majority, who primarily (more than 90%) belong to mainstream Christian denominations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. I initially hypothesized that given that the policy did not include a nuanced understanding of religion it would not be meaningful within the lives of religious minorities living in the province and therefore would fail to deliver its policy objectives. However, following analysis of 37 interviews with Muslims in the city of St. John's, I came to realize that my initial hypothesis did not reflect my participants' experiences. As a result, in this thesis I have argued that although the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Multiculturalism Policy (2008) addresses broader issues such as outlining general policy objectives that call for equality, culture sharing, etc., comprehensive issues remain that could be better addressed by the province through an enhancement of social practices that, for one, could extend religious holidays to all religious groups, majority or minorities. I therefore conclude that the existing Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy and programs could be further developed to address the needs of religious minorities, most tangibly through facilitating knowledge around religious holidays (the two Eid festivals) within the province. Along with this brief review of the findings of the research, this conclusion addresses possible limitations, future questions and the potential significance of the research findings.

5.1 Initial Hypothesis Revisited

I initially hypothesized that, due to the lasting effects of the late abolishment of the denominational school system in 1997 and the demographic prevalence of mainstream Christianity, the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) failed to incorporate notions of religion in an effort to address the rights of religious minorities within its policy objectives. Through analysis of local Muslims' lived experiences it became evident that the policy failed to facilitate equal access to religious holidays for religious minorities, due to existing contextual structures, which privilege Christianity. As I described in Chapter Four, this point is reflected through the experiences of Muslims living in St. John's who faced challenges in receiving time off to celebrate their religious holidays, twice a year, as well as for prayer times, recalling Mandisa's narrative in Chapter Four, where he explained that his celebration of Eid had changed since moving to NL due to work commitments. Many of the participants in this study expressed that their desire for time off for religious holidays was rooted in the normative cultural granting of Christian holidays. Elements that bolster this situation such as equality, the economy, cultural normative Christianity and secularism were explored in Chapter Four. They spoke directly to the experiences of Muslims living in St. John's and as I argued in the findings, such themes highlight some of the comprehensive issues that the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) fails to consider.

5.2 Future Research

This research project was the first study of its kind to examine the real-time implications of the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) in terms of religion, with previous focus groups being held by the government, which did not fully address the needs of religious minorities. Furthermore, as described in Chapter One, the initial focus groups spearheaded by the Newfoundland and Labrador Government did not explicitly ask questions about religious minorities' experiences of their everyday lives and rather more generally asked questions mainly focused on multiculturalism. The majority of the findings from the NL Government's focus groups suggested creating more public awareness through "cultural sharing". More specifically, the focus groups summarized that there was large support for the Multiculturalism Policy in the province, and that further initiatives such as education for greater public awareness about multiculturalism would enhance the policy (NL Human Resources 2009), without providing any concrete plans.

Although there have been previous studies in St. John's that have sought to specifically understand the experiences of Muslims, as well as the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) (Akter 2009, NL Human Resources 2009, Downie 2012), this research and the greater project is rooted in one of the most extensive research projects to date. As I described in Chapter One, there has also been a limited amount of qualitative studies on multiculturalism in Canada (Nayar 2012). Only recently

has there been a number of larger-scale studies completed throughout Canada, which examine similar themes (see Beyer and Ramji 2013, Bramadat and Seljak 2005). As a result, there is a great deal of future research that could be done to further examine multiculturalism policies in relation to lived experiences within the Atlantic provinces, as well as Canada as a whole.

Future research could examine other religious minorities' experiences living in Newfoundland and Labrador in relation to the Multiculturalism Policy. More specifically, an additional study could seek to compare other Newfoundland and Labrador religious minorities' experiences of receiving religious holidays off. This research would help to create a broader picture of all religious minorities' experiences with receiving religious holidays off, and potentially highlight some crucial differences. Furthermore, a comparative study could be completed in other smaller Canadian provinces such as Prince Edward Island or New Brunswick, in order to further compare the findings related to multiculturalism from this research. Similar research in other provinces may produce slightly different or similar findings, which would shed more light onto the findings and experiences as explored in this research. Overall, since this research is the first of its kind there are many possibilities for future studies in order to test my findings.

5.3 Significance

Based on my analysis in Chapter Four of participants' challenges in receiving two religious holidays off from work and school as a way to shed light on some of the existing comprehensive challenges of multiculturalism in NL, I now offer more concrete policy

and program alternatives, which could address some of the challenges presented by my interlocutors.

First, Chapter Four highlighted some participants' experiences and narratives regarding religious equality. In order to explore participants' narratives on equality and religion, the work of Lori Beaman (2008, 2011, 2012a,b,c) and Tariq Modood (2007, 2008, 2009) were referenced. Their theories offered an understanding into the challenges that can exist within existing social structures for minority religious groups. For example, both Modood and Beaman highlighted the way these existing structures continue to serve the majority and consequently challenge and repress minority groups. This notion was also explored through examination of Jennifer Selby (2012) and José Casanova's (2011) work on secularism. Together, referencing the work of these scholars and participants' experiences it is clear that there needs to be a reexamination of existing social structures, which privilege mainstream Christianity. This research highlighted the need for these existing privileging structures to be recognized within the existing provincial policy and programs, and, ideally, within Newfoundland and Labrador society as a whole. This research in many ways suggested that multiculturalism within Newfoundland and Labrador would be better at addressing the everyday needs of religious minorities' if the existing privileges of the majority religion, specifically Christianity, were more publically recognized. Recognizing majority privileges would be a first step in assuring fair and equitable social programs and policies. The findings of this research signifies that there are existing challenges faced by minority religions within Newfoundland and Labrador that are currently not being adequately addressed through the existing version of multiculturalism.

Secondly, the existing Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008) could better address the experiences of religious minorities within the province through a greater consideration of the category of religion within the policy. The current policy too briefly mentions religion and does not explicitly mention any programs or policy objectives, with exception to Multiculturalism Week hosted annually by the Newfoundland and Labrador Government. However, as discussed in Chapter Four, referencing the work of Pellegrini and Jacobsen (2008), Bannerji (2000) and Fish (1997), there are challenges and issues with these week-long cultural showcases that set strict boundaries of what defines culture and more specifically religion.

Lastly, the existing policy is built upon an existing and widespread false notion of secularism within Canada. This false sense of neutrality, as argued in the previous chapter and section privileges Christianity, while providing unfair and unclear expectations, such as receiving religious holidays off from work and school, of the role of religion within Canadian society. This research points to the lived challenge of secularism and multiculturalism and demonstrates an overall weakness of multiculturalism within Newfoundland and Labrador. Multiculturalism policies in Canada, in this regard, are arguably set up to fail or at least be disappointing to religious minorities as they are set on a false and wavering foundations of “secularism.” This wavering notion of secularism, which sometimes understands some Christian religions as “culture” and other minority religions as “religion” or simply accepts the status quo, establishes an unstable and unequal sense of multiculturalism. Acknowledging and addressing Christian normativity could begin to develop a comprehensive version of multiculturalism that could touch the quotidian experiences of religious minorities.

Conclusion

Overall, this research has shed light on the experiences of Muslims living in St. John's and whether these are reflected and bolstered by the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Policy (2008). My findings illustrate that there remain comprehensive issues and challenges that exist with the existing multiculturalism policy, as reflected by participants' challenges in receiving equal access to religious holidays. This research has emphasized some of the existing challenges to the policy and programs such as ambiguous understandings of neutral secularism through examples from the experiences of Muslims living in the capital city. In closing, suggestions for improving the existing policy were outlined, such as more clearly spelling out the religious holidays of religious minorities, which could enhance the multicultural landscape and lived experiences of all people within Newfoundland and Labrador.

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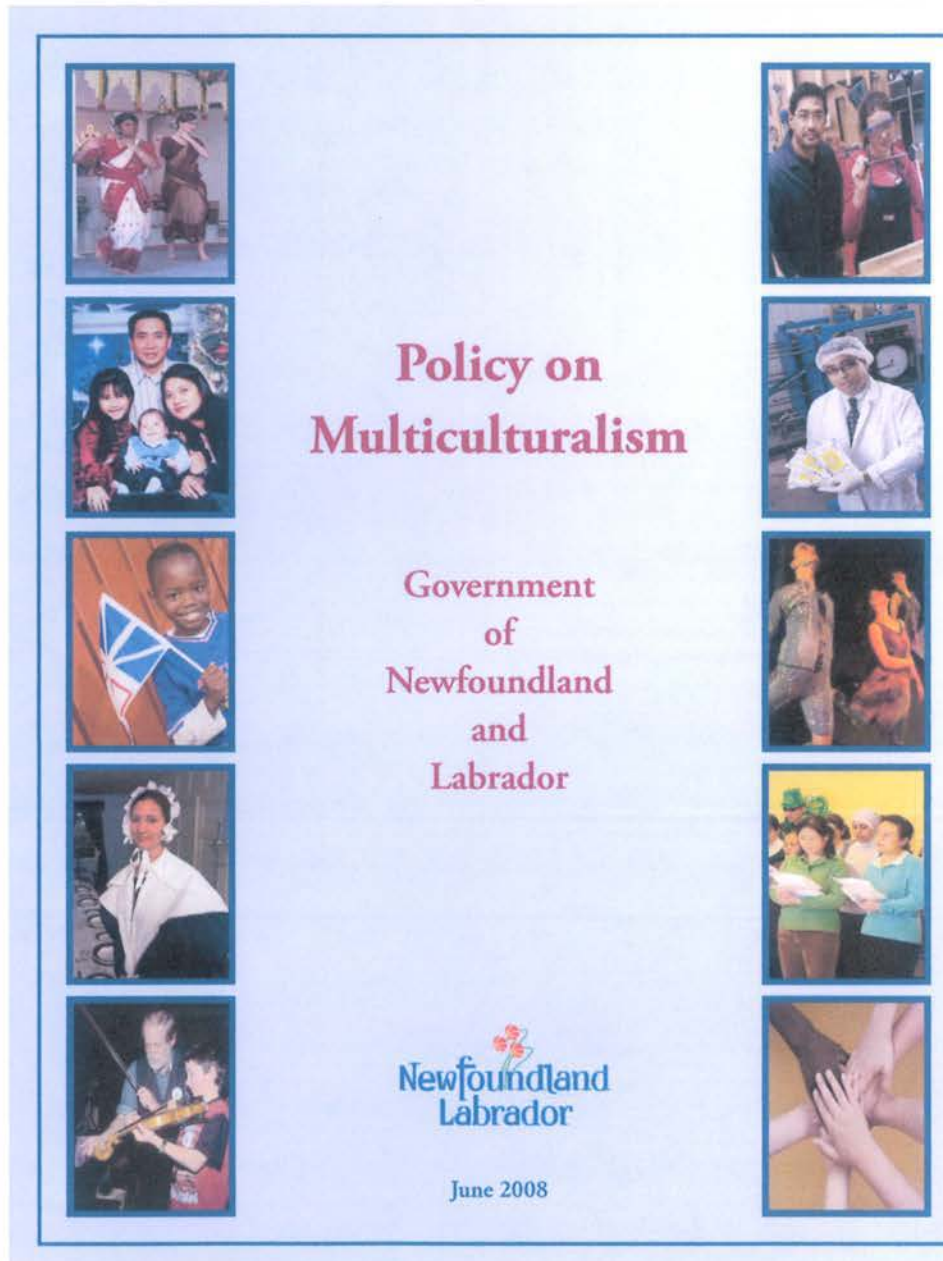
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Appendix A





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE), I am pleased to present the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Policy on Multiculturalism.

Government recognizes that diversity through increased immigration strengthens the social and economic life of the province and contributes to a prosperous future for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. In March 2007, the Provincial Government launched the provincial immigration strategy *Diversity - Opportunity and Growth*. The new Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism is overseeing the implementation of the \$6 million strategy. The strategy strongly recognizes the importance of multicultural communities throughout the province.

In implementing the policy on multiculturalism, the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism will partner with community groups and agencies and other government departments to promote active and inclusive citizenship that respects the rights and responsibilities of all. The new policy encourages residents of the province to welcome newcomers into our communities. It serves to support people from diverse cultural backgrounds who make Newfoundland and Labrador their new permanent home. It celebrates the cultural mosaic of Newfoundland and Labrador and recognizes the collective contribution being made to grow the province. It also promotes cross-cultural understanding and highlights the importance of public awareness and education regarding the benefits of a diverse and vibrant population.

I encourage everyone to support multicultural initiatives in their community, to share cross-cultural experiences and to foster partnerships that increase understanding and knowledge of one another. By celebrating diversity, we increase respect for all cultures; this enriches Newfoundland and Labrador society and the quality of life enjoyed by all citizens.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Shawn Skinner'.

Shawn Skinner
Minister

Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, Dept. of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NL A1B 4J6; Tel: 709.729.6607; Fax: 709.729.7381

VISION

Newfoundland and Labrador is a dynamic and vibrant Province, with welcoming communities where the cultural diversity of all its residents is valued and enhanced in the spirit of inclusiveness and harmony, to collectively build a self-reliant, prosperous Province.

PREAMBLE

The Policy on Multiculturalism for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is based on the following international, national and provincial commitments:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- The International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights;
- International conventions to promote racial and cultural equality such as the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- The Canadian Multiculturalism Act;
- The Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Code; and
- The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Multicultural Education Policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to the promotion of multiculturalism and cross-cultural understanding where the cultural diversity of all people is valued, supported and enhanced to collectively build a self-reliant, prosperous Province.

As a result, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to a holistic approach to:

- ensure that relevant policies and procedures of provincial programs and practices reflect, and consider the changing needs of all cultural groups;
- lead in developing, sustaining and enhancing programs and services based on equality for all, notwithstanding racial, religious, ethnic, national and social origin;
- provide government workplaces that are free of discrimination and that promote equality of opportunity for all persons accessing employment positions within the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- support multicultural initiatives by enhancing partnerships with culturally-diverse communities and provincial departments and agencies;
- encourage community based programs to foster two-way cross-cultural sharing, mutual respect, and citizenship values, as well as promote attitudes and perceptions that lead to cultural inclusiveness and harmony;
- highlight through public awareness and education, the importance of diverse cultures in our province, and facilitate life long learning that prepares individuals, especially youths to live and work in a multicultural society.

These commitments govern interaction among all cultural communities, including the Aboriginal peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador, through promotion of the following policy principles.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Culture, as a way of life, is dynamic, learned, and ever changing. The Newfoundland and Labrador Policy on Multiculturalism is based on the following principles:

Respect: There must be mutual understanding and respect for all cultures and appreciation of the way in which these cultural values are reflected in institutions and in everyday interactions both within and among all cultural groups.

Equality: Equality of opportunity for all, notwithstanding racial, religious, ethnic, or cultural origin is a fundamental precondition to full participation in society. It embodies rights and responsibilities of all, including people of diverse cultures. This means a commitment to a society where racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural minorities may live without fear of exploitation or discrimination and where all, irrespective of their racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural background, are encouraged and supported to participate in Newfoundland and Labrador's society.

Collaboration: Cross-cultural understanding, sharing and learning from each other assists to honour all cultural heritages while recognizing individual and group identity. Awareness and respect for all cultures helps to establish a base for a collaborative society with full and equal participation by all.

Inclusive Citizenship: Culturally diverse people possess a wealth and variety of human talents and experience with great potential to contribute to the economic and social development of the Province. The Province in partnership with community groups will facilitate access to services, to employment and to social and government institutions, so that everyone, irrespective of their cultural and ethnic background, can experience equal opportunity to contribute and actively participate in building a self-reliant, prosperous Province.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

To be developed in collaboration with various provincial departments and agencies, and in keeping with the general tenets of this policy and principles. Projects supported by the policy could include:

- Community development projects to foster cross-cultural understanding.
- Civic participation and ethno-cultural/ educational programs for youths to combat racism and discrimination and promote respect, collaboration and integration.
- Nurturing "Welcoming Communities" to make newcomers feel at 'home' and promote integration by actively participating in culturally inclusive community/social activities.
- Cultural Sensitivity professional development workshops for community workers (e.g. educators, law enforcement officers, health care/community service workers) to effectively serve youths, adults, women and senior members of diverse cultures.
- Acquisitions/Development and dissemination of multicultural resources (e.g., print, electronic, website) to support urban and rural communities.
- Development of targeted provincial government programs to serve diverse cultural groups in areas such as, entrepreneurship, employment, housing, health, education, women's and youth issues and legal services.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy is based on the review of existing policies on multiculturalism implemented across Canada and includes elements of the policies from the three Atlantic Provinces. We would like to thank members of Association for New Canadians, Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Association, Newfoundland and Labrador Multicultural Council Inc., Canadian Race Relations Foundation, The Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development and the Canadian Heritage for their assistance in developing this policy.

TO CONTACT US

If you're available for an interview, please contact one of us by e-mail!

Or, if you have any other questions or concerns you can contact us through our personal e-mails:

Caitlin Downie- cdown083@uottawa.ca

Jennifer Williams-will8980@gmail.com

Lori Beaman-lbeaman@uottawa.ca

Jennifer Selby- jselby@mun.ca

Or by phone:

864-4046 (Jennifer Selby's office)

BROADER SIGNIFICANCE

This project contributes to the broader understanding of the everyday experiences of religion. Although case law can offer some insights into the ways in which people negotiate religious diversity in everyday life by revealing the steps taken to reach agreement or, in popular language, accommodation, we know very little about the myriad ways that people experience those negotiations in the course of everyday life. We will also make policy suggestions to the provincial government.

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

If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at (709-864-2861).

Religion in the Everyday: Negotiating Islam in St. John's, NL

INVESTIGATORS:

DR. LORI BEAMAN

DR. JENNIFER SELBY



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university



Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This research program asks about how religious practices and beliefs are negotiated in the everyday lives of self-defined Muslims in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. We will ask informants about their experiences of negotiation and accommodation at home, at work, with public institutions and in the public sphere more generally.

We will ask about how you experience negotiations around religious beliefs and practices in the course of everyday life. Do you feel you are an equal player in a "bargaining" process? Have you experienced satisfactory resolution of your requests for 'accommodation'? How do you frame those requests? Do you reference, either implicitly or explicitly, models of equality?

Participants in this project will have the opportunity to discuss their political and religious experiences and struggles in St. John's.

YOUR ROLE

You can contribute to this study by giving 40-60 minutes of your time to answer some questions about your life story, your own or your family's everyday life experiences in St. John's, how and whether you practice Islam, and your thoughts on the integration of Muslims in the city.

The interview we will conduct will be open-ended with a few common set questions. The time and location of this conversation can be scheduled for your convenience.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This project will observe strict rules of confidentiality. Records of observations and conversations will be kept private and used for research purposes only.

Should you feel any discomfort in answering questions, you may refuse to answer any particular question or withdraw from the study altogether. Participants will not be paid to participate in the study.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

Dr. Lori G. Beaman is a Professor in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa. She is the Canada Research Chair in the Contextualization of Religion in a Diverse Canada and the Principal Investigator in a Major Collaborative Research Initiative on Religion and Diversity (see <http://religionanddiversity.ca/>).

Dr. Jennifer A. Selby is an Assistant Professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Her research focuses on contemporary Islam and secularism in France and in Canada. In 2008 she completed postdoctoral studies on Islam and public policy in Ontario at Harvard University. She joined the Department of Religious Studies at MUN in 2007 and lives downtown with her husband and daughter.

Jennifer Williams is a Religious Studies MA student at Memorial University. Her thesis research is part of this overall project.

Caitlin Downie is a Religious Studies MA Student at the University of Ottawa. Her thesis research is also a part of this project.

Appendix C

Religion in the Everyday: Negotiating Islam in St. John's, NL

1. Background information (i.e. age, education, marital status, place of birth, religious background and family history). How long in Newfoundland? In Canada? (these questions that will shift depending on respondent – we don't assume that because the interviewees are Muslim that they are immigrants). Do you have contact with friends/family/colleagues of other faiths in St. John's?
2. Do you define yourself as a practicing Muslim? Description of religious practices (pre and post-migration for first-generation immigrants; similarities and differences between parents and selves for second-generation immigrants)? [Family background.] Visible religious signs and comportment? Any shifts due to age, religious practice, migration?
3. How have you worked out your identity as a Muslim in the following situations? [Select 4-5]
 - a. At work? With colleagues?
 - b. At school?
 - c. Public school (with children)
 - d. University or college
 - e. In medical establishments?
 - f. At the mosque?
 - g. In sporting or community events?
 - h. With death (return to country of origin? Burial grounds in St. John's?)
 - i. In stores (question of *halal* foods)?
 - j. In restaurants/bars?
 - k. In the homes of non-Muslim friends and colleagues? Or Muslim friends and colleagues?
4. What have you found to be the most/least effective strategies in negotiating your identity as a religious minority?
5. What do you see as most important among your publicly visible expressions of religiosity? (i.e. which practices/beliefs are negotiable and which ones are not?)
6. Have you experienced what you would describe as negative experiences because you are a Muslim? In St. John's? In other places?
7. How does living in St. John's effect (or not) your expression of religious identity? If applicable: compared to your country of origin? Compared to other places lived in Canada/the US/Europe?
8. Have you noted any differences in discussions/responses/actions as the Muslim community has grown in St. John's in recent years? Post 9/11?
9. How well do you think the government does at treating religious groups equally? Could anything be done better? Have you ever had any reason to think that you are not welcome to participate in public life equally with non-Muslims? What is your understanding of multiculturalism? What do you see as your rights and responsibilities living here?