

The Fastest Growing Ethnocultural Community of Canada: Ethnocultural Freedom and Equality of the Canadian Muslim Minority

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Abstract

According to a report penned after September 11, 2001, Canada was the least affected country by the global surge in anti-Muslim sentiments. Given that Canada has always been portrayed as the peaceful nation of ethnic and national diversity, it will be interesting to analyze and discuss the situation of Canadian Muslims' ethnocultural freedom and equality in professing their religious identity without fear of subordination, discrimination or ethnocultural denigration in light Kymlicka's liberal theory of multicultural citizenship which argues for the just treatment of minority in form of self- government rights for national minorities and polyethnic rights for ethnic groups under the heading of multicultural citizenship rights, rather than the common rights of citizenship.

Introduction

Islam is the second largest religion after Christianity in Canada and the community is growing at a high speed. The Pew Research Center estimated the total number of Muslims in 2010 as 940,000. As of today, data from the 2011 National Household Survey retrieved from the National Post Daily indicates that Muslims constitute 3.2 percent of the total population, with a number of over one million, making Islam the fastest growing religion in Canada (National Post2013). A report from the Washington-based Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life shows that the Canadian Muslim population is expected to triple by 2030. Thus, it is predicted that Muslims will make up 6.6 percent of the total population with the estimated number of 2,661,000(Lewis 2011).

The climate became tense after September 11th and the wars in the Middle East that include Western militaries has put a spotlight on Muslims living in Canada and made their presence more apparent now than ever. Owing to global anti-Muslim bigotry, members of Canadian Islamic communities have increasingly become the target of intolerance, discrimination, harassment and assaults on the basis of religion. Those in Canada with Muslim or Arab-sounding names have been victimized by significant discrimination immediately following the events of September 11, 2001 (Hyman, Meinhard and Shields 2011). Repeatedly the Muslim community was held responsible for the inappropriate actions of a few Muslims in public discussions. A significant number of mosques has been vandalised in the days following the attacks on the World Trade Centers across Canada. For instance, the Islamic Society of British Columbia mosque became the target of acts of vandalism and mischief. In March 2011, someone spray painted offensive words on the outside wall of the mosque. 18 months later, the same mosque became the target of a hate crime when someone had left several piles of bacon outside of the mosque (The Canadian Press 2012). Moreover, Muslim women especially covering their hair in accordance to their Islamic beliefs have become victims of hate crimes in their daily lives. For instance, Inas Kadri, a mother of two and teacher, became the target of a hate crime at a local shopping mall in Mississauga, Ont. in November 2011. When Kadri was shopping with her children, two women approached her and one of them began swearing at her about her religion and her veil.

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The attacker, Rosemarie Creswell, was caught on a security camera pulling of Kadri's veil and walking away (CBC News 2011). Another similar incident took place in the Montreal metro when a woman came up to Nariman yelling about her hijab. The attacker pulled on her hijab and forcefully tried to take it off (CBC 2014). Those motivated by anti-Islam hatred have also vandalised halal food markets. It was reported, for instance, on February 14th, 2014 that a halal store in Sherbrooke, a city located in Quebec had been the target of acts of vandalism and violence several times. Abdelbari, the store's owner, said that his store's front window was shattered twice and he found bullet holes on the window one morning when opening the store. He also noted that his shop was littered with anti-Islamic signs and small crosses. Abdelbari articulated that this made him worry about his family's safety (Peritz 2014). Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (2007) was very right when he argued that multiculturalism has become a debate about the accommodation of Islam in the West.

Given that Canada has always been portrayed as the peaceful nation of ethnic and national diversity, it will be interesting to analyze and discuss the situation of Canadian Muslims' ethnocultural freedom and equality in professing their religious identity without fear of subordination, discrimination or ethnocultural denigration in light Kymlicka's liberal theory of multicultural citizenship which argues for the just treatment of minority in form of self-government rights for national minorities and polyethnic rights for ethnic groups under the heading of multicultural citizenship rights, rather than the common rights of citizenship.

Most common expectations of Muslims living in Western countries have always been the freedom to pray, eat halal and wear hijab. Canada is no exception. Overall, Canadian Muslims seem to be very concerned about such freedoms. 30 interviews with Canadian Muslim men and women supports, aged 20 to 40, support this assertion. Hence, this study discusses Canada's accommodation of Canadian Muslims' ethnocultural freedom to practice their polyethnic rights to pray, eat halal and wear hijab clothing in light of Kymlicka's liberal theory of multicultural citizenship. For any Muslim, Canada reflects a great understanding of the importance of these three polyethnic demands for Muslims and it is successful in recognizing and accommodating them so far.

Ethnocultural Justice

Ethnocultural justice is a significant principle of liberal culturalism. It defends fair and equal ethnocultural relations between majorities and minorities to reduce the vulnerability of minority groups to majority decisions. This principle marks that a system of common individual rights is not strong enough to promote and accommodate ethnocultural diversity since it promotes the values and beliefs of the majority group, for example, the choice of public holidays and national symbols; the language of public institutions and government services; and the political structure of the state. For this reason, liberal culturalists believe that group-differentiated rights are necessary to maintain and flourish ethnocultural justice throughout society. Such rights enable members of ethnocultural groups to express and flourish their distinctive identity just as members of the larger society do.

Ethnocultural justice requires that ethnocultural groups be treated with true equality, not formal equality. Whereas formal equality requires identical treatment for all individuals, true equality seeks to equip individuals that compose an ethnocultural community with a genuine equality of opportunity to enjoy their particularity in community with others. So, multicultural citizenship rights, while supplementing individual rights with collective rights, diffuse ethnocultural justice throughout society with the accommodation of ethnic, linguistic, racial or religious differences. Some commentators argue against ethnocultural justice and claim that formal equality promotes ethnocultural neutrality in majority and minority relations thereby bolstering individual liberty. This view is clearly mistaken and misplaced. As pointed out by Kymlicka (2001) formal equality, fails to accommodate beliefs, traditions, values and practices of the minority culture, focusing just on the larger society. Multi-ethnic liberal democracies should prioritize substantial equality over formal equality to enable ethnocultural groups to become full and equal citizens of the nation and to promote their communal dignity.

Modern societies are increasingly ethnically diverse, and many of them are multinational, as well. A country, which contains more than one nation, is a multinational state, and a country, which contains more than one ethnic group, is a multiethnic state. Instead of multiethnic, Kymlicka uses the term polyethnic. When people of different cultures, races, colours, nationalities or religions live together within a well-defined area, they form a polyethnic or/and a multinational society.

Whereas not all the countries in the world are multinational, almost all of them have some level of polyethnicity. The amount of ethnic pluralism varies from state to state. Canada, for instance, is both multinational and polyethnic, because it contains a French minority in the Quebec province, an Aboriginal community in several provinces and a number of ethnic communities emigrating from other parts of the world.

Milton J. Esman (2008) in his work "An Introduction to Ethnic Conflict" identifies three principal sources of ethnic diversity. The most well-known source of ethnic pluralism is conquest, which is all about subjugation of one people by other people. The result is the coexistence within a given state of more than one nation, or ethnic group as was the case with the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul that resulted in the incorporation of Christian inhabitants. Similar patterns of the incorporation of different nations or ethnic groups into a single state can be traced in virtually every country and area of the world.

A second source of ethnic pluralism, Esman (2008) mentions, is the annexation of some territories into another geo-political entity. This occurs as a consequence of union, reunification, or expansionism. Some of the expansion of the multi-ethnic empires such as the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) over the century occurred in this manner. The society the Ottoman Empire had ruled over the centuries was extremely polyethnic, and modern Turkey was established on such a polyethnic society in 1923. Esman argues that in 1532 the Breton people came under French rule through a dynastic marriage between François I. and Anne, a princess of Brittany. When Canada was established in 1867 as a Confederation, it was comprised of four provinces. Today, Canada as a federal state, through incorporation and unification, consists of ten provinces, and three territories.

A third type of ethnic pluralism, Esman (2008) identifies, is immigration that can be classified into three types. The first category is settler migrations where people have migrated from the land of their birth to establish permanent residences elsewhere and assume control of the area. This was the case for early British and French settlers in Canada, who convinced themselves that Canada was a land without people for a people seeking better opportunities. Esman (2008, 54) notes, "The settlers may persuade themselves that the territory they occupy is void of any significant population or is so sparsely settled that their presence will not disturb and even may benefit the original inhabitants".

The second category of population movements that generate ethnic pluralism is the voluntary movement of individuals or small groups (emigrants); those who leave their country of origin and are incorporated into another state. Political oppression or economic hardship within modern societies motivates individuals or small groups to leave their country of origin in pursuit of a high-standard of life in another country. This has been the experience of Muslim "guest workers" in France, and Germany, and Muslim immigrants in Canada. Employment opportunities and political freedom in the aforementioned countries act as magnets for those who are in search of improved living conditions. In those countries, immigration has become a central political issue after the tense climate of September 11, featuring prejudice and discrimination against Muslim emigrants. In addition, a large segment of the host society may not welcome emigrants, as often they blame elevated crime rates, rampant disease, cheap labor wages, and high welfare expenses on the newcomers. Esman notes (2008, 54) "Above all, they resent the prominence in their midst of exotic foreigners speaking strange languages who are believed to be poor candidates for assimilation into their nation".

The third category of population movements, Esman (2008) identifies, that generate cultural diversity is involuntary immigration. This is the mass movement of political and economic refugees across international boundaries. Amstutz (1999) notes, "Fundamentally, refugees are displaced people without a political home. They are persons who have fled their country of origin because of fear of persecution, discrimination, and political oppression". According to Amstutz, the refugee status splits into two types: Political refugees, and economic refugees. Political refugees are those who flee or have fled their home country for fear of being persecuted for reasons of religion, race, nationality or political opinion.

Economic refugees are those who immigrate to another country for purely economic reasons. For instance, a political science professor who makes next to nothing in his/her country and immigrates to another country in order to collect a substantially higher wage can be identified as an economic refugee. Similarly, a person whose livelihood was forcefully overrun by its respective state may seek to settle in another country as an immigrant under the refugee status for economic reasons. The suffering visited on these displaced people by loss of homes and livelihood results in the creation of a polyethnic or/and a multinational society in countries that accept them.

In some instances, these displaced people are likely to be the subject of discrimination and prejudice within the host society, as they are perceived as a burden on the welfare state and a threat to the mainstream culture. The relationship between the majority ethnocultural group and the lesser ethnocultural group is usually based on a hierarchical level of superiority, as the larger group is the possessor of political, social and economic resources. Under this circumstance, it is most likely that minority ethnic or national groups are subject to majority discrimination because of their inferior status. In a ranked ethnic system, such groups seek external protections to reduce their vulnerability to the larger society. The relationship between the Tamil minority and the Sinhalese majority in Sri Lanka is illustrative of ranked ethnic relations. Horowitz (2000), for example, identifies ethnic relations between the Malay majority and the Chinese minority in Malaysia as ranked. Kymlicka argues, "External protections involve inter-group relations--that is, the ethnic or national group may seek to protect its distinct existence and identity by limiting the impact of the decisions of the larger society" (1995, 36). In this regard, minority rights, or what Kymlicka calls "group-differentiated rights" can be used to provide external protections and to transform the ranked system into an unranked system in which the lesser population enjoys equality.

In the post-modern era, minority rights or multicultural citizenship rights are tremendously crucial to develop and maintain ethnocultural justice within countries consisting of people of different ethnicities or nationalities. These rights encourage ethnocultural groups to participate within the social, political and economic institutions of the existing society or to maintain their own distinct societal culture within a specific territory. Group-differentiated rights ensure that ethnocultural groups do not give up their religious, traditional or cultural practices and they take pride in their ethnocultural particularity without fear of discrimination. Hence, minority ethnocultural groups are endowed with a feeling of security and self-confidence in that the groups live at peace with the dominant culture and other ethnic groups. The Canadian experience, for instance, affirms this condition. Having adopted multiculturalism as an official policy in 1971, Canada guarantees ethnocultural freedom and equality of all Canadian citizens regardless of their racial or ethnic origins before the law and makes it easier for ethnocultural groups, to maintain their religious, linguistic or cultural particularity.

Kymlicka argues that ethnocultural minorities suffer grave injustice, if they are deprived of rights crucial to their ethnocultural survival. For Kymlicka, group-differentiated rights provide a model for alleviating the disadvantaged status of such groups by helping them maintain their distinctiveness. In the study 'Liberal Theory of Multicultural Citizenship' Kymlicka (1995) identifies three types of group-differentiated rights to manage majority and minority relations on a fair and equal basis: (1) Self-government rights; (2) Polyethnic rights; (3) Special representation rights.

The most controversial demand of national minorities and indigenous peoples is some form of political autonomy or territorial jurisdiction within a well-defined area to ensure the survival of their distinctive identity. To maintain ethnocultural justice between the majority nation and the minority nation, for Kymlicka as a member of liberal culturalism school of thought, is the key. For liberal culturalists, national minorities or indigenous peoples, who have been involuntarily or voluntarily incorporated into a larger state, should be allowed to engage in some sort of nation-building within the existing state. This, however, will challenge the privilege of the majority national character. Hence, the majority can conduct ethnoculturally a fair and equal interethnic relationship with the minority nation through the similar tools of self-rule that the majority group itself is exercising. For example: control over the language of government and education, the education curriculum, public expenditures, government employment, police organization, recreational services, and the healthcare system, to name a few.

While the traditional concern of national minorities and indigenous peoples has been with self-government, the common concern of ethnic communities, including immigrants or religious and linguistic minorities has been with the right to express their identity without fear of injustice or inequality. Thus, there has been increasing interest by these groups in state accommodation and recognition of their cultural and religious rights. Kymlicka (1995) briefly describes state accommodation of cultural and religious beliefs of ethnic groups as 'polyethnic rights'. For example, the policy exempting Sikhs from having to wear motorcycle helmets in Canada; providing public funding for ethnic schools, associations, magazines, and festivals; adopting laws that make it a crime to make racial statements at workplace, school, etc.; adopting dress-codes or work schedules to accommodate the cultural and religious beliefs of ethnic communities are a few examples of polyethnic rights.

In addition, the demand of Muslim student's girls in France for exemption from school dress-codes should be regarded as a polyethnic demand. Consider that polyethnic rights are crucial to protect ethnic groups from ethnocultural injustice, and to promote their integration into the public institutions of the mainstream culture. Any policy that ensures the cultural and religious survival of an ethnic group lies with polyethnic rights.

The logic of liberal culturalism entails polyethnic rights to accommodate and recognize cultural and religious differences of ethnic communities rather than reject them. Hence, ethnic communities will have the sense that their ethnocultural difference is appreciated by the mainstream, and in the end, they will be ready to integrate into the common educational, economic, social and political institutions of the mainstream. Multiculturalism policies, therefore, are of much help in accommodating ethnic groups' particularity. Polyethnic rights are often argued by proponents of the multiculturalism policy as a means to enable ethnic groups to have pride in their distinctive identity and to integrate into the mainstream societal culture. Hence, ethnic groups do not face a sort of racism that sees minority cultures inferior to the majority culture and the majority culture ensures cultural equality and freedom across ethnic lines. Moreover, therefore, equal and fair inclusion within the mainstream society enables ethnic groups to contribute to the ever-evolving majority culture and to become full and equal citizens of the nation, thereby eliminating ethnic stereotyping among members of the mainstream.

Moreover, there has been increasing interest in the idea of special representation rights by national minorities and ethnic groups and a more representative political process would make it easier for members of any disadvantaged or marginalized groups (ranging from ethnic and national minorities to the disabled) to have a certain number of seats in the legislature (Kymlicka, 1995). According to Young (1989), the solution to the underrepresentation of oppressed groups at a disadvantage lays in group representation rights.

It seems reasonable to conclude that members of the mainstream culture cannot promote the interests of ethnic and national groups effectively. This is due to the fact that there are undoubtedly limits to the extent to which members of the mainstream who dominate the political process are able and willing to understand the interests of these groups. Proponents of group representation accept that people can only speak for their own group. If political parties become more inclusive of members of ethnic and national groups, members of these groups will gain an opportunity to voice their polyethnic or self-government demands.

Special representation rights give ethnic and national groups an opportunity to voice their interests in the institutions of the state. These groups may alleviate the vulnerabilities and disadvantages they experience as being part of the decision making process. Indeed, the majority has the economic and political power to ignore minority groups on decisions that are fundamental to their survival. By acceding special representation rights, the mainstream can achieve fair and equal relations with ethnic groups and national minorities. Contemporarily, underrepresentation is a significant problem for these groups. For example, Muslims in France constitute 8 percent of the population, but hold just 0.17 percent of seats in the National Assembly, and 1.2 percent of seats in Senate. Similarly, Muslims in Germany make up 4 percent of the population, but hold only 0.81 percent of seats in the House of Representatives.

Kymlicka states that these three types of group-differentiated rights given above in detail may at times overlap; however, this does not mean that they need to go hand in hand. A national minority can claim both self-government and special representation in the central government while continuing, "An economically successful immigrant group may demand polyethnic rights, but have no basis for claiming special representation or self-government, etc." (1995, 58). For instance, the Québécois in Canada are seen as having rights of self-government and special representation. That is, the French minority exercise absolute authority over the internal affairs of the province of Quebec and possess three of the nine seats on the Supreme Court. In contrast, the Canadian Muslim community only enjoys polyethnic rights to express their distinctive identity at the federal and provincial level.

Islam in Canada

Why is religion considered as a constituent element of ethnocultural identity? Some of the most prominent theorists of multiculturalism are Charles Taylor, Bikhu Parekh, and Will Kymlicka. Each offers their own explanations of why religion and culture cannot be ignored and why it is crucial to recognize diversity and encourage the maintenance of different cultures in a society. Religion is an integral part of many people's daily life and determines their way of living, including distinctive clothing, dietary practices, and the observance of holidays and days of rest. It also requires the building of places of worship and religious institutions, as well as the display of symbols for example.

Islam is both a religion and a complete way of life. The Quran, which is the holy book of Islam, and the Hadith, which are the recorded teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (570-632 C.E.), are the foundation of teachings of the religion. Like Christians or Jews, Muslims fundamentally shape their lives through a lesser or greater degree of adherence to the teachings of their prophet and of their holy book. This is what makes Islam an integral part of Muslims’ ethnocultural particularity.

Because of individual and familial immigration, many Western democracies today are confronted with the recognition and accommodation of Muslims’ ethnocultural identity. Canada is no exception. Currently, Islam is the fastest growing and second largest religion in Canada. Its existence there is well warranted and recognized. The earliest Muslims that can be documented came to Canada in the 1800s. Initially, Muslim immigration to Canada was very low. When Canada replaced the Anglo-conformity model of immigration with a more liberalised policy after the Second World War, the rate of immigration from Muslim countries began to rise.

The 1871 census indicated that there were only 13 Muslims in Canada (Baljit 2011). A hundred years later, the 1971 census indicated a population of 33,000 Muslims. Estimates for the Muslim population in 1981 show a consensus of around 98,000 Muslims. According to the 1991 figure, the Canadian Muslim population was approximately 253,300 making up nearly 0.8 percent of the Canadian population. This number more than doubled across Canada within ten years from 253,300 to 579,600 as measured by the 2001 census (Perry 2008). The Pew Research Center estimated the total number of Muslims in 2010 as 940,000. As of today, data from the 2012 International Migration Outlook and the 2011 National Household Survey retrieved from the National Post Daily indicates that Muslims constitute 3.2 percent of the total population, with a number of over one million, making Islam the fastest growing religion in Canada (Bark and Jonson 2013). A report from the Washington-based Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life said the Canadian Muslim population is expected to triple by 2030. Thus, it is predicted that Muslims will make up 6.6 percent of the total population with the estimated number of 2,661,000 (Lewis 2011). Below is a table outlining the historical numerical growth of the Muslim population in Canada.

Population	Population Number
1871	13
1971	33,000
1981	98,000
1991	253,300
2001	579,600
2010	940,000
2013	1,000,000+

Figure 1: Historical Population of Muslims in Canada.

The data, from the 2011 National Household Survey presents preliminary information on leading religious affiliations in the Canadian populace. The survey indicates that Muslims accounted for only 0.7 percent of all immigrants who had arrived in Canada before 1971. This percentage increased dramatically from 0.7 percent to 17.4 percent between 2006-2011 (Statistics Canada 2011). The survey provides an analytical presentation of data indicating that Islam is the second largest religion after Christianity among immigrants as well as in Canada’s general population. The survey results also show that immigration has largely fueled the growth in the number of Muslims in Canada.

According to the 2005 Statistics Canada Report, the vast majority of Muslims in Canada live in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The Greater Toronto region in Ontario hosts over 300,000 Muslims and Montreal, Quebec is home to over 150,000 Muslims. Other Canadian provinces have a smaller but nonetheless significant number of Muslims. Below is a table outlining the percentage distribution of Muslims by Canadian provinces?

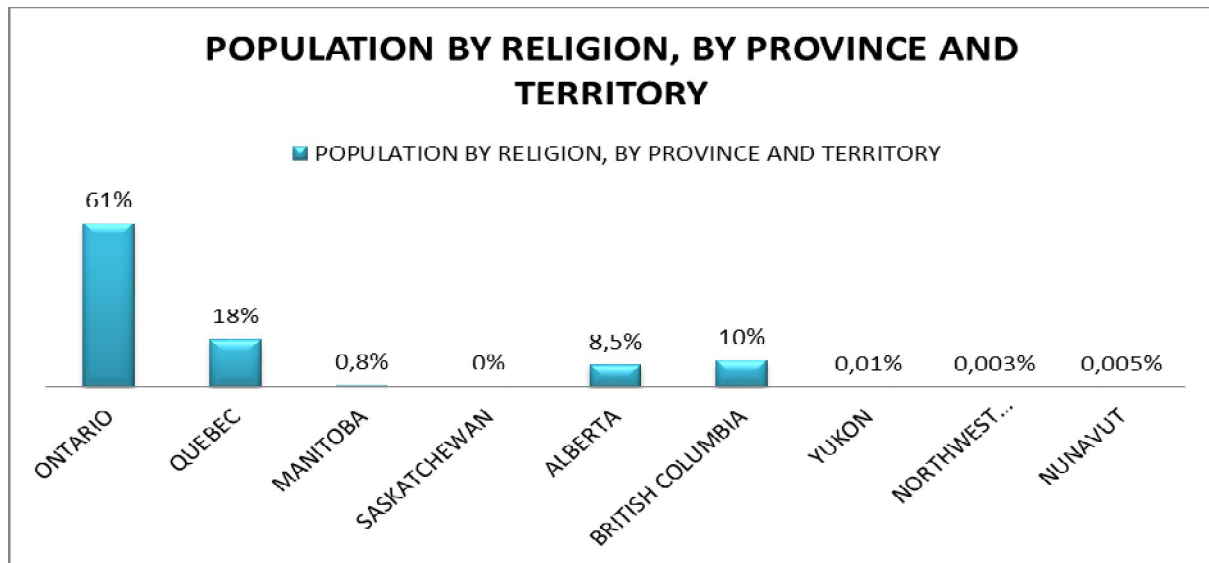


Figure 2: Muslim Population by Province

Source: Statistics Canada 2005

All the information given above information explains that there is a strong Muslim presence in Canada today. Most Canadian Muslims are foreign born. From outside glance, the Canadian Muslim community consists of persons of Arab, South Asian, African and European decent. For that reason, the community is highly ethnically diverse. It is also vital to mention that Sunni Muslims, which make up the largest denomination of Islam, comprise the largest portion of the community (75 percent). Shi'as and other Islamic groups constitute the rest portion (Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development 2005).

It is important to mention few points here. As noted above, the Canadian Muslim community is racially, ethnically and linguistically very diverse. Therefore, such diversity has led me to take into account the complex reality that it is quite difficult to identify common polyethnic ethnic demands of the community with certainty. As it is mentioned in detail in the sample design section below, personal interaction with Muslims of different backgrounds helped me define three common polyethnic demands. Such demands are the freedom to have access to halal meat and food products, the right to pray and the freedom to wear headscarf or hijab (regarding Muslim women). The great majority of the Canadian Muslim community reflects a strong expectation to see these three polyethnic rights intimately respected by the Canadian mainstream. Interviewed members of the community have confirmed such observance.

The target samples were adult Muslims who came to Canada from a variety of predominantly Muslim countries with the intention to settle in Canada. In recruiting the sample, Islamic community centers, located in cities that host a large Muslim population, played a particularly important role, because they are the most important civil organization actors in Canadian Muslims' life. The names of visited community centers are: the Toronto and Region Islamic Congregation in Toronto, the Islamic Foundation Toronto in Toronto, the Salahaddin Islamic Centre in Toronto, the Islamic Society of North America in Mississauga, the Muslim Association of Canada in Toronto, the Islamic Center of Calgary in Calgary, the Manitoba Islamic Center in Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Islamic Centre, the Islamic Center of Quebec in Montreal, the Islamic Care Center in Ottawa, the Ottawa Muslim and the BC Muslim Association in Vancouver . Gatherings in the given community centers in the form of such social events as fund raising dinners, family day brunches and community outreach programs facilitated meeting diverse groups of Muslims and provided opportunities to speak with them about the purpose of my study. Most informants spoke on condition of anonymity. During the initial stages of the study, it was challenging to develop an accurate sample because of the very diverse composition of the Canadian Muslim community. However, such challenge had faded after realizing that Islam, as a particular way of life, has led Canadian Muslims emigrated from different countries of origin to put aside cultural differences and to gather around common three religion-based polyethnic demands: (1) the freedom to consume halal meat and food products; (2) the freedom to pray; and (3) the freedom for Muslim women to wear hijab (headscarf).

Halal Food

A first finding of the study is that both native-born and immigrant Muslims in Canada have a strong willingness to consume halal meat and food products just like any other Muslims residing in other Western countries. Halal is an Arabic word meaning “permissible”. In terms of food, it means food products and ingredients, which are allowed to be eaten or drunk according to Islamic dietary laws. The opposite of halal is haram, which means “unlawful” or forbidden by Islamic law. In terms of food, haram means food products and ingredients, which are forbidden for Muslims to eat or drink by Islamic dietary laws.

The Noble Quran says in matters of eating and drinking that mankind must eat on earth what is lawful, pure, clean, wholesome and pleasing to taste. According to this verse, everything is halal on earth other than certain foods and drinks that have specifically forbidden. The most well-known example of non-halal food in Islam is pork. Islam has forbidden Muslims to eat pork and consume products containing any ingredient that is porcine sourced. Prohibition of pork is strictly mentioned in the Noble Quran. That being said the aforementioned verses do mention that there are exceptions to this law, and that Muslims can eat non-halal food, including the flesh of swine, in the moments of absolute necessity such as the danger of “death” from starvation. Other certain foods and drinks have also been forbidden in the Noble Quran. Some of these examples are the eating of carrion, the consumption of blood, consumption of intoxicating drinks and substances, consumption of the meat of an animal that has been sacrificed to idols, consumption of the meat of an animal that has died from strangulation and the meat of an animal that has been killed or eaten from by wild animals.

The criteria for consumption of non-porcine meat and animal tissue are based on halal practices. According to Islamic dietary laws, a Muslim butcher, who at the time of slaughter mentions the name of God, must slaughter an animal. Additionally, the Muslim who is performing the slaughter must use a sharp knife to cut the throat of the animal so as not to cause undue harm, causing the animal’s death without cutting the spinal cord. Lastly, the blood from the animal must be drained. It is noteworthy that Islamic dietary law allows Muslims to eat meat (with the exception of pork), from those people who are considered “People of the Book”, or Christians and Jews, provided that God’s name is invoked at the time of slaughtering. As read in the Quran: “This day [all] good foods have been made lawful, and the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them” (The Noble Quran, 5:5 Sahih International English Translation Version). Today Islamic scholars agree that the verse mentioned in the Quran about eating the meat of the “People of the Book” is referring to the Christians from the time of Prophet Muhammad, and that since that time Christian methods of animal slaughter have drastically changed. That being said, Muslims can consume kosher meats, which are consumed by Jews, in case that halal meat is not available. This is due to the fact that practicing Jews still continue to slaughter according to their traditions and religion with great care taken to assure such practices are maintained and performed correctly.

Accordingly, members of the Canadian Muslim community has an increased awareness of Islamic dietary laws and avoid food and beverages that are haram. Members of the community I had a chat at the mentioned Muslim Community centers above confirmed such sensitivity of the community and told that they eat halal food and avoid eating meals or snacks that do not display the Halal certification. The Canadian Halal Meat Market Study conducted by the Alberta Provincial Government in January 2005 strongly also confirms this situation. The study explains that the demand for halal meat is increasing in parallel with the growth of the Canadian Muslim population and Muslims in Canada are zealous consumers of halal meat (Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development 2005). It is true that Canadian Muslims are inclined to abstain from eating the meat of an animal that has not been slaughtered in line with Islamic dietary laws and food products that do not carry the Halal certification. They place high importance on this matter. There are also Muslims in Canada who choose to consume commercial meat without the halal label, apart from or even pork. But, they are a small minority. Regardless, most Muslims in Canada demanding halal meat slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law and food products allowed under Islamic dietary guidelines in Canada.

In a personal interview (May 21, 2012) , the executive director of the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC), Attia Tantawi, highlighted that most Muslims in Canada prefers to eat halal meat and halal food products and added that a significant number of halal restaurants and grocery stores selling food products labeled halal is largely the result of this fact.

Asked why the halal certification was important for Canadian Muslims, Tantawi replied that some foods are difficult to classify as halal because of the ingredients they contain, so the halal symbol on the packages is of high importance for Canadian Muslims. At this point, the availability of halal restaurants, halal meat markets, halal grocery stores and halal certified food products is an important thing for Canadian Muslims in acquiring food products and ingredients that are prepared or processed in line with Islamic norms. In general, it is possible to find halal restaurants, halal meat markets and halal grocery stores across Canada. Certainly, cities with a large Muslim population are most likely to offer much more halal services and venues than other cities with a lesser Muslim population.

As mentioned earlier above under the heading of ethnocultural justice, the main two sources of ethnocultural diversity are the voluntary or involuntary incorporation of a historical community with a distinct language, culture or religion territorially concentrated in a specific area into a larger state, and individual and familial immigration. Kymlicka (1995) highlights that immigrants establish ethnic groups by coalescing into loose associations within the larger society and adds that immigrants do not wish to set up a parallel society alongside the majority culture, but seek greater recognition and accommodation of their ethnoculture by the institutions and laws of the mainstream culture to maintain their distinctive ethnocultural character. Suggesting that the majority culture recognize and accommodate ethnocultural particularity of ethnic groups under their jurisdiction of 'polyethnic rights'. Immigration is a vital part of Canadian polity and there is ample recognition among Canadians that the country is highly polyethnic.

Most Muslims in Canada fit the immigration category, because they leave their origin country to start a new life in Canada many by their own wishes and desires. No one forced them to settle in Canada. Hence, according to Kymlicka's theory of minority rights, which attaches importance to the right of immigrant groups to freely express their ethnocultural particularity without fear of discrimination or oppression in the host society, Canadian Muslims have the right to be able to observe Islamic dietary guidelines without any legal hindrance within Canadian society. This should be considered as a polyethnic demand arising from religious difference. Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights suggests that the Canadian mainstream society should accommodate Canadian Muslims' polyethnic demand to eat and obtain halal food.

There are no laws or regulations at both provincial and federal levels that hinder Muslim individuals from opening up a halal meat or grocery store or from practicing halal slaughtering throughout Canada. It seems that the Canadian mainstream society has recognized the importance of the implementation of the principles of halal slaughter for Muslims. According to a study on the Canadian halal market conducted by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development in 2005, nearly 15 percent of federally inspected cattle slaughter and 35 percent of calf slaughter was performed in Halal certified places. The study also indicated that halal meat consumption was an essential fraction of the Canadian Muslims' life, given that 88 percent of respondents said it was very important to consume halal meat. 72 percent of respondents said they only consumed halal meat. The majority of respondents (75 percent) stated that the availability of halal meat at restaurants could encourage them to dine out more often. Only 3 percent reported that consuming halal meat was not an important issue (Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development 2005).

In addition, the study put the value of the Canadian domestic halal market at \$214 million, with an average annual household expenditure of \$1623 and stated that Muslim households are ardent meat and meat product consumers. Muslim households spend \$31 per week on meat and meat products compared to the average Canadian household per week expenditure of \$17. The study did note that the household size might have partially affected such expenditure difference. As of today, faced with a growing demand for halal food, according to data from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the market for halal products in Canada is worth nearly \$1 billion (Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development 2005). These figures clearly indicate that halal meat consumption is an integral part of Canadian Muslims' lives.

Moreover, this shared commitment among Canadian Muslims to Islamic dietary law has led to the creation of non-profit organizations dedicated to promoting halal food and the institution of halal in Canada. Canadian Muslims like other Muslims living in the West would like to see halal certification on food products just like kosher symbols are used to distinguish kosher certified food products and ingredients according to whether or not they have been prepared and/or processed in line with Jewish Dietary Laws. For instance, the ISNA Halal Certification Agency, which is an affiliate of the Islamic Society of Canada (ISNA), a Muslim umbrella group in North America, provides Halal Certification service to Canada as well as America by certifying and supervising the production of halal products. It has its own halal logo. Like ISNA, the Muslim Consumer Group certifies halal food products manufactured and processed in Canada and the US.

The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA), which has offices in various countries including Canada, the US, Belgium and Malaysia, is another non-profit organization certifying and supervising the production of halal products. Like others, the Halal Monitoring Organization is also a recognized halal certifier in Canada. Kymlicka's model of polyethnicity underlying multiculturalism policies in Canada supports the ability of Canadian Muslims to observe Islamic dietary laws. The Canadian mainstream society has not adopted laws to inhibit individual Muslims from practicing halal slaughter or establishing non-profit organizations for the halal certification of food products. Hence, it can be partially said that either the individual or the collective right of Canadian Muslims to consume halal food has been accommodated by the Canadian Mainstream society via the market.

The consumer demand for halal food products is more likely to increase over time, because Islam is the second largest and fastest growing religion in Canada. According to my personal observation, most Muslim residents in Canada usually prefer small privately owned halal meat shops and grocery stores to large grocery outlets run by non-Muslims to acquire their halal meat and food products. The finding from the Canada Halal Market Study confirms this observation. According to this study, 85 percent of Muslims buy halal meat from their local halal meat stores rather than from large grocery retail outlets. Based on personal interview and observation, it is necessary to mention that most of Canada's Muslims observing Islamic Dietary laws are likely to buy halal meat from a distributor, if the packing is labeled with a halal logo they can trust and the halal certification is trustworthy (Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development 2005).

If Canada forced Muslim immigrants to renounce this religious requirement on the ground that they have uprooted themselves from their homelands with their own consent, this would be inconsistent with liberal justice, because there would be no ethnocultural equality between the Canadian mainstream and the Muslim minority. Keep in mind that ethnocultural justice requires true equality between ethnocultural groups in the pursuit of maintaining ethnocultural particularity. Given that the concept of halal food is one of the particularities of Islamic identity, any attempt by the Christian mainstream to ban the observance of Islamic dietary guidelines would serve to undermine the existence of ethnocultural equality within the Canadian society. It is clear that Canadian multiculturalism has encouraged, rather than discouraged, Canadian Muslims' access to halal food.

Canada as a land of ethnic and racial diversity strongly endorsed its commitment to ethnocultural diversity by being the first country to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy in 1971. This is clearly consistent with ethnocultural justice, as Canada adopted the multiculturalism policy for the promotion of ethnocultural equality among its citizens. To further strengthen its citizens' capacity to take pride in their ethnocultural heritage, Canada referred to the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms enacted in 1982 and passed the multiculturalism act in 1988. Hence, the Canadian mainstream culture has further managed to guarantee minority cultures the right to enjoy and maintain their ethnocultural belonging. Under these conditions, the Canadian Muslim community freely enjoy the freedom to have access to and eat halal food.

The Prayer

A second finding of the study is Canadian Muslims' commitment to freedom to pray. As one of the five pillars of Islam, prayer is an important aspect of the Islamic life. Muslims pray five times a day to communicate with and show their submission to their Creator. When Muslim immigrants came to Canada, they thus brought their practices of prayer with them. It is true that most Canadian Muslims attach high value to the freedom to pray, as not only do they believe that it is one of the most important commandments in their religion, but they believe that it brings meaning to their ethnocultural identity. Does Canada then encourage Muslims to maintain their daily worship? To answer this, it is worth examining if there is any oppression on Canada's Muslims to prevent them from praying. Asked if the Canada accommodates and recognizes the freedom of Muslims to pray, Tantawi replied that Canadian Muslims in general attaches great importance to the freedom to pray and a significant number of mosques and their increasing number nationwide are the natural result of this situation. He also added that he has not personally experienced any major event significantly undermining the community's freedom to pray so far (personal interview May 21, 2012).

Here, the total number of mosques can be taken as concrete evidence to decide whether praying should be considered as a popular polyethnic demand among Canadian Muslims. It is a pity for the study that there is no any official count of how many mosques are in Canada. However, it is estimated that there are more than 1.000 mosques in Canada. According to data received from masjidintoronto.blogspot.ca, there are 112 mosques and Islamic centers in the Greater Toronto area alone. This number may be more, but not less given the increasing number of Muslims in Canada. Such number clearly indicates two things. First, the freedom to pray is of high importance for the Canadian Muslim minority, second Canada has well encouraged such demand within the multiculturalism policy framework.

As Canadian Muslims fit Kymlicka's immigrant category, their expectation to pray freely should be considered within the framework of polyethnic rights. It is noteworthy that this polyethnic demand derives its legitimacy domestically from section two of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizing multiculturalism and internationally from Article 27 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Declaration on Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. Being a signatory to these international covenants, Canada has further indicated its commitment to protecting and promoting the polyethnic demands of ethnic groups within its territory. This suggests that, as a visible religious minority, the right of Canada's Muslims to pray should be protected and encouraged by the Canadian mainstream through necessary laws and policies within the polyethnicity framework. As is mentioned before, Canada has largely achieved this through the implementation of its Multiculturalism policy.

Kymlicka in the book 'Liberal Theory of Multicultural Citizenship' (1995) confirms the collectivist aspect of multicultural citizenship rights, because they are designed in a way to protect ethnocultural communities as a whole from the destabilising impact of the decisions of the larger society. Within this context, the Islamic requirement to pray reflects both a communitarian and individual outlook and Canada's Charter of Rights based on the concept of multiculturalism recognizes and accommodates both outlooks. Islam says that a Muslim can perform the act of prayer alone or in community with other Muslims. Moreover, it praises praying in congregation. Specific to this issue, there are prophetic narrations extolling praying in congregation under the leadership of the Imam.

There is also a congregational prayer in Islam that Muslims hold every Friday just after noon. The Friday prayer represents a communitarian outlook since it cannot be performed individually. To congregate for their five daily prayers and the Friday prayer, like any other Muslims living in other countries, Canadian Muslims have built a variety of Islamic centers, mosques and masjids (prayer rooms). The motive behind this is to make it easier for a Muslim to find a place to pray in Canada, especially in and around the areas, which host a large Muslim population, or in public areas such as universities and airports. It is correct to say that the Multiculturalism policy of Canada encourages Canadian authorities to affirm the polyethnic demand of Canadian Muslims for prayer places in the same way they meet similar demands of followers of other faiths.

Islam as an ethnocultural identity covers a striking diversity of people and offers them a shared vocabulary of tradition and convention, which underlies a full range of social and religious practices. Differences in ethnicity and race do not preclude the integrative power of this common ethnoculture. Kymlicka (1995) argues that a liberal society should allow its members, sharing a different ethnocultural identity, the freedom to pursue their different path of life for the promotion of individual liberty and autonomy within the society. This argument suggests that Canada as a liberal society, therefore, should encourage, rather than discourage, its Muslim individuals' choice to uphold the Islamic prayers without fear of discrimination or punishment, as this relates to their individual freedom and autonomy.

Muslim immigrants to Canada had brought the practice of praying with them. Naturally, they expected to maintain and sustain the Islamic prayer in their new home. Since the majority of Canadian Muslims have a strong commitment to the Islamic prayer and they see it as a significant part of their daily way of life, the loss of the freedom to pray would be like losing one of the most important aspects of their life. This certainly indicates their deep connectedness to the freedom of worship. In a personal interview with Dr. El-Tantawi Attia, I asked him if Canada offers Muslim residents the freedom to observe the Islamic prayer both individually and collectively. Tantawi was sure to communicate that he moved into Canada in the 1970s and from that moment onwards, he and other Muslims have enjoyed an increasing number of community centers, mosques, masjids and Islamic schools that is promising for Canadian Muslims' freedom of worship (May 21, 2012).

It is correct to say that if Canada had forced Muslim immigrants to renounce the Islamic prayer as a precondition for immigration, this would have been regarded as a violation of the liberal principles of individual freedom and autonomy. However, Canada has implicitly accepted their expectation to pray freely in their new homeland, considering that the ties to one's ethnocultural identity are too strong to give up and hence it is very wrong to expect someone make such a sacrifice. As a liberal society, Canada recognized that the conception of the good life varies from person to person according to their ethnocultural heritage and so views any interference with it as a violation of individual freedom and autonomy. Such understanding encouraged Canadian authorities to be more responsive to Muslims' expectation of respect for their daily prayers. It is also important to treat Canada's acceptance of Canadian Muslims' attachment to the Islamic prayer with the equality argument propelled by Kymlicka to come to some clear observations. First, there is no doubt that Canada has affirmed the dignity and value of ethnocultural diversity through multicultural citizenship rights; the nature of Canadian multiculturalism allows its citizens to keep their ethnocultural heritage and defines it as an equal right that all Canadians can capitalize on. Canada needed to manage its ethnocultural diversity in a peaceful manner, as it may have quickly become a source of political, social and economic instability.

Second, Canada managed to create a prosperous peaceful society by promoting genuine equality among its citizens pursuing different paths of life through the concept of multicultural citizenship. In this regard, Canada saw the accommodation of religious practices as an element of its Multiculturalism policy and became very sensitive to this matter. Rather than imposing restrictions on the expectation of its people to practice their faith in daily life, it opted to accommodate it. Under these circumstances, Canadian multiculturalism favored not only the members of a particular religious group, but also the members of all groups in terms of the freedom of worship. This is very consistent with Kymlicka's equality argument, which seeks to promote justice in inter-cultural relations through multicultural citizenship. One could argue that there is a relatively fair and equal relationship between ethnocultural groups in terms of the freedom of worship in Canada, given the extensive presence of places of worship throughout Canada, including mosques, churches and synagogues as well as reserved places in the public spaces to ensure the freedom of worship of members of different faiths. For instance, one can find a masjid, a chapel or a Knesset at any university or major airport in Canada. This indicates Canada's just and equal approach to freedom of worship.

However, public holidays unavoidably promote the freedom of worship of particular identities, which is considerably inconsistent with the equality argument. As is well known that, Sunday is the day of prayer for Christians. Canadian Christians flock to churches every Sunday. So the recognition of Sunday as a public holiday unavoidably promotes the freedom of worship of a particular ethnocultural community. Similarly, the recognition of Saturday as a public holiday unavoidably promotes the right of the Jewish people to pray because Saturday is the holy day of Judaism. But Friday, which corresponds to Sunday in Christianity and Saturday in Judaism, is not a weekly holiday for Muslims in Canada. So, one can argue that this situation is a significant disadvantage to the members of the Muslim community by referring to Kymlicka's equality argument, because Muslims' day of prayer has not been taken into account in the same way as that Christians' and Jews' day of prayer have been taken into account.

Accepting this fact as a violation of ethnocultural equality, one can object to the recognition of Friday as a public holiday for Muslims on the ground that it would be very difficult to replace the existing schedule, with a neutral one, or it would be unworkable calling minority Muslim public servants to work on Sundays or upgrading two weekly holidays to three days. There is no reason to create conflict between this state regulation and the Muslim Friday worship. However, it is important to mention that such assumption has no place in the equality argument, considering that it is likely to undercut the argument's ideal of maintaining 'genuine equality' in cross-cultural relationships. Some attempts may be made by the Canadian mainstream to provide support for Canadian Muslims demand to take Friday off through polyethnic rights. In so far as the existing government regulation support the religious worship days of Christians and Jews, there is an equality argument for remedying the disadvantage of Muslim workers. It is also important to mention that the recognition of Christian religious holidays (Christmas, Easter) as public holidays by the Canadian state cannot be justified on the equality argument, because it has solely been designed to protect the need of a particular community. Here, there is no reason to create some unnecessary conflict between this state regulation and Islamic holidays. In this regard, the only question is how to ensure that members of the Canadian Muslim community can celebrate their religious festivals without having to go to work, school or university.

The Canadian mainstream can ensure this through polyethnic rights. In so far as, existing policies support the religious holidays of the Canadian mainstream, there is an equality argument of equality for ensuring that some attempts are made to provide similar support for the Canadian Muslim community. On this view, one may propel the ideal of benign neglect, which is the strict separation of state and ethnicity, for example the recognition of Christmas and Easter, to ensure that the Canadian state neither promotes nor disadvantages any particular ethnocultural identity. The Canadian Muslim community hardly claims that the Canadian mainstream treat them unfairly with respect to the celebration of Islamic festivals and the observation of Friday prayers. That being said there is no way to establish a state that does not reflect a particular ethnocultural identity. Any government therefore cannot avoid promoting its nation's culture. This is an unavoidable fact, which makes the ideal of benign neglect or common citizenship rights not applicable.

The Hijab

A third finding of the study is Canadian Muslims' commitment to the freedom to wear hijab. The use of religious symbols in both the public and private sphere is an integral part of the scope of the freedom of religion. In our modern environment of ethnocultural diversity, religious symbols are one of the demonstrations that allow the individual to represent his or her religion or faith. Hence, the government of ethnoculturally diverse countries have found themselves compelled to make laws and policies to accommodate religious diversity within their jurisdiction.

Most common religious symbols in Canada is the Islamic headscarf, the Sikh turban and kirpan, the Jewish kippa and the Christian cross. Within the Islamic faith, many Muslim females wear the headscarf or hijab as a symbol of submission and obedience to God. It is an integral part of Islamic life. Islam suggests that Muslim females keep their heads and certain parts of the body covered when praying and in the presence of men who are not family members. As with the Sikh faith, it is the turban and kirpan at issue. Sikh men must wear a turban to keep their hair uncut and carry a curved dagger about 20 centimeters as a symbol of respect for God. The kirpan symbolizes the struggle between good and evil (Fuller 2004). In a similar manner, some Christians carry a cross as a symbol of submission to God. It is the kippa or yarmulke at issue, a small skullcap worn by Jewish males to demonstrate their submission to God within the Jewish faith.

In Canada, courts, and provincial and federal human rights deal with many issues of discrimination on religious grounds, including the use of religious symbols in the public space. For instance, the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Creed and the accommodation of Religious Observances states that it is a duty for public places, like schools or organizations, to accommodate such religious symbols as the headscarf or hijab and Sikh kirpans (Barnett, 2011). The Ontario Human Rights Commission condemned the decision of a Quebec soccer tournament to ban an eleven-year-old Muslim girl from wearing a headscarf while playing in her games, calling this decision a violation of human rights.

According to Kymlicka's theory of minority rights, something like a headscarf should be evaluated within the framework of polyethnic rights, given that most of the Canadian Muslim women are immigrants. Recall that Kymlicka sees immigrants' polyethnic demands as legitimate and warranted so far as they are consistent with the model of polyethnic rights, which justifies ethnocultural demands of minority groups other than indigenous peoples and national minorities, up to a certain level. It would not be wrong to say that the Canadian model of polyethnicity offers Muslim women who wear hijab an inclusive citizenship, encouraging them to integrate into the Canadian society and take an active role in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs. It is very common in Canada to see a Muslim woman wearing hijab walking freely on the street, working as a police officer or doctor, leading a civil rights movement, playing soccer or running a non-profit organization. This is because there is no federal law against Muslim women wearing the headscarf that would seek to alienate them. This is a good indicator that the value of wearing hijab for Muslims has been well recognized and accommodated by the Canadian mainstream society.

Wafa Dabbagh is a good example to show the extent to which Canadian polyethnicity is accepting of hijab. Dabbagh as a Muslim woman was the first member of the Canadian Military to wear a hijab. Her rank was Lt. Commander in the Royal Canadian Navy. This example exclusively confirms the success of Canadian polyethnicity in enabling Muslim women to participate within the public institutions of the Canadian mainstream. If Canada had not abandoned the Anglo-conformity model and adopted a more tolerant and pluralistic policy (multiculturalism) in the 1970s, Dabbagh wouldn't have been allowed to assume the rank of Lt. Commander in the Canadian Military with her headscarf, or possibly even have held a position in the army at all.

Most Muslim women wearing hijab fit neatly into the pattern of voluntary immigration. For example, there are refugee Muslim women who, like immigrants, have come as individuals or with families, but did not do so voluntarily. The Muslim women discussed thus far, fall into Kymlicka's voluntary immigration category as they have come to Canada voluntarily in reliance upon Canada's reputation for tolerance and openness, promising them the opportunity to pursue their way of life without interference in Canada. This was not the case for refugee Muslim women wearing hijab, who, for one reason or another, came to Canada involuntarily. For these women, they are delighted to have fled to a place where they are allowed to continue wearing hijab.

There are also Canadian-born Muslim females, who do not fit the immigration category. These females acquired Canadian citizenship at the time of birth, as Canada does not describe citizenship not only in terms of blood. Most of them have learnt about the Islamic headscarf through their families and Islamic schools. Having grown in a liberal society built on ethnocultural diversity, they have enjoyed the freedom to wear the Islamic headscarf without discrimination, from the time they decided to wear it. They, like the other Muslim females mentioned above, enjoy the inclusive citizenship that Canada offers.

Though the Canadian Muslim community is a mixture of people from different ethnocultural backgrounds, Islam is explicitly a common identity that transcends their ethnic differences. Certainly, hijab is one of the main signs of the Islamic identity. Muslims women's desire to wear hijab, therefore, reflects both an individual and collectivist outlook of Islam. It seems that Canada's multiculturalism as a policy of supporting polyethnicity within the mainstream supports both aspects of the hijab. By not marginalizing or segregating Muslim women they are focused on as an individual, and from the perspective of society as a whole the name of preserving the mainstream's distinctiveness (as a predominately Christian society), is still maintained.

Kymlicka sees polyethnic rights as a sort of external protection that reduces or eliminates the vulnerability of minority groups against the destabilising impact of the decisions of the majority group. Notice that Canada's multiculturalism policy provides Muslim women who wear headscarves some sort of 'external protection' against the Canadian mainstream the way it protects and promotes the distinct clothing style of other long-standing Christian sects (Mennonites, Hutterites). This makes it less likely that wearing the headscarf will cause difficulty for Canadian Muslim women in keeping their identity in public spaces. It seems to be the case that there is no visible rejection of these women, and on the contrary, a strong acceptance of wearing headscarf from the Canadian population. The Canadian experience, hence, signifies the values of mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding in inter-group relations and the promotion and protection of the freedom of members of a visible minority to have access to their ethnocultural membership.

Remember Kymlicka's argument on the importance of multicultural citizenship rights in enlarging the freedom of individuals by providing them free access to their particular way of life. This argument is very applicable to the polyethnic rights of headscarf-wearing Canadian Muslim women. Hijab, as mentioned above earlier, is one of the main signs of the Islamic identity and a large number of Muslim women in Canada are the carrier of this Islamic sign. Canada has well recognized this situation and ensured their access to hijab strongly through the system of multicultural citizenship rights.

If Canada had not supplemented its common rights of citizenship (built on universal individual rights) with a system of multicultural citizenship rights, true or substantial equality would have never been possible to maintain between Muslim women symbolizing Islam with their headscarf and those women or men, , who, for example wear a cross to show their allegiance to Christianity. Notice that the promotion and accommodation of ethnocultural differences is the essence of true equality. Without multicultural citizenship rights, Muslim women would have been awarded no genuine equality, but only formal equality that unavoidably promotes a particular ethnocultural identity.

Canadian multiculturalism recognizes both national and ethnic diversity of the Canadian society and this recognition serves to promote, rather than eliminate, Muslim women's sense of true equality. It is for this reason that hijabi Muslim women participate effectively in every aspect of Canadian life as female members of the majority. They enjoy the freedom to go to school or university, to work at public and private places, to main free and peaceful contacts with members of the mainstream without any discrimination. In the absence of such rights, they would experience a sense of inferiority, which is indeed inconsistent with liberal justice.

As a result, Canada can be seen as very accommodating of Canadian Muslim women's individual and communitarian choice to freely wear a headscarf or hijab. It affirms the dignity and value of such choice. With no pressure to assimilate or give up their hijab, Canadian Muslim women enjoy Canada's inclusive citizenship and so freely participate in the Canadian mainstream life. Notice that this is mainly achieved through the Multiculturalism policy adopted in 1971, which abrogated the assimilationist Anglo-conformity model. As Canada's Multicultural citizenship model defines Canadian national membership in terms of integration, rather than assimilation into the mainstream life, minority cultures are able to maintain various aspects of their ethnocultural heritage. Under these circumstances, Canadian Muslim women maintain a sort of external protection against the Canadian mainstream in enjoying the freedom of clothing in accordance with Islam without fear of persecution and interference.

Conclusion

Today, it is quite obvious that there is a strong Muslim presence in Canada accounting for 3.2 percent of the total population. This figure makes Islam the second largest religion after Christianity in Canada. Considering the data that the Canadian Muslim population is expected to triple by 2030, Islam is most likely to be an area of interest for the Canadian mainstream society. It seems that immigration from Muslim countries has largely fueled the increase and will continue to do so, if the federal government ruled by the Conservative government for last eight years does not discriminate against Muslim immigration applications.

As immigration is the most common source of Islamic identity for Muslims in Canada, the Canadian Muslim population is composed of a broad spectrum of Muslim communities. However, this diversity has not prevented these communities from voicing common polyethnic demands. Among them, three common polyethnic demands stand out: the freedom to pray, to eat halal and for Muslim women to wear a hijab. It seems that Canada has adequately accommodated and recognized such polyethnic demands thus far. One can easily find an Islamic centre, a mosque, or a masjid in Canada to pray, especially in cities, which host a large Islamic community. Likewise, one can easily find a halal grocery store or halal restaurant to consume halal meat and food products. A Muslim woman wearing a hijab or Islamic head covering has always been encouraged to participate in the social and economic life of the mainstream.

However, today, Canada's Muslims face the danger of being marginalized from the Canadian mainstream because of rising Canadian anti-Muslim sentiment resulting largely since the September 11 attacks. It seems that anti-Islamic prejudice has become commonplace within a significant portion of the Canadian society. Islamophobic crimes and incidents especially targeting Muslim women wearing hijab and Muslims' places of worship are exclusively the result of this situation. For now, prejudiced opposition to Islamic meat ritual spearheaded by the Party Quebecois is present in Quebec, but at this point, not across Canada. That being said, Canadian Muslims may face this prejudiced critique of halal slaughter across Canada if Canadian anti-Muslim sentiment reaches significant levels.

Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper correlated Islam with terrorism in an interview with CBC chief correspondent Peter Mansbridge in 2011 and implicated mosques as places supporting terrorism (Mansbridge 2011). Canada's expired anti-terrorism clauses brought back by the Harper government in 2013 were the extension of this perception. Harper's terrorism basis to define "Islamicism" as a top threat to Canada's domestic security is a huge blow to the Canadian conception of multiculturalism that seeks to offer an inclusive society for the members of minority cultures operating on the values of ethnocultural justice and equality. This situation clearly challenges the ethnocultural freedom and equality of Canadian Muslims in term of sustaining and expressing their particularity without fear of exclusion from the mainstream society.

Today, Canadian Islamophobia is like corrosion on metal, eating away at the confidence of Muslims in Canada's Multiculturalism policy. Canadian Muslims are an integral part of Canadian society and have a strong sense of pride in the Canadian identity. They are law-abiding citizens and very keen to integrate. However, growing Islamophobia is most likely to challenge Muslims' integration into Canada's mainstream and their three polyethnic rights mentioned throughout the study. Surely, Muslim integration will be a more contentious issue in Canada in the near future due to the growing anti-Muslim sentiment combined with a rapidly growing Muslim population. As a result of this, it would be not wrong to say that a particular portion of the Canadian society may become more exclusive to the Canadian Muslim community, thereby alienating Muslim individuals.

What Canada should do to eliminate anti-Muslim prejudice existent within a certain part of the society is to enhance interethnic ties between the minority Muslim community and the majority Anglophone society through multicultural citizenship education in coordination with non-governmental organizations.

Here, the immediate target population should be Islamophobic Canadians in the hope to witness dramatic decreases in the levels of their anti-Muslim sentiments in a short or medium period. The long-run target population should be future generations. The expected result is that Canadian Muslims will remain an integral part of the Canadian society and hence the society will be purified from its Islamophobic members.

Anti-Islamic incidents similar to those in Europe and the United States have surprised many because Canada has always been known and portrayed as a land free from ethnocultural stereotyping and prejudice. It is also very important to mention here that occurred anti-Islamic incidents in Canada should not lead one to argue for either the complete breakdown of Canada's multiculturalism policy or the entire exclusion of Canadian Muslims from the Canadian mainstream society. Multiculturalism as a state policy in Canada still operates well and offers its Muslim community an inclusive society. Canadian Muslims still keeps their particularity and continues the free development of their culture. This section clearly suggests that Islamophobia is incompatible with multiculturalism and such racist behavior should be addressed within the context of multiculturalism before it has become a form of racialization like anti-Black racism. If Islamophobia completes its evolution, Canada is likely to be confronted with social ills of prejudice and segregation that Canadian Muslims largely suffer. The critics of multiculturalism may jump on this scenario as a ground to call for retreating from Canadian multiculturalism by ignoring the beneficial effects of it.

What Canada should do to eliminate anti-Muslim prejudice existent within a certain part of the society is to enhance interethnic ties between the minority Muslim community and the majority Anglophone society through multicultural citizenship education in coordination with non-governmental organizations. Here, the immediate target population should be Islamophobic Canadians in the hope to witness dramatic decreases in the levels of their anti-Muslim sentiments in a short or medium period. The long-run target population should be future generations. The expected result is that Canadian Muslims will remain an integral part of the Canadian society and hence the society will be purified from its Islamophobic members.

The net results of this study can be summarised this way: (1) Canada provides well accommodates the expectations of Canadian Muslims to freely enjoy the polyethnic demands to pray, eat halal and wear hijab, (2) Canada as a member of the Western club is not immune to Islamophobia and should deal with it before it becomes a complex problem, (3) religious diversity today is an essential part of Canadian multiculturalism and its future depends on addressing challenges raised by Islamophobia, and (4) Canada's mainstream should avoid reducing its ethnocultural relationship with the Muslim minority on issues of "security", otherwise loyal Muslim citizens will increasingly be stigmatized and hence alienated from public life and state institutions, (5) the future of Canadian multiculturalism is dependent on the acceptance of Canadian Muslims as free and equal citizens of the Canadian society, (6) Canada can serve as a micro example of eliminating such racist behavior from a multicultural society.

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Appendix A: Description of Interviewees

1. Abdul-Karim: A fifty-four year old man living in Montreal, who immigrated from Tunisia to Canada.
2. Amin: A 36-year-old man who immigrated to Canada from Tunisia.
3. Amina: A hijab-wearing, 23-year-old woman who immigrated to Canada and comes from to a Pakistani origin.
4. Aisha: A 21-year-old woman who immigrated to Canada at the age of eight and comes from a Pakistani background.
5. Alisha: A hijab-wearing, 26-year-old woman who immigrated to Canada at the age of 18 from Egypt.
6. Ali: A 21-year-old man who was born in Canada and comes from an East African background.
7. Asima: A 25-year-old woman who immigrated to Canada and comes from an African background.
8. Bushra: A 20-year-old Muslim woman who was born in Canada and comes from an Arab background.
9. Celal: A 30-year-old man who immigrated to Canada from Turkey.
10. Dawoud: A 23-year-old who immigrated to Canada from Saudia Arabia.
11. El-Tantawy Attia: The Executive Director of the Muslim Association of Canada from an Egyptian background.
12. Elif: A 26 hijab wearing woman who immigrated to Canada at the age of six from Turkey.
13. Fatima: A 28-year-old woman who immigrated to Canada and comes from a Lebanese background.
14. Fatma: A hijab wearing 38-year-old woman, who immigrated to Canada from Turkey 15 years ago.
15. Feras: A 28-year-old man who immigrated to Canada and comes from a Lebanese background.
16. Futuri: A 40-year-old man who immigrated to Canada and comes from a Libyan origin.
17. Husein: A 33-year-old man who immigrated to Canada twelve years ago and comes from an Arab origin.
18. Murat: A businessman, who immigrated to Canada from Turkey.
19. Imam Yusuf: The Imam of Hz. Abu Bakr Mosque in Toronto from an Arabic background.
20. Reshad: A 35 year-old man who immigrated to Canada many years ago and comes from an Arab origin.
21. Sedef: A 29-year-old women who immigrated to Canada from Turkey.
22. Sami: A Turkish 34-year-old immigrant married to a native Canadian with four children living in Toronto.
23. Sahum: A 25-year-old man who immigrated to Canada few years ago and comes from to an an East African background.
24. Salim: A 24-year-old man who immigrated to Canada a few years ago from Bangladesh.
25. Senol: A 32 year old man, who came to Canada as an international student.
26. Tesnim: A hijab-wearing, 25-year-old woman born in Canada to a Libyan family.
27. Yesim: A hijab wearing interior architect, who came to Canada as an international student and spent 4 years of her life in Canada.
28. Zaid: An immigrant from Iraq, who is a pharmacist in Canada.
29. Zeynab: A 36 year-old woman who immigrated to Canada many years ago and comes from an Arab origin.
30. Zahra: A 27 year-old hijab wearing woman who immigrated to Canada many years ago and comes from an Arab origin.

Appendix B

Interview Guide

Demographic/Background Questions:

1. Where were you born?
2. How old are you?

Questions about Religion:

3. What does Islam mean to you?
4. Can you say the most common demands of the Canadian Muslim community are to pray, eat halal and wear hijab?