MORE THAN JUST TERRORISTS?: CONSTRUCTIONS OF CANADIAN MUSLIM IDENTITIES IN THE CANADIAN DAILY PRESS

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ABSTRACT

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Discursive psychology was used to analyze constructions of Canadian Muslim identities in the Canadian mainstream daily press. News and opinion discourse from a six-month period (November 1, 2008 - April 30, 2009) was examined. Whereas previous research has typically focused on negative news coverage, I examined the full range of identity portrayals of Canadian Muslims available in the daily press. Not unexpectedly, the most overtly negative identity constructions of Canadian Muslims were found in coverage of terrorism trials. In that coverage, the accused were typically worked up as endorsing an extreme interpretation of Islam. These extreme descriptions of the accused may suggest a particularized and therefore non-representative Muslim identity. Negative identity was also constructed in articles that reported on Canadian Muslims’ interactions with the legal and immigration systems: the behaviours of some Canadian Muslims (e.g., polygamy) were formulated as a threat to mainstream Canadian social values. The coverage also dealt with the issue of discrimination against Canadian Muslims. The case for discrimination was accomplished via comparison (e.g., government treatment of Muslim versus non-Muslim Canadians). However, in some coverage, Canadian Muslims were indirectly and subtly portrayed as possibly deserving of discriminatory treatment. Canadian Muslims were favourably portrayed when they: 1) upheld mainstream
Canadian social values, 2) had a sense of humour about their Muslim identity, and 3) educated non-Muslim Canadians about Islam. However, favourable identity constructions of Canadian Muslims were often accompanied by background information that negatively portrayed Muslims in general. This juxtaposition of positive representations of individual Canadian Muslims with negative general information about Muslims and Islam may have subtly suggested that good Muslims are an exception rather than the norm. Overall, it was found that Canadian press coverage offers a fuller picture of Canadian Muslim identity than elsewhere (e.g., the U.S. and the U.K.). However, Sampson’s (1993) distinction between accommodative and transformative voice suggests that this picture is still incomplete. Several possibilities for improvement are suggested; for example, the press’s reliance on ready-made news (e.g., staged events) may provide opportunities to increase favourable identity portrayals of Canadian Muslims.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Within minutes of the planes crashing into the Twin Towers of New York City’s World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001, Islam and terrorism became “inseparable, inextricably linked” (Ahmad, 2006, p. 962). Following these attacks, Muslims, particularly those in Western countries, reported feeling “under the microscope” (Task Force on the Needs of Muslim Students, 2006). In post-9/11 Canada, there has been an increase in reports of discrimination against Muslims, and concerns regarding stereotypical and misleading portrayals of Muslims in the Canadian news media have regularly been voiced. For example, between 1998 and 2004, the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) conducted an annual study of anti-Islam coverage in the Canadian press. From 1998 until September 11, 2001, the CIC’s media research showed a reduction of 17% in the use of anti-Islam language and terminology. However, after September 11, there was a substantial reversal of this trend. According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2006), negative media portrayals and other negative expressions towards Canadian Muslims are evidence of the growing problem of Islamophobia. The Ontario Human Rights code defines Islamophobia as: “stereotypes, bias or acts of hostility towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general.”

Newspaper discourse represents an important site for the (re)production and/or resistance of identities of marginalized groups (Hartley, 1982). Cottle (2000a) argued that it is in and through news media representations that members of the audience are variously invited to construct a sense of who they are in relation to who they are not. In this study, I used discursive psychology to examine portrayals of Canadian Muslims in the mainstream Canadian press. Past research on depictions of Muslims in the press has
tended to focus on news coverage that explicitly problematizes Muslims (e.g., Muslims as terrorists) (Elgamri, 2008; Karim, 2003; Poole, 2002, 2006). In this study, in contrast, I include the full range of identity portrayals of Canadian Muslims that are available in the mainstream daily press. In addition to examining Canadian Muslim identities, this study also explores how these identities were constructed in newspaper discourse, the contexts in which they appeared (i.e., news topics), and who did the constructing (e.g., journalists, news sources). I also explore the social actions that were accomplished through these identity constructions.

In order to place this study in its proper context, I review the literature from two domains of research. First, I review the findings of studies of Muslims in the press. Second, I review social psychological theory on social identity. Following this review of the relevant background literature, I discuss discursive psychology metatheory in general and the discursive psychology approach to the study of identity in particular. I also present the relevant research findings from the latter.

**Background: Studies of Muslims in the Press**

First I review relevant research from the communications and journalism studies fields and a critique is offered. Next I review studies of Muslims in the press conducted from the perspective of critical discourse analysis (CDA), and a critique is offered. Critiques of these two streams of research are provided as a backdrop against which the strengths of the discursive psychology approach can subsequently be considered. I also briefly review and critique several additional studies of Muslims in the press that do not fit within either the journalism studies or the CDA traditions.
Communications/journalism studies research on Muslims in the press. Much of the research on Muslims in the press has been conducted within the fields of communications and journalism studies. The focus of that research has typically been on one or more of three broad aspects of the coverage: the amount of press coverage about Muslims (e.g., before and after 9/11), the content of press coverage about Muslims (e.g., negative and limited depictions); and the type of coverage of Muslims (e.g., domestic versus foreign coverage). I briefly review the findings in each of these areas.

Quantity of press coverage about Muslims. Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, there was an increase in press reports concerning Muslims and Islam. Whittaker (2002) conducted a key word search for “Muslim” and the alternative spelling “Moslem” in seven British daily newspapers and found that the number of articles about Muslims increased between 219% and 658% in the year after 9/11. Based on these increases, Whittaker concluded that “newspaper readers are far more aware of Islam now than they were a few months ago” (Whittaker, 2002, p. 2). Whittaker pointed out that tracking the increase in the amount of coverage does not offer insight into the quality of the information readers received; however, he did not define what was meant by quality (i.e., reliable or positive/negative). Furthermore, Whittaker did not address the even more basic point that simply counting the number of articles containing the word Muslim offered no insight into what the coverage is about in terms of topic (e.g., terrorism, immigration, or some other topic).

A Dutch study by d’Haenens and Bink (2007) also examined the frequency of newspaper coverage of Muslims pre- and post-9/11. Seven years of newspaper coverage (1998-2004) in the Algemeen Dagblad were analyzed, which generated a sample of 667
articles. The authors used Lexis Nexis to search for “Islam” and “Muslim” in the articles’ titles and lead paragraphs. D’Haenens and Bink also searched for the key word fundamentalism, stating that this would yield additional articles where Islam was the key topic. d’Haenens and Bink found that the Algemeen Dagblad published an increasing number of articles about Muslims over the sampling period. Not surprisingly, the peak was in September and October of 2001, which corresponded with the period immediately following the terrorist attacks in the United States. The 72 articles printed in those two months represented more than half (51%) of all Islam-related articles published that year.

**Negative press coverage about Muslims.** In addition to an increase in the amount of press coverage of Muslims and Islam since 9/11, research has also shown that, on balance, the images and discourses that construct Muslim identity in the mainstream press have tended to be negative and hostile (Poole & Richardson, 2006). The pervasiveness of negative reporting on Muslims has been demonstrated in Canada. Karim (2003) employed discourse competition theory in his examination of Canadian media portrayals of “Islamic violence” from 1980 to 2000. According to discourse competition theory, professional journalism tends to reproduce the dominant discourse, which is the perspective favoured by society’s elites. The dominant discourse is presented as being rational and natural, and is used to maintain the status quo. However, discourse competition theory also stresses that the media are not monolithic vehicles for only one type of discourse; mass-mediated discourse can also function as the site of contestation between various views. Nevertheless, by its sheer ubiquity, the dominant discourse in the media mitigates the impact of alternative or oppositional discourses.
In his analysis of Canadian newspaper coverage, Karim (2003) found that the terms “Muslim” and “Islamic,” which refer to the entire religion, its institutions, and adherents, were used mainly in conflictual contexts in headlines such as *The Globe and Mail*’s “Islamic rioters demand freedom for arrested activists.” Similarly, *The Gazette* (Montreal) was found to routinely use phrases such as “Islamic death threat,” “Islamic suicide mission,” and “Islamic powder keg.” According to Karim, examples such as these reflect the dominant discourse on Islam, which demonizes the entire faith as fanatical. Karim also stressed that Western journalists are usually loathe to use “Christian” or “Judaic” in similar ways, although he did not link this claim to evidence from his analysis. The findings of Karim’s study are limited, however, because he did not employ systematic sampling criteria to generate his data set.

Martin and Phelan (2002) compared representations of Muslims and Islam on US television and on CNN’s online messageboard from September 11 to 17, 2001. Two textual corpora were analyzed: first, a 4.18 million word corpus of transcripts from five US television networks (CNN, ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox), and second, a CNN online messageboard corpus of 2.39 million words. A total of 30,836 messages was posted to the messageboard during the sampled time frame. Using the lexical analysis software Wordsmith, Martin and Phelan focused their analysis on noun phrases in which “Islamic” was used as an adjective. The authors acknowledged that one limitation of this approach was that the sample would include the phrase “Islamic militant,” while excluding the phrase “militant Islamic.” However, they stated that an advantage of this procedure was that it offered a simple, structured way of analyzing use of the word “Islamic” in two corpora with a combined count of over six million words.
The purpose of Martin and Phelan’s (2002) analysis was twofold: first, to look at the immediate lexical company of the word “Islamic” to provide insight into the dominant cognitive map of Islam; and second, to compare the lexical choices circulating in the two types of coverage. The number of noun phrases headed by the word “Islamic” was 468 in the television corpus and 1,582 in the messageboard corpus. The authors presented the 15 most commonly used noun phrases in each corpus. In the television corpus, the top three pairings were: “Islamic fundamentalist(s)” (11%); “Islamic jihad” (7%); and “Islamic world” (6%). In the online message board corpus the three most frequent pairings were: “Islamic terrorist(s)” (11%); “Islamic fundamentalist(s)” (9%); and “Islamic jihad” (6%).

Martin and Phelan (2002) found a high degree of commonality across the corpora. Ten of the same noun phrases appear in the top 15 of both corpora, accounting for 53% of the television corpus and 46.2% of the messageboard corpus. There was also cross-media correspondence between the descriptive (e.g., faith, nation, etc.) and evaluative (e.g., fundamentalist, militant, etc.) characterizations of Islam. According to the authors, the high cross-media incidence of the phrase “Islamic world” was noteworthy because it points to a “false universal” or mythic cognitive map of Islam (p. 264). Martin and Phelan also emphasize that an important cross-media void is the absence of any reference to “Islamic moderate(s)” (p. 264).

Martin and Phelan (2002) also found that there was a much higher incidence of Islamic noun phrases on the messageboard than in the television corpus. Although the messageboard corpus was significantly smaller than the television corpus, there were over three times as many noun phrases used on the messageboard than on television:
1,582 compared to 468. The most significant difference between the corpora was the ranking of “Islamic terrorist(s).” In the messageboard corpus “Islamic terrorist(s)” was ranked number one with a total of 174 uses (11%), whereas in the television corpus “Islamic terrorist(s)” was used only 14 times (3%). According to the authors, this suggests that irrespective of how the events were being precisely named and framed on US television, the recurring association of Islamic with terrorist(s) was prevalent amongst messageboard participants. What Martin and Phelan did not address, however, was the difference in the discursive activities involved, whereby messageboards might involve participants agreeing with, and therefore incorporating noun phrases heard elsewhere. Furthermore, news values regarding neutrality would suggest that it is not unexpected that fewer of these noun phrases were used in the television corpus.

**Research on domestic Muslims in the press.** In his assessment of the British context, Richardson (2001a) stated that there has been surprisingly little empirical research on British newspaper representations of British Muslims. The majority of the research has used selective, non-systematic, anecdotal evidence to illustrate biases in news media coverage. According to Meer (2006), it is important to distinguish between news coverage of domestic Muslims and news coverage of Muslims living in foreign countries because there is a tendency to “reduce the interpretation of the discourse to binary distinctions such as East versus West” (Meer, 2006, p. 45). For Meer, this binary framework is “essentialist, outmoded and empirically unsustainable given the number of Muslims currently residing in Britain who were born and brought up in the U.K.” (Meer, 2006, p. 45). According to Poole (2006) the study of British newspaper representations
of British Muslims is important because it allows for an examination of whether the local context is linked to more variety in representation.

In keeping with the findings on the frequency of newspaper coverage of Muslims already reviewed (Whittaker, 2002; d’Haenens & Bink, 2007), it has been shown that the number of articles in the British press that concern British Muslims increased over time. For example, in a sample that included coverage of both domestic and foreign Muslims, Poole (2006) found that newspaper articles about British Muslims accounted for 12% of the sample in 1994, 20% in 1999, and 25% in 2003.

A study by Richardson (2001a) examined 2,540 articles from British broadsheet newspapers that featured Muslims. The portion of the data set represented by British Muslims (the “domestic sample”) was surprisingly small at 11%, which is to say that the Muslims portrayed were predominantly foreign. Richardson found that negativity dominated the reporting on British Muslims. Violence was referred to in 38% of domestic articles. Peace was referred to in 9.4% of domestic articles. The words “fundamentalist/ism” and “terrorist/ism” were found in, respectively, 27% and 23% of the domestic sample. According to Richardson, this “negativisation” distinguishes British Muslims from Britain’s predominantly white, non-Muslim communities.

Richardson (2001a) also examined the inclusion of quotations by British Muslims in the domestic sample. According to Richardson, quotations are an indicator of wider societal inclusion. Richardson found that 31% percent of articles quoted primary actors who were Muslims, compared with 58% that quoted actors who were non-Muslim. Richardson concluded that Muslim actors, even those who were so central to the reported event that they were the first individual referred to in a news report, were considered to
be “less informed, less authoritative and less credible sources than non-Muslims” (p. 229).

A study by Poole (2006) used quantitative content analysis to explore British newspaper coverage of British Muslims in 2003. The frequencies generated by quantitative content analysis were argued by Poole to be a useful measure of the amount of attention and thus importance assigned to stories about British Muslims. Poole analyzed coverage from The Guardian and The Times and their sister Sunday newspapers, The Observer and The Sunday Times. These publications were chosen because they have differing political/ideological stances: The Guardian is left of centre politically, and The Times is politically conservative. In order to ensure a representative sample, Poole included all articles that used the terms Muslim or Islam.

Poole (2006) identified the types of stories in which British Muslims were featured, thereby purporting to reveal the assumptions that are made about them. In both The Times and the Guardian, the most frequent topic in 2003 was terrorism. Other topics included politics, the war in Iraq, education (e.g., religious schools), discrimination, race relations, relationships (e.g., marriages between British Muslims and prominent non-Muslims), crime and asylum. With respect to the most dominant representation of British Muslims—Islamic terrorist—Poole concluded that it “closely resembles that of the global aggressor, which suggests that the notion of an essential Muslimness is present and is in danger of becoming fixed” (p. 102). Poole found that terrorism accounted for 24% of the coverage in the Guardian and 30% in The Times. According to Poole, the greater focus on terrorism in the more politically conservative newspaper was not surprising given that the terrorist identity fits with the negative perceptions of Muslims that are more likely to be
reinforced in the conservative press. Poole also found that the religious beliefs of Muslims were cited by journalists as the key to understanding all Muslim behaviour. Muslims’ religious beliefs were treated as the root cause of conflict and the difficulty Muslims have in adapting to British culture.

**Critique of the communications/journalism studies research.** It was often the case that studies conducted in the communications and journalism studies fields were not situated within an explicit perspective. This is problematic because the foundational and methodological assumptions that the researcher relied on were often unclear. As Wood and Kroger (2000) note, the dimensions on which perspectives vary include:

- orientations toward language as action and as topic, the definition of terms, the nature and role of theory, the nature of research questions, the sorts of data that are analyzed, the conceptualization and treatment of context, data collection, sampling, transcription, categorization, levels of analysis, quantification, the warranting of claims and the writing of reports (p. 18).

A specific example from the literature I reviewed comes from Martin and Phelan (2002), wherein the authors concluded that references to the “Islamic world” in their television and messageboard corpi were evidence of the existence of a “cognitive map of Islam” (p. 266). Edwards and Potter (1992) defined cognitivism as an explanatory strategy in which perception and action are said to be shaped by the cognitive processes of individuals. In the cognitivist perspective, everyday language is treated as a mental abstraction, that is, as a route to cognition wherein talk and text can be directly mapped onto underlying cognitive representations of knowledge and reasoning. Martin and Phelan’s (2002) statement regarding a “cognitive map of Islam” signals that the authors
adopted a cognitivist approach; however, as is commonly the case in cognitivist research, the authors did not explicitly disclose a commitment to that particular perspective (Potter and Edwards, 2003). As a consequence, the authors’ assumptions are left untested, and such an approach can therefore only provide a partial account of the phenomenon under examination.

Another limitation of the communications/journalism studies research, which is related to the tendency to avoid articulating foundational assumptions, is that identity was often unproblematically treated as a variable that is amenable to fixed, essentialized categories, such as those of race, sex, or gender (Somers, 1994). For example, in Richardson’s (2001b) study, which examined the question of who speaks in newspaper stories about British Muslims, sources were treated as holding a singular identity: Muslim or non-Muslim. So, for example, if a government official was quoted, that person was automatically treated by Richardson as a non-Muslim source, regardless of whether he/she was Muslim.

Most of the research I reviewed on Muslims in the press did not go beyond content analysis. Content analysis involves what Edwards and Potter (1992) call “gross categorization.” Gross categorization blurs the fine details of language use in favour of its general form. Furthermore, the process of categorization prevents the analyst from examining the particulars of the context within which the discourse was created (Hopkins & Reicher, 1996).

In some of the studies I reviewed, there was no description of the methodology whatsoever, and in others very few details were provided regarding analytical procedures. For example, Karim (2003) cited examples of headlines where Islam was negatively
linked with descriptors such as “fundamentalist” and “terrorist”; however, these seemed to be selective examples from the broader collection because Karim did not provide information about the process he used to gather and analyze the headlines. In cases such as this, the reader does not have the information necessary for evaluating the claims made and the conclusions drawn.

It is particularly relevant to the present research that the literature contained little to no information about non-negative coverage. For example, d’Haenens and Bink (2006) commented only in passing that some attempts to associate Islam with positive elements were found in Dutch newspaper coverage. They cited the example of an article that profiled a Moroccan cabaret dancer. It would seem that in contrast to d’Haenens and Bink’s principal finding that the Dutch press portray Islam as an extremist religion, a lone article about a cabaret dancer who is Muslim is somewhat trivial. However, the authors did not report having conducted a systematic analysis of the non-negative coverage. Therefore, it is possible that the sample contained additional cases.

**Critical discourse analysis studies of Muslims in the press.** Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an approach that has been widely used to study representations of racialized minority groups in the press. For example, Teo (2000) examined newspaper depictions of Vietnamese in Australia; Wodak and Matouschek (1993) studied Austrian newspaper discourse about immigrant (i.e., non-white) workers; and Pietikainen (2003) used CDA to explore how an indigenous group was represented in the Finnish press. CDA has also been used to explore the portrayals of Muslims in news discourse, and a detailed review of three such studies follows.

Richardson (2001b) examined letters to the editor over a period of four months from
October 1997 to January 1998. The letters were written in response to articles (news stories, editorials, features, columns, cartoons, reviews and letters) that featured Muslim actors in prominent positions. The sample was comprised of 86 letters. Citing Hartley (1992), Richardson stated that letters to the editor of broadsheet newspapers are an example of an elite discourse genre, and therefore represent an important site for the (re)production and/or resistance of discourse around notions of “We-dom” and “They-dom” (p. 144). We-dom and They-dom refer to the organization of society according to strategies of inclusion and exclusion, dividing people into “us” and “them.” The boundaries of We-dom and They-dom can be drawn not only on the basis of citizenship, but also on the basis of gender, race, class, and ethnicity, etc. (Hartley, 1992). In keeping with van Dijk (1987), Richardson focused on the argumentative structures of readers’ letters to show how argument is used to support the expression of delicate or controversial social opinions, while simultaneously protecting the speaker against unwanted negative inferences about his or her ethnic attitudes.

In the first part of his analysis, Richardson (2001b) categorized the letters using a series of binary positions thought to characterize “closed” and “open” representations of Islam (p. 149). For example, in a closed representation, Islam might be depicted as inferior to the West, whereas in an open representation, Islam would be represented as being equal to the West. The other binary positions examined were: Islam represented as separate/interacting; Islam represented as enemy/partner; criticism of the West by Islamic sources rejected/considered; Islamophobia defended/criticized; and Islam versus the West as natural/problematic.
Richardson (2001b) found that negative-Other representations of Muslims/Islam were dominant in the letters. Muslims and Islam were represented as the West’s enemy in 62% of the letters, and 60% argued that there is something innate or natural in the enmity between Islam and the West. In 68% of letters, writers argued that Islam and Muslims are separate from, or Other in relation to the West. Richardson also found that these percentages increased in letters where it was argued that Islam is an influential factor in explaining the social action of Muslim people. In these letters, “Islamic-ness” was employed by the writers as a rhetorical resource to derogate Muslims. Generally speaking, the letters to the editor were found to take a closed view of Islam.

In the second part of this study, a thematic analysis showed that the presumed incompatibility between Islam and the West was accompanied by three stereotypical themes: Muslim terrorist violence; freedom of speech; and the poor treatment of women. Richardson demonstrated how rhetorical resources and the structures of argumentation were used by letter writers to support their claims. The most common argumentative strategy letter writers used to derogate Islam was to refer to acts of violence carried out by Muslims in the name of Islam. The discursive features of this argumentative strategy included arguing from part (Muslims) to whole (Islam), and the use of hyperbole. Alleging an association between Islam and the curtailment of free speech was another argumentative strategy used to derogate Muslims. Richardson cited the example of a letter to the editor in which the Satanic Verses was labeled as “criticism and satire,” implying over-sensitivity and that Muslims somehow “didn’t get the joke” (p. 153). Argumentation of this sort both assumes and concludes that Islam and free speech are somehow incompatible. The subjugation and abuse of Muslim women at the hands of
Muslim men was an extensively employed argumentative strategy in this sample of reader letters. This argumentative strategy was found to be frequently accompanied by analogy. According to Richardson, arguments based on analogy are a form of “plausible reasoning,” in which argumentative supports are attuned to an audience’s ideological commitments. Arguments based on analogy increase the likelihood that the audience will support the author’s position. Richardson concluded that taken together, the three argumentative themes of Muslim terrorist violence, free speech, and control/repression of women demonstrated the presumed inferiority of Islamic culture and values. The implication was that Muslims should adapt to the dominant culture’s way of life.

Meer (2006) examined the representations of British Muslims that were made available by “print media public intellectuals” (PMPI). PMPI are influential print media journalists who are recognized for their expertise across a wide range of topics upon which they choose to comment. Meer analyzed articles written by PMPI in five British newspapers: The Telegraph, The Daily Mail, The Times, The Observer and the Guardian. PMPI were selected for being broadly representative of secular liberal or conservative nationalist positions, along with their notoriety with the public. It was Meer’s contention that PMPI from both the liberal and conservative camps take a “bottom line” approach in their discussions about Muslims (p. 40). Both sets of PMPI share a set of assumptions based on an “ethnic absolutism” where Britishness is exclusionary and intransigent. Meer adopted Hage’s (1998) concept of “white fantasy” to explain the PMPI’s belief that they have a right to intervene and regulate the lives of ethnic Others, while at the same time cementing the myth that it is the very presence of ethnic Others, and not the discourse about them, that perpetuates racism (p. 40).
In keeping with Richardson (2001a), Meer’s (2006) analysis focused on the argumentation strategies of PMPI in their depictions of British Muslims. One broad and recurring theme identified by Meer was the idea that Muslims and Islam are anti-modern and antipathetic to democracy and human rights. Within this anti-modern theme, PMPI were often found to invoke issues related to multiculturalism. Specifically, multiculturalism was repeatedly framed by PMPI as marking a choice for British Muslims between integration and separatism. Integration is treated as assimilation, so that an inherent Britishness may remain unchanged. Separatism on the other hand is typified by the example of self-segregating Muslim communities in specific parts of the U.K. Another theme identified by Meer in the PMPI discourse was the idea that Muslims receive special treatment at the expense of other groups in British society. In Meer’s view, this was a particularly useful argumentative strategy in post-Rushdie Britain because it fits with the previously established complaint that Muslims are not capable of taking criticism or understanding satire. According to Meer (2006), this study demonstrated how PMPI “cultivate public notions and contribute to the formation of a particular consciousness” (p. 53). By analyzing argumentation strategies, Meer purported to have shown that the reproduction of stereotypes reinforces particular perceptions and understandings of Muslims in Britain.

Elgamri (2008) used CDA to analyze British broadsheet coverage of four foreign events: 1) the fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini in February 1989 against the Indian-born British novelist Salman Rushdie, 2) the emergence and seizure of power by the Taliban movement in Afghanistan in 1996, 3) the killing of 59 foreign tourists by the Jamaat Islamia at the Luxor hotel in Egypt in 1997, and 4) the attack on the World Trade
Center and the Pentagon in the United States in 2001. Elgamri sought to highlight questions of power and ideology in the process of representation in light of the characteristics of Orientalist discourse. According to the Orientalist tradition, Islam is viewed on the basis of the following set of assumptions: 1) its alleged contrast with and difference from the West, 2) its alleged inability to change, 3) its perceived incompatibility with modernism, 4) its perceived threat and destabilizing power, 5) its demographic and socio-cultural threat, and 6) its monolithism.

Elgamri’s (2008) sample included the first six weeks of coverage in three daily newspapers: *the Guardian, The Independent and The Times*. Elgamri selected articles for analysis based on five key themes: 1) representations of Islam as a monolithic entity, 2) associations of Islam and Muslims with extremism, 3) associations of Islam and Muslims with terrorism, 4) representations of Islam and Muslims as anti-Western, and 5) representations of Islam and Muslims as irrational.

Elgamri (2008) found that British broadsheet coverage tended to represent a single, monolithic Islam that ignored the demarcations between militant, moderate and liberal versions of Islam. Mainstream Islam was often conflated with the militant version of Islam. For example, violent acts carried out by militant movements were not explicitly and unequivocally attributed to the radical fringes of the Muslim faith such as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Elgamri also found that within the Rushdie coverage and the September 11 coverage, members of the British Muslim community were represented explicitly and implicitly as a “threat-from-within,” for example by questioning the loyalty of British Muslims to Britain and their commitment to law and order (Elgamri, 2008, p. 222).

Emotive language was frequently used to make events seem sensational and dramatic. In
particular, emotive language was paired with religious identifiers such as “Muslim fundamentalists,” “Islamic extremist,” and “Islamic terrorism.” Elgamri also found that the terms “Arab” and “Muslim” were used synonymously despite the fact that all Arabs are not Muslim nor are all Muslims Arab. This inaccuracy may, according to Elgamri, contribute to Britons’ use of a racial basis to discriminate against Muslims.

A number of other studies of press coverage of Muslims were reviewed, but were found to be only peripherally related to the central concern of my study, which is the range of identities of Canadian Muslims in the Canadian press. Among these was a study by Gottschalk and Greenberg (2008) that examined political cartoons to demonstrate how symbols and stereotypes are presented visually to construct Muslims as the opponents of the United States. Gottschalk and Greenberg analyzed images rather than discourse. Ahmad (2006) interviewed British Muslims about their reactions to news reporting of the events of 9/11. In that study, the news coverage itself was secondary to Muslims’ reactions to it. Hogan (2006) used content analysis and CDA to examine the extent to which letters to the editor supported or challenged state policies and practices in the US-led War on Terror. Mishra (2008) examined US newspaper articles to establish how the relationship between Islam and democracy in the Turkish, Iraqi and Iranian contexts was constructed. Both Hogan and Mishra focused on broader social concepts (i.e., democracy and public policy), rather than on the identities of Muslim people that are constructed in the press, which is my primary interest.

The primary value of reviewing this peripheral literature was that these studies contributed to my understanding of the broader context. For example, in the introduction to their study of Muslims in political cartoons, Gottschalk and Greenberg (2008)
provided general information about Islam. The authors reported that the nations with the largest Muslim populations are, in order, Indonesia, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, and it is estimated that 1.2 billion people identify themselves as Muslim globally, that is, one in five people.

**Critique of CDA studies.** Generally speaking, the CDA approach is macro-analytical and is concerned with critically examining social and cultural practices. The emphasis in CDA is therefore on understanding discourse in relation to social problems and social-structural variables such as race, gender and class, and most centrally, power (Wood & Kroger, 2000). CDA has been subjected to a number of critiques on various grounds. However, in this section I will address three specific concerns: the role of context, the explanatory significance of social cognition, and the centrality of ideology.

One assumption of the CDA studies reviewed here is that all discourses are historical and they can therefore only be understood with reference to context (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Once a feature of context has been “observed, postulated or otherwise identified, CDA is used to explore whether and how such a feature affects, or is affected by structures of text and talk” (van Dijk, 1998, p. 460). Therefore, contextual categories such as gender and power might be postulated a priori in order to understand or explain ongoing talk. Contextual presuppositions of this sort have opened CDA up to criticism from those who reject performing this “side-step,” which takes the analyst directly from the text to something regarded as real and determining behind the discourse (Widdicombe & Wooffit, 1995). The limitations of this practice were articulated by Schegloff (1997) who contended that, although as members of society analysts might know, for example, who is oppressed, it is self-indulgent to import this knowledge a priori into the analysis.
Those who argue against CDA’s *a priori* reliance on macro social structures to explain discourse suggest that analysts should focus instead on the concerns of the participants. The provenance of this position is in ethnomethodology. Ethnomethodology is the study of people’s methods for producing and making sense of everyday social life (Garfinkle, 1967). Therefore, the shift to an analytic focus on the concerns of participants is guided by the lessons from ethnomethodology about how language is used in everyday situations. The recommendation to focus on participants’ concerns is also linked to the requirement in discursive psychology that the analyst must be able to point to the place in the data where things happen in order to warrant analytic claims (Wetherell, 1998).

In some studies that apply CDA (e.g., van Dijk, 1998; Wodak & Matouschek, 1993), social cognition is said to mediate the relationship between language and society. Several assumptions underlie social cognition theory: that human cognitive abilities are limited, that people therefore process information as “cognitive misers” so as to be able to manage the demands of everyday interaction, and that, following from the need for cognitive efficiency, people categorize information about people, objects and situations before they engage memory or inferential processes (Howard, 2000). It is therefore assumed that in producing discourse, people rely mainly on collective frames of perception called social representations. One limitation of this cognitive focus is that social representations are treated as separate from the practices in which they are used. When social representations are conceptualized as static entities that are carried around in the minds of individuals, explanatory attention is drawn away from what is being done with representations in the settings in which they are produced. This limits the exploration of the indexical and reflexive properties of discourse (Edwards & Potter,
The terms “indexical” and “reflexive” come from the ethnomethodological tradition. The term “indexical” refers to the idea that the meaning of a word or utterance is dependent on its context of use (Potter, 2006). When ethnomethodologists use the term “context” they mean more than the features of the setting of talk. They mean that an utterance is fitted to a sequence of talk, which is part of a broader social setting (Potter, 1996). The term “reflexive” refers to the idea that, in addition to being about actions, events and situations, discourse is at the same time constitutive of those things (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). According to the ethnomethodological approach, the realistic model that treats talk as basically a descriptive or representational medium is flawed, and the concept of reflexivity is used to undermine the dualism that realism assumes between a description and what it is a description of (Potter, 1996). Reflexivity also suggests that the findings of discourse analysis apply equally to the texts produced by discourse analysts (e.g., this dissertation). As Potter and Wetherell (1987) stressed, the point is that all texts are subject to the same processes and have the same constructed, action-oriented aspects.

Ideology is a socio-cognitive concept that features prominently in the CDA studies I reviewed. Ideology refers to the systems of ideas that act as interpretation schemes for everyday life, and which are suffused with common sense or partisan interests. In CDA, ideologies are understood as central to the self-identity of groups and how they view their relationship to other groups. According to this approach, ideologies are expressed in discourse. Therefore, CDA is used to examine the concrete, contextualized manifestations of socially shared ideological representations in the details of talk. However, this process of linking the details of text to the operation of ideology is
regarded as problematic from the discursive psychology perspective because it implies that discourse and ideologies have a separate existence. In the discursive psychology approach, ideologies are created in and through discourse.

**Additional studies of Muslims in the press.** In this sub-section I review two studies that did not fit within the journalism studies or CDA traditions. Said (1981) was among the first scholars to conduct a study of the Western media’s constructions of Muslim societies. Said demonstrated that events such as the oil crisis in the mid-1970s and the overthrow of the Shah of Iran by Islamist militants were viewed by Western journalists within an Orientalist perspective. Said used the term Orientalism to describe a pervasive Western tradition, both academic and artistic, of prejudiced outsider interpretations of the East, shaped by the attitudes of European imperialism in the 18th and 19th centuries. According to Said, Western news correspondents who reported on Muslim countries were generally poorly equipped to provide readers with an adequate understanding of those nations and as a result, stereotypical generalizations and clichés were common in the coverage. Although Said focused on U.S. news coverage of specific events such as the hostage crisis at the U.S.-embassy in Tehran in 1979, he did not report any details about the sampling procedures he used to collect his data. Said also did not provide any information regarding the sampling time frame, the sample publications, the sample size, or his criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of specific items in the sample. In a chapter about U.S. news coverage of the hostage crisis in Tehran, for example, the only information Said provided about sampling was as follows: “To sift through the immense amount of material generated by the takeover of the United States Embassy in Teheran…is to be struck by a number of things” (p. 77). Therefore, although the
examples Said used to support his claims seem to make a compelling case for the misrepresentation of Muslims and Islam, the findings of this study are severely limited by Said’s selective sampling procedures.

According to Brown (2006), representations of Islam and Muslims were “sophisticated, diverse and historically fluid before 9/11” (p. 297). Brown’s research, which was presented as a critique of Said’s (1981) study of Orientalist discourse in the media, sought to demonstrate the heterogeneous nature of categories such as “the West” and “Islam.” Brown analyzed newspaper articles from the United Kingdom and France from the 1970s to the late 1990s. Brown focused on newspapers from the “quality press” that were politically centrist or left-wing on the basis that “it would be easy to find sensationalized material on virtually anything in the British tabloids, and they do not really have a French equivalent” (p. 298).

Brown (2006) demonstrated that a paradigm shift had occurred across the twenty-year time frame from an exotic, sensual stereotype of Muslims to the more recent stereotype of Muslim fanaticism. Brown also found that prior to the Rushdie affair in Britain, the discourse focused on Asians or Pakistanis, but thereafter switched to an emphasis on “Muslims.” This shift marked a change from identity constructions based on ethnicity and nationality to identity constructions based on religion. However, Brown also found that pre-9/11 discourses were diverse, ranging from highly negative stereotypes of Islam to a reflexive critique of media Islamophobia. Methodologically, Brown’s study significantly improved upon the earlier work by Said (1981), and contributed to the empirical knowledge base regarding the representation of Muslims in the press prior to 9/11.
Background: Social Psychological research on Identity

In the last section, most of the studies I reviewed described their central concern as “representations” of Muslims (e.g., Brown, 2006; d’Haenens & Bink, 2006; Martin & Phelan, 2002; Poole, 2006; Richardson, 2001). These studies did not, however, specifically articulate a theory of identity, which is a concept that is central both to this study and within the field of social psychology. I therefore begin this section with a review of conventional social psychological theories of identity and provide an example of how research on Muslim identity is typically carried out in this tradition. I then offer a critique of this approach, which acts as a backdrop against which the merits of the discursive approach to the study of identity can be considered.

In social psychology, the major approaches to social and personal identity categories are Tajfel’s (1982) social identity theory (SIT) and Turner’s (1987) self-categorization theory (SCT). Both SIT and SCT are rooted in social cognition theory. I will not discuss SIT and SCT in detail here; however, I wish to highlight some of the basic features of these approaches so as to provide a “critical edge” (Edwards, 1998, p. 16) to the discursive approach that I used in my research.

The central assumption of SIT is that individuals define their identities along two dimensions: first, the social dimension, which is defined by membership in various social groups; second, the personal dimension, which refers to the idiosyncratic attributes that distinguish an individual from others. In SCT, the building blocks for constructing identity— the social categories themselves— are understood to be objective phenomena. In SCT, identity is built by selecting a particular self categorization as appropriate for a given set of circumstances.
In SIT and SCT, categorization is treated as a psychological, subjective, private mental process. Because of this cognitivist foundation, SCT assumes perceptual, prelinguistic origins of language and mind (Edwards, 1998). SIT and SCT treat identity as an explanatory resource, which means that people are understood to passively or latently have a certain identity, which then causes feelings and actions. In keeping with the theoretical and methodological traditions of experimental psychology, both SIT and SCT treat categories as experimental variables.

Although I will not fully review the extant literature on the application of SIT and SCT to Muslim identity, an example of how this research is typically carried out using SIT is provided here. Because both SIT and SCT research are based on the same cognitivist assumptions and they both use the same methodological approach, the general critique I go on to make applies to both approaches. I therefore do not review a separate SCT study.

Social identity theory was used by Verkuyten (2007) to explore the relationship between group identification and intergroup relations by focusing on religion. Identification was studied in relation to general affective ratings of multiple religious out-groups and the endorsement of Islamic group rights. According to Verkuyten, although religion is an important dimension for defining a positive social identity in comparison to dissenters and non-believers, social psychology has paid little attention to religious identity. Verkuyten also contended that in the Netherlands, Islam has increasingly become the “negative other,” and in the Dutch media, Islam has become symbolic for problems related to ethnic minorities and migration. Verkuyten predicted that Muslim identity would be very important for most Turkish-Dutch participants and that this would
make Islamic group identification more like a nominal rather than a continuous variable. According to SIT, when identity circumstances are threatening, people will try to maintain or restore a positive and distinct collective identity, for example by increasing their ingroup favouritism (Verkuyten, 2007). Therefore, Verkuyten (2007) also predicted that Turkish-Dutch Muslims would express negative feelings toward religious outgroups. Following Berry and Kalin (1995), Verkuyten also predicted that as a religious minority group, Turkish-Dutch Muslims would favour Islamic group rights because these offer the possibility of maintaining and expressing their own distinctive religious identity and obtaining more equal social status in society.

Verkuyten (2007) conducted a questionnaire study of 217 Turkish-Dutch participants, 206 of whom indicated that they were Muslim. Muslim group identification was assessed based on six items that used seven-point scales. More than 50% of participants had a score of seven on the Muslim group identification scale, which according to Verkuyten (2007) indicated that their Muslim identity was an integral or inextricable part of how those participants saw themselves. Verkuyten created two groups, classifying participants as either “high” or “total” on Muslim group identification.

In order to measure participants’ feelings towards other religious groups, the researcher had participants complete the “feeling thermometer.” One-hundred degrees on the feeling thermometer indicated a very positive feeling toward a group and zero degrees indicated very negative feelings. Feelings toward five religious groups were examined: Hindustanis, Christians, Muslims, Jews and non-believers. To assess participants’ attitudes towards Islamic group rights in the Netherlands, eight items that were relevant to the Dutch context were used. These items focused on public rights such as the right to
establish Islamic schools. Items were measured on seven-point scales ranging from one (disagree strongly) to seven (agree strongly).

For the thermometer questions, Muslims’ ratings were significantly negatively related to feelings towards non-believers, but not significantly related to feelings towards the other religious out-groups. The mean score for Islamic group rights indicated that the participants favoured special rights for Muslims (\(M=5.52, \text{SD}=1.34\)). Verkuyten used regression analysis to predict the endorsement of Islamic group rights, and found that Muslim identification was a significant positive predictor of group rights.

According to Verkuyten (2007), the high proportion of “total” Muslim identifiers is probably related to global and national developments. For example, the “increased global tensions and divergences between the Western and Islamic world may force Turkish-Dutch Muslims to a position of having to defend and stress their religion” (Verkuyten, 2007, p. 351). Verkuyten also contended that the results show that the dichotomous distinction between high and total Muslim identification is an important one because individuals who reported feeling totally committed to their religious group showed very strong ingroup favouritism and were much more in favour of making demands for Muslim group rights than those with a high but not total score on Muslim identification.

**Critique of social identity theory research.** In the conventional social psychological approach, criticisms of Verkuyten’s (2007) might centre around concerns regarding the methodological limitations of survey research using questionnaires, for example, measurement issues related to scale type or issues of response bias such as social desirability. However, here I will forego a detailed discussion of the concerns raised by
conventional social psychological research in favour of drawing attention to the limitations of that research suggested by the discursive approach.

As previously mentioned, conventional social psychological research operates in line with a realist stance whereby epistemological assumptions are not articulated. For example, Hepburn and Potter (2004) noted that researchers’ own categories are embedded in the items in questionnaires and that questionnaire research puts people in the position of disinterested experts on their own and others’ practices, thoughts and so on, which encourages participants to provide normatively appropriate responses. In the discursive approach, epistemology is not taken for granted. Investigating the epistemological orientation of discourse requires identifying the mechanisms by which descriptions are made to appear factual and objective (Potter, 1996).

Social identity theorists also tend to assume the operation of particular social identities. For example, researchers simply assume that the social actors they study are acting as Palestinians, as women, as French Canadians, and so forth (Antaki, Condor, & Levine, 1996). These researchers often attempt to verify their assumptions concerning the operation of social identities by asking participants questions concerning the nature and strength of their group identification. A second strategy these researchers use to verify assumptions concerning the operation of social identities involves inferring a social identification by observing its presumed effects. Social identity theorists often warrant knowledge of the salience of a particular aspect of social identity by pointing to phenomena such as ingroup favouritism or social stereotyping. However, a participant’s ingroup favouritism might, in principle, be set up by something quite different from social identification, and there is no self-evident guarantee that social identification
always or even usually brings about ingroup favouritism. Antaki, Condor and Levine (1996) warned of the danger of circular reason as a “lurking problem” in this approach (p. 476). A good deal of research deriving from social identity theory relies on the assumption that social identifications represent relatively enduring aspects of participants’ self-perceptions. This is particularly apparent in studies such as the one by Verkuyten (2004) that I reviewed in detail above, which attempted to measure and compare individuals in terms of the strength of their identification with a particular category, and then considered how these individual differences co-varied with phenomena such as ingroup favouritism.

An appreciation of the context-dependent nature of social identity might lead one to question field research which assumes that the ways in which respondents describe themselves to a researcher on a questionnaire has some bearing on their activities in other, different, situations. In studies like Verkuyten’s (2007), the way the research was conceptualized and the way the data were interpreted involved setting aside the possibility of flexibility within the research context. As a consequence, researchers make the assumption that aspects of social identity were uniformly salient or not salient to participants throughout the duration of the study and also that over the course of the research, the context did not shift or change (Antaki et al., 1996). In SIT studies such as Verkuyten’s (2007), no mention was made of the ontological status of identity; however, identity was treated as being real (i.e., cognitively real at the level of perception). Whereas cognitivists treat identity as a mental state, ethnomethodologists, as I will show in the next section, treat identity as a device that is deployed in local discursive transactions (Antaki et al., 1996).
Background: The Discursive Psychology Approach to the Study of Identity

I begin this section with a review of the metatheoretical framework of discursive psychology (DP). Next I discuss the DP approach to the study of identity. This section concludes with a review of the findings from DP studies of identity.

Discursive psychology. The metatheoretical framework adopted in this study is that of discursive psychology (Edwards, 1998, 2004; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996). In the preceding critique of the CDA approach, I drew upon some of the principles from ethnomethodology that underlie DP (e.g., discourse is indexical and reflexive). Because of its influence on DP, I will begin this section with a discussion of several additional features of ethnomethodology. I will then present DP more formally, albeit briefly.

Recently, ethnomethodology has been used to refute the long-standing view of language which treats the relationship between a word or utterance and an object as what is important about a description (Potter, 1996). Because the scientific approach treats descriptions as a stand-in for something in the world, they are understood to be “merely the linguistic imprints left by the factual object” (Potter, 1996, p. 42). Potter (1996) focused on three ethnomethodological concepts that are critical to the approach’s different understanding of the nature of facts – indexicality, reflexivity and the documentary method of interpretation. Brief definitions of indexicality and reflexivity were provided in the previous section. The documentary method of interpretation is based on Garfinkel’s (1967) claim that, in making sense of the world, people come to understand events and actions in terms of “background expectancies, models and ideas” (Potter, 1996, p. 49). These background expectancies are modified by the understanding which is gained, so there is a circular process continually taking place: an utterance is
seen as evidence of a pattern and, in turn, the fact that the utterance is part of the pattern is used to make sense of it.

Edwards (2004) defines DP as “the application of principles and methods from discourse and conversation analysis…to psychological themes” (p. 258). The general term “discourse analysis” (DA) refers to a range of related but contrasting research traditions. One major difference between the various types of DA is their methods of analysis. For example, the form of DA rooted in linguistics analyzes discourse in terms of grammatical structures, while critical discourse analysis (CDA) combines linguistic analysis with ideological critique (Edwards, 2004). Conversation analysis can be thought of as a development of ethnomethodology which followed up the insights about the indexical and reflexive nature of discourse and applied them to conversational interaction (Potter, 1996). In conversation analysis, the concern with indexicality focuses on how utterances relate to the conversational sequences in which they occur. The concern with reflexivity is demonstrated through the attention conversation analysts devote to the kinds of interactional work discourse accomplishes. A third defining feature of conversation analysis is that interaction is regarded as methodically based, which is to say that talk-in-interaction is orderly (Potter, 1996).

Discursive psychology embraces a social constructionist perspective. According to Potter (1996), the concept of construction operates on two levels when applied to descriptions and accounts. First, descriptions and accounts construct versions of the world. Second, descriptions and accounts are themselves constructed. When a constructionist stance is adopted, the focus is on issues such as how descriptions and accounts are put together, the discursive devices that are used, and the types of things or
events that are produced via descriptions and accounts (Potter, 1996). Although research embedded in the social constructionist approach has been accused of being a dilettante pursuit, Potter and Wetherell (1987) stressed that this type of research is critical, political and potentially emancipatory. For example, discursive constructions of the self and the other have “vital consequences for the positioning of people in society; they are not neutral or without impact, they produce senses of the self which may be negative, destructive, oppressive, as well as senses which might change and liberate” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 104).

In his history of DP, Edwards (2004) noted that its publication record goes back to the mid-1980s, and parallels the development of a rhetorical approach to social psychology (Billig, 1985). From the late 1980s onward, these two approaches have blurred together and there has also been an interest in utilizing ideas from conversation analysis. DP has developed as a discourse-based alternative to topics that have traditionally been approached in social psychology as cognitive representations, which have been explored through experimental laboratory studies. These topics include attitudes, social representations, and categories, among others. In DP, these psychological topics are respecified as discourse practices. Therefore, rather than viewing people as having attitudes and social identities that they carry around in their heads and that they produce when cued, discursive psychology views attitudes and identities as being formulated discursively in people’s everyday interactions (Edwards, 2004).

In the DP approach, discourse is regarded as both constructive and action-oriented. As noted above, discourse is constructive in the sense that a speaker or writer offers a particular description of events (or themselves or others) when many possible versions
could be offered. Accounts are action-oriented in the sense that they are constructed in ways that perform actions on and for the occasion of their telling.

Unlike traditional social psychological research in which social life is taken to be a consequence of the interplay of factors that have more or less regular patterns and determinate outcomes, in DP social life is conceptualized as normative and rhetorical (Edwards, 1998). Whereas traditional social psychology treats norms as governing action, in DP norms are understood as being oriented to, which means that deviations are not only expected, they are treated as being inferentially rich. In DP, rhetoric is treated as oriented to persuasion. According to Edwards (1998), rhetoric is best described this way to emphasize that no matter how strong it is, there is no guarantee that persuasive goals will be accomplished.

Once it is established that participants conduct important psychological business through reports and descriptions, the analytical realm of fact construction is made available (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Fact construction refers to the everyday discursive procedures that participants use to make an account appear credible. According to Edwards and Potter (1992), because reports are often a way of performing delicate and psychologically problematic actions, and because reports are often received in this way, it is important for people to present them as factual, disinterested versions. The identification of participants’ techniques that help to generate facticity is therefore one of the major analytical tasks of DP.

**The DP approach to the study of identity.** In the discursive approach to the study of identity, the interest of the analyst lies in exploring the identity categories people actually use, the features those identity categories carry, and the social actions that identity
categories are used to accomplish (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998). Widdicombe (1998) explained how identity categories can be used to accomplish social actions. Because categories are conventionally associated with activities, attributes, motives and so on, they are a powerful cultural resource in warranting, explaining and justifying behavior. Therefore, when a category label is applied to a person, the features associated with that category can be treated as applicable to the person. As Widdicombe (1998) pointed out, a category’s presumed attributes provide “a set of inferential resources by which to interpret and account for past or present conduct, or to inform predictions about likely future behaviors” (p. 53).

According to Widdicombe and Woofit (1995) the ascription of a social identity can operate as a form of social control. Once a person’s category affiliation has been stated, it is always potentially the case that the sense or purpose of his or her actions, beliefs, opinions and so on may be understood solely in terms of what is commonly known or expected about that category, without consulting him or her. This may in turn provoke a sense of social injustice. On the other hand, Widdicombe and Woofit (1995) also identified a variety of ways in which people can resist the appropriateness of an identity label.

**Review of relevant DP studies of identity.** A large body of DP literature on identity exists; however, in this section, I review DP studies of identity that are directly relevant to the present study in that they involve the analysis of monologic discourse.

Lynn and Lea (2003) examined the social construction of the identity of asylum seekers in Britain. The focus of their analysis was letters to the editor that attended to the issue of asylum. A sub-sample of eight letters was analyzed. According to the authors,
acceptance into society requires more than the granting of citizenship. Rather, the closeness of people’s resemblance to the stereotype of the “true” inhabitant will determine acceptance or rejection. Consequently, in Britain, non-whiteness constitutes a tangible barrier to acceptance. Lynn and Lea contended that focusing on differences, such as ethnicity, religion and language among other qualities, contributes as much to an awareness of self as it does to an awareness of Other. Focusing on difference is said to encourage a sense of identity, of “us” and “them.” The authors also stressed that identity is malleable, changing as the rhetorical context requires.

Lynn and Lea (2003) found evidence of the well-documented discourse of bogus asylum-seeker or economic refugee in the letters’ constructions of the identity of asylum-seekers. The authors demonstrated the rhetorical strategies employed by letter writers to bring off a position that is critical of asylum seekers while simultaneously seeming reasonable. For example, letter writers offered their assertions as a presentation of fact, where a claim was made with no evidence put forward to support it. The expectation was that the claim is common knowledge and therefore part of the consensus. By differentiating asylum-seekers into those who have a genuine case and those who are said to be bogus, letter writers also invoked differing entitlements: genuine refugees are entitled to various social services whereas bogus claimants are not so entitled. Invoking categories (i.e., bogus versus genuine), and their associated membership entitlements has been shown to be a powerful rhetorical strategy (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Category entitlement refers to the idea that certain categories of people, in certain contexts, are treated as knowledgeable (Potter, 1996). Simply being the member of some category, for example, doctor, lawyer, etc., is sufficient to account for and warrant a person’s
knowledge of a specific domain. Lynn and Lea also found disclaimers and rhetorical questions to be commonly used rhetorical devices in the letters to the editor.

The authors also demonstrated that membership business is conducted by letter writers’ categorizations of asylum-seekers as bogus or genuine (Lynn & Lea, 2003). For example, ill will toward the bogus asylum-seeker was said to occur because these people receive housing ahead of Britons. In this way, blame was constructed as lying with the asylum seekers themselves, rather than with failures of the immigration system. In keeping with the concept of category entitlements, the authors concluded that once asylum-seekers are assigned a bogus status, all subsequent interpretation of their actions occurs in terms of this status.

Mehan (1997) explored the discourse strategies deployed by participants in the contest over the meaning of immigrants in California in the context of Proposition 187, which was a direct voter question included on the ballot during a State election. Proposition 187, which was subsequently approved by the California electorate, requires public officials to check the legal status of users before they receive social services such as medical care and education. Mehan’s materials for analysis included speeches and articles by proponents and opponents of Proposition 187, along with pamphlets and other political documents, and letters and editorials in major California newspapers. As with the other studies presented in this section, a principal concern of Mehan’s analysis was the argumentation strategies participants employed in order to present their version as factual.

In keeping with discursive psychology’s focus on the rhetorical function of discourse, Mehan (1997) pointed out that representations of a group of people are not a simple
reflection of objectively held characteristics. Rather, Mehan contended that each mode of representation works to constitute the group of people being represented and defines the person making the representation. For example, in terms of how the group of people affected by Proposition 187 was constituted, Mehan found that those who opposed Proposition 187 depicted those affected by it as “undocumented workers” or “non-resident workers.” Proponents of the Proposition, by contrast, defined the population in question as “illegal immigrants” or “illegal aliens.” In the first case, representing people as undocumented suggests that these people contribute economically to society, but that they do so in an extra-legal capacity. This status is worked up as being temporary or transitory and implies that these people are legitimate members of society. By contrast, use of the terms “illegal” and “alien” by those who support the Proposition invokes a representation of people who are outside of society.

Mehan also showed how the act of constructing a representation defines the person working up the representation. Opponents and proponents of Proposition 187 had different ways of characterizing the relationship that individuals have to society. Proponents of the Proposition typically depicted social life as a zero-sum game where “their” gain is worked up as “our loss.” For example, they made statements such as “illegal immigrants take jobs away from law-abiding citizens” (Mehan, 1997, p. 259). Those who opposed the Proposition, on the other hand, presented a version of society in which “we’re all in this together” (Mehan, 1997, p. 260).

Mehan (1997) also demonstrated that different sets of argumentation strategies were used by opponents and proponents of Proposition 187. Whereas opponents often used scientific idioms and statistical evidence, proponents were more likely to use compelling
anecdotes. For example, Mehan found that opponents often referred to carefully researched scholarly studies that showed the economic benefits of immigrants to the California economy. Proponents on the other hand used television commercials that depicted shadowy figures crossing the border, accompanied by a voice-over saying, “Those illegal aliens streaming across the border are taking your jobs and abusing your social services” (Mehan, 1997, p. 263). In conclusion, Mehan speculates that the latter message may have been more effective because it connects directly to people’s lives and suggests how the immigration issue affects them directly.

Reicher and Hopkins (1996) analyzed speeches by the leaders of the two main British political parties concerning the 1984-5 miners’ strike. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether the two speakers presented the social categories involved in an event in different ways and to see whether any differences are related to the strategies the speakers employed to mobilize their audience. The authors argued that context and categorization are interdependent such that definitions of the frame of reference (i.e., who is included within it and what their respective positions are) will affect category definitions. Rather than the frame of reference being a given and the categories occurring as a consequence, Reicher and Hopkins maintained that they are both open to argument. It was therefore expected that there would be opposing definitions of the appropriate frame of reference, of what the relevant categories were, of what the ingroup stereotype was and of those included in the ingroup.

Reicher and Hopkins (1996) showed how each of the leaders constructed a different frame of reference, with Prime Minister Thatcher depicting the miners’ strike as part of a general struggle between democracy and terrorism, and Labour Party leader Kinnock
framing the strike as Thatcherism against society. Thatcher defined the categories involved in the strike as the “British” on the one hand and the executive of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) on the other. Thatcher’s ingroup was conceived of as all but a very small and specific handful of people. In this way, Thatcher moved those who by-and-large supported the strike—the labour movement, miners in general, the striking miners in particular—into her ingroup of the British. The acts of the NUM executive were then portrayed as attacks on the defining characteristics of Britishness. In Kinnock’s speech, Thatcherism was depicted as ignorant and oppressive of the country as a whole, and therefore as constituting an attack on society. Those who might otherwise have been thought of as generally opposing the strike—the upper or middle class, the Conservatives, the government, the cabinet—were removed from Kinnock’s definition of the outgroup, with only Thatcher herself remaining.

In addition to identifying how the two speakers worked up different categories, Reicher and Hopkins (1996) suggested that the way the context is defined (e.g., as a prioritization of democracy) affects which categories became salient. Although the two speakers differed in their description of the relevant categories, their shared concern with electoral politics meant that they both tried to make the ingroup as comprehensive as possible and the out-group as restrictive as possible. The authors concluded that the relationship between context and categories is not unidirectional. Once context is made problematic then it is just as possible that categorization may define context as vice versa.

Reicher and Hopkins (1996) analyzed interviews and speeches given by activists, candidates and Members of Parliament before and after the 1992 general election in Scotland. During this time period, Scotland’s relationship with the United Kingdom was
high on the political agenda. All of the major electoral parties except the governing Conservative Party were advocating constitutional change to Scotland’s relationship with the UK. Reicher and Hopkins sought to: 1) demonstrate how different constructions of the social context can be advanced in order to support one form of categorization over another; 2) illustrate how the content or meaning of various categories is a site of debate; and 3) explore the consequences of these constructions for one’s understanding of the social relations that constitute the social world and therefore the appropriateness of a particular course of action.

Reicher and Hopkins (1996) showed that the Scottish National Party (SNP) sought to make people’s Scottishness relevant for political self-definition and action while undermining the political relevance of Britishness. Conversely, the Conservative Party sought to make Britishness relevant while undermining the political relevance of Scottishness. According to the authors, the category that was adopted was worked up through the processes of argumentation. Here they followed Billig’s (1987) observation that categories are only invoked and defined in particular ways when there are alternatives. Through their analysis of categorization, Reicher and Hopkins demonstrated that the issue of which categories were used as the basis for action cannot be read off from the social context because the social context itself is in need of definition and constitutes a site of contestation. The authors also stipulated that the definition of social context cannot be separated from definitions of categories and their contents. For example, they showed that the contrasting definitions of the category Britain offered by the SNP and the Conservative Party indicate that the meaning of the category is a site of contestation and that as different meanings are offered, so an understanding of the context
changes (e.g., from one where Scottishness is under threat to one where Scottishness is being defended).

LeCouteur, Rapley, and Augoustinos (2001) examined political leaders’ discourse about the “Wik judgment” (a land rights decision in Australia) as a site of interest in the analysis of political rhetoric and the construction of “racially sensitive” issues. In contrast to approaches that treat social categories as routine, mundane and unproblematic objects, the authors demonstrated the local construction of category memberships and their predicates as strategic moves in political talk. Specifically, LeCouteur et al. showed how the categories of Aborigines and farmers, the two groups central to the debate about Wik, are strategically constructed categories that have entitlements attached to them.

LeCouteur et al. (2001) illustrated how politicians’ speeches referenced past injustices toward Aboriginal people in a way that was vague and non-descript. As a category, Aboriginal Australians were constructed as passive recipients of whatever treatment (good or bad) was handed out to them. In that way, Aboriginality was being normatively bound to passivity– to waiting for others to act on problems. By contrast, farmers were constructed as valuable and contributory to the future of the country.

Throughout their analysis, LeCouteur et al. (2001) demonstrated how certain discursive devices are brought to bear on the management of the identities of Aborigines and farmers. For example, they showed how, in Prime Minister Howard’s speech, a consensus warrant was invoked that co-implicated his political opponents as supporters of his viewpoint. The discursive device at work in this example was stake inoculation. Stake inoculation refers to descriptions that are constructed to head off the imputation of stake or interest (Potter, 1996). In another example, the authors showed how a politician
used ironizing discourse to undermine the facticity of the Prime Minister’s position. Discursive devices can also be used to bolster the facticity of a position, and LeCouteur et al. illustrated how the Prime Minister constructed a vivid narrative as a warrant of the facticity of his claim.

LeCouteur et al. (2001) concluded that the specific and strategic deployment of what may initially appear to be demographic or occupational categories—“Aborigines” and “farmers”—was of particular theoretical relevance to work on social categorization. Rather than being routinely non-problematic, these social categories were shown to be situationally crafted to achieve very specific local ends.

Rapley (1998) examined the ways in which Australian Member of Parliament Pauline Hanson’s political rhetoric was constructed so as to claim and to consolidate her personal identity as constituting ingroup membership as an “ordinary Australian” (p. 330). For example, she employed contrastive imagery to distinguish herself from “polished politicians.” She also offered a series of self-categories such as “a mother of four children,” “a sole parent,” and a “business woman” as warrants for the facticity of her position. Once ingroup category membership was established, Hanson worked to undermine the credibility of criticism against her position by showing that she was speaking commonsensically. Rapley showed how the facticity of Hanson’s position was bolstered through a range of conventional facticity-promoting devices. For example, Hanson employed idiomatic and demotic speech, which are rhetorical devices that stressed her shared membership in the category of ordinary Australian because they contradict the polished political discourse of parliamentary rhetoric. In this analysis, Rapley (1998) showed Hanson’s political rhetoric to be “consistently facing both ways”
Nairn and McCreanor (1991) analyzed public submissions made to a 1979 Human Rights Commission that investigated race relations in New Zealand. The analysis focused on the submissions made by majority-group members, known in New Zealand as “Pakeha.” The Maori are New Zealanders of Polynesian-Melanesian descent. Nairn and McCreanor identified two patterns of language, ideas and images widely deployed by submission writers to construct and account for Maori/Pakeha relations. In the first pattern, submission writers produced a catalogue of positive and negative characteristics which they used to categorize Maori as good or bad. Maori who fit within the mainstream of society and contribute to maintaining it were presented as good, while those who fail, resist or oppose the mainstream in any way were seen as bad. The categorization of some Maori as good legitimated the question “Why can’t all Maori be like this?” (Nairn & McCreanor, 1991, p. 251). According to the authors, this formulation facilitates the blaming of Maori for their ascribed badness, thereby absolving the Pakeha-dominated society of blame. Splitting the Maori population into categories of good and bad also facilitates the pitting of Maori against Maori.

Nairn and McCreanor (1991) called the second pattern the “stirrers pattern” (p. 252). Stirrers are those Maori who are seen to be agitators. The following characteristics were attributed to stirrers: they are outsiders, they engage in inappropriate interference, they do not have the knowledge or understanding required for engaging in constructive intervention, and they take offense where none is intended. In this way, the stirrers were depicted as generating conflict where there should be harmony. Pointing to the stirrers...
allowed the view to be put forward that race relations in New Zealand were unproblematic until agitation by the stirrers began, and would return to a satisfactory state if agitation stopped. According to Nairn and McCreanor, the most important work accomplished by this categorization was that it marginalized stirrers and rendered their claims unworthy of consideration. A second function of this categorization was to allocate blame for deteriorating race relations to stirrers. In this way, the Pakeha majority can absolve themselves of the problem without having to consider the possibility that many Maori actually are disadvantaged. Therefore, Pakeha social institutions and practices can continue to operate without scrutiny. Both of the patterns identified by Nairn and McCreanor demonstrated how majority-group members can invoke categories of Maori that perform social actions that help to maintain the status quo.

Simmons and LeCouteur (2008) examined the ways in which formulations of “the possibility of change” were implicated in descriptions of two riots in Australia that received widespread media attention (p. 667). One riot involved members of an indigenous community, while the other riot occurred in a non-indigenous community. Data were drawn from newspaper articles, television and radio interviews and parliamentary debates. By focusing on the ways in which versions of events and categories were constructed, Simmons and LeCouteur were able to identify the functions of these constructions. The analysis also focused on the rhetorical construction of factual versions. With respect to the Aboriginal community, change was repeatedly presented as not possible. In contrast, descriptions of the problems in the non-Aboriginal community formulated change as an achievable outcome.
Simmons and LeCouteur (2008) demonstrated how Aboriginal identity was constructed in a particular way so as to facilitate attributions of blame for the problems in their community. For example, negative stereotypes such as aggressiveness and a weakness for drugs and alcohol were repeatedly described as stable dispositions of Aboriginal people. According to the authors, by essentializing these attributes, and repeatedly rehearsing this discourse, the idea that there is no possibility of change comes to dominate the popular and political imagination. If problematic events and issues that occur in indigenous communities are repeatedly linked to membership categories based on race, it is unlikely that these problems will be addressed.

Simmons and LeCouteur (2008) also included in their analysis a detailed description of some of the discursive devices that were found to bolster the facticity of the reports on the riots and those involved in them. For example, the authors showed how a vague description “every couple of years,” was employed to formulate the rioting in the Aboriginal community as frequent, without providing specific information regarding its frequency (Simmons & LeCouteur, 2008, p. 673). The use of vague terms to describe the frequency of the violence and rioting in the Aboriginal community was found to be a regular feature of the media reports. Vague formulations are rhetorically robust because they are resistant to challenge (Edwards & Potter, 1992). The authors also showed how the apparent facticity of the claim that problems in the Aboriginal community are intractable was bolstered using a three-part list (Jefferson, 1986): “The poverty’s in your face, there’s huge unemployment, and the streets are awash in heroin” (Simmons & LeCouteur, 2008, p. 675). Each element in the list is also amplified, so poverty does not just exist, but is “in your face,” there is “huge” unemployment, and the streets are
“awash” in heroin. Another device shown by Simmons and LeCouteur to enhance the fact-value of a report was category entitlement. As previously mentioned, category entitlement refers to the idea that certain categories of people, in certain contexts, are treated as knowledgeable (Potter, 1996). A speaker in one of the Simmons and LeCouteur’s (2008) reports was identified as a local councillor who “lived most of his life” in the community where the riot occurred, a description that may increase the likelihood that his remarks will treated by readers as carrying more weight.

Conclusion and Research Questions

There has been considerable research on identity using the discursive approach, including several studies that focused on newspaper discourse. In my review of the literature, I did not, however, come across any DP studies that specifically examined the construction of Muslim identities in newspaper discourse, which is the focus of my research. Given the limitations of studies of Muslims in the news media carried out in the communications/journalism studies and CDA traditions, I decided to carry out a DP study of Canadian Muslim identities in the Canadian press.

According to Karim (2003) Islam is well on its way to becoming the second most-popular faith after Christianity in many Western countries largely as a result of immigration patterns and the numbers of native-born North Americans and Europeans becoming adherents; therefore, “the Muslim Other who used to be far away across the ocean is now more likely to be a next-door neighbour” (Karim, 2003, p. 178). This speaks to the need to conduct research that examines the portrayals of Canadian Muslims that are made available to Canadians. As suggested by my review of the literature, the majority of studies has been conducted in Britain and, to a lesser extent, the United
States. There is at least one crucial difference between Canada and these other two contexts: Canada has not experienced a terrorist attack perpetrated by Muslims. This might at least partially account for greater academic interest in the study of Muslim representations in the American and British presses. In addition to that difference, all three countries have experienced different histories of immigration from Muslim countries. For example, according to Moghissi, Rahnema, and Goodman (2009), in Europe, most Muslims come from the same ethnic or national origin. For example, in England, most Muslims are Pakistani or Bangladeshi, whereas in France, the Muslim population is comprised predominantly of Algerians and other North African peoples. In Canada, the Muslim population is more diverse, coming from South Asia, Arab countries, Iran, Afghanistan, Africa, and East and Southeast Asia (Moghissi et al., 2009). In general, the Muslim population in Canada is smaller and younger historically than it is in Europe. According to the 2001 census, the Muslim population accounted for two percent of the population, up by 128.9 from 1991 (Moghissi et al., 2009). Another contrast between Canada and Britain is that unlike the latter, Canadian law provides protection against incitement to hatred on the basis of religion (Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2006).

The research questions addressed by my analysis fall under two main domains: the discursive construction of Canadian Muslims’ identities, and the link between topical features of news reports and the formulation of Canadian Muslim identities. It is important to clarify exactly what is meant by “Canadian Muslim” in this research. I am concerned here with portrayals of Muslims in Canada and not with citizenship status.

1 In addition to Muslims living in Canada, several of the newspaper articles I analyzed concerned Muslims who normally live in Canada (e.g., Omar Khadr is a Canadian Muslim detained at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba).
Primary research questions:

1. What is the range of identities of Canadian Muslims in the Canadian mainstream daily press? If Canadian-Muslim-as-terrorist is taken as the anchor at one end of the range of identities on offer, what other identities, if any, are available?

2. How are the various identity constructions of Canadian Muslims worked up discursively in the news reports (i.e., what are the discursive features that characterize this identity work)?

3. Who constructs the identities of Muslim Canadians in the daily press? Is it Muslim Canadians themselves, members of the establishment such as government officials, journalists or others? Furthermore, do the identity constructions differ depending on who formulates them and, if so, how?

4. What social actions are carried out through the identity constructions of Canadian Muslims?

Secondary research questions:

5. What news topics are associated with Canadian Muslims?

6. What is the link between the news topics and the identity work about Canadian Muslims that is accomplished? Does coverage of explicitly negative events correspond with overtly negative portrayals of Muslim Canadians? If so, how is this accomplished in the discourse.
Chapter Two: Method

Data

The data for this study came from Canadian mainstream daily newspaper coverage. The Newspaper Audience Databank (NADbank) is the principal research arm of the Canadian daily newspaper industry. According to NADbank (2007), the top ten daily newspaper markets in Canada, by circulation are: 1) Toronto, 2) Montreal, 3) Vancouver, 4) Ottawa-Gatineau, 5) Calgary, 6) Edmonton, 7) Quebec City, 8) Hamilton, 9) Winnipeg, and 10) London.

The corpus of newspaper articles was collected using the Canadian Newsstand database. Canadian Newsstand is a web-based database that provides access to full text articles from over 170 Canadian newspapers. The database includes the complete electronic backfile for most newspapers, which includes news items, columns, editorials, and features. Newspapers from the first six of the top ten daily newspaper markets are available through Canadian Newsstand, as follows: 1) Toronto Star, 2) The Gazette (Montreal), 3) Vancouver Sun, 4) Ottawa Citizen, 5) Calgary Herald, and 6) Edmonton Journal. Quebec City does not publish an English-language daily, and was therefore excluded from the sample. Newspapers for the bottom three markets (Hamilton, Winnipeg and London) were not available through the version of Canadian Newsstand held by the University of Guelph’s library. However, it seemed reasonable to expect that the sample of articles available from the top six markets is representative of Canadian daily press coverage of Canadian Muslims and was therefore sufficient for this study. In addition to the six local daily newspapers, the data set also included items from Canada’s
two national newspapers, which circulate daily in large and small markets across the
country: The Globe and Mail and the National Post.

It is important to note that six of the eight sampled newspapers were owned by
Canwest Publishing Inc., the largest publisher of English-language paid daily newspapers
in Canada. Only the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail were not holdings of Canwest.
A consequence of this ownership pattern was that the same article may have appeared in
more than one of the sampled publications on any given day. Articles written for the
Canwest News Service are available to all of the chain’s dailies. It is then a matter of
discretion for each publication whether the article is printed. The only distinction from
one publication to the next is the headline under which the article appears. Headlines are
not written by the journalist who covered the story. Instead, headlines are typically
crafted by the section editor. For the purpose of this study, only one version of duplicate
articles was included in the sample.

Using the key words “Muslim” and “Canada” or “Canadian” I conducted a search of
the six-month period from November 1, 2008 to April 30, 2009, which returned 251
newspaper articles. Although the timeframe was somewhat arbitrary, it was chosen so as
to include the most recent news coverage and to maximize the possibility of a wide-range
of identity portrayals within a manageably sized sample of articles. In order to determine
their relevance to the proposed study, each of the 251 articles was read in full. Articles
were excluded from the sample on three grounds. First, some articles were not
substantively about Canadian Muslims and therefore were not relevant to the research
questions about the construction of Canadian Muslim identities. For example, an
editorial from the National Post (March 20, 2009, p. A.6) ran under the headline
“Canadian diplomat right to interrupt speech on anti-Semitism: Top UN advisor.” The editorial is about a Canadian UN official who intervened during a speech that highlighted Muslim-sourced anti-Semitic material. Second, news items that portrayed non-Canadian Muslims in a foreign context were excluded. In keeping with Poole (2006), the exclusion of the foreign context allowed me to focus on what the Canadian context offers with regard to the variety of representations. Previous research that analyzed the representation of Muslims in the Canadian press (e.g., Karim, 2003) suggested that the reporting framework centres around conflict and violence; however, little is presently known about the construction of Canadian Muslims’ identities in the Canadian press. Recall that by “Canadian Muslims” I mean Muslims in Canada and not Canadian in terms of citizenship status. Finally, letters to the editor (LE) were also omitted from the sample. Previous research has typically analyzed LEs separately from news items (e.g., Lynn & Lea, 2003, Richardson, 2001). Among the reasons for conducting a separate analysis of LEs, Lynn and Lea (2003) argued that LEs typically focus on the discourse of “ordinary,” “everyday” people rather than on those who may be regarded as having any significant social or political power or influence. LEs therefore constitute a form of discourse wherein people articulate their views in public; however, it is also acknowledged that the newspaper’s editor acts as a mediator in selecting and editing the letters (Lynn & Lea, 2003). It is important to stress here that LEs and articles about non-Canadian Muslims may work together with articles about Canadian Muslims as sites of Muslim identities made available to Canadian readers. In this sense, my research may perhaps best be viewed as a contribution to an understanding of one specific piece of a rather complex
representational framework. The exclusion of articles based on those three criteria resulted in a sample of 185 items.

Although many of the studies I reviewed did not provide detailed information about the sampling procedures the analyst(s) used, in two studies (d’Haenens & Bink, 2007, Richardson, 2001), a key word search for “Islam” was conducted in addition to the key word search for “Muslim.” Given that identity work about Canadian Muslims may also occur when the name of the religion is invoked, a second search of the Canadian Newsstand database was conducted using the key words “Islam” and “Canada” or “Canadian,” for the same six-month time frame. That search generated 384 articles. Based on a full reading of each item, and employing the three criteria as above, 19 additional items were added to the sample, raising the total to 204.

It may seem surprising that the search for “Islam” yielded only 19 additional items. However, I found that the majority of the articles were foreign news items, and often covered the activities of the Canadian military in Afghanistan, or events in other Muslim countries such as Pakistan. Additionally, many of the articles were already included in my sample (i.e., the article contained both “Muslim” and “Islam”). In a small number of articles, the keyword “Islam” was the journalist’s or a source’s surname. It is important to note that of the 19 additional items, nine of them were found to also contain the keyword “Muslim,” meaning that these items had been missed by the database in my original search. I take up the issue of articles being missed in the database search in the Discussion section.

Of the 204 items in my sample, 136 (67%) were news reports, and the other 68 items (33%) were opinion pieces (i.e., editorials or columns). Unlike news items, which are
presented as a report of the factual elements of a story, editorials and columns represent the viewpoint of a newspaper’s editorial board or of a columnist. Opinion pieces signal to readers the increased relevance of certain topics/issues, and are deliberately constructed to offer a particular position on an issue. According to Greenberg (2000), opinion discourse not only takes sides by evaluating events, but it also explains these events in ways having to do with attribution of responsibility. That is, opinion discourse is oriented toward blame and, as such, it attempts to mobilize news readers around a particular position.

Although the distinction between news and opinion discourse did not substantively affect how the two types of articles were analyzed, I kept track of the type of article in order to determine whether there were important differences in how the identities of Canadian Muslims were constructed in each.

**Preliminary Analysis**

**Initial reading.** In discursive psychology, the analytic process begins with a full reading of the sampled material to immerse the analyst in the data and to develop a familiarity with the depth and breadth of the content. The initial reading also provided an opportunity to identify additional articles that should have been excluded according to my search criteria. The sample was reduced from 204 to 174 articles. In the final sample, 120 items (69%) were news articles and 54 items (31%) were opinion articles (i.e., columns and editorials).
Table 1 presents the proportion of news articles and opinion pieces from each of the eight sampled newspapers. The number of news items per sampled publication ranged from eight in the *Vancouver Sun* to 24 in the *Toronto Star*. The number of opinion pieces per sampled publication ranged from one in the *Edmonton Journal* to 14 in the *National Post*. The publication with the greatest number of items was the *National Post*, which had 35, and the publication with the fewest items was the *Vancouver Sun*, which had 10.

**Headlines.** The word “Muslim” was used in 20% of news headlines and in 10% of opinion piece headlines. The word “Islam” was used in only six percent of news headlines and in less than one percent of opinion piece headlines. This suggests that in coverage
about Canadian Muslims, the headline often did not explicitly flag to readers that the article was about Muslims.

Use of the words “Muslim” and “Islam” is not, however, the only means of signalling to readers that an article is about Muslims. A number of other words that belong to the category “Muslim” were found in news headlines, including: mosque, imam, hijab/niqab, Ismaili, jihadi, and halal. In total, 16% of news headlines contained a word that belongs to the category “Muslim.” In the headlines of opinion pieces, the following words that belong to the category “Muslim” were used: mosque, jihad/jihadi, imam, niqab, and Ismaili. In total, 19% of opinion piece headlines contained a word that belongs to the category “Muslim.” However, given my stance as a discourse analyst, it is important to stress that there is no guarantee that readers will interpret the use of these words as indicative that the article is about Muslims. For example, if a reader is unsure of the definition of a word such as “halal,” which refers to meat prepared in accordance with Islamic law, the connection to Islam and Muslims would not be made. Likewise, although the word “Ismaili” refers to a sect of Islam, this may not be common knowledge.

**Identity topics in newspaper discourse.** Over the course of multiple re-readings of the sample, I organized the 174 articles into five broad groupings based on aspects of Muslim Canadian identity found in the coverage. The first grouping pertained to Canadian Muslims’ religious identity. The religious identity grouping included discourse concerned with topics such as Muslims’ religious practices (e.g. diet, dress, prayer), Muslims’ interfaith relationships (e.g., with Jews and Christians), the spiritual aspect of Islam, and issues pertaining to religious interpretation (e.g., interpretation of the Qu’ran). A second grouping brought together articles that dealt with discrimination against
Canadian Muslims. In those articles, Canadian Muslims were described as the target of various types of discrimination, both as individuals (e.g., death threats) and as a group (e.g., defacement of a mosque). The third grouping was concerned with articles in which Canadian Muslims were depicted as terrorists. Those articles were most often concerned with the coverage of terrorism trials. A fourth grouping was created for articles that dealt with identity constructions specifically related to Muslim women’s identities. The topics of those articles included, for example, honour killings, and issues of religious dress, such as wearing the hijab or niqab. The fifth grouping was used to organize articles in which Muslim identity was formulated in terms of cultural practices. For example, one extract described Canadian Muslim women’s practice of wearing the hijab as an outward display of faith, whereas this practice among women in predominantly Muslim societies was described as social convention.

According to this organizing scheme, it was possible to place some of the articles into more than one of the five groupings. In keeping with the principles of discursive psychology, being able to place an article in more than one grouping highlights the complexity of identity constructions and the usefulness of an approach that does more than treat these groupings and their frequency of occurrence as equivalent to analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Initial coding. It is important to note that in the discursive approach, the coding process is quite distinct from doing analysis, with the goal being to take an otherwise unwieldy corpus of data and distill it into analytically manageable chunks (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Coding is a preliminary step that prepares the way for a much more fine-grained analysis. The way the data are organized in coding captures something important in
relation to the research questions. Although the five groupings identified in my initial reading were helpful for determining the overarching topics related to Canadian Muslim identity, that organizational approach did not adequately address my primary research question regarding the range of identity constructions in newspaper discourse about Canadian Muslims. I therefore sought to organize the identity constructions of Canadian Muslims along a continuum from extremely negative identity portrayals to extremely positive identity portrayals. Not surprisingly, I found that the most explicitly negative representations of Canadian Muslims were related to the construction of a terrorist identity, and 15 relevant extracts were identified. Next, I created a separate grouping for those extracts that suggested a negative identity for Canadian Muslims in contexts other than terrorism. A notable pattern in this grouping was that across the extracts, Canadian Muslims were depicted as a threat to Canadian values based on their interactions with the legal and immigration systems (e.g., human rights cases regarding religious accommodation); 15 such extracts were identified. Moving along the continuum from negative to positive identity constructions were 24 extracts drawn from my preliminary grouping of articles concerned with discrimination against Canadian Muslims. On their face, the identity constructions in these extracts were neither explicitly positive nor explicitly negative. Finally, I identified 29 extracts in which Canadian Muslim identity was positively constructed. The extracts that portrayed a positive Canadian Muslim identity were drawn from coverage on an array of topics, for example, a soccer match between Muslim youth and RCMP officers, a multifaith symposium about representations of religion in the media, and an interview with the star of a television comedy called “Little Mosque on the Prairie.”
Analytic Concepts

The principal goal of analysis is to explain what is being done in the discourse and how it is accomplished (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Analytic concepts are helpful in suggesting what the researcher might look for and in interpreting what is there. As Wood and Kroger warned, however, such concepts are meant to be “sensitizing” and are therefore not applied to the discourse in a mechanical way (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 99). The following is a brief presentation of some of the analytic concepts that were useful in this study.

Appearance-reality contrast. Refers to the idea that people sometimes warrant accounts or pursue rhetorical aims by positing a distinction between appearance and an underlying reality which represents the true situation, or a preferred version. “Appearance” will often be treated as a perceptual metacognition, that is, what things look like, sound like, or seem. Appearance-reality contrast is an effective rhetorical move because it acknowledges the obviousness of appearances, thereby acknowledging the basis for one’s own or someone else’s (possible) understanding in terms of appearance. At the same time, an appearance-reality distinction subverts the version based on appearance in favour of a purportedly more insightful and adequate version (Edwards, 1991).

Category entitlement. Refers to the idea that certain categories of people, in certain contexts, are treated as knowledgeable. Category membership obviates the need to ask how a person knows because membership in the category is treated as sufficient to account for, and warrant, knowledge in a specific domain. There are two bases for category entitlement: first-hand knowledge and expertise (Potter, 1996). Category membership is not as straightforward as it may first seem. Membership does not in itself carry a “ready-made
and mechanical set of entitlements” (Potter, 1996, p. 133); entitlements can be built up and undermined in a variety of ways. Closely related to the concept of category entitlement is the concept of membership categorization devices. Sacks (1992) described membership categorization devices as “collections of categories for referring to persons, with some rules of application” (p. 238). When a membership categorization device is applied to a person, it makes available a set of inferences about category-bound activities, which is to say that certain activities are associated with certain categories.

**Empiricist constructions.** Empiricist constructions are often found in the rhetoric of news organizations and they are structured to avoid dealing with issues concerning the status of the claims. The official rhetoric of news organizations stresses neutrality and an emphasis on reporting facts (Potter, 1996). Consider the following example from Potter (1996) which comes from a news report of an attack on a tavern in Cape Town: “In July, five gunmen used grenades and [inaudible] rifles to attack a church service in a white suburb of Cape Town; 11 people were killed. That attack was believed to be the work of the UPLAR” (Potter, 1996, p. 155). The connection to the UPLAR is not managed by citing evidence but through reporting a belief that is not attached to an agent or the collective; rather, the belief is free floating.

**Extreme case formulations.** Extreme case formulations work a description up as good or bad, or maximal or minimal by using the extreme points of relevant descriptive dimensions (Pomerantz, 1986). The statements “All Muslims are terrorists” and “Muslims never have a sense of humour” are two examples of extreme case formulations. Extreme case formulations help to make a message more persuasive.
Footing. The concept of footing was developed by Goffman (1979). Footing refers to the different roles that participants can have in discourse, and is related to the more general issue of alignment, that is, whether a speaker is presenting a factual account as their own, or distancing themselves from it. For a particular piece of speech or written text, it may be necessary to distinguish the principal, whose position the talk is meant to represent, the author, who does the scripting, and the animator who says the words. These distinctions have implications for accountability (e.g., see definition of stake and interest) and factuality (Potter, 1996). For example, with respect to accountability, the animator might be treated as just passing something on. In terms of factuality, there is a difference between making a claim oneself and reporting that of someone else; a speaker is not usually treated as being accountable for factual claims that are reported. Reporting is thus one practice for managing an appearance of neutrality. The distinctions between author, principal and animator are particularly relevant to news discourse where there are legal and quasi-legal requirements that the news be neutral or impartial (Potter, 1996).

Hierarchy of modalization. Hierarchy of modalization refers to the idea that two sets of discursive resources are available to speakers for dealing with the facticity of a description. At one end of the modalization hierarchy are resources that can be used to undermine the facticity of versions. For example, “X is possible.” At the other end are resources that formulate a description as factual and unproblematic, for example, “X is a fact” (see Potter, 1996, p. 112).

Ironicization. There is a wide range of resources available to people for ironicizing descriptions, including lies, delusions, mistakes, flattery, deceptions and
misrepresentations (Potter, 1996). These can be drawn upon to undermine the adequacy of a description.

**Narrative.** As Edwards and Potter (1992) stress, the plausibility of a report can be increased by embedding it in a narrative sequence. Narrative offers the opportunity to fuse together memory and attribution or event description and causal explanation, because the recounting of events typically attends to their causal, intentional and plausible sequential connections. Narrative is closely related to vivid description (see below).

**Rhetoric of argument.** This is an externalizing device. Claims are constructed in the form of logical argument that makes them seem external to the speaker or writer. These provide a sense of rationality and have been found to be particularly important when a version is being offered in order to make an attributional inference, for example to blame. This device presents the inference as being necessitated by the events themselves and not as desired by the speaker or writer (Edwards & Potter, 1992).

**Stake and interest.** The general term stake and interest is used to refer to a range of considerations that people may use to discount descriptions (Potter, 1996). At their strongest, these considerations are used to imply that the description’s speaker has something to lose or gain, that they have a stake in what the description refers to. Descriptions may be constructed so as to head off the imputation of stake or interest—these attempts are referred to as stake inoculation. Another common approach people use to manage the dilemma of stake is stake confession. Stake confession may appear in situations where stake considerations are unavoidable, so the best thing to do is confess
them. According to Potter (1996), stake confession works as a display of honesty and objectivity, which may be disarming.

**Systematic vagueness.** Systematic vagueness refers to vague, global formulations which are an important element of defensive rhetoric (Potter, 1996). Vague formulations are robust against being undermined because, unlike with detailed descriptions, there is no risk of introducing contradiction or confusion. However, vague formulations can be treated as dissembling on the basis that they lack the persuasiveness of a detailed, first-person account. Idiomatic expressions are one example of the rhetorical use of vagueness.

**Three-part lists.** Three-part-lists are used to construct descriptions that are treated as complete or representative, and can also be used to signal that an occurrence is commonplace (Potter, 1996). The regularity of the three-part structure of lists suggests that this is a normative property (Jefferson, 1990). That is, lists not only can and do appear in three parts, but also should occur in this way. Therefore, if a list contains fewer than three parts, it may be treated by participants as incomplete.

**Vivid description.** When an event or situation is described vividly, that is, treated in terms of its particulars, the describer’s credibility may be enhanced. Vivid description increases the likelihood that a report will be treated as a direct observation rather than as an interpretation of events. However, vivid description is what Potter (1996) called a “double-edged rhetorical weapon” because it can be reworked, undermined and ridiculed (Potter, 1996, p. 168).

**Validation Procedures in Discursive Psychology**

In conventional social psychology, researchers use the concepts of reliability and validity to justify the grounds for their claims. Discursive psychologists use different
criteria to validate their claims, and these reflect DP’s alternative metatheoretical and epistemological perspective (Wood and Kroger, 2000). According to Potter (1998), discourse researchers typically draw on some combination of four considerations to justify the validity of analytic claims. First, and most important, are readers’ evaluations. A distinctive feature of discourse research is its presentation of analytic materials in a way that allows the reader to make his or her own judgments about the analyst’s claims. In keeping with this validation criterion, I include as an appendix the full-text versions of the newspaper articles from which my analyzed extracts were drawn. Second, analysts make use of participants’ understandings as they are displayed in the discourse. That is, discursive psychology attends to how people themselves construct and deploy descriptions, rather than introducing the analyst’s own predefined descriptions into the analytic context, which is a common practice in conventional social psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Third, claims are about patterns in the discourse and these must be supported by accounting for exceptions to the patterns and discounting potential alternatives or counterclaims (Wood and Kroger, 2000). Fourth, a discourse analysis may be partly assessed in terms of its coherence with the findings of previous discourse studies. A study that builds coherently on past research is more plausible than one that offers anomalous claims.
Chapter Three: Analysis

Introduction

In this section, I present the analysis of Canadian Muslim identity in the mainstream daily press using the four broad groupings described in the previous section: 1) the construction of terrorist identity, 2) the construction of Canadian Muslims as a threat to Canadian values, 3) the construction of discrimination against Canadian Muslims, and 4) the construction of favourable Canadian Muslim identities.

The 40 extracts presented in this section were selected to demonstrate the patterns I identified in my analysis of 69 extracts. The extracts were also selected to demonstrate noteworthy deviations from the general patterns in the discourse. As is the case with all discourse analytic studies, there are numerous angles from which selected texts could be approached, and a multiplicity of features that could be pointed out in each extract. In this section, attention is given to those features that relate to the focus of the study (LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001).

The line numbering of the extracts was preserved from the online version of the articles and is meant to orient the reader to the extract’s placement within the article from which it was drawn. Each extract is preceded by the headline under which the article ran. I included the headlines because they are meant to convey the gist of the article, albeit from the point of view of the headline writer, and they provide the reader with an interpretive frame for the article. There are instances, however, where the headline offers little to no information about the content of the article. For example, Extract 26 came from an article that ran under the headline “Their common goal,” which is an article about Muslim law students at McGill University who have created a Muslim Law
Students’ Association. In cases such as this, and in cases where the extract begins midway or near the end of an article, I briefly provide some context to familiarize the reader with the events being reported. Each extract is also preceded by information about the publication title, page number and date of publication, and I have indicated whether the extract is drawn from a news item or an opinion piece. Finally, at the end of each extract in parentheses I have also included information about the total number of lines in the article.

**The Construction of Terrorist Identity**

The extracts I present in this section are based on the analysis of 15 news articles and two opinion pieces. Thirteen of the fifteen news articles were set in the context of ongoing legal proceedings in terrorism trials (e.g., trial, sentencing hearing, etc.). The other two news items concerned a Canadian Muslim man who was arrested in Somalia for allegedly participating in a terrorism plot there and the Government of Canada’s counter-radicalization techniques aimed at steering Canadian Muslims away from extremism.

All 13 news items about terrorism trials appeared in the front section of the newspaper, and three articles appeared on page A1. This is not surprising: terrorism is news. A high proportion of the articles appeared in the *National Post* (six of 13 articles, or 46%), which reaches a national audience. Articles about terrorism trials also had high representation in the capital city’s daily, the *Ottawa Citizen* (four of 13 articles or 31%). Nearly 80% of the articles about terrorism trials were found in two of the eight sampled newspapers. None of the news articles about terrorism trials were drawn from Canada’s other national newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*. Recall, however, that my sampling
criteria did not involve searching for coverage about terrorism per se, but for coverage about Canadian Muslims. Therefore, these terrorism trials may well have been covered in The Globe and Mail, but if they were, the articles did not make use of the category labels “Muslim” or “Islam.” This suggests that it is possible to cover the terrorism trials of Canadian Muslims without making direct reference to the accused’s religion.

**Basic identity information.** Within the 13 articles in this sub-section, very few basic details pertaining to the identity of the accused were provided. The most frequently reported basic identity information was age, which was stated in nine (69%) articles. The accused ranged in age from 21 years to 55 years. It was also fairly common in these articles for journalists to report the accused’s nationality. Four articles (31%) stated that the accused was a Canadian. In two of the four articles, the distinction between Canadian-born (one article) and naturalized citizen (one article) was made; however, the other two stories referred to the accused simply as “Canadian.” A further four articles (31%) included information about the accused’s non-Canadian country of origin. These countries included Morocco (two accused), Iraq and Algeria. Five articles (38%) included information regarding the length of time the accused had lived in Canada, which ranged from six years to 14 years. The only additional piece of basic identity information that was provided with any regularity was the accused’s occupation, which was stated in four (31%) articles. The accused were a computer specialist, a pizza-delivery man, a software designer, and a professor.

When basic identity details about the accused were provided, they were often presented in a single sentence. For example, an article in the Calgary Herald (November 5, 2008. Pg. A.11) described the accused as follows: “Harkat, 40, an Ottawa pizza
delivery man, was arrested in December 2002 on the strength of a security certificate seven years after his arrival in Canada.” Furthermore, it was rarely the case that basic identity information was provided near the top of the article (i.e., it was not typically included as part of the lead paragraph where, according to journalistic convention, the most important information is found). In the preceding example, the basic identity information about the accused was located in lines 12 and 13 of a 36-line article.

Aside from the fact that all of the accused were men, which was never explicitly pointed out in the articles, the only identity marker that the accused had in common was their religion. Whether it was stated directly (64%) or indirectly (36%), it was clear in each article that the accused was Muslim. The following line from an article in the National Post (February 6, 2009. Pg. A.5), illustrates how the Muslim identity of an accused was accomplished indirectly: “They discussed a plan for members of the group to travel to Pakistan to seek and receive paramilitary training that they would then use to engage in violent jihad.” Through the reference to “Pakistan,” which is an Islamic country, and violent “jihad,” which is the term often used by the news media to mean holy war undertaken by Muslims, the accused would almost certainly be understood by readers to belong to the category “Muslim.”

In the coverage of terrorism trials, the accused were depicted as having a particular kind of Muslim identity. In nine of the 13 articles (69%) it was reported that the accused allegedly had links to extremist Islamic groups, such as al-Qaeda. In other words, the terrorist identity of the accused was worked up through the reporting of evidence that specified them as a particular type of Muslim (e.g., one who endorses al-Qaeda ideology), and not through reference to their Muslim faith more generally.
The role of religiosity in terrorist identity. As the following four extracts demonstrate, descriptions of the religious beliefs of the accused were variously used to bolster a terrorist identity (i.e., via reference to the presence of extreme Islamic beliefs) or to refute a terrorist identity (i.e., via reference to the absence of extreme religious beliefs).

The following two extracts show how descriptions of the accused’s extreme Islamic beliefs were used in the construction of terrorist identity.

‘Where do you draw the line?’; Quebec man accused of terror activities was expressing religious freedom.

News

19 Evidence before the court shows that Mr. Namouh was driven by a fervent faith, one that saw as enemies Christians, Jews and even Muslims who did not share a desire for the creation of pan-Islamic rule.
20 "I write to you my loved ones with tears falling from the intensity of my love to our mujahedeen protectors, and in hatred of the Crusaders and Shi'a and apostates," Mr. Namouh wrote in 2006 on a password-protected, invitation-only online message board known as Khidemat.
(71)

This article is a report of the trial proceedings against Said Namouh, who is facing charges of conspiracy, participating in the activities of a terrorist group, facilitating terrorist activity and extortion. The first notable feature of this extract is found in Line 19, in which the journalist writes that “Evidence before the court shows that…” This formulation is an example of what Potter (1996) called empiricist discourse. One characteristic of empiricist discourse is that its grammatical structure minimizes the actions or involvement of the author. The instance from Line 19 (evidence… shows that) minimizes the sense that anyone (e.g., prosecution lawyers, witnesses) was involved in constructing or interpreting the evidence, or that it is contested in some way. Instead, the evidence takes on a life of its own. As Potter (1996) showed, empiricist discourse is a
rhetorically live actor, carrying out actions such as “suggesting, pointing, showing and implying” (Potter, 1996, p. 153). Empiricist discourse has been shown to play a specific role in news discourse, where it can be employed by journalists as a means of displaying neutral footing. According to Potter (1996), when used in this way, empiricist discourse allows news organizations to avoid having to account for the truth status of claims.

In Line 19, the accused’s involvement in terrorist activities is attributed to his extreme religious beliefs. In the description of the accused as “driven by a fervent faith,” “driven” suggests that he acted on compulsion and that he may therefore not have been in control, and “fervent” extremizes the accused’s religious beliefs. The journalist does not directly state that the accused is a Muslim or that his faith is Islam, but this is clear from the phrasing “even Muslims…” in Line 20. The three-part list in Lines 20-21 ratchets up the extremity of the accused’s religious beliefs by suggesting that his alleged enemies are many (“Christians, Jews, and even Muslims…”). The “even” in Line 20 also emphasizes that Namouh’s religious views are extreme and the formulation “even Muslims” is particularly noteworthy because it works up a distinction between Muslims who share a desire for the creation of pan-Islamic rule and those who do not. In this extract, Namouh is portrayed as a particular kind of Muslim, one who holds very extreme views. It is possible that the description of Namouh in such extreme terms may distance him, though not explicitly, from Muslims in general. That is to say, what makes Namouh a terrorist is the extremity of his religious views in particular rather than his Muslim faith in general.

In Lines 22-25, the journalist includes a quotation from an online posting by the
accused. The insertion of the accused’s own words bolsters the evidence presented in Lines 19-21. The quotation features poetic-sounding language, “with tears falling from the intensity of my love,” and violates the Western cultural stereotype that it is undesirable and/or inappropriate for men to express their emotions by crying. This quotation also suggests that the accused is unable to control his emotions, a quality which may therefore make him seem more threatening. Each of the components of the three-part list in Line 23 is a religious term, and these may be confusing, or at least not self-explanatory, to some readers. The first item, the “Crusaders,” is a reference to eleventh to thirteenth century Christians who engaged in military campaigns against Muslims in a bid to reclaim land considered holy. “Shi’a” refers to the second most populous branch of the Islamic faith. The most populous is the Sunni branch, to which the accused presumably belongs. Finally, “apostates” refers to people who have forsaken their religion. Because this three-part list names three different groups, it may also ratchet up the extremity of the accused’s hatred by emphasizing that it extends widely across groups.

A final detail that contributes to the construction of the accused as extreme, though not specifically in terms of his religious beliefs, is the description of the online message board, Khidemat, as “password-protected, invitation-only” (Line 24). “Invitation only” suggests that the accused is part of a select inner-circle and “password protected” implies that the message board is not publicly accessible. Taken together, these two details may suggest to the reader that Namouh was engaging in underground activities. This description may emphasize to the reader that he is a threat.

In this extract, the identity information suggests that the accused is a specific kind of person (e.g., his religious views are particularly extreme, he was part of an exclusive
online community. This identity description may be performing what Billig (1985) referred to as “particularization.” Particularization is concerned with the discursive processes by which an individual stimulus is distinguished from a category, or above all, “the processes by which a particular stimulus is treated as a particular or ‘special case’” (Billig, 1985, p. 82). The identity details in Extract 1 that specify that Namouh’s religious views are extreme may therefore function as a form of particularization, suggesting to the reader that Namouh is a specific kind of Muslim who is not necessarily representative of Muslims in general. It is of course not possible to be certain what conclusion readers will reach; it is only possible to unpack the identity formulations that are being made available.

Crown demands two life terms for Khawaja; ‘Highly questionable’ whether he should ever get out of jail, prosecutor tells court

7 Mr. Khawaja, 29, sat impassively in the prisoner's box as the prosecutor portrayed him as an evil and bloodthirsty religious zealot intent on murdering and terrorizing Jews, Christians and anyone who did not embrace his extremist version of Islam and the teachings of al-Qaeda.

(75)

This extract comes from a news article about the sentencing hearing of Momin Khawaja, who was convicted of terrorism-related offenses. Lines 7-10 contain a very explicitly negative portrayal of the religious identity of the accused. This identity construction is complex in that it offers representations of the accused constructed by both the prosecutor and the journalist. While the prosecutor’s portrayal of the accused is damning in itself, the journalist’s description of the accused as sitting “impassively” (Line 7), adds an additional negative dimension to the characterization by suggesting that he is unaffected by being described in this way. This accused seems cold-blooded on the
one hand, while on the other hand, the additional descriptors from the same sentence, “evil and bloodthirsty religious zealot intent on murdering and terrorizing…,” suggest a hot-blooded killer. It is noteworthy that although the portrayal of the accused in Lines 7-10 is attributed to the prosecutor, it is not a direct quotation of what the prosecutor said. Indirect quotations are a common feature of journalistic discourse, and in this instance, use of an indirect quote may have provided the journalist with greater leeway to produce a more explicitly negative and more extreme identity of the accused. Specifically, by treating the formulation of the accused as “evil and bloodthirsty” (Line 8) as belonging to the prosecutor, the journalist can mask any interpretive work that he or she has done. Whether or not the prosecutor used the words “evil and bloodthirsty” to describe the accused, is not, however, the central issue. The point I want to highlight with this example is that the journalist’s use of an indirect quotation is a display of neutral footing (Potter, 1996). By indirectly quoting the prosecutor in Lines 7-10, the journalist can employ vivid adjectival language that is not in keeping with the “just the facts” tone of news reporting without posing much risk to the journalist’s neutrality. This point can perhaps be best illustrated by introducing an example of how the same accused was described in another article from the Ottawa Citizen (April 10, 2009. Pg. A.3). There, Kahwaja was described as “… an Islamic jihadist committed to al-Qaeda’s call for violence against all non-believers.” Although it is still clear from this description that the accused endorses an extreme interpretation of Islam, the strong emotive words found in Extract 2, “evil,” “bloodthirsty,” “religious zealot,” “murdering” and “terrorizing” are absent.
In the next extract, the absence of Islamic religious beliefs was invoked to support the argument that the accused is *not* a terrorist.

Friends shocked as Ottawa professor held in Paris bombing; Lawyer says Diab is a victim of mistaken identity, has nothing to do with deadly synagogue blast

News

The news of Mr. Diab's arrest was met with disbelief by two of his former professors. "It's not credible to me," said Louis Kriesberg, a thesis adviser to Mr. Diab who has continued to write letters of reference for him since he earned his PhD in sociology from Syracuse University in 1995. "I've known him for a long time as a student. He's a very productive and very bright scholar, and he does good work," he said. "He's very intelligent, very committed to his professional work. He's a lively person - I enjoy him."

Mr. Kriesberg, who is Jewish, is a professor emeritus of sociology and social conflict at Syracuse University. He never knew Mr. Diab to be in any way anti-Semitic.

"I saw no evidence of any religiosity," Mr. Kriesberg said.

This article reports on the first court appearance of an Ottawa man arrested for the 1980 bombing of a Paris synagogue. None of the other articles about terrorism trial proceedings featured quoted information from a source who knows the accused personally. In the rest of the sample, the quoted sources were typically lawyers, judges, and expert witnesses (e.g., a CSIS agent). Those individuals were therefore detached from the accused, if not necessarily neutral. In Extract 3, however, the individual quoted was the accused’s thesis advisor, an identity that could either enhance or diminish his credibility. On the one hand, Kriesberg might be treated by readers as having greater insight into Diab’s character as a result of their professor-student relationship. On the other hand, Kriesberg may be regarded as less credible if he is assumed to have a vested interest in defending the accused based on that same professor-student relationship.
Kriesberg’s quotations feature two separate three-part lists (Lines 48-49 and Lines 50-51) that favourably portray the accused. All of the attributes listed by Kriesberg, except perhaps, “lively,” are relevant to the professor-student relationship (“productive,” “very bright scholar,” “does good work,” “very intelligent,” “very committed to his professional work”). These statements are therefore within Kriesberg’s category entitlement as Diab’s thesis advisor. In addition to being positive attributes, many of the items in the two lists are also extremetized: “very” bright scholar, “very” intelligent, and “very” committed to his professional work. What is most notable about the attributes listed in Kriesberg’s three-part lists is that the identity of the accused they construct is not in keeping with a terrorist identity.

As in Extracts 1 and 2, here too the accused’s religiosity is explicitly treated as relevant to his identity. In this case, however, religiosity is invoked in support of the position that the accused is not a terrorist. In Line 52, the journalist describes Mr. Kriesberg as Jewish. That detail gives Kriesberg the category entitlement to make the statement quoted in Line 53 that he “never knew the accused to be in any way anti-Semitic.” Had Kriesberg’s own religion been left unstated by the journalist, the remark would not seem as credible. Furthermore, Kriesberg’s claim is strengthened through the two extreme case formulations in Line 53: He “never” knew Mr. Diab to be in “any” way anti-Semitic. The quotation in Line 58 contains two additional extreme case formulations: I saw “no” evidence of “any” religiosity.” The fact that the journalist marked Kriesberg’s religion is also noteworthy because at this point in the article, the accused’s religion has not been directly stated. It is not until Line 71 that the reader is told that the accused is “a Lebanese native who grew up a Shia Muslim in South Beirut” (see Appendix). Until that
point in the article, the accused’s Muslim identity is only implied (e.g., through a reference to The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which was blamed for the bombing). Kriesberg’s quotation in Line 58 directly addresses the matter of the accused’s religiosity, using it to make a case for why the accused does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the category of “terrorist.” This illustrates that religiosity is being treated as a critical component of the terrorist identity.

I have included an analysis of the next extract in order to highlight the variable, flexible and contingent nature of identity categories; here the extreme religiosity of the accused is used in the construction of a positive identity.


Court eases bail terms for alleged sleeper agent; Adil Charkaoui News

4 Madam Justice Daniele Tremblay-Lamer ruled that the danger Mr. Charkaoui might have presented at one time has been "neutralized" by the passage of time. (lines omitted)

5 She said she was swayed by testimony of Montreal imam Salam Elmenyawi, who has befriended Mr. Charkaoui since his 2003 arrest.

6 Mr. Elmenyawi described Mr. Charkaoui as "a fervent Muslim who adheres to the Sunni interpretation but who respects other religions and opinions contrary to his own," the judge wrote. Mr. Elmenyawi testified that Mr. Charkaoui would be "an exemplary citizen" if he were released without any conditions. (36)

This extract comes from an article that reported on the bail hearing of Adil Charkaoui, who was arrested in 2003 on a security certificate. Security certificates are a mechanism of the Canadian legal system through which the Government of Canada can detain and deport foreign nationals and all other non-citizens living in Canada.

What is striking about the description of the accused’s “fervent” religious beliefs in Lines 10-12 is that this is the same adjective was used to describe Khawaja in Extract 1. In Extract 1, the accused’s fervent Muslim beliefs were alleged to have led to him to
regard “Christians, Jews and even Muslims who did not share a desire for the creation of pan-Islamic rule” as enemies. However, in this extract, the accused’s intense Muslim beliefs are linked to his positive attributes: “respects other religions and opinions contrary to his own” (Lines 11-12). The “but” in Line 11 signals that an exception or contradiction is coming, and this suggests that Elmenyawi was sensitive to the possibility that his description of the accused as a “fervent Muslim” could be read as a negative characterization. In this extract, an argument is being made that a Muslim person can be fervently religious without that trait invariably excluding respect for other religions and opinions.

The final two extracts in this section demonstrate that terrorism suspects’ religiosity is not always dealt with explicitly.

Pizza man ‘sleeper’ for al-Qaeda

1 A senior Canadian spy says Mohamed Harkat operated as an al-Qaeda sleeper agent in 2 Ottawa -- and kept in contact with Osama bin Laden's main banker.
(lines omitted)
17 … and has links to terrorist groups associated with the bin Laden network, including 18 the Algerian GIA and the Egyptian Islamic Group.
…
21 In that conversation, Harkat described himself as a Canadian Muslim and inquired 22 about Chechen mujahedeen leader Ibn Khattab and other "brothers."
(36)

Although this extract contains an explicit reference to the fact that the accused is Muslim (Line 21), information about the nature of his religious beliefs is provided only indirectly through the presentation of evidence that links him to Islamic terrorist organizations. For example, Line 2 states that the accused “kept in contact with Osama bin Laden’s main banker” and Line 18 states that he has links to “the Algerian GIA and
the Egyptian Islamic Group.” These references to known terrorist organizations may therefore act as a proxy for the accused’s religious beliefs. It is therefore not necessary to call the accused “an evil and bloodthirsty religious zealot” as in Extract 2, because the simple invocation of a connection to bin Laden may suggest to the reader that the accused has such qualities.

Extract 6 (National Post. February 6, 2009. Pg. A.5)
‘Toronto 18’ accused named in U.S. terror case; ‘Co-conspirator’
News

1 An alleged ringleader of the "Toronto 18" group has been named as a "coconspirator" in a terrorism case in the United States.
2 An indictment filed in Atlanta recently links Fahim Ahmad with a network of extremists that stretched from Canada and the U. S. to Pakistan and the Balkans.
3 It says two Atlanta men, Ehsanul Islam Sadequee and Syed Haris Ahmed, took a bus 6 to Toronto on March 6, 2005, to meet Mr. Ahmad and "other supporters of violent 7 jihad," including a man identified as Azdi Omani.

This extract differs from Extract 3 in that the accused is not explicitly identified as Muslim. The reference to the “Toronto 18” in Line 1 refers to the very high profile case of the arrest of 18 Toronto-area men in 2006, who were alleged to be members of an Islamic terrorist cell plotting a series of attacks against targets in Ontario, Canada. The journalist’s reference to the Toronto 18 might be interpreted by the reader as a signal that the accused is Muslim; however, this would only be accomplished if the reader was familiar with that case. In Line 1, the accused is also referred to as an “alleged ringleader.” “Alleged” is a necessary detail because when the article was published, the man had not yet stood trial for his involvement in the Toronto 18 case. However, that he is alleged to be a “ringleader” nonetheless has strong negative connotations, suggesting that he played a central role in that case. The lead sentence informs readers that this individual has been accused in two separate terrorism cases in two different countries,
which may suggest that he is highly committed to terrorist activities. His implied guilt is also ratcheted up because, whereas someone may be unfairly accused in one case, it seems improbable that an innocent person would be wrongly accused twice.

In addition to having a Muslim-sounding name (Line 3), the accused is described as having links to “a network of extremists” (Line 3-4). Although he is never directly identified as a Muslim, the combination of the accused’s Muslim-sounding name along with his alleged involvement in terrorism plots and his alleged links to extremists, not only imputes a Muslim identity, but implies that the accused endorses an extreme interpretation of Islam. The imputation of religious extremism is also achieved via the reference to “other supporters of violent jihad” (Line 6), where “other” implies that the accused is himself a supporter of violent jihad.

Section Summary. News articles about terrorism trials were found to contain very limited basic identity information about the accused. The accused were diverse in age, profession, nationality and length of time in Canada. In most of the coverage the accused was labeled “Muslim.” However, in one-third of the news reports, the accused’s Muslim identity was conveyed indirectly. In those instances, the accused’s connections to Islamic countries such as Pakistan or Morocco along with their alleged involvement in “jihad,” would very likely be sufficient for readers to draw the conclusion that the accused is Muslim. I also found, however, that the accused were depicted as having a very specific kind of Muslim identity. Most of the articles reported that the accused allegedly had links to extremist Islamic groups, thereby suggesting that terrorist identity is tied to extremist ideology in particular rather than the Islamic faith in general.
The religiosity of terrorism suspects was often treated by discourse participants (i.e., journalists and quoted sources) as a central component of the terrorist identity category. Extreme Islamic religious views were shown to be tied to constructing the terrorist identity of the accused in Extracts 1 and 2, while the accused in Extract 3 was constructed as not conforming to a terrorist identity specifically because he was lacking in Islamic religiosity. In keeping with the social constructionist assumptions of the DP approach, my analysis of Extract 4 is a reminder that, although category labels such as “fervent” Muslim might currently be associated with a negative meaning (e.g., fervent Muslims are evil and blood thirsty, as in the description of Khawaja), there is nothing inherently negative about this identity category. The foregoing analysis also demonstrated that religiosity is only sometimes explicitly treated as central to a terrorist identity.

**The Construction of Canadian Muslims as a Threat to Canadian Values**

Whereas the previous section dealt with the overtly negative coverage of Canadian Muslims accused of terrorist activities, this section is concerned with coverage of Canadian Muslims in two contexts—freedom of religion human rights cases, and polygamy in immigration—that at face value was less explicitly negative, but nonetheless portrayed them as creating problems within society. The common theme in all of these extracts was that Canadian Muslims were worked up as engaging in behaviours that could undermine core Canadian institutions (e.g., the legal system and the immigration system), thereby threatening Canadian social values. In this section I present the analysis of 13 of the 15 extracts I analyzed. Seven of the extracts (54%) came from opinion pieces and six extracts came from news items (46%).
Canadian Muslim identity in coverage of freedom of religion cases. The extracts in this sub-section came from articles about human rights cases in which Canadian Muslims claimed that their religious rights have been violated. Religious freedom is a protected right under Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In the four extracts in this sub-section, Canadian Muslims’ claims that their religious rights were violated were worked up as illegitimate.

Extract 7 (Toronto Star. February 2, 2009. Pg. A.1)
Order to take off niqab pits law against religion; Woman to appeal ruling forcing her to unveil face in sexual assault trial
News

1. A judge has ordered a Toronto woman to testify without her niqab at a sexual assault trial - raising the thorny issue of whether Muslim women should be allowed to appear as witnesses wearing a veil that covers everything but the eyes.
2. The issue is a collision of two rights, pitting religious freedom against the right of a defendant to face an accuser in open court.
3. The case could be precedent setting because it doesn't appear there is any Canadian case law addressing the question of Muslim women in the courtroom. In Canada, home to about 580,000 Muslims, the case will be closely watched, amid fears about Muslim women coming forward in criminal cases.
4. In October, Ontario Court Justice Norris Weisman reached his "admittedly difficult decision" to force the complainant to testify with her face bared after finding her "religious belief is not that strong ... and that it is, as she says, a matter of comfort,"
5. he wrote in his ruling.
6. In his judgment, Weisman wrote "at the 11th hour we learned ... she has a driver's licence with her unveiled facial impression upon it." She told court she took comfort in the picture was taken by a female and there was a screen between her and potential male onlookers.
7. A relative of the woman said…
8. "This is primarily an issue of protection the court offers to victims of sexual assault – especially those from minority communities, who experience the added stigma of bringing these deeply personal issues into open court."
9. Alia Hogben, executive director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, said, in court "the laws of the country should be acceptable," and although it is important that sensitivity be shown ... showing the face is acceptable."
The journalist’s use of the metaphorical term “thorny” (Line 2) suggests that the issue is controversial. In Line 4, the issue is described as a “collision,” which echoes the sense (from Line 2) that the matter is controversial while subtly adding an undertone of violence. In the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, freedom of religion is known as a “fundamental freedom.” Fundamental freedoms theoretically apply to everyone in Canada, regardless of whether or not they are a citizen. The “could” in Line 6 suggests that the case has the potential to upset the system. In Line 8, the journalist includes information about the number of Muslims in Canada. This is an example of quantification rhetoric, which refers to the manner in which numerical and non-numerical quantity formulations are used in argumentative cases (Potter et al., 1991). The use of quantification rhetoric here may work in two ways. First, reporting the raw number of Muslims living in Canada (“about 580,000,” Line 7) likely has the effect of making the number seem larger than would reporting the Canadian Muslim population as a percentage of the total population of Canada (i.e., less than two percent) would. Second, the journalist placed the information about the number of Muslims in Canada immediately after the general construction of the issue as “Muslim women in the courtroom” (Line 7). The proximity of the population data to this description of the issue may give the impression that the case directly pertains to over one-half million Canadian Muslims, when the judgment applies much more narrowly to women who wear the niqab. Therefore, the location of the population information at that place in the article may enhance the perceived significance of the case. The sense that this human rights case is of great significance is also strengthened in Line 8 where the journalist states that, in Canada, the “case will be closely watched.” However, the journalist does not specify
who will be closely watching. Lines 8-9 contain a second vague formulation: “amid fears about Muslim women coming forward in criminal cases.” Readers are not told whether it is Muslims or non-Muslims who are fearful, and the precise cause of this fear is also vague. For example, whereas the implication for Muslim women is that they may need to choose between testifying in court and preserving their religious modesty, the non-Muslim population may fear disruption of the justice system. Regardless, this pairing of Muslims with “fear” implies that the situation is threatening. It is also noteworthy that in Line 7 Canada is described as “home” to about 580,000 Muslims, which is stronger than saying, for example, “580,000 Muslims live in Canada.” However, given that Canada is called “home” in the same sentence that Muslims are described as an object of fear, the journalist’s use of “home” may not convey to readers a sense that Muslims belong.

Lines 10-11 quote the judge who called his decision “admittedly difficult.” Here, “admittedly” suggests a degree of reluctance in calling the decision difficult. Furthermore, describing the decision as difficult implies that there was merit to both sides of the case. Moreover, the combination of the judge’s “admittedly” and the quotation marks around his statement suggest it may perhaps only be the judge who found the decision difficult (i.e., it was not really a difficult decision). The quotation of the judge in Line 12, contains the sub-clause “as she says” which bolsters the judge’s ruling by highlighting that the complainant herself said that wearing the veil is a matter of comfort. Also in Line 12, the judge is quoted as saying that the complainant’s “religious belief is not that strong,” where “that” operates as a qualifier which downgrades the religious belief. Note how the judge’s choice of words is quite different from saying that her religious belief is weak or that she is not religious, assessments which may have seemed
less balanced. Finally, in Line 12, the issue at the centre of the case is described as “a matter of comfort” (quoted by the judge and attributed to the complainant). One’s personal comfort does not constitute a legitimate legal basis for invoking a claim of religious freedom. Taken together, the components of Line 12 build a strong case that the complainant’s claim to religious freedom is spurious.

The judge’s quotation in Lines 33-36 offers additional evidence that the issue is construed as not being legitimately about freedom of religion. In Line 33, the judge uses a colloquial expression, "at the 11th hour,” which in addition to suggesting that it was almost too late, subtly implies that the complainant may have been trying to keep this information concealed, that she was withholding or hiding information that was valuable to the judge’s decision. The judge also uses legalese in Line 34 to describe the complainant’s driver’s licence photo: “unveiled facial impression upon it.” This lends a more serious and official tone to his statement. The judge’s “she told court,” also in Line 34, suggests a skeptical stance because the complainant’s statement is treated by the judge as an opinion or perspective. The fact that the complainant has a driver’s licence picture that was taken without her niqab is being worked up as evidence that that the claim to religious freedom is not legitimate: if religion did not preclude her from removing the niqab for the licence photo, then it is not legitimate to refuse to remove it when giving testimony in court.

In Lines 55-57, in the quotation of the complainant’s relative, the issue is framed as being first and foremost about the protections the court offers to victims of sexual assault. This could possibly signal to the reader that the issue is therefore not about freedom of religion as the complainant contends. The inclusion of this statement from the
complainant’s relative may also undermine the complainant’s case in a second way. In addition to seeming to contradict the very basis for the freedom of religion case, if the complainant’s own family member believes the case is about something other than freedom of religion, doubt is cast on the legitimacy of the case. In Line 56, the relative refers to “those from minority communities” which distances the issue from Muslim women in particular, and thereby strengthens the notion that the case is not about religious freedom. It is also interesting that the person quoted is referred to only as “a relative of the woman” (Line 51). On the one hand, the source’s anonymity may weaken the credibility of the statement; however, given that the quotation contradicts the complainant’s claim, it may seem to readers as though this person gave a statement on the guarantee of anonymity.

In Lines 58-60, the comments of a second source are quoted and here too, the legitimacy of the case is disputed. As the head of a Muslim women’s organization, Hogben has category entitlement to speak to the issue. She may therefore be regarded as a credible authority on the matter of whether it is acceptable for a Muslim woman to show her face. Hogben’s statement therefore lends further support to the notion that the complainant’s religious freedom claim lacks legitimacy. In Line 59 Hogben says the laws of the country “should be acceptable” where “should” suggests that an injunctive norm exists and that Muslim women who wear the niqab are violating it. Injunctive norms concern people’s perceptions of what is commonly approved of or disapproved of within a particular culture. Therefore, women who wear the niqab are treated by Hogben as failing to adhere to Canadian values. The structure of Hogben’s statement as quoted in Lines 59-60 is also noteworthy. Hogben makes a show of conceding using the three-part
structure of proposition (“the laws of the country should be acceptable”), concession (“and although it is important that sensitivity be shown”), and reassertion (“showing the face is acceptable”). This way of conceding was shown by Antaki and Wetherell (1999) to strengthen one’s own position at the expense of a counter-argument. Interestingly, the ellipsis in Line 60 also signals that the journalist omitted part of Hogben’s original statement. It is therefore possible that it is the journalist who is responsible for the proposition, concession, reassertion structure of Hogben’s remark.


Court ruling causes ‘collision of values’

News

"It raises elements of both culture and law because there is something of a collision of values here," said David Butt, the woman's lawyer. "On the one hand, people have the right to freedom of religion, which includes the right to religious practises that are related to dress. On the other hand, accused persons have the right to make full answer and defence, which means to a certain extent the ability to confront their accuser. It is those rights that intersect here."

Farzana Hassan, president of the Muslim Canadian Congress, said although some women do wear head coverings as part of their religious interpretation, it is not a paramount requirement in Islam. "I think the main foremost right is that justice be served. And if her wearing the veil is obstructing that then it has to be taken into account. She has to comply with the law," she said.

Extract 8 deals with news coverage of the same trial as the previous extract. In Line 7 the complainant’s lawyer states that the case raises elements of both “culture and law.” However, the lawyer then goes on to discuss religion and the law (“…people have the right to freedom of religion,” Line 8-9) rather than culture and the law. This suggests that the lawyer may be treating religion as an aspect of culture, which could weaken the case given that unlike religion, culture is not protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In Line 11, the lawyer is quoted as saying “…there is something of a collision of values”
where “something of” works to downgrade collision by implying that the issue is not really or not quite a collision: it is something less strong. Similarly, in Line 12 the lawyer formulates the issue as being about rights “intersecting.” In this description, the issue is not about Muslims versus the rest of Canadian society but about how Muslim faith intersects with Canadian law. In Lines 8-12, the complainant’s lawyer also sets up a contrast between the right to freedom of religion and the right to make full answer and defense. Note how the latter is hedged in Line 11 where the lawyer’s quotation includes the caveat “to a certain extent,” which signals that the right to religious freedom is more important.

As in the previous extract, the legitimacy of the claim to religious freedom is called into question through the category entitlement of the person quoted (Line 36). In Line 37, Hassan is quoted as saying that “some women do wear head coverings” where “some” is a vague formulation which stresses that not all Muslim women engage in the practice, and “do” works to heighten the contrast with those who do not wear head coverings. Also in Line 37, Hassan refers to wearing head coverings as part of women’s “religious interpretation” which implies that the practice is open to different readings. Hassan also says in Line 38 that wearing a head covering is “…not a paramount requirement” which suggests that, although it is required, it is not the religion’s most important requirement. In Lines 38-40 Hassan implies that the right to religious freedom (i.e., wearing the veil) is inferior to the right to full answer and defense when she doubly emphasizes that the “main foremost” right is that justice be served. Interestingly, the issue at the centre of the case is not, as Hassan frames it, about wearing head coverings in general. It is specifically about wearing the niqab, which covers all of the face except for
the eyes. In Line 40 Hassan is quoted as saying “She has to comply with the law.” Here, the onus is placed on Muslim women to adhere to the law as opposed to being on the legal system to enforce the Charter right to freedom of religion.

Extract 9 (Toronto Star. November 12, 2008. Pg. A.6) Mosque fights for human rights as it smears West, Jews online; Centre backs women’s complaint of violation of religious rights while denouncing other faiths

News

1 A mosque asking that Canadian workplaces respect a strict Muslim dress code is at the same time disseminating slurs against Jews and Western societies, and warning members against social integration.

(lines omitted)

26 In September, a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal heard two weeks of testimony from eight mosque members alleging "Islamophobia" at the company's west Toronto plant…

29 The eight women, who lost their jobs at UPS, say Islam dictates that they wear a full-length skirt for modesty. The courier company insists that any skirt be knee-length for safety, as workers climb ladders up to 6 metres high.

32 Under their skirt, the women wear full-length trousers but say they do not want the lower part showing in case the shape of the calf can be discerned.

34 The complaint originally centred on the company's use of temporary workers and uneven enforcement of its safety rules.

(lines omitted)

64 ... Mosque administrator Abukar Mohamed confused matters further by appearing to agree with UPS, saying "The Quran says women must be covered - it doesn't give you the specific clothes. But I am not a religious authority."

(66)

Lines 4-25 of the article provide details of the controversial statements about the West, women and Jews that were posted on the Khalid Bin Al-Walid Mosque’s website. The eight women at the centre of the UPS human rights case attend the Khalid Bin Al-Walid Mosque.

Placement of the word Islamophobia in quotation marks in Line 27 highlights that this is the mosque members’ version of what happened and signals the possibility that it may not be accurate. Also, the journalist’s use of quotation marks was not necessary given that the Islamophobia was already qualified as “alleged” (Line 27). In Line 29, the journalist
uses a euphemistic expression (“lost their jobs”), rather than the more direct term “fired,” which may make UPS’s action seem less harsh. For example, jobs may be “lost” for any number of reasons including lay-offs due to a recession, a company closure, etc. Line 29 describes the complainants as saying that Islam “dictates that they wear a full-length skirt for modesty,” where “dictates” suggests the behaviour is prescribed by their faith. This is crucial to the complainants’ human rights case, which argues that their dress is protected by the Charter as a religious freedom. Later in the article, however, in Lines 53-54 (not in extract, see Appendix), two of the women are reported to have said in an interview that “they live in Canada now, and are free to pick and choose from Islamic law.” Although the two pieces of contradictory information are presented more than twenty lines apart in the article, the effect is a weakening of the complainants’ credibility, which by extension calls the legitimacy of the human rights case into question.

In Line 29, the women are described as “saying” that Islam dictates their dress, whereas in Line 30, UPS’s claim is described by the journalist in much stronger terms as “insisting” that the issue is about safety. Whereas the women’s “saying” may work to suggest that they are being measured and reasonable, the contrastive description of UPS as “insisting” may make the company appear defensive about the accusation.

The way in which UPS’s argument is presented in Lines 30-31 signals that the issue is not about religion, but that even if it were about religion, the company’s need to run a safe work environment would trump the women’s religious rights. The juxtaposition of the claimants’ position versus the employer’s position in Lines 29-33 gives the impression that the women’s stance on religious modesty violates common sense. That is, modesty is all fine and well until you fall from a six-metre-high ladder. In Line 32, the
journalist includes the detail that the women wear full-length trousers under their skirts. Specifying that the trousers are “full-length” stresses that the leg is completely covered. Wearing pants underneath a skirt in order to ensure modesty is not normative in Canada and would generally be considered extreme. The “in case” in Line 33 suggests that the shape of the calf does not even necessarily show, further implying that the women’s concern with modesty is extreme to the point of being unreasonable by Canadian standards.

Lines 34-35 introduce additional evidence that this case is not legitimately about freedom of religion. Because the complainants are presented as having changed the nature of the complaint, it is implied that concerns about religious modesty and the fundamental tenets of Islam are being used opportunistically to increase the chances of the case for wrongful dismissal succeeding. Finally, the details provided in the article’s last paragraph (Lines 64-66) strengthen the position that this case is not legitimately about freedom of religion. The journalist’s use of “appearing” in Line 65 may suggest that Mohamed does not actually agree with UPS or it may signal the inconsistency of Mohamed’s quotation. Furthermore, the quotation of Mohamed in Lines 65-66 directly contradicts the complainants’ claim in Line 29 that Islam dictates the wearing of a full-length skirt. Mohamed may be treated by readers as having the authority, based on his category entitlement as a mosque administrator, to make a credible argument regarding religious requirements. However, in the article’s final sentence (Line 66), the journalist also includes Mohamed’s statement, “But I am not a religious authority,” in which Mohamed clearly tries to distance himself from his remarks by disavowing his category entitlement. The suggestion in Lines 34-35 that the complainants changed the basis of
their complaint, combined with the quotation of Mohamed in Lines 65-66, make for a strong case that the claim to religious freedom is not legitimate.

Extract 10 (*Toronto Star*. Nov 25, 2008. pg. AA.4)
An unholy zeal for tolerance
Column

5 Well-meaning religious tolerance, taken to an uncritical extreme, can give licence to extreme religious interpretations: Muslim women insisting on ankle-length skirts despite safety hazards when working beside conveyer belts; and ultra-Orthodox Jews demanding that a local YMCA frost its windows so young boys wouldn't be tempted. (lines omitted)
34 … At recent Canadian Human Rights Tribunal hearings, the women produced a letter from a Toronto mosque, suitably inscribed on letterhead, proclaiming they were on rock solid religious ground by insisting on their long skirts…
38 "This is to certify that the religion of Islam requires all Muslim women to cover her entire body inclusive of the legs, arms, head, ears and neck," asserted the Khalid Bin Al-Walid Mosque, adding that the women "would not be able to wear pants as an outfit."
42 That would be news to most observant Muslim women in Canada, many of whom interpret the Qur'anic injunction to modesty in their own ways. A few weeks later it emerged that the mosque's home page included links to an outside Islamic website with a Q&A describing female genital mutilation (circumcision) as "an honour for women," and tracing the wickedness of high heels to "the Jewish women." The mosque pointed to a disclaimer on the home page that it was not necessarily endorsing such views. But why was it linking to a website spewing such offensive nonsense?
50 Last week, UPS and the local Somali-Canadian Muslim women settled their dispute before the tribunal could rule. After pushing the envelope on this issue, the complainants agreed to keep the file sealed. Case closed, on a Pandora's Box that should never have been opened. (62)

“An unholy zeal for tolerance” is an example of a headline that provides the reader with little sense of what the article is about. The meaning is cleared up early in the column, however, with the columnist’s argument that “well-meaning religious tolerance, taken to an uncritical extreme, can give licence to extreme religious interpretations.” (Lines 5-6). In Lines 6-8 the columnist provides two examples of what he means by extreme religious interpretation, giving one example pertaining to Muslims and one
example pertaining to Jews. What is notable about the columnist’s description of these two instances is the way in which he describes the two groups. Whereas the general description “Muslim women” is used in the first instance, the much more specific “ultra-Orthodox Jews” is used in the latter (i.e., the Jews in question are not just Orthodox, they are “ultra” Orthodox). So, whereas the situation involving Muslims is not treated as applying to a narrow or specific group of Muslim women, the actions of the Jews are treated in a highly particularized way.

It is important to note that in Lines 18-31 of this article (not in extract, see Appendix), the columnist elaborates on the example of the group of Jews in Montreal who asked the YMCA to frost its windows so that boys would not be able to see inside. This is significant because it suggests that the columnist was not singling out Muslims.

In Line 36 the columnist includes the detail that the letter is “suitably” inscribed on letterhead, a detail which may suggest that the mosque was trying to appear legitimate. Lines 38-41 quote from the mosque’s letter. The use of official-sounding language in Line 38 (“this is to certify that) signals the authority of the writer and may bolster the legitimacy of the claim that follows that “the religion of Islam requires all women to…”

Although the generalizability of the columnist’s claim in Line 42 is qualified in two places: “most observant Muslim women” and “many of whom,” the statement is vague enough to convey the sense that very few women endorse the mosque’s position on modest dress. This vagueness works to make the claim robust to criticism. In Lines 43-46 the columnist introduces information that undermines the credibility of the mosque. The information from the mosque’s website suggests that those who worship at that mosque are extreme and hateful, which implies that the mosque cannot be treated as a credible
authority on the matter of religious dress. It also implies that there is a double standard at play because the mosque is insisting that religious rights be protected, while at the same time vilifying people of the Jewish faith. In Lines 48-49, the columnist poses a rhetorical question as a way of implying that the mosque is linking to the website because it endorses these views.

In Line 50, the complainants are very specifically identified as “local Somali-Canadian Muslim women.” Particularizing the complainants with this string of five identity markers may signal to readers that not all Canadian Muslims are implicated. On the other hand, however, the columnist’s main point is that this small group of women has inappropriately caused a fuss. Therefore, it is also possible that particularizing the complainants in this way may suggest that even a small group of Muslims is capable of causing upheaval within the Canadian system.

In Line 52, the columnist uses an idiomatic expression, likening the women’s case to “a Pandora’s Box,” which suggests that it has potentially opened up all sorts of unforeseen problems. The extract ends with a statement by the journalist that explicitly addresses the perceived illegitimacy of the case– it “should never have been opened” (Line 53).

**Canadian Muslim identity in coverage of polygamy.** The four extracts in this subsection came from articles that dealt with the practice of polygamy in Canada. These articles were ostensibly about the practice of polygamy in a Mormon community in Bountiful, British Columbia and the criminal charges brought against the community’s leader, Winston Blackmore. However, as the analysis of the following four extracts
shows, the press used the situation in Bountiful to leverage the argument that Muslim
polygamy is a threat to Canada’s immigration system.

The Crown likely will lose polygamy case against Blackmore; Lawyers warn that
religious freedom would protect multiple marriages
Editorial

Consider this: If the polygamists win in Bountiful, what will be the reaction of
Canadian Muslims? Many Muslim countries allow polygamy, though Canada
currently does not allow Muslim immigrants to bring multiple wives into the country.
But if polygamy is recognized as a constitutional right in Canada, there's nothing to
stop Muslim groups from demanding recognition of their polygamist marriages and
suing to have their multiple wives and children allowed into the country.
Is that what Canadians want? Will that stop the exploitation of women and kids?
(46)

The first 36 lines of this opinion piece focus on the legal arguments for and against the
constitutionality of polygamy. At line 36, however, the editorial shifts to a discussion of
the implications should the Crown lose its case against Blackmore– what it will mean to
Canadians if polygamy is found to be a protected religious right under the Charter of
Rights and Freedoms. Although the editorial is ostensibly about the practice of polygamy
in the Mormon community of Bountiful, The Gazette’s editorial board clearly is
cconcerned with the practice of polygamy among Canadian Muslims (Lines 39-45).

Lines 39-40 contain a hypothetical question to a hypothetical scenario. The editorial
does not go on to include an answer to the question from any Canadian Muslim(s).
Instead, the article speculates about the outcome in Lines 42-45. The “currently” inserted
in Line 41 is a reference to the fact that depending on the outcome of the court case
Canada’s polygamy law may change. In Line 42 of the editorial it is argued that “there’s
nothing to stop Muslim groups from demanding recognition of their polygamist
marriages,” where the extreme case formulation “nothing” implies that Muslim groups
will make such a demand. Two aspects of the vague formulation “Muslim groups” are interesting. First, the editorial does not specify which Muslim groups are meant. Therefore, just as the use of “Muslims” might suggest all Muslims, here, the use of “Muslim groups” may suggest that the statement applies to all Muslim groups. Second, the specification of “groups” seems to make a distinction between Muslims as individuals and Muslims in groups, where the latter are being flagged as problematic. This may give the impression that demands by Muslims groups (i.e., Muslims who are organized) are a greater threat than claims by individual Muslims. Finally, the specification of “their” in “their polygamist marriages” (Line 42) suggests that the practice of polygamy violates Canadian social norms and works Muslim immigrants up as “Other.”

Finally, the editorial concludes with two rhetorical questions in Line 45. The first question sets up a distinction between Canadians on the one hand and Muslim polygamists on the other, suggesting that Muslim polygamy is antithetical to what it means to be Canadian. The second rhetorical question in Line 45 is an effective way of ending the article because it preempts an accusation that the editors are expressing anti-Muslim sentiment. This is accomplished by concluding with a statement that backs away from the issue as being about Muslim polygamy per se, and reformulates the crux of issue as being about the welfare of women and children. This discursive move of backing away from the original argument bears some similar to what Liu and Mills (2006) referred to as “plausible deniability,” where minority group members were not attacked for explicit categorical reasons, but for violating a moral code valued by the majority. In Liu and Mills’s study the moral code was respect for authority. In Extract 11, the moral code valued by the majority is monogamous marriage.
Let the people decide
Column

52 …Legalizing
53 polygamy in the Bountiful case will immediately jeopardize Canadian immigration
54 policy which prohibits polygamous Muslims bringing multiple wives into Canada.
(59)

As with the previous extract, most of the opinion piece (Lines 1-51 of a 59-line article)
from which Extract 12 is drawn focuses on the constitutional debate that has been opened
up by the polygamy charges against Blackmore. Also in keeping with the previous
extract, here too the columnist uses the Blackmore case to suggest that polygamy is also a
Muslim problem. The important difference with this extract, however, is that the
columnist exercises no subtlety in making her point. For example, in Line 53,
“immediately” lends a feeling of urgency, while “jeopardize” suggests that the entire
system is at risk. There is an important distinction in the authorship of this opinion piece
compared to the editorial in the previous extract. Here, the author, Janet Albrechtsen, is
an Australian who is visiting Canada, whereas the previous article was written by The
Gazette’s editorial board. Albrechtsen’s status as an outside observer may give her the
leeway to take a less measured stance than The Gazette in spelling out the would-be
implications of Muslim polygamy.

Notwithstanding polygamy
Editorial

15 A ruling striking down the law against polygamy will not only open the door to
16 legitimize the practice at Bountiful, but will permit certain Muslim sects to practise
17 polygamy, further victimizing women who may be recent immigrants and unaware of
18 their equal rights in Canada. It will likewise allow for a burgeoning number of
19 multiple wives to add their names to the welfare rolls, and thus to the taxpayers'
20 burden, if polygamy is lawful. Polygamy cannot be allowed in this country.
In keeping with the pattern shown in the two previous extracts, the principal concern in this editorial is the practice of polygamy amongst Canadian Muslims. When Muslims are first introduced in this article at Line 16, a seemingly measured approach is taken in pointing out that the ruling will affect “certain Muslim sects,” which clarifies that not all Muslims practice polygamous marriage. However, this is where neutrality of the piece ends. Inclusion of the word “further” in Line 17 suggests that Muslim women will not only be victimized by polygamy but that they are already victims.

Use of the metaphoric “burgeoning” in line 18 suggests that the number of women involved will grow rapidly. But note that this is also an imprecise formulation and that vague formulations are robust against argument to the contrary. In Line 19, the editorial board implies that at present, immigrant Muslim wives are on welfare and that the problem will only be exacerbated if polygamy is legalized in Canada. In Lines 19-20, it is suggested that the crux of the problem is that the increase in welfare claims will add to “the taxpayers’ burden.” This rhetorical move is similar to that in Extract 11 where the article concludes with a statement that may reduce the likelihood that the writer’s argument will be dismissed as anti-Muslim. As in Extract 11, where the issue was formulated as ultimately being about a concern for the welfare of women and children, here the editorial board formulates the problem with polygamy as being essentially about the cost to taxpayers and therefore not about the Muslim religion. Finally, throughout this article a very explicit argument was made for why Muslim polygamy is a threat to the Canadian immigration system. Therefore, in summing up the article with the statement “Polygamy cannot be allowed in this country,” the editorial board not only succinctly states its position, but also signals that this is the logical conclusion to the argument.
Legal experts split over constitutionality of Oppal’s move against polygamy

8 … Although this week's charges focus on the community of Bountiful, the battle is 9 expected to land in the Supreme Court of Canada and is being watched across the 10 country.
11 "Hiding behind these [alleged] polygamists are dozens of imams who have multiple 12 wives, and who are conducting polygamous marriages and flaunting it," Tarek Fatah, 13 founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress, said yesterday in a telephone interview 14 from Toronto.
(56)

Unlike the previous three extracts which were drawn from opinion pieces, Extract 14 comes from news coverage of the events in Bountiful. This article is therefore meant to be treated by readers as a factual account of events. Unlike the other extracts where there was some leeway for the authors (i.e., editors and columnists) to directly express their negative opinions of Muslim polygamy, in this extract the construction of a negative Muslim identity is achieved via quotation of a Muslim representative—Fatah is the founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress—which preserves the journalist’s neutrality. However, it bears pointing out that the journalist is directly responsible for linking the issue of polygamy to Muslims by seeking out comment from Fatah. Aside from legal experts, the only person quoted in the article is Fatah. If Fatah’s remarks were not included, the focus of the article would be on the constitutionality of the law prohibiting polygamy, with no reference to Muslims at all.

In the quotation of Fatah in Line 11, he describes imams as “hiding” which suggests that the imams are being deceptive about the practice of polygamy among Canadian Muslims. The quotation of Fatah in Line 11 also refers to “dozens of imams” a vague formulation that suggests a large but unspecified number. This may give readers the impression that the practice of polygamy is widespread. However, in keeping with the
function of vague formulations, because the precise number of imams involved is not specified, the claim is also robust against criticism. Furthermore, because many readers would have no point of reference regarding the number of imams in Canada, it is unclear whether “dozens” represents a significant proportion of the population of imams. In Line 12, Fatah’s quotation includes a second negative description of the imams in which he says that they are “flaunting” their behaviour. “Flaunting” implies that the imams are blatantly disregarding the Canadian law against polygamy which suggests disdain for Canadian norms. Note, however, that this also contradicts Line 11 where Fatah describes the imams as “hiding” their behaviour.

As the founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress, Tarek Fatah has the category entitlement that makes him a credible source regarding practices within the Muslim community in Canada. Through the use of descriptions such as “hiding” (Line 11) and “flaunting” (Line 12) it is clear that Fatah is problematizing the practice of polygamy. This may signal to readers that polygamy is not endorsed by all Canadian Muslims.

Whereas in the previous extracts the link between Muslims and polygamy was introduced later in the articles (e.g., at Line 39 of 46 in Extract 11, at Line 52 of 59 in Extract 12, and in Line 15 of 21 in Extract 13), here the link is made early on (at Line 11 of 59). Another difference is that the previous extracts were drawn from opinion pieces (i.e., editorials and columns) while this extract comes from a news article. In opinion pieces, the editorial board or columnist may build up their argument and conclude with a bottom line statement. The convention in news writing, however, is the opposite: the most important information is located at or near top of the article. This suggests that the issue of polygamy is treated as highly newsworthy.
In these four extracts, Muslims are negatively depicted despite the fact that the event at the centre of the story— the polygamy charges laid against Winston Blackmore— does not on its face have anything to do with Canadian Muslims. However, as the analysis of these extracts illustrates, the issue of polygamy is worked up as being a serious threat to Canada’s immigration system, to women’s rights and to taxpayers despite the fact that not a single concrete example was given of a Canadian Muslim who practices polygamy. The Fatah quotation in Extract 14 only refers generally to imams with multiple wives who conduct polygamous marriage ceremonies. Furthermore, none of the sampled articles included a quotation by a Muslim organization or individual who endorses polygamy. However, it was nonetheless assumed by the press that if polygamy is legalized, Muslim immigrants to Canada will engage in the practice. It is interesting that the sampled coverage contained no similarly negative portrayals of members of the Bountiful community. In the coverage analyzed here, journalists were found to work up the threats of polygamy as a Muslim problem.

**Section summary.** More than half of the extracts in this section (54%) came from opinion pieces (i.e., editorial or column). The taking up of social issues in opinion pieces signals to the reader that the matter is of particular social relevance. What the analysis of these extracts makes clear is that the changes to Canada’s legal and immigration systems implied by these cases involving Canadian Muslims are treated by the press as posing a threat to normative Canadian social values.

Another finding in this section was that journalists make selective use of quotations to support one side of an issue in a way that maintains the appearance of their own neutrality. It was also shown that the individuals quoted often came from the Muslim
community and that they spoke against the actions in question (e.g., spoke against wearing the niqab in court and spoke against polygamy). This quotation pattern may have worked in two competing ways. On the one hand, when journalists quote sources from the Muslim community who disagree with the actions in question, the source’s category entitlement may strengthen the journalist’s argument. On the other hand, when journalists quote members of the Muslim community who disagree with those in question, it may suggest to readers that there is variability among Muslim identities and values. However, my analysis of the discourse does not allow for the drawing of conclusions about how the reader will take up the text. Instead, this finding is concerned with the properties of the quotation pattern that may variously weaken or strengthen the journalists’ claims.

The Construction of Discrimination Against Canadian Muslims

This section is concerned with coverage that involved the construction of discrimination against Canadian Muslims. Extracts from 24 articles were analyzed. Fifteen of the extracts came from news items (75%) and five came from columns (25%). Two prominent patterns were identified in the coverage. In the first pattern Canadian Muslims were constructed as being treated differently than other Canadian citizens by the federal government. In the second pattern, articles that described discrimination against Canadian Muslims were found to contain supplementary negative information about Muslims in general. The inclusion of negative background or contextual information is potentially dilemmatic to the extent that it may subtly suggest to the reader that Muslims are partly responsible for the discriminatory treatment they receive.

Constructions of government discrimination. In the five extracts I present in this sub-section, Canadian Muslims were worked up as being treated differently than other
Canadian citizens by the Canadian government. I found that journalists and news sources often supported their claims of unfair treatment through the use of comparisons. In the first three extracts of this sub-section, the way the government has treated Canadian Muslim individuals accused but not convicted of terrorism is compared to the way the government treated a specific non-Muslim Canadian named Brenda Martin. In 2008, Martin, who was convicted of fraud, was repatriated from Mexico to serve her sentence in a Canadian prison. The 2008 repatriation of Brenda Martin from Mexico was a high profile news story and many readers would likely be familiar with that case.

Heat’s on PM over Khadr case
News

1 Some 185 Canadian groups and individuals have signed a letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper accusing his government of harbouring anti-Muslim sentiment for refusing to repatriate Omar Khadr from the U. S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
(lines omitted)
13 "We believe that your inaction with regards to this important case, compared to your active involvement in other cases (such as the repatriation of Brenda Martin from Mexico), has been, rightly or wrongly, interpreted by the Muslim community as indicative that your government considers Canadian Muslims to be second-class citizens," said the letter, that was sent Tuesday.
20 …He is the only westerner still detained at Guantanamo Bay; other nations have repatriated their citizens to face justice at home.
(22)

In 2002, Omar Khadr, age 15, was apprehended by the U.S. army in Afghanistan during a shootout. Toronto-born Khadr was accused of lobbing a grenade that killed a U.S. soldier. At the time of the article, he was being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, without trial.

The headline of the article, “Heat’s on PM over Khadr case” is vague and does not give readers a sense of the nature or source of pressure on the Prime Minister. Although
the journalist specifies that the number of signatories of the letter is 185 (Line 1), no
distinction is made between the number of groups and the number of individuals who
signed the letter, nor are any of the groups or individuals identified by name. Because the
number of signatories by groups and individuals are not reported separately, the number
may seem larger. It is noteworthy that the journalist describes the signatories as
“Canadian” (Line 1) because this may suggest to the reader that the issue of Khadr’s
repatriation is relevant to the citizenry as a whole, and not a special interest limited to
Muslims. The lexical choice “harbouring” in Line 2 implies that the government’s anti-
Muslim sentiment is hidden or concealed, which has negative connotations. Furthermore,
the journalist’s description of the government as “harbouring anti-Muslim sentiment” is
more euphemistic than, for example, “the government discriminates against Muslims” or
“the government is Islamophobic.” Also in Line 2, the journalist works the signatories up
as “accusing” the government of anti-Muslim sentiment, whereas the signatories’
position is stated rather differently in the content quoted from the letter. In Line 13 (“We
believe…”), the signatories describe their stance not as an accusation of the government,
but rather as an interpretation of the government’s position on the Khadr case. This may
also signal that a diplomatic stance is being taken in presenting the issue to the
government. This interpretation is supported in Line 15 in which the letter writers’ claim
that Canadian Muslims are considered second-class citizens is hedged with the clause
“rightly or wrongly.” By offering the possibility that theirs is the wrong interpretation,
the writers soften the tone of the letter. Recall also that in Line 3, the situation was
described by the journalist as a “refusal” to repatriate Khadr. However, in Line 13, the
letter describes the government’s position as “inaction,” suggesting a more benign view of the government’s behaviour.

In the quoted portion of the letter in Lines 13-17, a comparison is used to strengthen the claim that Khadr is being unfairly subjected to differential treatment by the government because of his Muslim identity. Three features of that comparison are noteworthy. First, the Khadr case is referred to as “this important case,” (Line 13) while “other cases” (Line 14) are not similarly qualified. This upgrades the significance of the Khadr case and implies that the government previously took action in less important cases. Second, the letter refers to other “cases” (plural), suggesting that the government has a history of involvement in similar situations. This implies that the government’s inaction in the Khadr case is anomalous. Third, the letter refers to a specific Canadian, Brenda Martin, who was repatriated (Line 14-15).

Unlike in Line 1 in which the journalist identifies the letter’s signatories as “Canadian” groups and individuals, in Line 15, the letter more narrowly specifies that the concerns about Khadr’s treatment are situated in the “Muslim community.” This may weaken the signatories’ claim. The argument might seem more compelling if non-Muslim Canadians were also said to believe that Khadr is being treated unfairly. In Line 16, the letter refers to “Canadian Muslims.” The noun Muslim may seem more powerful than the adjective Canadian, and may therefore downplay the emphasis on their status as Canadian citizens by emphasizing their distinctiveness as Muslims.

The article ends in Line 22 with two additional details about Khadr’s case. First, Khadr is the only westerner still being held at Guantanamo Bay. Second, other nations have repatriated their citizens to face justice at home. Arguably, these details may be
doing more than simply informing the reader of the facts of Khadr’s case. The comparison of Canada to other nations may bolster the letter writers’ claim because it suggests that if every other western nation has repatriated its citizens from Guantanamo Bay, then perhaps Canada should have too. Since Canada has not repatriated Khadr, and there is no apparent explanation for why Canada’s stance is different, this information may support the letter writers’ claim that Khadr is being treated differently because he is Muslim.

Cleared by RCMP, Canadian still can’t come home.
News

35 The cost of removing Mr. Abdelrazik seems to have played a part in the government's decision. In a "memo to ministers" marked "Canadian eyes only" and dated only days before the Harper government transmitted the delisting request to the Security Council last December, they were warned "it is possible that a plane would need to be chartered for Mr. Abdelrazik's return to Canada. The costs of the charter and the government escorts would be prohibitive," ministers were advised by senior Foreign Affairs officials.
42 Cost hasn't deterred the government in some instances. The Harper government paid more than $80,000 to charter a private jet to fly convicted felon Brenda Martin back to Canada from Mexico last May after a brouhaha of public attention about her plight.
45 Mr. Abdelrazik, who is Muslim and black, has a family, including several young children, living in Montreal.

Abousfian Abdelrazik was arrested in Khartoum, Sudan in 2003, while visiting his mother. Despite being cleared by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Sudanese police, Abdelrazik’s name remains on the United Nations Security Council's blacklist of suspected al-Qaeda operatives. For over a year, Abdelrazik has been living in the Canadian Embassy in Khartoum. The government of Canada agreed to grant Abdelrazik a temporary emergency travel document if he could obtain a confirmed reservation for a flight back to Canada; however, most airlines refused
to carry him because his name is also on a U.S. no-fly list. When Etihad Airways, an airline based in Abu Dhabi, agreed to fly Abdelrazik home, the government imposed a new condition: that he have a fully paid ticket.

As in the previous extract, here too a comparison to how the government treated Brenda Martin is made to support the claim that Abdelrazik is being discriminated against. However, whereas in the previous extract the comparison to Martin was invoked by those campaigning on Khadr’s behalf, here the comparison is introduced by the journalist. In Lines 35-45, the journalist draws a comparison between the government’s attitude toward the cost of repatriating Abdelrazik (“prohibitive,” Line 40) and the “more than $80,000 paid” (Line 43) to repatriate Brenda Martin. Two aspects of the journalist’s comparison point to the display of neutral footing. First is the use of quotation. By directly quoting a Foreign Affairs memo to ministers (Lines 38-40), the journalist uses the government’s own words to report their stance towards the repatriation of Abdelrazik. Second, the journalist’s “seems to have” in Line 35 uses modalization, which suggests that a measured and reasoned position is being adopted.

In Line 42 there is an implied “but” at the beginning of the sentence “Cost hasn’t deterred the government in some instances,” which casts doubt on the government’s claim that the cost of repatriating Abdelrazik is prohibitive. The journalist’s “seems” from Line 35, along with the concrete example of the Harper government’s repatriation of Brenda Martin in Lines 42-44, also sets up an appearance-reality distinction. An appearance-reality distinction is a rhetorical resource that signals a contrast between superficial appearance and an underlying reality, which represents the “true” situation (Edwards, 1991). The journalist’s appearance-reality distinction here suggests that while
the cost of returning Abdelrazik to Canada “seems” to be the reason the government has not brought Abdelrazik home, the reality may be different. What is different about this extract compared to Extract 15, however, is that here Abdelrazik’s Muslim identity is not directly pointed to as the reason for this treatment.

A particularly noteworthy piece of identity information is included in Line 43, where the journalist labels Brenda Martin as a “convicted felon.” In Line 10 of the article (not in extract; see Appendix), readers are told that Abdelrazik “has been cleared by the RCMP, CSIS and the Sudanese police.” This three-part list leaves little room to doubt Abdelrazik’s innocence. Therefore, it is possible that highlighting Martin’s identity as a convicted felon may make the injustice of the government’s treatment of Abdelrazik seem greater. Note, however, that the journalist does not make a direct comparison of Abdelrazik’s “innocence” to Martin’s guilt. The information about the innocence and guilt of each is available in different parts of the article, separated by over thirty lines of text. Therefore, the reader may or may not attend to the comparison.

In Line 45, the journalist reports that Abdelrazik is “Muslim and black.” Although these particular pieces of identity information could arguably have been inserted in any number of places in the article, they are located immediately following the comparison of Abdelrazik to Brenda Martin. Given that Mr. Abdelrazik is explicitly identified as Muslim and black, it is implied, by extension, that Brenda Martin is neither Muslim nor black. By virtue of its placement, this identity information suggests that the government has not brought Abdelrazik back to Canada because he is Muslim and black. Whereas in Extract 1 the story explicitly centred around the claim that Khadr was being treated a certain way because he is Muslim, here the role of religion and race are not explicitly
named as the cause of Abelrazik’s treatment. It is therefore not possible to say whether the reader will come to this conclusion. It is also not possible to say whether the invocation of both race and religion as possible factors in Abdelrazik’s treatment makes the case more or less compelling to readers than would religion alone.

Extract 17 (Ottawa Citizen. February 1, 2009. Pg. A.1)
All my human rights were taken away. ... I don't know what's going on in the world. I'm still in 2006"; Bashir Makhtal is a Canadian trapped in an Ethiopian jail.

He looks at the 2008 case of Brenda Martin -- in which a Conservative cabinet minister flew to Mexico to secure the release of the Canadian convicted of fraud -- and wonders why something similar wasn't done for his cousin a long time ago. Is it because Bashir is black? Is it because he is Muslim? Or is it because the Canadian government doesn't want to help a citizen trapped in the war on terror?

Bashir Makhtal, a Canadian citizen born in Ethiopia, was detained while travelling in Somalia and was subsequently sent to Ethiopia on an illegal rendition flight. It is against international law for a country, in this case Somalia, to forcibly send a non-citizen to a third country. Makthal has been in an Ethiopian prison since 2007.

As in Extracts 15 and 16, here too Brenda Martin is invoked as the basis of comparison for evaluating Bashir Makhtal’s treatment by the government. In this extract, the comparison is attributed to Said Makhtal who is the accused’s Ottawa-based cousin. Said Makhtal’s two-year effort to compel the Canadian government to intervene on Bashir’s behalf is described at length in the article. In Lines 255-257, a three-part list of possibilities is offered for why Bashir Makhtal has been treated differently than Brenda Martin. However, once they have been raised, none of the three possibilities gets taken up as “the” reason for Makhtal’s treatment by the government. Therefore, as in the previous extract, it is not possible to determine what conclusions the reader may draw about why
Makhtal did not receive the same treatment as Martin. It is possible that the reader will conclude it is one, some, all or even none of these factors that explains why Makhtal has not been repatriated.

It bears pointing out that the article from which Extract 17 is drawn is different from the previous two in a potentially important way. Whereas Extracts 15 and 16 come from news stories, Extract 17 comes from a profile piece. Unlike news stories, which attend to the five “w”s (who, what, when, where, and why), profile pieces attend to the question of “who” in much greater detail. It is therefore not particularly surprising that the article about Makhtal provides the reader with many details about who he is. In fact, according to the journalist who wrote the story, in order to understand why Makhtal is still in an Ethiopian prison, it is necessary to answer the question of who he is (Line 54; see Appendix). This profile piece contains so many details about Makhtal’s life story and detention that the article comes in at 278 lines, making it by far the longest in my sample. By comparison, the next longest article in the sample is 156 lines. The matter of article length and the plethora of details provided about Makhtal is potentially important because although it is clear throughout the article that the journalist is making a case that Makhtal has been badly treated by the government, the reader would have to reach line 256 to find an explanation. Even when they are named, the reasons—race, religion, the war on terror—are presented as possible reasons and not *the* reasons.

In the following extract, comparisons are also used to support the claim that a Canadian Muslim is being treated unfairly by the government; however, in this case, the comparison is to other Canadians in general, and not to a specific, named Canadian in particular.
Stephen Lewis, a former UN special envoy, has joined more than 160 Canadians to purchase a flight home for Abousfian Abdelrazik, a Canadian citizen stuck in Sudan because the Harper government won't give him a passport.

Mr. Lewis, who was also Canada's ambassador to the United Nations in the 1980s, joins former solicitor-general Warren Allmand and more than a dozen lawyers and law professors effectively challenging the government's claim that the United Nations is to blame for the Kafkaesque predicament ensnaring Mr. Abdelrazik.

Claudia Schibler, 53, a disabled Canadian veteran who served in Bosnia, said she was infuriated by the government's treatment of Mr. Abdelrazik. "Some of us put on the uniform and risked life and limb for values that we [Canadians] are privileged to have," Ms. Schibler said. "I thought that people who came to our country and who hadn't known the freedoms that we have should be treated just like any other citizen," the former army sergeant said from her home in Halifax.

"Just like the Germans zeroed in on the Jews, we are zeroing in on Muslims ... this is so wrong," Ms. Schibler said.

Boyce Richardson, an author and filmmaker, said it was "bloody awful" the way Mr. Abdelrazik is being treated by the Harper government. There seems, he said, to be "at least two classes of Canadian citizen," adding Mr. Abdelrazik is not the only case of a Muslim Canadian not being treated as a full citizen.

An interesting feature of this article’s headline is that it points out that those who have come to Abdelrazik’s aid are “Canadians ‘from all walks of life.’” The quotation “from all walks of life” is from Line 15 of the article. The headline also contains the three-part list “lawyers, former government officials and ordinary Canadians.” The third part, “ordinary Canadians,” contrasts with the two professional categories “lawyers and former government officials,” suggesting that the issue cuts across social categories. “Ordinary Canadians” in the three-part list may work with the extreme case formulation “from all walks of life” in the first part of the headline to emphasize that Abdelrazik’s case is not
only of bureaucratic or legal relevance. It is also notable that the headline specifies that these people are “denouncing treatment of Muslim Canadian,” which signals that Abdelrazik’s identity as a Muslim is central to the story. Note, however, that the headline does not specify that it is the government that is being denounced.

The journalist devotes considerable space in this article— the first 20 lines—to describing some of the people who donated money towards a plane ticket for Abdelrazik. As in the previous extract in which the number of signatories was stated, here the number of people who donated money for the plane ticket is specified (“more than 160 Canadians,” Line 3). This augments the sense that there is a broad base of support for Abdelrazik. In this extract, two high-profile donors identified by name (Stephen Lewis and Warren Allmand), and their high-status titles as “former UN special envoy,” “Canada’s ambassador to the United Nations in the 1980s,” and “former solicitor-general” may lend credibility to Abdelrazik’s cause. In Line 7, the journalist describes Abdelrazik’s predicament as “Kafkaesque,” which is an eponym used to describe situations or ideas that are reminiscent of the work of writer Franz Kafka. Although it is possible that the journalist’s use of the term “Kafkaesque” may be obscure to some readers, it may also suggest that Abdelrazik’s situation centres around legalities and that it is unjust. One of Kafka’s best-known works is the novel “The Trial” which tells the story of a man who is arrested and prosecuted without the nature of his crime being revealed to him or to the reader.

I have included in this extract the quotations of two people who donated money to pay for Abdelrazik’s plane ticket (Lines 22-26 and 35-36; and Lines 64-65). The journalist provides readers with identity markers about both sources. Schibler is described as “a
disabled Canadian veteran who served in Bosnia” (Line 21), and Richardson is identified as “an author and filmmaker” (Line 63). Although the journalist does not mark Schibler’s or Richardson’s religion, and the article does not state that they are not Muslim, it is unlikely that readers would assume them to be Muslim because of their non-Muslim sounding surnames. Schibler and Richardson’s opposition to Abdelrazik’s treatment may thus seem more compelling than if their identity was marked as Muslim because they are less likely to appear to have a vested interest in the matter. Another feature of both Schibler and Richardson’s statements is the use of emotionally charged language: Schibler is described as “infuriated” (Line 21) and Richardson calls Abdelrazik’s treatment "bloody awful" (Line 63). In both cases, this type of language suggests a strong response to the perceived injustice against Abdelrazik.

The details provided by the journalist with respect to Schibler (Lines 20-26 and 35-36) suggest a particularly compelling category entitlement based on Schibler’s status as a “disabled Canadian veteran who served in Bosnia” (Line 20) and as a “former army sergeant” (Line 25). This is evident in Line 20 in which Schibler’s quotation orients to her authority as a war veteran. In Lines 22-25, Schibler is also speaking as a Canadian: “we Canadians,” “our country,” the freedoms that we have.” In lines 24-26, Schibler is suggesting that a contrast exists between the treatment of immigrant Canadians (“people who came to our country,” Line 24) and other citizens. In this instance, Schibler seems to be suggesting that the Abdelrazik’s discriminatory treatment stems from his immigrant status. However, in Line 35, Schibler specifies that it is Muslims in particular who are being singled out: “…we are zeroing in on Muslims.” The description “zeroing in” suggests a deliberate targeting, and given that Schibler was identified as speaking as a
war veteran, the term may also conjure up the imagery of Muslims being caught in the
cross-hairs. Finally, Schibler’s claim that Canada’s zeroing in on Muslims is comparable
to Germany’s zeroing in on Jews is a very provocative statement because it suggests that
Canada is acting on the basis of a systematic policy grounded in religious hatred.
Furthermore, religious hatred as practiced toward Jews by Germany manifested as
genocide, so this comparison also seems to invoke a slippery slope argument.

In Lines 63-66 an indirect comparison is made between Canadian Muslims and other
Canadians when Richardson is quoted as saying there seems to be “at least two classes of
Canadian citizen.” Although “seems” would suggest that perhaps there is an appearance-
reality contrast at work, Richardson is reported as stating that Abdelrazik is not the only
case of a Muslim Canadian not being treated as a full citizen. The implication is therefore
that two classes of citizens do, indeed exist.

Unlike the previous four extracts, the final extract in this sub-section does not centre
around a specific Canadian Muslim individual who is worked up as being unfairly treated
by the Canadian government. Here, a claim is being made that Canadian Muslims in
general are discriminated against, without the specifics of an individual’s circumstances
being invoked.

‘We’ve been victimized’; Three human rights complaints, three failures. Not so
says the complainant
News

82 "Before, section 13 [the federal human rights hate speech provision] was used mainly
83 by Jewish groups. Nobody really had any concern," he said. "There was not much
84 fuss."
85 "We are not politically engaged like the Jewish community. We have less senators,
86 MPs and MPPs than the Jewish community. We are a community under construction,
87 and then an earthquake came to challenge that community, which is 9/11," he said.
88 "Politicians ignore Islamophobia, while in the Jewish community, if there is any
89 indication of anti-Semitism, the politicians are up front, saying this is not acceptable.
90 This is the right way to do it.”
(121)

The individual quoted in this extract is Mohamed Elmasry, President of the Canadian Islamic Congress. The article is based on an interview with Elmasry about the unsuccessful cases he brought before the Ontario, British Columbia, and federal human rights tribunals. Elmasry had argued that Maclean’s magazine violated Canadian hate speech laws in its descriptions of Muslims. In Lines 82-83, Elmasry sets up the Jewish community as the basis of his comparison in his claim about the unfair treatment of Canadian Muslims by politicians. In Line 83, Elmasry bolsters his claim that Muslims are being treated differently than Jewish groups through two extreme case formulations: “Nobody really had any concern.” In Lines 85-86, Elmasry attributes the differential treatment of the two groups to their levels of political engagement, using a three-part list to strengthen his claim that Canadian Muslims are not as politically engaged as members of the Jewish community: “We have less senators, MPs and MPPs than the Jewish community.” In his construction of the identity of the Muslim community in Canada, Elmasry uses metaphorical language. First, in Line 86, he describes the Muslim community as being “under construction,” which implies not only that the community is a work in progress, and may suggest, by extension that the Jewish community is more established. Therefore, being under construction may be perceived by Elmasry to be a further disadvantage the Muslim community faces. Second, in the same sentence (Line 87), Elmasry likens 9/11 to “an earthquake.” The likening of 9/11 to an earthquake is interesting because earthquakes are uncontrrollable acts of nature, whereas terrorism is a deliberate human action. The suggestion is that the Canadian Muslim community was
affected by an event both beyond its control and not of its making. Elmasry goes on in Line 87 to state explicitly that his earthquake metaphor was in reference to 9/11, despite the likelihood that most readers would have made such a connection themselves. I found elsewhere in the coverage (see next section) that 9/11 was sometimes invoked in vague or euphemistic terms as way of distancing the Muslim community from references to terrorism. Here, however, any distancing effect that Elmasry’s “earthquake” metaphor may have had is likely downgraded by his clarification it applies to 9/11. In Line 88, Elmasry bolsters his claim that politicians treat discrimination towards Muslims and Jews differently through the use of an extreme case formulation, “…if there is any indication of anti-Semitism…” Furthermore, in Line 88 “Islamophobia” is worked up as real phenomenon, comparable to anti-Semitism. This is accomplished by Elmasry’s claim that “Politicians ignore Islamophobia,” which, in keeping with the concept of hierarchy of modalization, is a means of treating Islamophobia as a “fact” (Potter, 1996).

By invoking a comparison with the Jewish community to make his argument, Elmasry is clearly on potentially problematic ground. Given the historical and ongoing conflicts between Muslims and Jews, it is possible that the reader will view Elmasry’s claim as grounded in these hostilities, and this could potentially weaken his credibility.

**Negative identity information in constructions of discrimination.** The seven extracts in this sub-section also deal with constructions of discrimination against Canadian Muslims. A prominent feature of these extracts is that they were found to also include negative identity information about Muslims. Although on the one hand Canadian Muslims are worked up as being mistreated, on the other hand, there is accompanying information that problematizes Muslims. This negative information about Muslims was
usually in the form of background or contextual information that explained the discrimination. Unlike the previous sub-section in which articles typically focused on the treatment of a specific Muslim individual, here the articles were more often focused on discriminatory actions towards Canadian Muslims as a group, although not exclusively.

National group urges police probe of mosque defacement; But Dorval congregation wants ‘to forgive’ and meet vandals

1 A national lobby group called yesterday for a swift police probe after vandals defaced a Dorval mosque for the second time in a year.
2 But Mehmet Deger, president of the 1,500-member mosque, had a much different reaction.
3 Deger said he just wants to put the incident behind him and his congregation.
(lines omitted)
15 Deger spoke after the Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations in Ottawa asked for a swift police probe, calling this "a possible hate crime."
17 "In both instances," the council added, "the side of the mosque was spray-painted with the word 'Koran' and numbers that reference somewhat controversial verses of the Quran that are often taken out of their historical context and misinterpreted as implying that Islam teaches Muslims to wage wars against non-Muslims."
(27)

Although Lines 1-2 do not explicitly refer to Muslims as being the target of discrimination, it is indirectly suggested that the mosque members have been wronged given that the situation warrants calling for a police investigation. Also, those who defaced the mosque are called “vandals,” which suggests the malicious destruction of property, thereby assigning the defacers a negative identity label. The sense of wrongdoing is also amplified through use of the word “swift” (Line 1) which lends a sense of urgency to the matter. Taken together, the information in Lines 1-2 suggests to the reader that the mosque members are the target of discrimination. It is notable that Line 1 refers rather vaguely to “a national lobby group” and does not name the group in question. It is not until Line 15 that the reader is told that the group in question is the
Running Head: CANADIAN MUSLIM IDENTITIES IN THE PRESS

Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CCAIR), and that the CCAIR has called for the police probe on the basis that the incident is “a possible hate crime” (Line 16). In the article’s lead sentence, the journalist labelled the spray-painting as defacement by vandals, which is much less serious than a hate crime. The CCAIR may therefore seem to be reacting based on a vested interest in how the spray-painting is defined, particularly since the mosque president “just wants to put the incident behind him and his congregation” (Line 5). Note, however, that the CCAIR was quoted by the journalist in Line 16 as calling the spray-painting a “possible” hate crime, which suggests that their response is measured and they have not jumped to conclusions.

In Line 18, the CCAIR calls the verses of the Quran that were spray-painted on the mosque “somewhat controversial,” where “somewhat” downgrades the seriousness of the controversy. According to the CCAIR, these verses are “often taken out of their historical context and misinterpreted” (Line 19), which suggests that the verses themselves are not the problem, but how they are used by others. Despite the CCAIR’s use of language that attempts to mitigate the significance of the meaning of the verses, the details about the verses are potentially problematic for the CCAIR because of the inference that is made available. The spray-painted verses imply that those who worship at the mosque are guilty, or at least guilty by association, of using the Quranic verses to wage war against non-Muslims. The contextual information about the defacement includes information that may be taken up some readers as suggesting that the mosque members may not be innocent targets of discrimination and there may be some justification for the defacement.
Radio host Lowell Green chastised for ‘abusive’ remarks about Muslims

News

According to the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC), Mr. Green launched an "uninformed and unfair" attack when he told his CFRA audience in early December that the majority of Muslims are fanatics and extremist behaviour is symptomatic of the religion, not just a radical minority.

Mr. Green, the self-styled occupier of a mythical "Island of Sanity," had been inspired by the story of British schoolteacher Gillian Gibbons whose elementary class in the Sudanese capital Khartoum named a class teddy bear "Muhammad" and caused a storm of outrage across the Muslim world.

Ms. Gibbons was forced to leave the country after being threatened with imprisonment and death.

Mr. Green posed the question to listeners: "Is there something inherent in the Muslim faith that promotes violence and oppression of women?"

This extract illustrates even more clearly the potential problem that arises when contextual information about the initial incidence of discrimination is reported. Although the article is ostensibly about the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council’s ruling that Green’s remarks were "uninformed and unfair" (Line 5), the journalist nonetheless devotes considerable space early in the article (Lines 8-15) to recounting Green’s remarks. Although Muslims are initially positioned as victims of Green’s attack (e.g., in the headline and in Line 5), the details that immediately follow (Lines 8-13) may offer a rationale for viewing Green’s remarks as not entirely unjustified because the teddy bear incident provides an example in which Muslims appear to have behaved unreasonably, at least by Western standards. It important to note, however, that the way in which the journalist set up the presentation of Green’s remarks may work to undermine Green’s credibility. In Line 8, the journalist describes Green as “the self-styled occupier of a mythical ‘Island of Sanity.’” The descriptions “self-styled” and “mythical” suggest that,
for the journalist at least, Green has not been successful in constructing his identity as an “Island of Sanity,” which may weaken Green’s credibility.

Extract 22 (Ottawa Citizen. April 14, 2009. Pg. A.12)
A Canadian abandoned Column

Finally, last week, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon confirmed that he had denied Abdelrazik a passport "on the basis of national security," even though both CSIS and the RCMP say they have no current and substantive information linking him to criminal activity. Now it's possible that a person can indeed be a security risk even if he has no ties to criminal activity. Maybe Lawrence Cannon has information that Abdelrazik secretly identifies with Islamic terrorists. That would theoretically make him a security risk, the same way that a Canadian who, say, self-identifies as a neo-Nazi might constitute a security risk. But that is not an argument for leaving him in limbo in Sudan.

The Canadian government is suggesting that Abdelrazik is a security risk; if true, the risk ought to be a manageable one. Bring him back to Canada and put him under surveillance, if need be. This is a Canadian citizen, remember, one who has never been on the wrong side of the law, as far as anyone knows. Does he identify with Islamic radicalism? He says no. But even if he did, he would hardly be the only Canadian Muslim to do so.

Like extracts 16 and 18, this article centres around Abousfian Abdelrazik, the Canadian man who has been living at the Canadian Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan for over a year. Despite having been cleared by Canadian law enforcement agencies, Abdelrazik has been refused a passport and he is unable to fly home because his name is on a United Nations no-fly list. In general, the columnist seems to be taking a sympathetic stance towards Abdelrazik. For example in Lines 26-30, the columnist argues that even if Abdelrazik secretly identifies with Islamic terrorists, “that is not an argument for leaving him in limbo in Sudan.” Despite the columnist’s generally sympathetic stance, the article contains a number of details that may work together to weaken the notion that Abdelrazik is an innocent victim of discrimination. What is
different about this extract is that the negative information about Muslims is not introduced to readers through a recounting of background details. Rather, in three separate places the columnist introduces hypothetical and speculative statements that taken together may cast doubt on Abdelrazik’s innocence. First, the columnist speculates that “maybe” Lawrence Cannon has information that Abdelrazik secretly identified with Islamic terrorists” (Line 27). The columnist then goes on to invoke a negative group comparison to neo-Nazis in order to illustrate the type of threat Abdelrazik might pose. A second statement by the columnist that may cast doubt on Abdelrazik is found in Lines 42-43: “…who has never been on the wrong side of the law, as far as anyone knows.” On the one hand, the columnist highlights the fact that Abdelrazik has no ties to criminal activity through the combined use of an extreme case formulation, “never” and the idiomatic expression “on the wrong side of the law.” On the other hand, this strongly stated claim is then immediately downgraded with the speculative statement, “as far as anyone knows.” Here the columnist introduces the possibility that the issue is not so much that Abdelrazik is not on the wrong side of the law, but rather that the evidence has not been uncovered. A third speculative statement regarding Abdelrazik’s innocence is introduced by the columnist in Lines 43-44: “Does he identify with Islamic radicalism? He says no.” Here, “says no” positions Abdelrazik’s denial as a claim rather than as a fact. Consider by comparison, how the facticity of the claim changes, becoming stronger, when written as follows: “Does he identify with Islamic radicalism? No.” In Lines 44-45, the columnist invokes a generalization of Canadian Muslims saying that even if Abdelrazik did identify with Islamic radicalism “…he would hardly be the only Canadian Muslim to do so.” Two features of this statement are noteworthy. First, “hardly” together
with the extreme case formulation “only” suggests it is unlikely that Abdelrazik would be alone in these views, and further, it would come as little surprise that other Canadian Muslims identify with Islamic radicalism. One interpretation of the columnist’s presentation of Adelrazik’s case is that casting doubt on Abdelrazik’s innocence may provide grounds for the reader to conclude that the government was not unjustified in its decision to deny Abdelrazik a passport.


Former judge wants to bar Muslims from university scholarships he funds

1. A retired judge who funds scholarships at two Canadian universities is asking that 2. those scholarships not be awarded to any students "of Islamic background," calling his 3. decision a form of "retaliation" against the Taliban.
4. The Globe and Mail received a fax from retired Windsor, Ont., judge Paul 5. Staniszewski outlining his decision, which he says he made after learning of the 6. beheading of Polish engineer Piotr Stanczak at the hands of Taliban militants in 7. Pakistan this month.
8. "I'm reacting to innocent people being killed," said Mr. Staniszewski, 84, when 9. contacted by The Globe.
10. "I'm not in the business of killing people. I am in the business of sending messages." 11. Mr. Staniszewski described the possibility that some students would lose funding as 12. a form of "tit for tat."

Two pieces of identity information in Line 1 suggest an initially positive identity for Staniszewski. First, the professional category “judge” comes with a considerable degree of authority and credibility, and is generally a highly regarded role within society. Second, funding scholarships at universities is a generous act, which suggests a benevolent identity for Staniszewski. However, the identity information in the remainder of the extract arguably paints a less high-minded image of the retired judge. Both Staniszewski, and the Polish engineer, Stanczak, have similar-sounding names. Although the article does not say so, if Staniszewski is assumed by the reader to also be Polish, this
shared identity feature may seem to be the reason for his decision. Therefore, Staniszewski’s decision to exclude Muslim students from his scholarships may seem personally motivated, a factor which might undermine his credibility. Several additional details may also limit the judge’s credibility. First, Line 4 states that “The Globe and Mail received a fax” from the judge, which suggests that Staniszewski initiated contact with the newspaper. Second, Staniszewski’s age is reported in Line 8. Because he is 84 years old, some readers may be inclined to dismiss Staniszewski’s views as those of an eccentric old man. The mention of Staniszewski’s age may also signal his membership in a cohort for which early socialization of tolerance toward diversity was not prevalent. Third, in his own words, Stanisweski describes his decision as a form of “tit for tat” (Line 12), implying equal retaliation. However, excluding Canadian Muslim university students from scholarships hardly constitutes equal retaliation for a Taliban beheading. This may suggest that Staniszewski’s action is not logical. Fourth, the retired judge is quoted as saying that he is taking this action in reaction “to innocent people being killed” (Line 8). However, it is just as likely that the Muslim students he intends to exclude from his scholarships are innocent which again suggests that Staniszewski’s decision is not logical. Taken together, these pieces of information limit Staniszewski’s credibility.

The matter of whether or not the Muslim university students are regarded by readers as having been treated unfairly may depend to some extent on what readers make of the details about the engineer who was beheaded by Taliban militants. As in Extract 21, here too the violent actions of non-Canadian Muslims are reported as the basis for discrimination against Canadian Muslims.
29 Arar, an Ottawa engineer, was detained at New York's JFK Airport on Sept. 26, 2002 as he waited for a connector flight to Montreal after a vacation in Tunisia. (lines omitted)

33 The three-year, $15-million Arar inquiry concluded false information given to U.S. authorities by an inexperienced RCMP anti-terrorism team, which tagged Mr. Arar as an "Islamic extremist," very likely set off a chain of events that led to his deportation and torture. Arar commissioner Justice Dennis O'Connor also unequivocally cleared Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian, of any links to terrorism. (37)

Maher Arar is a Canadian Muslim who was deported to Syria and tortured, circumstances which subsequently led to a government inquiry into the handling of the case. Arar was cleared of any link to terrorism and was awarded $10.5 million in restitution. Arar’s case and the public inquiry received very heavy news media coverage, so readers may be assumed to be familiar with details of the backstory on Arar. This article is a report of Arar’s participation on a panel on media ethics at which he spoke about how the media handled his case.

The final paragraph of the article summarizes the backstory on Arar (Lines 29-37), and the journalist includes the detail that Arar was detained in New York while waiting for a connector flight after a vacation. Although waiting for a connector flight is arguably a rather mundane activity, when the person in question is a Muslim and the connector city is New York, images of 9/11 may be invoked. The journalist also includes the date of Arar’s detention, which was September 26, 2002 (Line 29) or just one year after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Furthermore, it is reported that Arar was returning from a vacation in Tunisia, a detail that may seem suspicious both because this North African country is Arab and because it is not a typical destination for Canadian vacationers. Taken together,
these details suggest that although it is unfortunate that Arar was wrongfully detained, his detention may not have been entirely unjustified. I would argue that the journalist’s inclusion of the detail that Arar is a “Syrian-born Canadian” (Line 37), also functions in the same way, implying that although Arar was “unequivocally cleared” (Line 36), one might nonetheless understand how such an error might be made. This extract demonstrates that supplemental information about Muslim identity does not necessarily have to be overtly negative in order to make available the possibility that the government’s actions, while regrettable, were not unreasonable.

The detail that Arar was “unequivocally cleared… of any links to terrorism” is arguably the most important piece of information in the paragraph about the inquiry; however, the journalist explicitly states this fact only in the final sentence of the article. News stories follow what is referred to as an “inverted pyramid” format where the most important details are reported first and then details follow “in order of diminishing importance” (Jones, 1976, p. 45). One practical application of this formatting convention is that an article can easily be shortened without any of the essential information being lost.

Placement of this information at the end of the article suggests that the journalist does not regard it as most important. Rather, the ordering may reflect the presumption that the news audience knows of the acquittal because of the previous coverage. In this case, the most important information may be understood as the newest information, which is presented first.

Lines 33-37 report the conclusions of the public inquiry. Here, the journalist casts the inquiry in an agentic manner, meaning that the conclusions are attributed to the inquiry.
In Line 34, the RCMP are described as “inexperienced,” a qualification which may suggest that the RCMP may have simply not have known better and therefore that Arar’s treatment was not due to his Muslim identity. The anti-terrorism team is described as having “tagged” Arar as an Islamic extremist (Line 34). This verb choice carries more colloquial or informal connotations than a more common synonym such as “labelled,” which is more suggestive of stereotyping. The RCMP’s giving of false information and tagging Arar as an Islamic terrorist are described as “having very likely set off a chain of events” (Line 35), where “having very likely” downgrades the RCMP’s responsibility somewhat by raising the possibility that Arar’s deportation and torture may have been caused in some other, unmentioned way, by unnamed others.

**Section summary.** Two patterns were identified in the constructions of discrimination against Canadian Muslims. In the first pattern, Canadian Muslims were portrayed as being treated unfairly by the Canadian government. I found that journalists and news sources often invoked comparisons to support the claim that Canadian Muslims are unfairly being treated differently by the government. These comparisons often juxtaposed the treatment of an individual Canadian Muslim with the treatment of a specific non-Muslim Canadian or focused on the distinction between how Canada treats its citizens compared to how other countries treat their citizens.

The results of my analysis also suggest that the identity of the person or group to whom the Muslim target(s) was compared matters because it either bolstered or weakened the case for discrimination against Canadian Muslims. In Extracts 15, 16 and 17, comparisons to Brenda Martin, a non-Muslim, were invoked to support the claim that Muslim individuals were not being repatriated *because* they are Muslim. Interestingly, in
Extracts 16 and 17, the journalist included the additional detail that Brenda Martin is a convicted felon. Given that neither Abdelrazik nor Makhtal have been convicted of a crime, the injustice of their treatment by government may be amplified. The issue of whether or not a comparison will be treated as convincing by the reader is by no means straightforward. This point is more clearly illustrated with reference to Extract 19 in which the President of the Canadian Islamic Congress invoked Jews as his comparison group. In that case, he may either have weakened or strengthened the case for identifying Muslims as the target of discrimination depending on the sympathies of the reader.

In the second sub-section I found that reports about discrimination against Canadian Muslims often included background or contextual information that portrayed Muslims in general in a negative light. One possibility is that this juxtaposition of portrayals may subtly suggest to the reader that although Canadian Muslims are sometimes discriminated against, an explanation or justification for this treatment may exist. As previously stated with regard to comparisons, however, it is important to point out that there is no way of saying with certainty what interpretation the reader will make.

The Construction of Favourable Canadian Muslim identities

In this section I present 16 of the 29 extracts I analyzed in which Canadian Muslim identity was worked up in a generally favourable light. In keeping with the previous section on constructions of discrimination against Canadian Muslims, I found that constructions of positive Canadian Muslim identity often included references to negative actions by Muslims in general. However, not all of the favourable identity constructions were accompanied by negative identity information about Muslims, and I found that when Canadian Muslims were portrayed in unambiguously positive terms, they were
characterized as upholding Canadian values. I also found that when the topic of September 11 was raised in the positive coverage, it was formulated using vague, euphemistic discourse, by journalists and Muslim sources alike. The positive coverage was also found to depict Canadian Muslims as having a sense of humour about their Muslim identity.

**Negative information in favourable identity constructions.** Analysis of the following three extracts illustrates that some constructions of favourable Canadian Muslim identity also included negative identity information about Muslims generally.


Integrating Islam’s core values into Canadian life; Mother and daughter appreciate freedom to debate

News

1 Islam is the world's second-largest religious group. Within each Islamic community and denomination, different interpretations have sprouted from Islam's 7th-century roots. How does that play out for Canadian Muslims?

2 Two Edmonton women agreed to talk about their Islamic faith, but for safety reasons asked that their real names not be used.

3 "People sometimes use Islam as an excuse for things," says Rogi, a high-scoring university student and a Canadian citizen who was born in Iran. A practising Muslim, she navigates between old world views and life in the 21st century. Rogi believes that true Islam comes from being a good person and relating to God through one's heart and actions.

(lines omitted)

4 Age nine is when many Muslim girls begin to pray and wear hijab, often interpreted as a head-covering but literally meaning modest dress.

(lines omitted)

5 Islam has two denominations: Sunni and Shi'a. Shi'a constitutes a smaller percentage of Muslims and is practised mainly in Iran. Many varying traditions have evolved within Muslim countries around the world, a reality that has influenced mother and daughter in how they choose to view Islam in Canada.

(lines omitted)

6 The family reads the Qur'an, the Islamic holy book transmitted to the prophet Mohammed in 610 CE, to examine the context of its messages. When in doubt, they simply work hard to be good, modest and hardworking.
This extract features two negative representations of Islam, both of which are worked up rather subtly. First, the idea that Islam is threatening and dangerous is introduced in Lines 4-5 where the journalist informs readers that for “safety reasons” the women “asked that their real names not be used.” At this point in the article, it is not clear what the mother and daughter’s views on Islam are; however, from the headline, the reader knows that they “appreciate freedom to debate.” The journalist’s implication is that the women’s views about Islam will put them at risk for retaliation by members of the Muslim community who disagree with them. This signals a negative stance (by the mother and daughter and adopted by the journalist) toward the broader Muslim community, which is positioned as not being receptive to divergent views on Islam to the extent that expressing a different viewpoint puts one in danger. Second, the reader’s introduction to Rogi opens with the quote, “People sometimes use Islam as an excuse for things,” (Line 6), which is made doubly vague through the use of “people” and “things.” Rogi does not specify that it is “Muslim people” who use Islam an excuse, but chooses instead the more general and inclusive “people.” Rogi also does not specify which “things” Islam is used to excuse. However, practices such as honour killing, stoning, and genital mutilation, all of which violate Canadian social norms, may come to mind as the types of things that Islam has sometimes been used to excuse.

The first pieces of direct identity information about Rogi provided by the journalist are that she is “a high-scoring university student and a Canadian citizen who was born in Iran (Lines 6-7).” Note that Rogi is not described just as a university student, but specifically as “a high-scoring” university student, a detail which signals to readers that she is intelligent. Inclusion of the detail that Rogi is a Canadian citizen may work to
convey to readers that Rogi is a more established member of Canadian society, that is, she is not a recently arrived immigrant. However, the detail that Rogi was born in Iran may subtly suggest to readers that she is not fully Canadian. Nonetheless, working together, the explicit identity information about Rogi creates a generally favourable identity which may lend credibility to her statements about Islam.

A notable feature of this extract is that it includes general information about Islam (Lines 1-2; Lines 22-23; Lines 39-40; Lines 49-50). Only six percent of the 155 articles in my sample included general or contextual information about Islam. On its face it is good that these details about Islam are made available to readers because they help improve public knowledge about this religion. It is notable, however, that two of the pieces of background information are accompanied by the suggestion that Islam is open to interpretation (Lines 22-23; Lines 39-41). Line 22 tells readers that the hijab is often “interpreted” as a head-covering, but literally means modest dress. This suggests that wearing a hijab is a legitimate practice when it is properly understood. This formulation signals a discrepancy between the literal meaning of modest dress and the interpreted meaning of head-covering, which may cast doubt on the necessity of the practice of wearing a head-covering. Immediately following the information about Islam’s two denominations (Line 39), the journalist invokes the relevance of interpretation again, stating that “many varying traditions have evolved” (Line 40) where “many” (Line 40) suggests a large, but unspecified number and “varying” (Line 40) implies diversity and difference. Furthermore, if the mother and daughter “choose” (Line 42) how to view Islam, then the religion is quite clearly open to interpretation. Finally, in Line 50, the messages of the Qu’ran are not treated by the mother and daughter as facts or religious
edicts that must be followed, because the family is described as sometimes being “in
doubt” when reading the Qu’ran. On the one hand these repeated references to Islam as
open to interpretation may be positive to the extent that they break down the stereotype of
Islam as rigid and oppressive. However, an alternative interpretation suggests a
potentially less desirable implication. If any number of interpretations of Islam are
possible, it may suggest that certain Muslim practices are a matter of social convention
rather than religious requirement. The distinction between social convention and religious
requirement was shown to be central in section two of my analysis where this distinction
was used to argue that Canadian Muslims do not have a legitimate basis for their freedom
of religion claims.

Their common goal
Column

1 Junaid Subhan was 17 and just starting at John Abbott College when the Sept. 11
2 attacks on New York’s World Trade Centre towers rocked his perception of what it
3 meant to be Muslim in North America.
4 A West Island youth then torn between a passion for science and an interest in
5 business, Subhan can’t name an instance where he’s felt he’d been mistreated or
6 discriminated against because of his religious background or beliefs. But in the
7 backlash that followed the attacks - Muslims were stopped at the border, permanent
8 residents like Adil Charkaoui arrested and youths like Omar Khadr detained without
9 trial at Guantanamo Bay prison camp - Subhan began to rethink his career path.
10 At 25, Subhan is in his third year of law at McGill University, one of a growing group
11 of young Muslims who see the legal profession as their chance to make a difference,
12 as members of their own community and in the wider world to which they also
13 belong. (59)

The article from which Extract 26 was drawn ran under a headline that does not
convey to the reader a sense of what the article is about. For instance, the headline offers
no indication of who “they” are, and “common goal” does little to impart a sense of what
is being reported on. As it happens, the article is about Muslim law students at McGill University who have created a Muslim Law Students’ Association.

In Line 1 of this extract, the 9/11 terrorist attacks are worked up as being central to Subhan’s identity. Although the article goes on to portray Subhan in a generally favourable light, the reference to 9/11 in the opening line invokes the most negative stereotype associated with Muslims, that is Muslims-as-terrorists. The statement in Lines 4-6 that Subhan “can’t name an instance where he’s felt mistreated or discriminated against…” is notable because of what it signals about Canadian society, which is that discrimination against Canadian Muslims is not a pervasive phenomenon.

The two people named by the journalist as examples of individual discrimination against Canadian Muslims (Adil Charkaoui and Omar Khadr) in Line 8 were involved in heavily reported terrorism cases. Khadr was accused of killing a U.S. soldier in Afghanistan and Charkaoui was detained on a security certificate and was alleged by CSIS to be a sleeper agent for al-Qaeda. Therefore, by naming two individuals involved in high profile terrorism cases as examples of the backlash against Muslims, the journalist may be subtly suggesting that the backlash is not completely unjustified. However, at the same time, the journalist also implies that Khadr is being treated badly: “detained without trial at Guantanamo Bay prison camp” (Line 8-9). In Lines 7-8, the journalist describes the backlash against Muslims using a three-part list; however, no reasoning or explanation is given for the actions described. Nothing is said about why Muslims were stopped at the border, or why permanent residents like Adil Charkaoui were arrested at the border or why Omar Khadr is being detained without trial at Guantanamo Bay prison
camp. As a result, the journalist may give readers the impression that these actions were carried out indiscriminately against Muslims.

In keeping with the previous extract, here too the explicit identity information about the profilee is favourable. For example, Subhan is in his third year of law school at McGill University (Line 25), which implies that he is intelligent and driven. Notice, however, that it is subtly suggested in Lines 11-13 that Subhan’s choice of profession is first and foremost about making a difference in his “own community,” that is, the Muslim community. A notable feature of Line 12-13 is that the journalist could have concluded this sentence with a period after the word “world.” Instead, the further description “to which they also belong” is added. This is an example of the sort of formulation that makes the discourse analyst ask “why this here?” By explicitly stating that “they also belong” to the wider world, the journalist may be signalling that the issue of belonging is problematic in some way.

Minority report; Vancouver woman risks her life to expose the persecution of Azerbaijani Iranians
News

24 The plight of Azerbaijanis and other ethnic minorities in Iran has slowly taken over Zamani's life. From her apartment in downtown Vancouver, she communicates by instant messenger with her network of contacts in Iran, who tell her -- often at great risk to themselves --about Azerbaijani activists who have been detained, tortured or killed by Iranian police for demanding language rights. They are often accused of being separatists who want to break up Iran. Zamani, who is also Azerbaijani Iranian, takes down their reports, translates them and sends them to Amnesty International officials in London, who publicize the cases. She has also formed a non-profit organization in Vancouver called the Association for the Defence of Azerbaijani Political Prisoners (ADAPP), which she funds mostly out of her own pocket. (lines omitted)
65 Zamani moved to Ottawa to be with her husband. She had strong enough marks in math and science that she was accepted by the University of Ottawa on government scholarships, even though she spoke no English. She completed an undergraduate degree in physics with a specialty in microwave engineering, then moved to
69 Vancouver to work on an emergency preparedness project with a professor at the
70 University of B.C.
(lines omitted)
105 Zamani began getting death threats herself when she started going on satellite
106 television and radio stations broadcast in Iran and talking about minority rights. Her
107 parents live in Iran and are regularly called in for questioning by intelligence service
108 agents. Zamani said her father tells the agents that they have no control over what
109 she does and that she doesn't listen to them. The authorities have already taken their
110 land, their home and many of their belongings.
111 "They are kind of safe," she said with a nervous laugh. "They have not much to lose
112 except their lives. ... I told them on the phone that there is no way that I would be
113 bullied."
(127)

The first 23 lines of this article (not shown) describe the situation faced by
Azerbaijani Iranians living in Iran. The reader is told that Azerbaijani are a persecuted
ethnic minority group that practices the same religion, Shi’a Islam, as the majority of
Iranians, but that speaks Azeri Turkish rather than Persian.

Lines 24-33 of the article focus on the human rights work that Zamani does on behalf
of Azerbaijani Iranians. In Lines 27-28, the reader is told that Azerbaijani activists have
been “detained, tortured or killed by Iranian police for demanding language rights” and
that Azerbaijani’s are “often accused of being separatists.” This description has special
significance for Canadian readers given this country’s experiences with the issues of
French-language rights and separatism in the province of Quebec. In contrast to the
Iranian response of detaining, torturing and killing, in Canada, the state’s response to
these issues has been far less extreme with solutions being sought via the legal and
political systems.²

² An exception occurred in 1970 when the kidnapping of two Quebec government
officials by members of the Front de libération du Québec, resulted in the Prime
Minister’s invocation of the War Measures Act which involved the deployment of
Canadian Forces troops across Quebec. The police were given far-reaching powers,
including the ability to arrest and detain individuals without bail.
The portrayal of Zamani includes a number of details that cast her in an extremely positive light. For example, readers are told that, in addition to working with the human rights organization Amnesty International, Zamani has formed a non-profit organization that she “funds mostly out of her own pocket” (Line 33). This identity construction highlights Zamani’s deep commitment to her work. In Lines 65-70 the journalist provides background information about Zamani including the detail that “She had strong enough marks in math and science that she was accepted by the University of Ottawa on government scholarships, even though she spoke no English.” This description not only suggests that Zamani is exceptionally intelligent, but it also contrasts with the negative connotations that usually accompany immigrants’ inability to speak Canada’s official languages. Furthermore, the reader is told that Zamani has a degree in physics with a specialty in microwave engineering, a traditionally male-dominated field.

A notable aspect of Lines 105-113 is that the identity construction of Zamani includes features that contradict the stereotype that Muslim women are oppressed and dominated by men, particularly their male family members. For example, “…her father tells agents that they have no control over what she does and that she doesn’t listen to them” (Lines 108-109), and “I told them on the phone that there is no way that I would be bullied” (Lines 112-113). Lines 105-113 contain conflicting identity information about Zamani. On the one hand, she may come across to readers as being reckless, given that she seems willing to risk her parents’ lives ("They have not much to lose except their lives,” Line 12) in addition to her own (“Zamani began getting death threats herself...,” Line 105). On the other hand, Zamani’s strong stance toward Iranian authorities, which is heightened by
the extreme case formulation “no way” in Line 112, may come across to readers as someone who is not intimidated by authority.

Despite my finding that the explicit identity information in these extracts tended to suggest a favourable Muslim identity, because these extracts also contained negative identity information, it is difficult to say whether readers will take away a generally favourable impression of the person who was profiled.

**Canadian Muslims uphold Canadian values.** Analysis of the following two extracts shows that not all of the favourable portrayals of Canadian Muslims are accompanied by negative identity information about Muslims. In these cases, individual Canadian Muslims have been singled out for upholding Canadian values and they are portrayed in unambiguously positive terms.


Hepburn’s picks; The Tories’ plan to fill 18 vacant Senate seats before Christmas has sparked speculation about possible names. Columnist Bob Hepburn and reporters Linda Diebel and Daniel Dale weigh in on their own nominees

17. Tarek Fatah A prominent spokesperson for secular and progressive Muslim issues 18. who would bring a much-needed unique perspective to the Senate. A Toronto resident, he is the host of a weekly cable TV show, *The Muslim Chronicle*, and has 20. written extensively for Canadian newspapers and magazines. He founded the Muslim Canadian Congress in 2001, a moderate group that has advocated for separation of 22. religion and state.

(33)

In this article, the author profiles six individuals whom he would nominate to sit on the Senate. Tarek Fatah is the fourth person profiled. Given that the profiles are not ordered alphabetically, the placement of Fatah’s profile may signal to readers that Fatah is not the journalist’s number one pick for a Senate seat: he is somewhere in the middle of the pack. More important than the positioning of Fatah’s profile, however, is its
content. All of the identity information about Fatah focuses exclusively on the activities he has carried out as a Muslim. This suggests that all of the aspects of Fatah’s identity that would make him a good Senator are grounded in his identity as a Muslim. It is clear from Line 17 that Fatah is being worked up as a very specific type of Muslim. By describing Fatah as a “prominent spokesperson for secular and progressive Muslim issues,” the journalist stresses to readers that Fatah is a member of the Canadian mainstream. These references to “secular” and “progressive” also invoke their contrastive pair parts, “religious” and “regressive.” Therefore, by describing the type of Muslim Fatah is, the journalist is also conveying something to readers about the sort of Canadian Muslim he is not. Likewise, in Line 21, the Muslim Canadian Congress is qualified as a “moderate” group, which may invoke the stereotypically ascribed Muslim identity “extreme.” It is evident that Fatah is being recommended for a seat on the Senate precisely because he possesses a specific type of Muslim identity— one that upholds mainstream Canadian values.

5 Ottawans join Order of Canada; Former Citizen writer among 60 Canadians honoured by country

24 Azhar Ali Khan, a former member of the Citizen’s editorial board, federal government official and president of the Ottawa Muslim Association, was made a member of the Order “for his contributions as a leader in the Muslim community and as a journalist and volunteer dedicated to strengthening ties between people of diverse backgrounds and faiths.”
(lines omitted)
31 He said he is grateful that he had the chance to live in such a great country as Canada. 32 “I’m just overwhelmed that Canada appreciated whatever little work I did” in helping 33 keep Canada a great country or even improving it, he said. (33)
This article presents brief profiles of five Ottawans who have been named to the Order of Canada. Ali Khan is the fourth individual profiled. As in Extract 28, here too, the journalist did not order the profiles alphabetically, so the presentation of Ali Khan lower in the list may signal his lesser importance. However, unlike the previous extract in which all of Fatah’s accomplishments pertained to activities he carried out as a Muslim, here the journalist lists achievements that are not specific to Ali Khan being a Muslim (e.g., “member of the Citizen’s editorial board,” Line 24, and “federal government official” Lines 24-25). However, aspects of Ali Khan’s Muslim identity are nonetheless heavily emphasized. For example, the reason Ali Khan received the Order of Canada is specifically attributed to the activities he undertook as a Muslim (Lines 26-28).

Interestingly, Ali Khan is the only one of the five honorees who is quoted, and his quotation in Lines 31-33 constructs him as a certain type of Muslim: one who holds Canada in high regard (“such a great country as Canada,” Line 31), and also suggests that he possesses a trait that is stereotypically Canadian in that he appears modest: “…Canada appreciated whatever little work I did” (Line 32). Finally, Ali Khan’s remark also suggests that Muslims not only contribute to Canada, but that they may even improve it (Line 33), which is important because it demonstrates that public discourse about Muslims in Canada contains messages that run counter to the theme found in section two of my analysis, that Canadians Muslims pose a threat to Canadian values.

**Canadian Muslims do positive identity work.** The three extracts presented in this sub-section came from articles that covered community events held by Canadian Muslims (e.g., symposia, and a soccer match). The events involved Canadian Muslims’
endeavours to influence non-Muslims’ perceptions of Islam (i.e., to positively portray Muslim identity).


Media distort Islam, women’s forum hears; Interfaith symposium aims to create dialogue among religions

News

1 Scum, hostile, lunatics -- all these descriptions have appeared in the news media to describe Muslims, says Ayesha Mian. The Muslim woman spoke Wednesday at an interfaith symposium sponsored by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association of Edmonton.

13 Peaceful Islam is not very newsworthy,” said Mian, communications secretary for the Edmonton Ahmadiyya branch and the forum’s Islamic representative speaker. 15 “The media often focuses on the actions of individuals pursuing their own worldly goals.”

As in the first three extracts analyzed in this section, here too negative identity information about Muslims is made available. The three-part list in Line 1 is noteworthy for how the parts work together to suggest the completeness of a negative Muslim identity, particularly because each item describes a different type of attribute (Atkinson, 1984). The word “scum” can be used to describe a group of people, implying that they are riffraff or the dregs of society. The word hostile, which can refer to a person’s character, actions or feelings, suggests that Muslims are antagonistic. The third item in the list, “lunatics,” implies that Muslims are not of sound mind. A second notable aspect of this three-part list is its positioning in the article’s lead. Rather than opening with information about the ostensibly positive action of holding the symposium, the journalist

As in the first three extracts analyzed in this section, here too negative identity information about Muslims is made available. The three-part list in Line 1 is noteworthy for how the parts work together to suggest the completeness of a negative Muslim identity, particularly because each item describes a different type of attribute (Atkinson, 1984). The word “scum” can be used to describe a group of people, implying that they are riffraff or the dregs of society. The word hostile, which can refer to a person’s character, actions or feelings, suggests that Muslims are antagonistic. The third item in the list, “lunatics,” implies that Muslims are not of sound mind. A second notable aspect of this three-part list is its positioning in the article’s lead. Rather than opening with information about the ostensibly positive action of holding the symposium, the journalist
began instead with an attention-catching quotation that invokes well-known stereotypes about Muslim people. However, it is important to note that when it is considered within the context of the lead sentence as a whole, the three-part list may be taken up by readers as signaling that these descriptions have been unfairly applied to all those who practice Islam.

It is notable that in Lines 13-16 which quote Mian directly, the journalist points out that she is the “communications secretary” for the Edmonton Ahmadiyya branch. On the one hand, Mian’s category entitlement as an official representative of an Ahmadiyya Muslim organization may increase her credibility to comment on the issue of media representations of Muslims. It is possible, however, that because it is part of Mian’s job to present Ahmadiyya Muslims in a positive light, her statements may come off as less credible to readers because she arguably has a vested interest in projecting a positive image of her faith group. Mian’s category entitlement is embedded within her quotation, which may lead readers to take up her remark as an instance of “she would say that, wouldn’t she”? (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p. 117). The category entitlement may result in a focus by readers on Mian’s motivation rather than on the content of what she said.

Mian’s lexical choice “worldly” (Line 15) is also notable because it suggests, very subtly, that the actions focused on by the media are not based in religion, and therefore are not representative of Muslims at all. Furthermore, Mian’s formulation also places emphasis on “individual” actions, which signals that those who engage in worldly goals are not representative of the group (Muslims) as a whole.

In Line 49, the journalist uses an indirect quotation of Mian to describe the symposium euphemistically as “an excellent way to challenge popular views.”
that the journalist chose the more neutral adjective “popular” over an alternative such as
“stereotypical” that would problematize these views. When Mian is quoted directly in
Line 56, however, she uses language that more explicitly problematizes the underlying
issue: “stereotypes and misconceptions.”

Whereas in Line 2 the journalist did not qualify what sort of Muslim Mian is, in Line
49 Mian is described as “a moderate Muslim.” Invocation of the category label
“moderate,” makes available the corresponding contrastive term, “fundamentalist.” By
prefacing the statement about Mian’s beliefs in this way, the journalist restricts the group
to which Mian’s comments apply (i.e., to moderate Muslims).

Extract 31 (Toronto Star. January 28, 2009. Pg. L.1)
Forum aims to debunk stereotypes; U of T gathering probes lives of Muslim women

News

1 Arranging to meet someone new at a coffee shop, Hodan Osman exchanges a few brief
2 appearance details to ensure she and the other person can find each other.
3 "I will be the Muslim," she deadpans, aware that her hijab and long dark skirt make her
4 stand out.
5 She's okay with that.
6 It's the assumptions made about her because of the thin piece of material covering her
7 head that are an issue, and something she hopes a symposium tonight at the University
8 of Toronto will help remedy.
(lines omitted)
13 Osman, who grew up in Toronto, says tonight's event is meant to dispel assumptions
14 and help non-Muslims understand why some women choose to wear the hijab.
(lines omitted)
41 "The idea is that they will learn something, and take it back to their friends and
42 family," says Osman. "With knowledge comes understanding."
(42)

In Lines 1-5, a favourable identity of Osman is constructed in several ways. First, the
opening anecdote describes “arranging to meet someone new at a coffee shop” (Line 1),
which depicts Osman engaging in an ordinary social activity. This is a subtle way of
suggesting that she is like other Canadians. Second, Osman is portrayed as having a good
sense of humour ("she deadpans," Line 3) about the fact her Muslim attire makes her 
“stand out.” Although Osman’s Muslim dress makes her different, this difference does 
not threaten the Canadian social system (unlike in the human rights case against UPS in 
Extract 9 or the case of wearing the niqab in the courtroom in Extract 7). The journalist 
emphasizes this point by explicitly stating “She’s okay with that” (Line 5), where the 
light and casual phrasing of the statement signals to readers that there is no cause for 
concern. It is notable that the journalist includes the detail that Osman grew up in Toronto 
(Line 13) because it makes the omission of information about where Osman was born 
stand out. This may subtly suggest that Osman is not from Canada. However, the 
information that Osman grew up in Toronto is an indirect way of suggesting that she has 
been in Toronto for quite some time (i.e., she is not a recent immigrant). The indirect 
quotation of Osman in Line 14 stresses that “some women choose to wear the hijab,” 
where “some” and “choose” contradict the stereotype that some people hold of all 
Muslim women being forced (by Muslim men) to adhere to a strict dress code. The way 
this information is combined may subtly imply that Osman holds more liberal religious 
views because she grew up in Toronto.

In Line 6, the journalist describes the underlying problem that has prompted the 
forum: “It's the assumptions made about her because of the thin piece of material 
covering her head that are an issue.” The lexical choice “assumptions” is a somewhat 
vague formulation because people’s assumptions about Muslims may or may not be 
correct. It is also interesting that although “assumptions” was used by the journalist in the 
article itself, the headline reads: “Forum aims to debunk stereotypes.” The word 
stereotype was not used anywhere in the article. This is noteworthy because news
headlines are written by a person other than the article’s author, which suggests that the more neutral term “assumptions” was treated by the headline writer as implying the more problematic “stereotype.” In Line 7 these assumptions are formulated by the journalist as “an issue,” which suggests that the matter is disputed; however, the use of “remedy” in Line 8 suggests that these assumptions are more than debatable, that is, they require correction. In an echo of Line 6, the journalist again uses the word “assumptions” (Line 13) to describe the crux of the matter. Repetition of “assumptions” may downplay the seriousness of the situation that Canadian Muslims face when compared to a stronger word choice such as “stereotype.” However, a less emotionally charged word like “assumption” may more readily make available the possibility that people’s perceptions about Muslims can be changed. In other words, a space for overcoming prejudice is opened up.

The concluding lines of this article (Lines 41-42) are noteworthy for how they echo Extract 30 in which Mian was quoted as saying “The main idea is to learn about each other. That is how we truly understand” (Line 55). In both cases, the women are stressing a desire to have their Islamic faith more fully understood by non-Muslims and in order to facilitate this process, they have taken the time to arrange public events.

Mounties 4, Muslims 4
News

5 Soccer matches, not typically seen as a means of advancing national security, can 6 apparently help get the ball rolling. At least, that sensibility led a group of Mounties 7 and Muslim youth to a downtown stadium yesterday, where an hour spent as soccer 8 adversaries was followed by a friendly question-and-answer session. 9 The idea behind the inaugural match was that common ground could be hashed out on 10 the Field Turf at the newly domed BMO Field. 11 Many Mounties and Muslims alike feel they get bad publicity these days. Playing 12 soccer was seen as a chance to bypass perception and the press, and explain
13 themselves to one another directly.
14 "It helped put into perspective that it's not an us-versus-them mentality," explained
15 Muhammad Robert Heft, the Muslim side's goalie and the event's organizer. "You're
16 dealing with a person now, not an idea."

(Lines omitted)

23 The outspoken Mr. Heft, a Muslim convert recognizable in his trademark white
24 turban, runs a Toronto Islamic centre known as P4E. An avowed fundamentalist, but
25 one who is deeply critical of terrorism, he spent months organizing the match.

(42)

“Mounties 4, Muslims 4” is an example of a headline that does not capture what the
article is about. From this description, the reader would have no way of knowing that the
article covers a soccer match between Muslim youth and RCMP officers. In Lines 5-6, the
journalist takes a skeptical stance towards the soccer event. First, he points out that
soccer matches are “not typically” seen as a means of advancing national security.
Second, the word “apparently” (Line 6) may suggest that while such matches may seem
to advance national security, the reality may be something altogether different.
Furthermore, the “at least” (Line 6), minimizes the consideration of national security and
signals that the journalist is skeptical. Also, there is a taken-for-grantedness to the
journalist’s claim because the statement “not typically seen” (Line 5) is not attributed to
anyone, which makes it seem as though there is general consensus on the matter. Further
skepticism is added in Line 9 which states that “the idea behind the match was…,” which
sets up a missing “but” and therefore implies that common ground may not have been
found. The “alike” in Line 11 suggests there is a similarity between Mounties and
Muslims and “these days” is a vague formulation which creates a sense of generality
because the time frame is not specified. In Line 12, the two parties are described as
“explain”(ing) themselves to one another.” The need to explain oneself to another
typically occurs when an account is required for a negative or problematic act. Taken
together, Lines 11-13 suggest an unsympathetic stance by the journalist towards both Muslims and Mounties.

In Line 15 the reader is told that in addition to being the Muslim side’s goalie, Muhammed Robert Heft is also the event’s organizer. Up until this point the article did not specify who initiated the event. Because the event was organized by a Muslim, it may seem that the Muslims have more of a vested interest in the event than the Mounties. Recall, however, that the journalist displayed a skeptical stance toward the event, so Heft’s identity as the organizer might not be perceived to be favourable by readers. Furthermore, the quotation of Heft in Lines 14-16 may signal to readers that the Muslim team previously held an “us-versus-them mentality” and that they had difficulty putting the situation into perspective. This is problematic for the Muslim identity because it suggests that a similar intervention may be required for other Muslims. Line 23 describes Heft as “outspoken,” a quality that can be either positive or negative or both. Although “Muhammed” is a Muslim-sounding name, “Robert Heft” is not. Heft may have added “Muhammed” to his name when he converted to Islam. The suggestion may be that as a convert, Heft is not a “real” Muslim. However, given the sheer number of details that highlight Heft’s Muslimness (he has a Muslim name, he wears a turban, he runs an Islamic centre), he nonetheless appears deeply committed to Islam. As in Line 23 where Heft was described as “outspoken,” the word “avowed” (Line 24) suggests that Heft is making a point of announcing his fundamentalism, implying that he is assertive about his beliefs. Furthermore, the journalist’s use of “but” in contrasting “fundamentalist” and “deeply critical of terrorism” highlights the incongruity of these two identity markers, particularly since news coverage often pairs “fundamentalist” with adjectives such as
“Islamic,” where it is used to denote a terrorist identity. The journalist also highlights Heft’s commitment to his cause when he points out that Heft spent months organizing the match (Line 25).

What is notable about the construction of Heft’s identity is that although the journalist devoted considerable space to working up “Muslimness” as central to Heft’s identity, because he is a convert to Islam, he may not be treated by readers as representative of Muslims in general. However, given that there have been some highly publicized cases of Muslim converts engaging in terrorist activities, Heft’s status as a convert may suggest an overzealousness that is problematic.

**The link to terrorism in favourable coverage.** The positive coverage of Canadian Muslims was found to sometimes include references to September 11, which is notable because Muslims-as-terrorists is the most overtly negative stereotype of Muslims. References to 9/11 in the favourable portrayals are therefore somewhat unexpected. As the analysis in this sub-section demonstrates, however, the issue is not so much that the topic of September 11 comes up in the positive identity coverage, but rather how it is formulated in the discourse and the implications this has for readers’ views of Canadian Muslims. In Extracts 33-36 I have provided only the sentence in which the reference to 9/11 is located; however, the full context in which these references were made is available to the reader in the full texts of the articles (see Appendix).


Their common goal
Column

1 Junaid Subhan was 17 and just starting at John Abbott College when the Sept. 11 2 attacks on New York's World Trade Centre towers rocked his perception of what it 3 meant to be Muslim in North America.

(59)
Alberta politician was Canada’s first Muslim cabinet minister
News

115 A month or two later, two jetliners crashed into the World Trade Center in New York.
(123)

Integrating Islam’s core values into Canadian life; Mother and daughter appreciate freedom to debate
News

52 "After Sept. 11 so many people distrust Muslim people," Anita says.
(69)

Activist seeks dignity for everyone; Calgarian tackles barriers between people
News

22 ... Essentially, I spent time at the UN specifically focusing on Muslim women in Canada post-9/11: from an economic perspective, a social perspective and a political perspective, what were some of the ramifications?
(37)

In Extract 33 a reference to September 11 was invoked in the first line. However, in the three other articles that mention September 11, it came up in the bottom half of the article. This suggests that although September 11 was not typically foregrounded in articles in which Canadian Muslims were favourably portrayed, the topic is mentioned as being relevant to the identities of Canadian Muslims, whether it is attributable to the journalist (Extracts 33 and 34) or to the interviewee (Extracts 35 and 36). In each of these four articles, euphemistic formulations were used to refer to the events of September 11, which constitute a way of talking about terrorism without actually using the words “terrorism” or “terrorist.” The most explicit reference was found in Extract 33, in which the journalist refers to the events as “the Sept. 11 attacks” on New York’s World
Trade Centre.” In Extract 34, the events were described as “two jetliners crashed into the World Trade Center in New York.” This description is not only euphemistic, but human agency has also been removed from the action of crashing the planes. In Extract 35 the terrorist attacks were invoked through a reference to “Sept. 11,” and in a third article, Extract 36, the journalist used only the numerical shorthand “9/11.” Referring to September 11, rather than talking explicitly about terrorism, is perhaps a way of distancing the articles’ profilees from the terrorist identity category personally, but nonetheless signals that terrorism is relevant to Canadian Muslims’ identity.

**Canadian Muslims have a sense of humour.** A final pattern that I identified in the favourable coverage was the description of Canadian Muslims as having a good sense of humour. However, as the following analysis demonstrates, it was not so much that these individuals have a good sense of humour in general that made the coverage significant; rather, it was that they were portrayed as having a good sense of humour about their identity as Muslims.

Forum aims to debunk stereotypes; U of T gathering probes lives of Muslim women

1. Arranging to meet someone new at a coffee shop, Hodan Osman exchanges a few brief appearance details to ensure she and the other person can find each other.
2. “I will be the Muslim,” she deadpans, aware that her hijab and long dark skirt make her stand out.

This extract (analyzed in the previous sub-section as Extract 31) portrays Osman as having a sense of humour about the fact that her mode of dress makes her different. The journalist conveys Osman’s sense of humour through the description “she deadpans” (Line 3), which is an interesting lexical choice because deadpan humour is accomplished...
by the pretense of seriousness. The portrayal of Osman as having a sense of humour about a topic- Muslim women’s dress- that is controversial in other contexts (e.g., wearing ankle-length skirts in the UPS human rights case in Extract 9, and wearing the niqab in the courtroom, in Extract 7), may distance her from the category of troublesome Muslim that was illustrated in the section on Canadian Muslims as a threat to Canadian values. Osman’s use of humour may also operate as a show of resilience in the face of the painful reality of possibly being discriminated against on the basis of her dress.

Extract 38 (Toronto Star. March 7, 2009. Pg. GT. 4)
‘You can be Egyptian and Canadian at the same time’; Warm welcome melted away Heba Elshamy’s Toronto winter blues

This article profiles Heba Elshamy, who recently immigrated to Canada from Egypt. In Line 26 the journalist signals to readers the tone to attribute to Elshamy’s remark. Selection of the word “chuckle” is noteworthy because it suggests that Elshamy is amused that her new friends thought all Muslims were terrorists. By extension, that Elshamy finds this stereotype amusing implies that it is not a cause for concern.

Extracts 37 and 38 both suggest that it is sometimes necessary for the journalist to signal to the reader when a quotation is to be read in a tone that attributes humour to the speaker. In both of these cases, if the journalist had not qualified the quotations, they may have been treated by readers as complaints, which would have signalled that the speaker was flagging a problem, rather than making light of the situation.

The next two extracts come from articles that profile Canadian Muslim entertainers. Extract 39 is based on an interview with actor Zaib Shaikh, from the television show
Running Head: CANADIAN MUSLIM IDENTITIES IN THE PRESS

Little Mosque on the Prairie, which is a situation comedy. Extract 40 is a profile of Ali Rizvi who is a stand-up comedian. Given that situation comedies and stand-up comedy are entertainment genres based on humour, it is not entirely surprising that the individuals profiled are cast as having a sense of humour. However, in keeping with the two previous extracts, the object of their humour is their Muslim identity.

New wave of minority comedians gets attention

News

1 Ali Rizvi jokes that Muslims procreate by touching their thick, caterpillar-like eyebrows and that every four years, those brows turn into butterflies and fly away.
2 “I am creating such an absurd stereotype because we have zero representation in the media, and some moron is actually going to believe me,” says the Toronto-born comic.
3 “That’s the real joke.”
4 Taking stereotypes to their absurd extreme is one way the up-and-coming Toronto comedian generates laughter and brings people of diverse backgrounds together in this multicultural city, where political correctness can hinder honest dialogue among communities.

This extract is similar to Extracts 37 and 38 in that the journalist explicitly marks Rizvi’s statement as a joke (Line 1). However, a notable difference in this extract is that although Rizvi himself is depicted as having a sense of humour, he is nonetheless overtly problematizing the situation of Muslims having “zero representation in the media” (Line 4), where “zero” representation is an extreme case formulation that signals he is making a complaint. Rizvi also problematizes the beliefs of some members of the public (“some moron is actually going to believe me”, Line 4). If this formulation of the problem in Lines 3-4 were not couched in humour, it would read as a much stronger indictment.

We become what we behold

Column

18 "You know you are confident when you can laugh at yourself," Shaikh said. "Little
Mosque allows all of us to laugh at ourselves. It especially allows us Muslims to laugh at ourselves."

In Line 18, Shaikh employs the idiomatic expression “laugh at yourself,” which is a way of conveying that a person does not take her/himself too seriously. In this instance, Shaikh also ascribes the trait of “confident” as applicable to those who can laugh at themselves. However, in Line 18, it is not clear that Shaikh is speaking about anyone in particular; rather, he seems to be making a general statement. Similarly, in line 19 Shaikh uses the inclusive “us” and “ourselves,” which may signal that his remark is meant to apply to people in general, particularly because “us” is upgraded by “all of.” However, Shaikh’s “all of us” may nonetheless be taken to apply only to Muslims were it not for the following line which sets up a contrast between people in general and Muslims in particular. Shaikh’s specification of “us Muslims” in Line 19 foregrounds his self-categorization as a Muslim. The “especially” in Line 19 implies that, for Muslims in particular, the television show Little Mosque on the Prairie affords an opportunity to laugh at oneself. Because Shaikh is an ingroup member of the group “Muslim,” he has the entitlement necessary for offering the remark that singles out Muslims. If, as a non-Muslim speaker Shaikh had said, “It especially allows Muslims to laugh at themselves,” the connotations would have been much less positive because Muslims would be very explicitly cast as Other.

Section summary. Most of the articles in this section concerned local stories (i.e., the story happened in same city as the newspaper in which it appeared). Furthermore, only two articles were published in the front section of the newspaper. One article was printed on page A.3 (Extract 26), but the other was located towards the end of the front section,
Therefore, unlike articles about terrorism trials, favourable constructions of Canadian Muslim identity were not the stuff of the front page. This suggests that the positive actions of Canadian Muslims were not treated by daily newspapers as being as newsworthy as the actions of those who are dangerous to the safety of Canadians.

Articles that contained favourable identity portrayals of Canadian Muslims were sometimes found to be accompanied by negative information about other Muslims more generally, which may have subtly suggested to readers that while there are instances of individual Canadian Muslims who are good, they are perhaps more of an exception than the rule. When Canadian Muslims were depicted in an unambiguously positive light, they were found to be described as a certain type of Muslim (e.g., progressive, secular, modest, etc.), who uphold cherished Canadian values. For example, these overtly positive portrayals were found in news articles where an individual was being recognized for his or her significant contributions to Canadian society (i.e., named to the Order of Canada and recommended for a Senate appointment). This suggests that as a society, Canadians reward Muslim citizens when they closely adhere to mainstream social values.

Within the favourable coverage, journalists and Muslims sources alike were found to formulate potentially problematic topics such as terrorism and discrimination against Muslims using euphemistic or vague formulations. For example, I found that individuals who were favourably portrayed were distanced from the category of Muslim terrorist through the use of euphemistic references to 9/11 that avoided explicitly negatively charged words such as “terrorist” and “terrorism.” Similarly, journalists and Muslim sources alike employed vague formulations when dealing with the issue of negative
stereotyping of Muslims. For example, expressions such as “popular views” (Extract 33) were used in the coverage, which may have downgraded the seriousness of the problem of discrimination against Muslims.

In articles that depicted them as having a sense of humour, Canadian Muslims were often portrayed as having a sense of humour about being different from the Canadian mainstream (e.g., religious attire) or having a sense of humour about the discrimination Canadian Muslims face (e.g., stereotyped as terrorists). Having a sense of humour about such matters was found to distance these favourably positioned Canadian Muslims from those who make a big fuss about being treated differently. However, because the problems were themselves couched in humour, this may have worked to downgrade the seriousness of the issues Canadian Muslims face.
Chapter Four: Discussion

I first present a summary of my findings, organized in relation to the six research questions I posed. I then discuss possible contributions of this research. Next, I take up its limitations. Finally, I offer possibilities for future research and discuss the implications for practice that are suggested by this study.

The Range of Canadian Muslim identities

One question I sought to answer in this study concerned the range of identities of Canadian Muslims that is made available in the Canadian mainstream daily press. I was particularly interested in exploring whether the press coverage of Canadian Muslims contained identity formulations other than “Canadian-Muslims-as-terrorists,” and if so, the nature of these constructions. I found that “Canadian-Muslims-as-terrorists” was by no means the only identity constructed in newspaper discourse, and that a range of portrayals did indeed exist. However, not unexpectedly, at the negative end of the range of coverage, depictions of Canadian Muslim terrorism suspects were found. Whereas the coverage of terrorism trials constituted the most straightforwardly negative identity constructions, I also found that Canadian Muslim identity was often negatively portrayed in articles that dealt with Canadian Muslims’ interactions with the legal system (i.e., human rights cases) and the immigration system (i.e., polygamy). In that coverage, the actions of Canadian Muslims were formulated as a threat to legal and immigration systems and, by extension, posing a threat to Canadian social values. I also found that the sampled coverage dealt with the issue of discrimination against Canadian Muslims. As I discuss in more detail below, the identity associated with being the victim of discrimination is mixed (i.e., it is neither unambiguously positive nor negative). My
review of the literature offered little insight into favourable identity constructions of Muslims in the mainstream daily press; however, my sample contained a number of articles in which the constructions of Canadian Muslim identity were found to be positive.

In the next section I discuss key findings in more detail based on the four broad groupings I used to represent the range of identity constructions.

**The construction of terrorist identity.** In a chapter on “sensitive subjects,” *The Canadian Press Stylebook* (2004) advises journalists that potentially sensitive identity details such as religion should be used to identify people only when it is “truly pertinent” (p. 19). With regard to criminal cases, the Canadian Press Stylebook suggests that journalists should not refer casually to a defendant’s religion, race, political party, profession or qualification unless it is directly relevant to the case. Journalists are specifically cautioned against categorizing an accused in a way that could reflect on an entire group of people. Generally speaking, I found that little basic identity information was provided about the accused in coverage of terrorism trials. Where background identity information was provided, details regarding age, occupation, nationality and length of time in Canada were most common. Across the 13 articles on terrorism trials, the only piece of identity information that all of the accused had in common was that they are Muslim men. However, in over one-third of these articles, the accused was not directly labeled a Muslim, although it would all but certainly be clear to the reader that the accused is Muslim based on references to Islamic countries such as Pakistan and allegations of involvement in activities such as violent “jihad.” An important finding of this study was that the accused in terrorism trials were often constructed as endorsing an
extreme interpretation of Islam. Descriptions of the accused as extreme may suggest to the reader a particularized and therefore non-representative Muslim identity. The centrality of extreme Islamic beliefs as a core feature of terrorist identity was also found in an article in which the accused was constructed as not being a terrorist, precisely because he is not a religious Muslim (Extract 3).

In a British study of broadsheet coverage, Elgamri (2008) found that violent acts carried out by Muslims were not explicitly and unequivocally attributed to the radical fringes of the Muslim faith such as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, thereby conflating mainstream Islam with militant Islam. My analysis suggests that in Canadian coverage of terrorism trials, it is common journalistic practice to provide details of the accused’s links to terrorist organizations. However, although the link between the accused’s terrorist activities and his extremist beliefs is being made, this is clearly not the same as explicitly and unequivocally attributing violent acts to the radical fringes of the Muslim faith. That is, although I found that the link is there it is difficult to say whether the reader would interpret it to mean that the accused is representative of the radical fringe or of Muslims more generally. In other words, although the link between the accused’s actions and extremist beliefs is available, the journalist does not make an explicit and unequivocal statement that this places the accused within the radical fringe of the Muslim community. According to Karim (2003), there has been a tendency in recent reporting on conflict involving Muslims to insert the caveat that “not all Muslims adhere to terrorism” (p. 191). Karim warns that this caveat has become just another media ritual in which the journalist then goes on to adopt the familiar and decontextualized and stereotypical approach to reporting on the conflict.
The construction of Canadian Muslims as a threat to Canadian values. I found that Canadian Muslims were portrayed as posing a threat to Canadian social values in two broad contexts. First, they were worked up as making illegitimate human rights claims pertaining to religious freedom. For example, in Extract 7, the complainant’s case regarding the wearing of the niqab in court was described by the judge as “a matter of comfort,” where personal comfort does not constitute a legitimate legal basis for invoking a claim of religious freedom. Canadian Muslims were also constructed as posing a threat to Canadian values in coverage where polygamy among Muslim immigrants was worked up as a threat to the Canadian immigration system. I found that the press tended to adopt a stance in which it was assumed that Muslim immigrants to Canada would practice polygamy. In other words, there was a taken-for-grantedness that Muslim newcomers would seek to violate the Canadian social norm pertaining to marriage. This negative representation of Muslim-immigrants-as-polygamists was so taken-for-granted by journalists that only one article referred concretely to the practice among Muslim immigrants, and in that instance, the evidence was anecdotal (Extract 14).

More than half of the extracts in the section on constructions of Canadian Muslims as a threat to Canadian values (54%) came from opinion pieces (i.e., editorials or columns). When social issues are taken up in opinion pieces, it signals to the reader that the matter is of particular social relevance. According to Greenberg (2000), opinion discourse has a formidable influence upon public opinion formation because it extends not just to the ordinary, everyday reader but also to institutional actors such as Members of Parliament. Furthermore, editorial opinions tend to be understood by the reader to be consistent with the viewpoints of the newspaper as an organizational entity that is equipped with the facts
that are required for developing informed opinion. Given the importance of opinion
discourse in the formation of public opinion, I would argue that the coverage of
polygamy and human rights cases is therefore potentially more problematic for Canadian
Muslims than the coverage of terrorism trials. Although terrorism represents an extreme
threat to the physical safety of Canadians, given that there have not been any successful
terrorist attacks in Canada, the threat likely seems remote. By contrast, Canadian
Muslims’ religious freedom cases and the practice of polygamy present less dramatic
threats to Canadians, but as my analysis showed, these are worked up in opinion
discourse as presenting a fundamental threat to Canadians’ way of life.

**The construction of discrimination against Canadian Muslims.** A discussion of
these findings requires discussion of the difficulty I encountered in naming the grouping
of extracts (i.e., my activity as an analyst). Although I called the section “constructions of
discrimination against Canadian Muslims,” none of the extracts contained the word
“discrimination.” For example, Extract 15 referred to “anti-Muslim sentiment,” Extract
19, to “Islamophobia,” and in Extract 20, the mosque defacement was described as a
“possible hate crime.” In early iterations of the analysis, I labelled this grouping
“Constructions of Canadian Muslims as the target of discrimination” and “Constructions
of Canadian Muslims as victims of discrimination,” but found that each was limited. For
example, referring to Muslims as the “target” of discrimination was problematic because
it implies motive. Referring to Muslims as “victims” of discrimination was also found to
be problematic because the term connotes a particular meaning in psychological research.
That is, victim suggests a patient (as opposed to agent) identity. For example, in research
in the area of violence against women, it has been argued that the victim typification
constructs women as passive, pathologizes them, casts them as deviant, and fails to recognize women as active agents (Dunn, 2005). The Muslim identities examined in the present study did not have these features.

The finding that the Canadian press quite regularly covers incidents of discriminatory treatment of Canadian Muslims suggests that the media discourse on Muslim identity in Canada is more complex and multidimensional than in the U.S. and the U.K., where much of the literature has been conducted. None of the literature I reviewed identified discrimination against Muslims as a prominent theme in the discourse. I found two patterns in the constructions of discrimination against Canadian Muslim. In the first pattern, individual Canadian Muslims were worked up (by sources and by journalists) as being unfairly treated by the Canadian government. A common feature of constructions of discrimination was the use of comparisons by journalists and sources to support their claims. These comparisons often juxtaposed the government’s treatment of an individual Canadian Muslim with the treatment of a specific non-Muslim Canadian (e.g., Brenda Martin). However, I also found a second pattern: some of the constructions of discrimination against Canadian Muslims were accompanied by negative background or contextual information that portrayed Muslims in general in a negative light. For example, Extract 21 comes from an article that was ostensibly about the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council’s ruling that an Ottawa radio host had launched an uninformed and unfair attack on Muslims. However, in describing the radio host’s comments about Islam, the journalist provided readers with information about the host’s rationale for his remarks, which was based on a story from Sudan in which an elementary school teacher was threatened with imprisonment and death for naming her class’s teddy
bear “Muhammad.” It is possible that in making negative background information about Muslims available, the discrimination against Muslims may seem reasonable or justifiable to some readers.

**The construction of favourable Canadian Muslim identities.** My review of the literature suggested that mainstream daily Canadian coverage would contain limited (both in quantity and in breadth) positive portrayals of Canadian Muslims. Although my primary concern was not with the number of positive portrayals per se (i.e., the point of analysis was not to make distributional claims), I found numerous examples of favourable identity constructions. Canadian Muslims were found to be positively portrayed in coverage in which: 1) their actions conformed with valued Canadian ideals, 2) they had a sense of humour about their Muslim identity, and 3) they were engaged in educating non-Muslim Canadians about Islam.

Although my findings support the conclusion that Canadian daily press coverage offers a fuller picture of Canadian Muslim identity than one might expect based on previous research from the United States and the U.K., a consideration of the issues raised by Sampson (1993) suggests a word of caution. In his discussion of some of the challenges to psychology’s understanding of human nature, Sampson lays out the arguments about identity made by collective movements (e.g., women, gay rights). For example, collective movement advocates contend that our current understanding of human nature does not reflect their groups’ interests or unique identity, and that psychology orients to human nature in terms of an implicit standard that is “primarily White, primarily male, and primarily Western…” (Sampson, 1993; p. 1219). Furthermore, this standard is so effectively hidden that it has been accepted as a neutral
description of the way the world really is. Collective movement advocates claim that they have been denied “voice” in determining their identity. The criticism is that voice tends to be treated as an accommodative, add-on strategy that preserves the interests of dominant groups rather than being truly transformative. According to this view, a new voice is simply added on to the old without fundamentally changing the old. Therefore, because the terms of discourse are not changed, a person may be given permission to speak, but only within the dominant discourse. The accommodative approach to voice is said to be problematic because it shields the dominant discourse from transformation. My finding that Canadian Muslims were positively portrayed when their actions conformed with valued Canadian ideals, when they demonstrated a sense of humour about their Muslim identity, and when they were engaged in educating non-Muslim Canadians about Islam, points to the Canadian press’s adoption of accommodative voice. In each of these three contexts, Canadian Muslims were favourably portrayed on the basis of having conformed to mainstream social values. Moreover, some articles in which an individual Canadian Muslim was worked up in a positive light were found to contain background information that negatively depicted Muslims and/or Islam in general. For example, in an article that profiled the religious beliefs of a mother and daughter (Extract 25), the journalist subtly introduced the notion that Muslims are threatening by including the detail that, “for safety reasons,” the women asked that their real names not be used (Extract 25). Therefore, despite working up a positive identity for the mother and daughter, the Muslim community-at-large was subtly problematized. One possibility is that the inclusion of negative information about Muslims and Islam in coverage that
otherwise portrayed a favourable Canadian Muslim identity may subtly signal to the reader that the favourably portrayed individuals are the exception rather than the rule.

**How are Canadian Muslim Identities Constructed?**

A second question I sought to address in this study was how the various Canadian Muslim identities were worked up discursively in the news reports. As shown throughout the analysis, many discursive devices feature in the construction of Canadian Muslim identity. However, discourse participants (i.e., journalists and sources) were found to regularly make use of certain discursive devices such as comparisons, displays of neutral footing, and vague formulations in the construction of Canadian Muslim identity. For example, in constructions of discrimination against Canadian Muslims, when a Muslim individual was worked up as being treated unfairly by the government, the case for unfair treatment was bolstered by invoking a comparison to how the government treated another, non-Muslim, Canadian citizen. Unlike other media studies, which seek to establish whether news discourse is biased or not, my use of the discursive approach in this study is concerned with the issue of how the appearance of neutrality is achieved in practice. In keeping with journalism’s professional conventions pertaining to the neutrality or impartiality of news, journalists in my study were found to use empiricist discourse (Extract 1), indirect quotation (Extract 2) and selective quotation (Extract 37) to display neutral footing. As described in the Method section, footing relates to participant roles in discourse and deals with the issue of alignment; “that is, how far speakers are presenting some factual account as their own or distancing themselves from it” (Potter, 1996; p. 143). Vague formulations were found to crop up in discourse where a difficult or potentially controversial subject was being discussed. For example, I found
that in favourable portrayals of Canadian Muslims, the topic of the September 11 terrorist attacks was constructed using euphemisms (e.g., “9/11”) that distanced the speaker from potentially problematic words such as terrorism or terrorist.

**Who Constructs Canadian Muslim identities?**

This question was primarily addressed in my analysis through a consideration of discourse participants’ (i.e., journalists and sources) category entitlements. As with the displays of neutral footing, discussed in the previous section, category entitlements relate to the matter of stake and interest management. For example, in the newspaper coverage of human rights cases, quoted sources were Muslim individuals vested with a category entitlement that allowed them to speak with authority about the actions of the claimants. Furthermore, in those instances, the quoted individual’s position of authority was used to discredit the claimants’ human rights claims. For example, in Extract 8, the journalist included a quotation of the President of the Muslim Canadian Congress (MCC), Farzana Hassan, in which she refuted the claim that Islam requires Muslim women to wear a head covering. As the head of a Muslim organization, Hassan’s remark would likely bear greater weight than if she were a non-Muslim weighing in on the issue. Another possible effect of quoting a Muslim source who discredited the claimants’ case is that it may suggest to the reader that not all Canadian Muslim women wear a head covering and that different points of view exist within the Muslim community. The quotation of authoritative Muslim sources may also be implicated in creating a separation between “good” Canadian Muslims and “bad” Canadian Muslims, a point I will discuss in greater detail in the next section.
The pattern of quotations of Muslim sources suggests that journalists sometimes used quotations to support one side of an issue over the other. This result is in keeping with previous findings. For example, according to Potter (1996), quotations offer journalists a mechanism for expressing their viewpoint without appearing to be doing so. As a result, the reader is unlikely to raise questions about a journalist’s neutrality and it therefore seems that one side of an issue is inherently more compelling than the other. Similarly, according to Verkuyten et al. (1995) the practice of citing the views of ethnic minorities who make disparaging comments about their ingroup is a powerful rhetorical device used to justify a speaker’s own views. However, Verkuyten et al. also suggest that in addition to supporting a speaker’s position, this rhetorical move does important membership business, which I discuss in the next section.

As stated in the previous section, I found that in constructions of discrimination against Muslims, comparisons were made between how the government treated Canadian Muslims and non-Muslim Canadians. I also found the matter of who makes the comparison to be of importance. For example, when the journalist or a non-Muslim source invoked the comparison, it is possible that this added additional weight to the credibility of the comparison because journalists and non-Muslims are less likely to be treated by readers as having a vested interest in the issue at hand. When the comparison was introduced by a member of the Muslim community, it is possible that the reader might regard her or him as having a personal stake in the issue, a motivation that could weaken the claim.

Articles that reported on events organized by Canadian Muslims were generally found to include quotations of Canadian Muslims. This is not particularly surprising given that
event organizers would most likely have contacted the media in the hope that the event would receive coverage. What is important about this finding is that it suggests that when Canadian Muslims had control over setting the terms of their representation in the press, they were likely to have their voice included. As I discuss further in the section on implications for practice, this finding suggests an opportunity for Canadian Muslims to execute greater control over the identity portrayals that circulate in the press.

**Membership Business Conducted via Identity Constructions**

In keeping with Sacks (1992), this question was concerned not with the categories themselves, but with how participants use descriptive categories and apply membership criteria as a way of performing social actions. Given that category descriptions are available for doing discursive “business,” categories such as gender, age, marital status, nationality, religion, etc., are not merely factual observations that have an automatic relevance to people’s conversational activities (Edwards, 1998). It is important to stress that because I relied on monologic discourse for this study, it is not possible to determine what effect the various identity categorizations have on the reader. By contrast, in conversation analysis, the researcher has access to speakers’ conversational turns, which allows for insight into how category work is taken up by the discourse participants. Therefore, in discussing membership business conducted in newspaper discourse, I am limited to a discussion of what is made available to the reader (i.e., possibilities for how the discourse may be taken up).

My findings from the section on constructions of discrimination against Canadian Muslims suggest that the inclusion of negative background information about Muslims may subtly convey to the reader that Canadian Muslims may themselves be responsible
for the treatment they receive (e.g., because Muslims do things such as behead innocent
engineers or issue death threats against teachers who name teddy bears Muhammad).
Attributing some of the responsibility to Canadian Muslims for the discrimination they
face may be a very subtle means of deflecting attention away from discriminatory acts
themselves. For example, when extreme acts by Muslims in other parts of the world,
such as a beheading in Pakistan and the issuing of death threats in Sudan, are introduced,
this information may be more memorable than the instance of discrimination against a
Muslim Canadian that is the crux of the story.

My analysis also showed that when it comes to human rights claims pertaining to
religious freedom and the practice of polygamy, Canadian Muslims are constructed as
making illegitimate use of the legal and immigration systems. The membership business
this accomplishes is the construction of Canadian Muslims as a threat to mainstream
social values. In keeping with Sampson (1993), the construction of Canadian Muslims as
a threat to social values is an example of the construction of Canadian Muslims as
“serviceable others” where Canadian Muslims are ascribed an identity that serves “the
dominant groups’ interests, desires and fears” (Sampson, 1993; p. 1226). To create a
serviceable other is to use representation in a powerful manner designed to accomplish
desired qualities for one’s own group by constructing a contrasting other who will be
serviceable to that mission. Rather than subjecting the legal system (and the Charter of
Rights and Freedoms) and the immigration system to a critical examination of their
relative strengths and weaknesses, in my data, Canadian Muslims were worked up by the
press as the problem. This may function as a means of preserving the status quo.
News Topics Associated with Canadian Muslim Identities

The findings that relate to this question were primarily obtained in the preliminary analysis in which I grouped identity constructions based on five broad news topics: religion, discrimination, terrorism, women’s issues, and cultural practices. Within the grouping of extracts about religious identity, the discourse was concerned with topics such as Muslims’ religious practices (e.g., women’s religious dress and polygamy), Muslims’ interfaith relationships (e.g., with Jews and Christians), the spiritual aspects of Islam, and issues pertaining to religious interpretation (e.g., interpretation of the Qu’ran). The second grouping focused on coverage that dealt with the topic of discrimination against Canadian Muslims. In those articles, Canadian Muslims were described as the target of a variety of types of discrimination both as individuals (e.g., death threats) and as a group (e.g., defacement of a mosque). The third grouping of articles was concerned with coverage of terrorism, particularly terrorism trials. I also created a separate grouping for articles that dealt specifically with issues related to Muslim women’s identities. The topics of those articles included honour killings and polygamy. The fifth grouping was concerned with articles that focused on Canadian Muslims’ cultural practices. For example, among Canadian Muslim women who wear the hijab, the practice was described as an outward display of faith, whereas women who wear the hijab in predominantly Muslim societies were described as engaging in the practice based on social convention.

These findings are useful in that they allow for a basic, if simplistic, comparison with studies carried out in other countries. For example, in a content analysis conducted by Moore and Mason (2008), the dominant representations of British Muslims included
associations with terrorism, religious and cultural difference and extremism. Three of my preliminary groupings (terrorism, religion and culture) overlap with Moore and Mason’s (2008), which suggests that there is some cross-country correspondence in the news topics associated with British and Canadian Muslims.

It bears pointing out, however, that the concept of news “topic” is not as unproblematically straightforward as either I or Moore and Mason (2008) take it to be. For example, when I generated my five initial groupings, I treated “topic” as being synonymous with the content-level of the discourse. However, in my discourse analysis, topics were treated as relevant in terms of what they revealed about the construction of Canadian Muslim identities. For example, I found that 9/11 was sometimes referred to in profile articles in which individual Canadian Muslims were favourably portrayed. Had I used a content analytic approach, I may have concluded that these articles were about the September 11 terrorism attacks. My use of discursive psychology, however, allowed for the more nuanced interpretation that references to 9/11 in otherwise positive identity constructions of Canadian Muslims would indirectly and subtly link Canadian Muslims to terrorism because the references to 9/11 were found to be euphemistic constructions that distanced the individual from the words “terrorist” or “terrorism.”

The link between news topics and identity work

I also had planned in this study to examine the link between news topics and the types of identity constructions of Canadian Muslims (i.e., positive or negative identities). I was specifically interested in whether newspaper coverage of explicitly negative topics (e.g., terrorism) corresponded with overtly negative portrayals of Muslim Canadians, and how that was accomplished in the discourse. While I found it to generally be the case that an
obviously negative topic such as terrorism contained explicitly negative identity formulations of Canadian Muslims, the relationship was not so straightforward in the other coverage. This was partly due to the limitations of having conceptualized the coverage (and identity categories) as amenable to the binary categorization of “positive” or “negative.” Simply put, both news topics and identity categories were found to be far more complicated. I found that while a news topic might have seemed positive on its face, closer examination of how the topic was treated by participants (i.e., journalists and sources) often suggested otherwise. For example, in Extract 32 I found that although the topic of a soccer match between Mounties and Muslim youth seemed to suggest a positive portrayal of Muslims, the Muslim individual who organized the event was not worked up in unambiguously positive terms. This suggests that when analysis is restricted to the topic level of the discourse, the analyst may overestimate the presence of favourable portrayals. As my discourse analysis showed, favourable Muslim identity constructions were sometimes found in articles that also contained negative background information about Muslims. Again, however, although it is possible that the inclusion of negative identity information may detract from the favourable portrayal for some readers, this outcome is not prescribed by the discourse.

**Scholarly Contributions**

This study marks the first of its kind to use discursive psychology to explore the identity constructions of Canadian Muslims in the Canadian press. Use of the discursive approach offered the advantage of going beyond simplistic statements found in content analysis and CDA such as “news coverage of Canadian Muslims is negative,” by not only showing that a wide range of identities was available, but also that these identities were
complex, nuanced and contextually-driven. That is, Canadian Muslim identities were found to be much more than just “good” or “bad,” or “positive” or “negative.”

Very little was previously known about the portrayals of Canadian Muslims in the Canadian context. The extant literature is mostly comprised of studies conducted in the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, the United States. Furthermore, the Canadian research that was available (e.g., Karim, 2002) did not make any distinctions between the portrayals of Canadian Muslims and the portrayals of foreign Muslims.

Judging from the literature I reviewed in the introduction, it would seem that researchers often focused narrowly, sometimes exclusively, on negative news coverage. By including and analyzing all of the coverage of Canadian Muslims over a six-month period, I was able to forestall drawing an a priori conclusion that newspaper discourse about Muslims is Islamophobic. Furthermore, because I employed discursive psychology, I was guided by the assumption that, although specific discursive and rhetorical devices may be used to achieve specific purposes, such as assigning blame or preserving the status quo, the discourse itself does not have properties that make it inherently racist (Tileaga, 2005).

As discussed in the introduction, conventional social psychology and some forms of critical discourse analysis (e.g., van Dijk, 1998; Wodak & Matouschek, 1993) have looked to social cognition to explain people’s attitudes towards minority groups. More recently, however, the discursive approach has been used to reformulate the concept of attitude. Whereas the social cognition approach conceptualizes attitudes as underlying mental constructs which index individual differences and predict later actions, in
discursive psychology the focus is on people’s practices of evaluation (i.e., what is done with evaluations) in particular settings (Potter, 1998).

Limitations

In the presentation of my analysis, I included a representative set of extracts along with a detailed interpretation that linked my analytic claims to specific aspects of the data such that the entire reasoning process was documented in considerable detail (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). According to Potter & Wetherell (1987), this makes the reporting process of discourse analysis more rigorous than the one used in experimental reports. However, in keeping with the epistemological commitments of discursive psychology, I am also attuned to the partial nature of research findings. I have therefore included the full texts of the newspaper articles from which the 39 extracts I presented in the analysis were drawn (Appendix). Furthermore, not all research questions are best addressed using the discursive approach, and there are undoubtedly additional questions related to the portrayal of Canadian Muslim identity in the Canadian press that could be considered by using other approaches. For example, I was not concerned in this study with questions about Canadian Muslim portrayals that could be examined using distributional or correlational analyses, such as whether constructions of Canadian Muslim identity differ in publications with different political orientations.

In the remainder of this section I will address four limitations of my study. The first is associated with the source of my data: mainstream daily press coverage. The second pertains to the use of key word searches to generate a sample. The third relates to the monologic nature of news discourse. The fourth pertains to my decision to treat identity as amenable to the concept of range.
My focus on newspaper discourse from mainstream daily publications limits the findings in specific ways. Newspaper discourse is shaped by a number of professional conventions, including the definition of what constitutes the news and who gets to write it. For example, mainstream daily newspapers employ journalists and columnists, who are paid professionals. By contrast, in newer social media formats such as blogs or Twitter, reports may be constructed by “citizen journalists,” (i.e., members of the general public with no professional training). The finding that Canadian Muslims were portrayed as terrorists, as a threat to Canadian social values, and as the target of discrimination may in part be attributed to the fit between these constructions and news values, according to which bad or negative news is regarded as more newsworthy than good or positive news (Bell, 1991).

A second limitation of this study is that my use of key word searches to generate the sample of articles may have inadvertently resulted in the exclusion of relevant coverage that did not contain an exact match of the key words “Muslim” or “Islam” and “Canada.” I was first alerted to this limitation while analyzing the coverage of terrorism trials. In that analysis I found that the Muslim identity of the accused was sometimes worked up without use of the category labels “Muslim” or “Islam.” For example, the Muslim identity of one accused was indirectly conveyed through the description of his plans to travel to Pakistan to receive paramilitary training to use to engage in jihad. The article was flagged in my search because the key word “Muslim” appeared near the bottom of the article in a background statement (i.e., not directly related to the trial): “The Post revealed last weekend that the government has been using several counter-radicalization techniques to steer Canadian Muslims away from violent extremism.” Had the journalist
not included this sentence, the article would not have made it into the sample. In the next section on possibilities for future research, I propose a sampling technique that would address this limitation.

A third limitation of this study, already mentioned elsewhere, is that the newspaper discourse I analyzed is monologic. Therefore, it is only possible to make claims about what is made available to the reader, not how it will be taken up.

A fourth limitation of this study relates to my use of the concept of range as a framework for organizing my data. In my analysis, I conceptualized range as the extent to which or the limits between which variation is possible (i.e., from extremely negative identity portrayals to extremely positive identity portrayals). However, a reflexive consideration of my use of the concept of range as an organizing principle also raised the following question: if the act of describing is a rhetorical process oriented to action, then what of the organizing framework I used to present my findings (Edwards and Potter, 1992)? For example, what of my decision to group all of the favourable identity constructions of Canadian Muslims together? I mention this example in particular because, as the reader may have noted, during my preliminary analysis I created two separate groupings for the data that dealt with negative identity constructions (i.e., terrorist identity and constructions of Canadian Muslims as a threat to Canadian values). Therefore, a reflexive evaluation of the approach I took to the preliminary analysis suggests that my formulation of the range of identity constructions as constituted by four groupings, where two were negative, one was both positive and negative (i.e., constructions of discrimination against Canadian Muslims) and one was positive, might have contributed to a sense that there were more negative identity formulations than
positive identity formulations in the coverage. However, neither the number of groupings nor the frequency of articles in each of the groupings was the central focus of this study. Rather, as the results of my discourse analysis suggested, broad groupings based on binary categories such as positive/negative are limiting in that they do not sufficiently capture the complexity of and differences in the discourse. For example, although I initially had conceptualized the constructions of Canadian Muslims as a threat to Canadian values as being less negative than constructions of terrorist identity, as previously discussed, my analysis suggested that this may not be the case.

**Possibilities for Future Research**

Given the limitations of using key word searches to generate a sample of articles, future research would benefit from a prospective method of data sampling. For example, this could involve reading a selection of newspapers on a daily basis for a set period of time, and collecting all of the articles that pertain to Canadian Muslims. This approach would address the problem with my study whereby articles that did not contain an exact match of the key words did not make it into the sample.

Future research may also involve analyzing the constructions of minority group identities in the discourse of “intermediate minority media organizations,” which include outlets such as the minority press, local cable TV stations, local radio, independent commercial television production companies, and community-based film collectives (Cottle, 2000(b), p. 3). In future research, analysts may also wish to focus more specifically on the identity constructions of Canadian Muslims by Canadian Muslims. Doing so would also create an opportunity to compare the findings from minority media discourse with the results of the present study of mainstream daily newspaper discourse.
Implications for Practice

The discursive approach is sometimes criticized for “just looking at words– not real things” as a way of suggesting that its findings will be of abstract interest but of no practical use (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 174). As Potter and Wetherell (1987) pointed out, however, it is important to consider that “virtually the entirety of anyone’s understanding of the social world is mediated by discourse” (p. 174). Furthermore, because discursive psychology involves examining the ways in which representations are achieved, sustained and legitimized, analysts may therefore obtain insights into concrete strategies that can be used to undermine dichotomous and stereotypical “us-them” thinking (Verkuyten, de Jong & Masson, 1995).

As Karim (2003) pointed out, the Western media have increasingly been in dialogue with Muslims regarding the coverage of Islam. Individual Muslims and Muslim organizations have used a variety of means to communicate concerns and to educate the media about Islam, including writing letters to editors and holding meetings with the staffs of media organizations. The findings of this study may be useful to Canadian Muslim individuals and organizations in their dialogue with news media organizations, because the findings point to specific journalistic practices in the construction of Canadian Muslim identities that are a possible site for change. For example, it may be useful to call journalists’ attention to the finding that news coverage of discrimination against Canadian Muslims often included negative background identity information about Muslims, which may have subtly suggested to readers that the discriminatory treatment was perhaps justifiable. A benefit of the discursive approach is that it assumes the possibility for changes to discursive practices exists, and past research shows that
journalistic practices have indeed changed. For example, Clayman and Heritage (2002) showed that the ways news reporters ask questions has changed since the 1950s, although not in response to discourse research.

The results of the present study indicate that favourable constructions of Canadian Muslims are often located in coverage of community events held by Muslims. Given that newspapers rely in part on ready-made news (i.e., press releases), Canadian Muslims and the organizations that represent them may wish to take advantage of this feature of news production practices by regularly inviting the news media to attend community events.

According to Karim (2003), one of the most significant barriers facing the development of informed reportage about Islam is the lack of knowledge and unease among many Western journalists about religion in general. Therefore, limited and/or negative identity constructions of Canadian Muslims may occur when journalists are not familiar with issues of spirituality. Journalists’ lack of familiarity with the subtleties of contemporary debates about Islam and lack of knowledge about the primary beliefs and practices of Muslims suggest that educating journalists about Islam or hiring Muslim journalists may lead to fewer problematic identity portrayals of Canadian Muslims.

Conclusion

Many of the bottom-line statements made in the literature on Muslim identity in the media suggest a black and white state of affairs. For example, Richardson (2001b) concluded that “British Muslim communities are almost wholly absent from the news, excluded from all but predominantly negative contexts” (p.1). In another British study, Poole (2006) found that the most dominant representation of British Muslims was Islamic terrorist. Poole concluded that an essential Muslim identity- that of the global aggressor-
was present in the British press and in danger of becoming fixed. By contrast, the findings from my study suggests that Canadian Muslim identities constructed in the Canadian press are not restricted to negative portrayals; in addition to the presence of favourable identity constructions, I also found that Canadian press coverage also regularly deals with the issue of discrimination against Canadian Muslims (i.e., the unfair treatment of Muslims within Canadian society). However, the study’s findings also suggest that a bottom-line statement of glowing praise for the superiority of Canadian press is not warranted. While it may be reasonable to conclude tentatively that the Canadian press does a better job at making available a greater breadth of identities for Canadian Muslims than do the news media elsewhere, my results also suggest that more could be done. In particular, when Canadian journalists report on controversial issues (e.g., human rights cases or polygamy), an effort should be made to ensure that those at the centre of the story are not worked up as representative of all Muslims in Canada. For example, as suggested by my findings on the construction of terrorist identity, an explicit process of particularization can be brought to bear which makes it clear to the reader that the negative characterization does not apply to all Canadian Muslims as a group, but rather, reflects a special case or a specific segment of the population.
Running Head: CANADIAN MUSLIM IDENTITIES IN THE PRESS

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Appendix

Full-texts of Newspaper Articles for Dissertation Extracts


‘Where do you draw the line?’; Quebec man accused of terror activities was expressing religious freedom.

1 The videos found on Said Namouh's computer when police raided his Quebec apartment in 2007 are brutal: point-blank executions of Westerners, suicide bombings, a charred soldier's body dragged through the street in celebration. Others offered tips on bomb-making or threatened Western governments over the presence of troops in Afghanistan.

2 Over the past three weeks, a Quebec court has heard that Mr. Namouh worked tirelessly to ensure these images were widely available on the Internet to the global jihadi community, in some cases doing the editing and adding subtitles himself. Mr. Namouh's work showed that he had "devoted his life to spreading the ideology of al-Qaeda and encouraging others to join the jihadist movement," said Rita Katz, a Crown expert at the terrorism trial. What Quebec Court Judge Claude Leblond will have to establish is whether those actions contravened Canada's Criminal Code.

3 His defence lawyer, Rene Duval, is not contesting that Mr. Namouh was the user named Ashraf, who was so active on online jihadi forums that he earned praise for his "good work in the service of the [Global Islamic Media] Front, jihad and the mujahedeen." But Mr. Duval argues that what his client did, while perhaps repugnant to some, was simply an exercise of his freedoms of expression and religion. "Where do you draw the line?" he asked outside the court.

4 Evidence before the court shows that Mr. Namouh was driven by a fervent faith, one that saw as enemies Christians, Jews and even Muslims who did not share a desire for the creation of pan-Islamic rule.

5 "I write to you my loved ones with tears falling from the intensity of my love to our mujahedeen protectors, and in hatred of the Crusaders and Shi'a and apostates," Mr. Namouh wrote in 2006 on a password-protected, invitation-only online message board known as Khidemat.

6 From the time Mr. Namouh joined the Khidemat forum in November, 2006, to his arrest in September, 2007, he had become the second-most active participant, Ms. Katz, head of the SITE Intelligence group, a U. S. company that monitors online terrorist activity, testified. The forum appears to have been used exclusively by members of the Global Islamic Media Front, a jihadist propaganda wing. Ms. Katz, appearing as an expert witness for the Crown, testified that Mr. Namouh was part of the front's "uploading and downloading brigade," establishing Internet links so that people around the world could watch propaganda videos on their computers or cellphones.

7 She said evidence recovered from his computer hard drive showed that he was responsible for creating links to publicize a March, 2007, video warning the governments of Germany and Austria that they would suffer terrorist attacks if their troops were not withdrawn from Afghanistan. He provided art for a May,
2007, communique by the Army of Islam, claiming responsibility for the kidnapping in Gaza of BBC reporter Alan Johnston and demanding the release of prisoners, Ms. Katz said. He also made available propaganda videos with such titles as Jihad Academy and Top Ten, glorifying insurgent attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. In May, 2007, he announced on the forum that he had created his own compilation video of attacks in Iraq, a 50-minute film known as Final 1000.

"I worked for more than 50 hours in creating the publication, in which I slept only 5 hours," he wrote on Khidemat. He apologized for the quality of the production, saying he lacked experience in editing and was limited because his computer was not very powerful.

The court has also heard that in August, 2007, Mr. Namouh's Internet chats were intercepted, revealing what police believe were plans to explode a truck bomb at an undisclosed location outside Canada.

"I have the information and experience for acquisition of explosives in a country and the way to have them easily," he said on Aug. 8. Later he was overheard discussing plans to travel to North Africa and saying, "Terrorism is in our blood, and with it we will drown the unjust."

Mr. Namouh faces charges of conspiracy, participating in the activities of a terrorist group, facilitating terrorist activity and extortion.

Mr. Duval said the trial is a crucial test of Canadian anti-terrorism law. "I question whether the fact of providing [Internet] links, especially when one is motivated by religious belief, is a violation of the Criminal Code," he said in an interview. He said that even though the beliefs of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden are "repugnant to hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people, still, are they not religious beliefs? A lot turns on that."

Ms. Katz maintains that Internet jihadi propaganda is not just a matter of expressing one's beliefs but an active effort to "indoctrinate, recruit and train followers." In a report submitted to the court, another Crown expert, Reuven Paz, stated that the Global Islamic Media Front is at the forefront of these activities. Its "independent media efforts amplify the extent and effect of terrorist propaganda by repackaging it into more sophisticated productions and disseminating them to the spectrum of jihadi forums," he wrote.

The trial continues next week.

Extract 2 (Ottawa Citizen. February, 13, 2009. Pg. A.5)

Crown demands two life terms for Khawaja; 'Highly question’ whether he should ever get out of jail, prosecutor tells court

1. His voice dripping with contempt, a federal prosecutor urged a judge to condemn terrorist Momin Khawaja to two life terms in prison plus at least 44 additional years for being "a grave and palpable threat to society."
2. "It is highly questionable whether he should ever be released from prison," assistant Crown attorney David Mc-Kercher said yesterday as he heaped scorn upon the defendant.
3. Mr. Khawaja, 29, sat impassively in the prisoner's box as the prosecutor portrayed him as an evil and bloodthirsty religious zealot intent on murdering and terrorizing Jews,
9 Christians and anyone who did not embrace his extremist version of Islam and the
10 teachings of al-Qaeda.
11 "Momin Khawaja, by his actions, has violated the fundamental principle of
civilization -- the right to life," and brought "suspicion and ill-will upon the Muslim
community here and abroad," Mr. McKercher told the court in what is expected to be
14 his final major courtroom address in the marathon terrorism case.
15 "He's chosen a murderous way of life. There is no indication of any remorse
whatsoever. A life sentence is more benign than the killings and maiming he
intended."
18 Mr. Khawaja was convicted in October of participating in, contributing to, financing
19 and facilitating a group of British Islamist extremists plotting to bomb London and
20 other British targets in 2004 and to wage a wider Islamic jihad against the West.
21 Though he never testified, his defence was that he wanted to aid and someday join
22 Muslim insurgents fighting Canadian and other NATO troops in Afghanistan, but was
23 unwittingly duped into designing and building electronic triggers -- nicknamed the
24 Hi-Fi Digimonster -- to detonate bombs the British group secretly planned to explode
25 in and around London.
26 Prosecutors produced no direct evidence Mr. Khawaja knew of the plot to detonate
27 600 kilograms of ammonium nitrate fertilizer at public sites in and around London,
28 the focal point of the prosecution's case. As a result, Ontario Superior Court Justice
29 Douglas Rutherford acquitted him of two terrorism charges related to the Hi-Fi
30 Digimonster, which he was building in his family's Orleans home.
31 Instead, the judge convicted him on two general Criminal Code counts of developing
32 and possessing an explosive device to detonate improvised explosive devices,
33 "whenever, wherever," in support of terrorism.
34 As the first Canadian convicted under new Criminal Code provisions of the Anti-
terrorism Act, the Ottawa software designer faces up to of two life terms plus 58
36 consecutive years. Though maximum sentences are typically only imposed in the
37 most serious of cases, Mr. McKercher told the judge to punish and denounce Mr.
38 Khawaja and his crimes in the strongest possible terms.
39 He recommended Mr. Khawaja serve two life terms: one for his work on the Hi-Fi
40 Digimonster, what Mr. McKercher called a "crucial part of a deadly engine of
41 destruction"; the other for instructing an unwitting Ottawa woman to help him
42 secretly funnel to the British group thousands of dollars, cash that is "the air that
43 breathes life into terrorism."
44 For five other charges on which Mr. Khawaja was convicted, Mr. McKercher
45 recommended the judge impose the high end of the available range of sentences for
46 each. He then asked the judge to rely on a new anti-terrorism provision in the
47 Criminal Code to order that each of those five sentences be served consecutively,
rather than concurrently.
49 He also noted Canadian law stipulates that a sentence should be similar to sentences
50 imposed on similar offenders for similar offences committed in similar
51 circumstances. Five of Mr. Khawaja's British co-conspirators are now serving
52 indeterminate life sentences.
53 "Momin Khawaja was an active player in the London fertilizer bomb plot, even if it
54 could be shown he didn't know where the bomb or bombs would go off. He was
55 literally the trigger man. (His) participation in the London group is indistinguishable 
56 from the five members who were convicted."
57 Several aggravating factors should add to the sentence, too, he said, including that his 
58 crimes were based on religious hatred.
59 He dismissed a mitigation claim by the defence that Mr. Khawaja's intent was to fight 
60 Canadian and NATO troops in Afghanistan, not kill innocents in London.
61 "This is not mitigation, this is treason," he scowled.
62 "It clearly doesn't matter where the device was going to be used. He's committed to 
63 the group concept of jihad. His intentions were murderous."
64 In all, the Crown is seeking 44 to 58 years, in addition to the two life sentences. If the 
65 judge agrees, Mr. Khawaja would be eligible to apply for parole in 10 years. There is 
66 no guarantee it would be granted then, especially, as Mr. McKercher point out, if he 
67 continues to express no remorse for his actions.
68 In a sentencing submission earlier this month, defence lawyer Lawrence Greenspon 
69 asked the judge to impose what amounts to "time served" in pre-sentence custody, 
70 plus one additional day. Mr. Khawaja has spent almost five years in jail since his 
71 March 29, 2004 arrest and both sides agree he is entitled to the standard two-for-one 
72 credit for "dead time," which amounts to almost 10 years shaved off whatever 
73 sentence the court orders.
74 Sentencing submissions are to continue today. Judge Rutherford is expected to 
75 reserve his sentencing until later this month or next.

Extract 3 (Ottawa Citizen. November 15, 2009. Pg. A.1)
Friends shocked as Ottawa professor held in Paris bombing; Lawyer says Diab is a victim 
of mistaken identity, has nothing to do with deadly synagogue blast

1 The Ottawa university professor arrested in the 1980 bombing of a Paris synagogue 
2 made his first court appearance yesterday as his former academic advisers expressed 
3 disbelief over allegations the "lively" scholar was once involved in a terrorist act.
4 Hassan Diab, 55, held his hands in a prayer position as two RCMP officers escorted 
5 him into the prisoner's box for a bail hearing in a small courtroom at the Ottawa 
6 courthouse on Elgin Street.
7 Dressed in a grey shirt, Mr. Diab sat silently between two RCMP officers, who wore 
8 protective goggles.
9 Mr. Diab, a part-time professor at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University, 
10 was arrested by the RCMP at a residence in Gatineau on Thursday.
11 The details of the allegations against him are covered by a publication ban. But his 
12 lawyer, Rene Duval, said his client is wanted in France on multiple counts of murder, 
13 attempted murder and wilful destruction of property by an organized group -- charges 
14 that carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.
15 Three Frenchmen and an Israeli woman were killed when a bomb hidden in 
16 motorcycle saddlebags exploded outside the synagogue on Rue Copernic in October 
17 1980. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- Special Operations was 
18 blamed.
Justice Michel Charbonneau of the Superior Court of Ontario yesterday adjourned the bail hearing until Thursday, to give the Crown and defence more time to prepare. Mr. Diab will remain in custody until then.

Mr. Duval had explained he did not have time to read the sealed information about his client and federal Crown prosecutor Claude Lefrançois said he needed time to interview a police officer.

The hearing is the first step in the legal process that could see Mr. Diab extradited to France to face charges Mr. Duval says were brought against the wrong man.

The publication ban imposed Thursday and the sealing of the charges under the Extradition Act mean the public is not allowed to know details of the French government's case against Mr. Diab or any evidence that will be presented at the bail hearing.

Mr. Duval insisted yesterday that his client, with a common Lebanese name, is the victim of mistaken identity, echoing Mr. Diab's previous denials of involvement in the bombing.

"It will be difficult for the prosecution to make its case because all this happened 20 years ago," Mr. Duval said.

He said the career academic has been in shock since his arrest. "Mr. Diab was treated like a violent bandit," Mr. Duval said. "He is now going to spend time in a common jail where he doesn't belong."

He said Mr. Diab has been under stress for more than a year because two men, possibly French police officers operating in Canada, followed him daily to his home and workplace.

Mr. Duval, who works from Trois-Rivières, Que., said he offered to speak to French officials to explain that they were investigating the wrong man, but they ignored him. The news of Mr. Diab's arrest was met with disbelief by two of his former professors.

"It's not credible to me," said Louis Kriesberg, a thesis adviser to Mr. Diab who has continued to write letters of reference for him since he earned his PhD in sociology from Syracuse University in 1995.

"I've known him for a long time as a student. He's a very productive and very bright scholar, and he does good work," he said.

"He's very intelligent, very committed to his professional work. He's a lively person – I enjoy him."

Mr. Kriesberg, who is Jewish, is a professor emeritus of sociology and social conflict at Syracuse University. He never knew Mr. Diab to be in any way anti-Semitic.

"We were good friends, in so much as a professor and graduate student are likely to be," Mr. Kriesberg said.

"I never sensed that he was in any way very actively involved in politics. He seemed to be paying attention, but that in no way struck me as unusual.

"I saw no evidence of any religiosity," Mr. Kriesberg said.

John Agnew also sat on Mr. Diab's dissertation committee, and was equally baffled by news of his arrest.

"He was not very sectarian," Mr. Agnew said, adding that he was "a very secular kind of guy."

"This is not someone who was very militant at all."

As a graduate student at Syracuse, Mr. Diab would occasionally visit Mr. Agnew,
who was the director of the social sciences program for a time while Mr. Diab was there, with concerns about his financial situation. To make ends meet and put himself through school, Mr. Diab taught introductory sociology classes at community colleges in upstate New York, Mr. Agnew said. He said he has not been in touch with Mr. Diab since about 1995 or 1996. "He certainly was someone who always seemed to be worried about money."

Mr. Diab, a Lebanese native who grew up a Shia Muslim in South Beirut, obtained his Canadian citizenship in the 1990s. He never expressed any interest in the Palestinian national cause, Mr. Agnew said. "Either he spun a tall tale consistently over years or someone else is spinning a tale about him," Mr. Agnew wrote in an e-mail. "I tend to the latter."

Mr. Diab's main scholarly interests lay in the economic development and sectarian politics of Lebanon, and he often spoke about what it was like growing up as a Shia Muslim in South Beirut, said Mr. Agnew, now a geography professor at the University of California.

Neither Mr. Kriesberg nor Mr. Agnew knew much about Mr. Diab's personal life. Mr. Agnew recalled that Mr. Diab was married to an American woman in upstate New York while he was a student at Syracuse University. Mr. Agnew did not know her name.

Birth records published in 1995 as a regular feature in the Syracuse Post-Standard show that a Hassan Diab was listed as the father of a baby girl born that year to a Heather L. Winne. It is unclear if this is the same Hassan Diab. Ms. Winne could not be reached and her relatives refused to comment.

A woman wearing a mauve headscarf sat at the defence table in court yesterday, apparently ready to testify on his behalf.

Mr. Diab has been a part-time professor at the University of Ottawa since 2007, said Andree Dumulon, the university's director of communications. Mr. Diab was teaching one class this term, and the university has said it will ensure it continues uninterrupted.

The university is not making any further comment.

A course outline on the university website lists Mr. Diab as the professor of a second year course on research methods in sociology in the winter 2008 term. Carleton University declined to comment, confirming only that an instructor by that name is teaching a course at the university.

Mr. Diab's CV lists a bachelor's degree from the University of Lebanon in Beirut in 1982 and a master's degree from Syracuse University in 1990. He also obtained a PhD in sociology from Syracuse in 1995, according to staff at the university registrar's office.

He became an assistant professor at the American University in Beirut from 1996 to 1999, according to the CV, and from 1999 to 2001 worked at the United Arab Emirates University. Then, from 2001 to 2002, he returned to Syracuse as an adjunct professor.

He is also the author of the 1999 book Beirut: Reviving Lebanon's Past.

The RCMP released no further details about the warrant under which Mr. Diab was arrested Thursday, citing French jurisdiction over the case. The warrant was
executed at a Gatineau residence as part of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, said Cpl. Jean Hainey of the RCMP. The RCMP has said they will be providing information to the French authorities as required. Wendy Wagner, a lawyer representing the Citizen, asked Judge Charbonneau to explain the publication ban and indicate what the media were allowed to report about the hearing. He said the order was justified under the Extradition Act, but the media can challenge it.

Court eases bail terms for alleged sleeper agent; Adil Charkaoui

A Federal court judge yesterday significantly relaxed restrictions on Adil Charkaoui, an alleged al-Qaeda sleeper agent whom the federal government is trying to have removed from Canada as a security risk. Madam Justice Daniele Tremblay-Lamer ruled that the danger Mr. Charkaoui might have presented at one time has been "neutralized" by the passage of time. She noted that Mr. Charkaoui's alleged terrorist activities go back nine years or more, and that he has not travelled outside Canada since early 2001. She said she was swayed by testimony of Montreal imam Salam Elmenyawi, who has befriended Mr. Charkaoui since his 2003 arrest. Mr. Elmenyawi described Mr. Charkaoui as "a fervent Muslim who adheres to the Sunni interpretation but who respects other religions and opinions contrary to his own," the judge wrote. Mr. Elmenyawi testified that Mr. Charkaoui would be "an exemplary citizen" if he were released without any conditions. "He has the support of his family and his community. It seems incredible to me that he would run the risk of disappointing them," Judge Tremblay-Lamer wrote. She added that even if he were a sleeper agent, his cover has been effectively blown by all the publicity around his case. Mr. Charkaoui, a Moroccan who has been living in Canada since 1995, was in custody for two years after his arrest, then released in 2005 under strict conditions. The judge yesterday lifted a 10 p. m. curfew and permitted him use of the Internet and cellphones. She also ruled that he should be free to leave his house unaccompanied by one of his parents and that he is free to travel outside Montreal, as long as he gives authorities 48-hours notice. He does not get his passport back, however, and there are certain named individuals suspected of links to terrorism whom he cannot contact. A $50,000 bail is also maintained, and he must continue to wear a GPS monitoring bracelet around his ankle. Much of the government evidence against Mr. Charkaoui is kept secret for security reasons, but a public summary alleges that he spent time in an al-Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan in 1998. Additional material made public last year said he had sought employment at Montreal's airport in 2000, a few months after a conversation in which he had discussed hijacking an aircraft. In October, 1999, Mr. Charkaoui talked about the mujahedeen in Bosnia and Chechnya and spoke of recruiting "brothers" for the jihad, a report from CSIS said. The Federal Court must still rule on the validity of the security certificate issued
declaring Mr. Charkaoui a danger.

Pizza man ‘sleeper’ for al-Qaeda

1 A senior Canadian spy says Mohamed Harkat operated as an al-Qaeda sleeper agent in
2 Ottawa -- and kept in contact with Osama bin Laden's main banker.
3 The Canadian Security Intelligence Service official, identified only as John, told a
4 Federal Court hearing Tuesday that Harkat's behaviour was consistent with an al-
5 Qaeda sleeper: he kept a low profile, denied his known use of aliases and lied about his
6 connections to Islamic extremists.
7 "Mr. Harkat showed the characteristics of being a sleeper agent after arriving in
8 Canada," John testified.
9 John, a section chief in the Middle East branch of the spy agency, has spent 10 years
10 investigating and analyzing Islamic terrorism.
11 He is the first CSIS agent to testify against Harkat in open court.
12 Harkat, 40, an Ottawa pizza delivery man, was arrested in December 2002 on the
13 strength of a security certificate seven years after his arrival in Canada.
14 Federal Court Justice Simon Noel must now decide whether the government made a
15 reasonable decision when it labelled Harkat a terrorist.
16 CSIS alleges that Harkat served as a soldier in Afghanistan during the early 1990s
17 and has links to terrorist groups associated with the bin Laden network, including the
18 Algerian GIA and the Egyptian Islamic Group.
19 John also testified that the spy agency recorded a phone conversation between Harkat
20 and a man named Haji Wazir.
21 In that conversation, Harkat described himself as a Canadian Muslim and inquired
22 about Chechen mujahedeen leader Ibn Khattab and other "brothers."
23 John told the court that CSIS believes Haji Wazir is, in fact, Pacha Wazir, a financial
24 kingpin from the United Arab Emirates whom bin Laden relied upon to move money
25 around the world.
26 In another conversation, recorded in 1998, Harkat is heard saying he was intentionally
27 keeping a low profile in Canada, John said, but would be "ready" after he had gained
28 permanent resident status.
29 In the opinion of CSIS, John said, Harkat was indicating he would then be "ready to
30 undertake jihad."
31 Under cross-examination by defence lawyer Norm Boxall, John admitted he had
32 never worked on the Harkat case, nor had he reviewed the secret evidence against
33 him.
34 Outside court, Boxall told reporters the testimony did not advance the public's
35 knowledge of the case against his client.
36 "The witness who testified today did so without any personal knowledge," he said.

Extract 6 (National Post. February 6, 2009. Pg. A.5)
‘Toronto 18’ accused named in U.S. terror case; ‘Co-conspirator’
An alleged ringleader of the "Toronto 18" group has been named as a "coconspirator" in a terrorism case in the United States. An indictment filed in Atlanta recently links Fahim Ahmad with a network of extremists that stretched from Canada and the U. S. to Pakistan and the Balkans. It says two Atlanta men, Ehsanul Islam Sadequee and Syed Haris Ahmed, took a bus to Toronto on March 6, 2005, to meet Mr. Ahmad and "other supporters of violent jihad," including a man identified as Azdi Omani. During the Toronto meetings, the conspirators discussed possible terrorist targets in the U. S., including military bases, oil storage facilities and refineries, the indictment says. "They also discussed a plan for members of the group to travel to Pakistan to seek and receive paramilitary training that they would then use to engage in violent jihad," it says. They intended to train with Lashkar-e-Taiba, according to the indictment. The LeT is the Pakistan-based terrorist group blamed for the recent massacre in Mumbai, India. The superceding indictment charges the Atlanta men with recording "casing videos" of terrorist targets in Washington, D. C., shortly after they had visited Toronto. It was filed in court in December and replaced a 2006 indictment that made no mention of Fahim Ahmad. The indictment provides an expanded look at extremists in several countries who allegedly communicated on Internet forums as they prepared terrorist attacks. They included the two Atlanta men, Mr. Ahmad, Aabid Khan (a British man also known as Abu Umar, who has since been convicted of terrorism offences), Younis Tsouli (since convicted of terrorism-related offences), and an alleged Bosnian terrorist named Mirsad Bektasevic, better known as Maximus. Mr. Sadequee and Mr. Ahmed have pleaded not guilty. Fahim Ahmad is one of 10 men awaiting trial for alleged violations of the Anti-Terrorism Act. He was among 18 Toronto-area men arrested by the RCMP in the summer of 2006 and accused of belonging to a "homegrown" Canadian terrorist group that was plotting to attack the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa and detonate truck bombs in Toronto. One member of the group was found guilty last year. Meanwhile, a "secret" government report says mass transit systems and government building are among the most likely targets of a homegrown Canadian terrorist cell. The intelligence report obtained by the National Post lists the "targets most likely to be attacked" by homegrown terrorists and how such an operation would be executed. Landmark commercial buildings, popular outdoor cafés and nightclubs, and the U. S. embassy and consulates are also likely targets, it says. Airport terminals and oil and gas facilities are "potential but less obvious targets in Canada." "Homegrown cells seek to emulate an AQ [al-Qaeda] attack, but on a smaller scale. They may begin with grandiose plans, but typically end up selecting soft targets (undefended with exploitable vulnerabilities), and often ones that they are familiar with," it says. The newly-released intelligence report focuses on the targets of homegrown terrorists, which it defines as "long-time residents or citizens of Western countries who are not directly connected to any terrorist group, but who have embraced the AQ [al-Qaeda] philosophy." Should a homegrown cell emerge undetected in Canada, the most likely attack
A judge has ordered a Toronto woman to testify without her niqab at a sexual assault trial - raising the thorny issue of whether Muslim women should be allowed to appear as witnesses wearing a veil that covers everything but the eyes. The issue is a collision of two rights, pitting religious freedom against the right of a defendant to face an accused in open court. The case could be precedent setting because it doesn't appear there is any Canadian case law addressing the question of Muslim women in the courtroom. In Canada, home to about 580,000 Muslims, the case will be closely watched, amid fears about Muslim women coming forward in criminal cases.

In October, Ontario Court Justice Norris Weisman reached his "admittedly difficult decision" to force the complainant to testify with her face bared after finding her "religious belief is not that strong ... and that it is, as she says, a matter of comfort," he wrote in his ruling.

Lawyer David Butt is representing the woman and next month in Superior Court will argue that the Oct. 16 ruling should be overturned. "For complainants in sexual assault cases, courtroom testimony is extremely difficult and often traumatic," he said last week. "During such times of great anxiety the courts should respect religious rights and practices that bring comfort and sustenance, particularly when they do not undermine the fairness of the proceedings."
20 When the complainant indicated last fall she wanted to wear her veil while testifying at the preliminary hearing, defence counsel told the judge that assessing her demeanour was of "critical importance" when tailoring questioning. Weisman asked the woman to explain her objections. "It's a respect issue, one of modesty and one of ... in Islam, we call honour," she replied. "It's also about the religious reason is to not show your face to men that you are able to marry. ... I would feel a lot more comfortable if I didn't have to, you know, reveal my face."

28 The woman also said only her family sees her without the veil.

29 Butt, who was granted standing at the hearing last fall, argued the judge must consider the Charter which protects religious freedom when making his decision. Butt argued the accused can hear her voice and inflection, see the expression in her eyes and body language.

34 In his judgment, Weisman wrote "at the 11th hour we learned ... she has a driver's licence with her unveiled facial impression upon it." She told court she took comfort the picture was taken by a female and there was a screen between her and potential male onlookers.

39 "In investigating just how important a belief this was, it came down to her candid admissions that it was a matter of her being 'more comfortable' and to me that really is not strong enough to fetter the accused's rights to make full answer and defence," the judge added.

42 Thanks to a publication ban and the nature of the charges, the names of the complainant and the two accused cannot be published.

47 While Justice Weisman was asked to rule at the outset of the preliminary hearing, which is now on hold, the matter was put over and arguments in Superior Court are now scheduled for March 2. Defence lawyer Hilary Dudding will appear on behalf of one of the accused men. She declined to comment.

51 A relative of the woman said it's distressing the judge has exceeded his "jurisdiction and ventured into the interpretation of religious laws concerning the veil, not to mention the fact that ... (she) has observed the veil for many years in accordance with her" beliefs.

55 "This is primarily an issue of protection the court offers to victims of sexual assault – especially those from minority communities, who experience the added stigma of bringing these deeply personal issues into open court."

58 Alia Hogben, executive director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, said, in court "the laws of the country should be acceptable," and although it is important that "sensitivity be shown ... showing the face is acceptable."

61 In the United Kingdom, a panel of judges drafted guidelines in 2007 that said Muslim women should be permitted to wear the niqab, as long as it does not interfere with the administration of justice, according to the Equal Treatment Advisory Committee of Britain's Judicial Studies Board. "Such decisions, however, should be made on a case-by-case basis," the committee said.
Forcing a woman to choose between taking part in a court case or removing her veil could affect her sense of dignity, exclude and marginalize her, the guidelines said.

Court ruling causes ‘collision of values’

A decision by a Toronto judge to compel a Muslim woman to testify in court without wearing her niqab has raised the tricky issue of how freedom of religion fits into the legal system and how it stacks up against other Charter rights. The ruling, stemming from the preliminary hearing into a sexual assault trial in October, could be the first time that the contentious issue has been ruled on in Canadian court.

"It raises elements of both culture and law because there is something of a collision of values here," said David Butt, the woman's lawyer. "On the one hand, people have the right to freedom of religion, which includes the right to religious practises that are related to dress. On the other hand, accused persons have the right to make full answer and defence, which means to a certain extent the ability to confront their accuser. It is those rights that intersect here."

Ontario Court Justice Norris Weisman made the decision after the woman asked to wear the veil while testifying against her alleged assailant and defence counsel contended they needed to see her face to gauge her demeanor on the stand. Niqabs are traditional Muslim veils that cover everything but the eyes.

Justice Weisman said her desire to wear the veil was more a matter of comfort and that the woman's religious beliefs were not that strong.

Mr. Butt contends that appearing in public and discussing a sexual assault can be very a difficult and traumatic experience.

"It is at times of great stress and difficulty like that that people naturally turn to their religious faith and their religious practises for comfort and for sustenance," he said yesterday.

"This is a Charter right to freedom of religion. It is for the courts to respect that right, not for the courts to comment on the validity on the particular religious practises engaged."

Muslim woman and head coverings such as niqabs have been the topic of much debate in Canada, from soccer fields to voting booths.

How the case is handled could change how Muslim women feel about coming forward to testify in a criminal case in Canada, home to nearly 600,000 Muslims.

Alia Hogben, executive director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, said the ruling could make some Muslim women hesitant to come forward, but that the question of comfort while testifying goes further than Muslim woman. She said the woman's wish to wear her niqab is a matter of personal comfort, not a case of choosing religion over justice.

Farzana Hassan, president of the Muslim Canadian Congress, said although some women do wear head coverings as part of their religious interpretation, it is not a paramount requirement in Islam. "I think the main foremost right is that justice be served. And if her wearing the veil is obstructing that then it has to be taken into account. She has to comply with the law," she said.
A publication ban means the names of the complainant and the accused can not be revealed, nor can any evidence presented in court. An appeal of the judge's ruling will be heard by the Superior Court of Ontario on March 2.

Mosque fights for human rights as it smears West, Jews online; Centre backs womens' complaint of violation of religious rights while denouncing other faiths

1 A mosque asking that Canadian workplaces respect a strict Muslim dress code is at the same time disseminating slurs against Jews and Western societies, and warning members against social integration.
2 The Khalid Bin Al-Walid Mosque near Kipling Ave. and Rexdale Blvd. serves as the religious authority for eight Somali women complaining to the Canadian Human Rights Commission that UPS Canada Ltd. violated their religious rights at a sorting plant. The mosque, founded in 1990 and serving upwards of 10,000 people, preaches strict adherence to sharia, or Islamic law, and no compromise with the West.
3 Teachings on the mosque's website, khalidmosque.com, refer to non-Muslim Westerners as "wicked," "corrupt" and "our clear enemies."
4 Sometimes Jews are singled out.
5 "Is it permissible for women to wear high-heeled shoes?" begins one posting in question-and-answer format. "That is not permissible," comes the reply. "It involves resembling the Disbelieving Women or the wicked women. It has its origin among the Jewish women."
6 Modern pastimes are condemned.
7 "What is the ruling on subscribing to sports channels?" another question begins.
8 "Watching some of the female spectators, when the camera focuses on them time after time" stirs "evil inclinations," the lesson reads. "Some (players) may not even believe in Allaah."
9 Mosque leaders refused repeated requests for an interview.
10 A disclaimer on the website says questions and answers do not necessarily reflect the mosque's views. But the About Us page says "All questions and answers on this site (are) prepared, approved and supervised by (the mosque's imam) Bashir Yusuf Shiil."
11 The mosque's stand on the UPS case also appears contradictory.
12 In September, a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal heard two weeks of testimony from eight mosque members alleging "Islamophobia" at the company's west Toronto plant. Three final days of testimony are scheduled for next week.
13 The eight women, who lost their jobs at UPS, say Islam dictates that they wear a full-length skirt for modesty. The courier company insists that any skirt be knee-length for safety, as workers climb ladders up to 6 metres high.
14 Under their skirt, the women wear full-length trousers but say they do not want the lower part showing in case the shape of the calf can be discerned.
15 The complaint originally centred on the company's use of temporary workers and uneven enforcement of its safety rules.
16 But the key question remains Is UPS insisting on shorter hems for safety or is it violating religious rights by denying the women permanent jobs unless they conform?
So far, no Khalid Bin Al-Walid Mosque representative has attended the sessions, but the women cited the mosque as their place of worship and religious authority, and tabled a letter from its administration. "This is to certify that the religion of Islam requires all Muslim women to cover her entire body inclusive of the legs, arms, head, ears and neck," the letter reads. "As such, (the women) would not be able to wear pants as an outfit."

On the other hand, the mosque's website teachings forbid women to work outside the home in the first place. "It is known that when women go to work in the workplaces of men, this leads to mixing with men," one such posting says. "This is a very dangerous matter," it reads. "It is in clear opposition to the texts of the Shariah that order the women to remain in their houses and to fulfill the type of work that is particular for her ...

"We ask Allah to protect our land and the lands of all Muslims from the plots and machinations of their enemies."

Two of the women making the complaint - Dales Yusuf, 46, and Nadifo Yusuf (no relation), 36 - said in an interview that they live in Canada now, and are free to pick and choose from Islamic law. "We must work," said Dales Yusuf. "I'm a single parent raising my kids." Jacque Chic, a lawyer with the Workers' Action Centre representing the women at the hearings, said neither she nor her clients were aware of the mosque's posted teachings. "I, the Workers' Centre and these women are concerned enormously about any expression of anti-Semitism or any other form of racism," she said.

Questions to the mosque about its teachings were met with evasiveness over three weeks. Mosque chairman Osman Mohamed three times agreed to an interview and three times cancelled at last minute. Imam Shiil was said to be in Saudi Arabia and unreachable. Mosque administrator Abukar Mohamed confused matters further by appearing to agree with UPS, saying "The Quran says women must be covered - it doesn't give you the specific clothes. But I am not a religious authority."

Extract 10 (Toronto Star. Nov 25, 2008. pg. AA.4)
An unholy zeal for tolerance

What's not to love about Canadian diversity and tolerance? Put me down as a lifelong fan.

But to answer the question directly, here's what can go wrong You can have too much of a good thing.

Well-meaning religious tolerance, taken to an uncritical extreme, can give licence to extreme religious interpretations: Muslim women insisting on ankle-length skirts despite safety hazards when working beside conveyor belts; and ultra-Orthodox Jews demanding that a local YMCA frost its windows so young boys wouldn't be tempted. The resulting controversies can be bad news for religious moderates who are in the mainstream of every faith.

Same with multiculturalism, which I strongly support. If taken to its extreme of cultural relativism - the belief that all cultural practices are equally good, since everything is relative - we can lose our sense of proportion.
I worry about the threat to tolerance from a small number of religious figures who push the envelope to the point of tearing at the tapestry of diversity. If they assert bizarre doctrines unchallenged by more sober mainstream voices, I fear they will only undermine majority public support for diversity.

I am reminded of how Montreal made the news two years ago when a local Y was asked to frost its windows so that ultra-Orthodox Jewish boys wouldn't be distracted on their way to synagogue by the sight of women working out. Frosting became a litmus test for tolerance Many self-styled progressives argued that it was a "reasonable accommodation" of these innocent young teenage boys; many others wondered why the Y was bending over backwards.

Watching the controversy, all I could think of was my four years in Jerusalem, where secular Israelis would converge at a local Salsa bar on the Friday night sabbath to dance their hearts out, all sweaty and suggestive as they swayed to the throbbing beat. Peering through the windows were clutches of ultra-Orthodox teenagers feasting their eyes on the sight of scantily dressed women, before proceeding to prayers in the Old City down the street.

No one frosted their windows. Canadians, God bless us, are so earnest about these things. Not just more Catholic than the Pope, but more Jewish than the Israelis.

All this came to mind when I read about the case of the local Muslim women who claimed discrimination because UPS deemed their flowing angle-length skirts a safety hazard as they clambered up ladders beside conveyor belts. At recent Canadian Human Rights Tribunal hearings, the women produced a letter from a Toronto mosque, suitably inscribed on letterhead, proclaiming they were on rock solid religious ground by insisting on their long skirts "This is to certify that the religion of Islam requires all Muslim women to cover her entire body inclusive of the legs, arms, head, ears and neck," asserted the Khalid Bin Al-Walid Mosque, adding that the women "would not be able to wear pants as an outfit."

That would be news to most observant Muslim women in Canada, many of whom interpret the Qur'anic injunction to modesty in their own ways. A few weeks later it emerged that the mosque's home page included links to an outside Islamic website with a Q&A describing female genital mutilation (circumcision) as "an honour for women," and tracing the wickedness of high heels to "the Jewish women." The mosque pointed to a disclaimer on the home page that it was not necessarily endorsing such views. But why was it linking to a website spewing such offensive nonsense?

Last week, UPS and the local Somali-Canadian Muslim women settled their dispute before the tribunal could rule. After pushing the envelope on this issue, the complainants agreed to keep the file sealed. Case closed, on a Pandora's Box that should never have been opened.

At about the same time as this fringe human rights case was wending its way through the system, mainstream groups were coming together in a more constructive way. The Canadian Somali Congress partnered with the Canadian Jewish Congress to set up a mentoring program for young Somali Canadians who are new to the workforce. Proof, perhaps, that multiculturalism and tolerance are alive and well, on all sides, in a very Canadian way.
Not for us the race riots that have plagued Europe and Australia in recent years, or the post-9/11 Islamophobia that has taken root in America. Let's keep it that way, by keeping our sense of balance.

The Crown likely will lose polygamy case against Blackmore; Lawyers warn that religious freedom would protect multiple marriages

1 Somewhere, right now, Winston Blackmore must be smiling.
2 The self-styled "Bishop of Bountiful" - Canada's most high-profile polygamist leader – is being handed a show-trial platform to prove what he's been saying for years: Taking multiple wives is a religious right and freedom, protected by the constitution.
3 As counter-intuitive as that might sound to people, he will have a very strong case. In fact, he will probably win, delivering the polygamist leaders in Bountiful a huge moral and legal victory.
4 B.C. Attorney-General Wally Oppal's heart is in the right place. He cares about the women and children of Bountiful and believes they are being exploited. He's trying to protect them.
5 But by bringing such a weak case against Blackmore and co-accused James Oler, Oppal's efforts seem bound to backfire.
6 Blackmore's lawyers will argue the fundamentalist practice of polygamy goes back more than 150 years in North America. They'll point out polygamy is practised widely and openly around the world, including in places like Afghanistan, where Canadian soldiers are fighting and dying to preserve freedoms in that country.
7 They'll argue the traditional interpretation of marriage between one man and one woman has been thrown open to wide liberal interpretation now that same-sex marriage has been legalized in Canada. And they'll be right on every count.
8 I'm not saying I support polygamy, because I don't. I'm just pointing out the reality: There's a reason nobody has been charged with polygamy in this country for more than a century. It's because the lawyers themselves know the charges won't stick.
9 The experts in Oppal's own ministry have said for years the Criminal Code section outlawing polygamy is outdated and unenforceable.
10 "It is in direct conflict with the freedom of religion guarantees in Section 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms," concluded one legal opinion sought by the B.C. attorney-general's office. Several others said the same thing.
11 A 2005 study done for the federal Justice Department recommended the law against polygamy be repealed and the practice decriminalized, noting a conviction would result only in a "light penal sentence" anyway.
12 In other words, even if they buck the odds and the Crown can prove polygamy is still illegal in Canada, Blackmore would probably get a slap on the wrist. And the whole legal circus will cost taxpayers a fortune to boot. So what's the point here?
13 Oppal should have followed the example set by the U.S. authorities who took down polygamist "prophet" Warren Jeffs on more serious charges like sexual exploitation.
14 That's the kind of charge that can be proven and stick in a court of law.
15 Instead, Oppal is proceeding with the flimsiest case possible. And the ramifications of losing are serious.
Consider this: If the polygamists win in Bountiful, what will be the reaction of Canadian Muslims? Many Muslim countries allow polygamy, though Canada currently does not allow Muslim immigrants to bring multiple wives into the country. But if polygamy is recognized as a constitutional right in Canada, there's nothing to stop Muslim groups from demanding recognition of their polygamist marriages and suing to have their multiple wives and children allowed into the country. Is that what Canadians want? Will that stop the exploitation of women and kids? Wally Oppal should be careful what he wishes for.

Let the people decide

Here I am in Canada again, receiving a few free lessons about your charter of rights. Almost every time I am in this otherwise great country, your Charter of Rights and Freedoms is making headlines for the wrong reasons. Reasons that Australians like me will be digesting as the push for an Australian charter of rights unfolds this year. This time it's the story of Winston Blackmore, who has had 26 wives and more than 106 children. Blackmore was arrested last Wednesday and charged with breaching B.C.'s criminal prohibition on polygamy. Winston says his fundamentalist Mormon beliefs on polygamy are protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which overrides B.C.'s Criminal Code.

Lesson No. 1: The claim by charter advocates that human rights are universal and absolute is rubbish. No right is absolute. The tricky part is working out the qualifications applicable to broadly phrased pieties. And given that is the case, who gets to fill in the blanks? In Canada, your approach has unelected judges determining the real content of the rights of the citizenry. And they have tended to fill in the blanks in a way that expands Charter rights at the expense of legislative prescriptions. Indeed, for more than twenty years, no prosecutor in Canada has been game to press polygamy charges against the wife-collecting Mormons of Bountiful. The orthodox legal opinion was that the polygamy provisions of the criminal code clearly fell afoul of the Charter right to freedom of religion.

B.C. Attorney-General Wally Oppal says polygamy is "intolerable ... I don't think right-thinking Canadians want the situation to persist." But, "if that section [of the criminal code] is invalid, we should let some court decide that." At least he's honest about who's in charge. Despite the hype about a charter being the sign of a progressive society, the opposite is true. Giving political power to a small bunch of judicial aristocrats is a backward step for a modern democracy.

The fundamental flaw behind a judicially enforced charter of rights is that reasonable people can and do disagree about the limits of human rights. Polygamy is a classic example. Assuming the relationships involved are entered voluntarily by consenting adults and there is no hint of abuse, why should these families be prosecuted when those engaged in other relationships once considered unconventional are not?

Now we get to Charter Lesson No. 2: Canada teaches us not to be duped by the fraudulent claims that are made in both Australia and Canada that a Charter of Rights preserves parliamentary sovereignty. The Canadian "notwithstanding clause" was
meant to allow Parliament to specifically overrule Charter rights. This provision was the clincher that broke the deadlock over enacting the Charter more than two decades ago. It was meant to mollify the skeptics who argued too much power would be vested in judges. It was a ruse. The notwithstanding clause has never been used by the federal government to protect the democratic right of Canadians to determine the limits of charter rights. At the highest level Politicians have been too timid to enact a law that expressly limits so-called human rights in the Charter. And some have even called for the abolition of this protection of parliamentary sovereignty. Australian Charter advocates are copying this wily ploy. They say a plain vanilla statutory charter which simply permits courts to make declarations of incompatibility won't threaten parliamentary sovereignty. But they know it takes a brave politician to snub something defined as a "charter right."

Lesson No. 3 from Canada is that judges are unsuited by temperament and training, and lack the resources and skills to make responsible decisions about complex social and political issues. For instance, if Canadian judges decide in favour of polygamy in the Bountiful case, the far-reaching effects will not have been debated by the judges in the same way that politicians' actions are publicly blow-torched. Legalizing polygamy in the Bountiful case will immediately jeopardize Canadian immigration policy which prohibits polygamous Muslims bringing multiple wives into Canada. The nature of marriage and society's regulation of human relationships are complex and controversial. Decisions on them should be made by elected politicians in the furnace of the political process. Not by a small group of unelected judges whose hubris is usually matched only by their ignorance of anything not taught at law school.

Notwithstanding polygamy

1 It will likely take years for a legal challenge to the right of the residents of Bountiful, B. C., to practise polygamy, to go through the courts. Now that fundamentalist Mormon sect leader Winston Blackmore and James Oler have been charged with polygamy, the process has been set in motion. And it is quite possible that the case could eventually end up in the Supreme Court of Canada. As it is impossible to know which party will be forming the government of the day when even the earliest court decision inevitably comes down, it is imperative for Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff and NDP Leader Jack Layton to tell Canadians where they stand on using the Charter's notwithstanding clause in this issue.

2 The court case will pit an argument about religious freedoms and Charter rights against the most bedrock values and ideas about family that Canadians hold dear.

3 Those values must be upheld if a court rules the religious freedom to practise polygamy takes precedence. Such a ruling is absolutely unacceptable in the larger Canadian society and voters have a right to know where each leader stands.

4 A ruling striking down the law against polygamy will not only open the door to
legitimize the practice at Bountiful, but will permit certain Muslim sects to practise polygamy, further victimizing women who may be recent immigrants and unaware of their equal rights in Canada. It will likewise allow for a burgeoning number of multiple wives to add their names to the welfare rolls, and thus to the taxpayers' burden, if polygamy is lawful. Polygamy cannot be allowed in this country. The voters are waiting to hear from their leaders.

Legal experts split over constitutionality of Oppal’s move against polygamy

A day after Attorney-General Wally Oppal fired the opening shots in a long-awaited legal showdown over polygamy, Winston Blackmore was waving the banner of religious freedom from the other side, saying yesterday that the charge against him amounted to religious persecution. But opinions are divided as to how successful that tactic will be, with some experts saying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms allows "reasonable limits" to religious freedoms, while others maintain Mr. Oppal doesn't have a legal leg to stand on. Although this week's charges focus on the community of Bountiful, the battle is expected to land in the Supreme Court of Canada and is being watched across the country. “Hiding behind these [alleged] polygamists are dozens of imams who have multiple wives, and who are conducting polygamous marriages and flaunting it,” Tarek Fatah, founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress, said yesterday in a telephone interview from Toronto. “Mr. Oppal has taken a very brave decision and other politicians could learn from him.”

British Columbia was flouting a federal law and its constitutional obligations by not prosecuting alleged polygamists, says Grant Huscroft, a constitutional-law expert at the University of Western Ontario who has argued in favour of prosecution since 1994. "You can't suspend a federal law in your province on some theory that you don't think it's constitutional," Mr. Huscroft said yesterday. Previously, B.C. had worried that Criminal Code provisions against polygamy could be found to violate the Charter. Two special prosecutors recommended in 2007 and in 2008 that the province refer the polygamy law to the B.C. Court of Appeal to determine if it was constitutional. Mr. Oppal rejected that approach. A prosecutor appointed last year recommended criminal charges. Mr. Blackmore and James Oler, charged this week with polygamy under section 293 of the Canadian Criminal Code, are sure to argue that they are being persecuted on religious grounds, Mr. Huscroft said. "They'll say, 'You can't prosecute me, this is an invalid, unconstitutional law,' " he said. The Charter is written in broad terms that make it relatively easy to prove that
something restricts religious freedom, he adds. The question then becomes whether
the limit is reasonable. "The whole question boils down to whether the government
can convince the court that a ban on polygamy is important in pursuit of some
significant purpose" such as protecting women and children, he said.
Not so fast, says Beverly Baines, a law professor at Queen's University who in 2006
recommended that polygamy be decriminalized.
The offence of polygamy was written into the Canadian Criminal Code in 1892 to
keep Mormons and former Mormons out of Canada. Mr. Oppal can't now make it
about the protection of women just because he wants it to be, Ms. Baines said
yesterday.
"I know the [Attorney-General] in B.C. has tried to suggest that the purpose of the
Criminal Code provision [against polygamy] is to protect women and children," Ms.
Baines said. "Unfortunately, that was not the purpose of the legislation when it was
first passed."
Courts do not allow a "shifting purpose" for legislation. So the government is not
likely to succeed if it argues that limits to religious freedom are acceptable to protect
women and children, Ms. Baines said.
The Criminal Code has better provisions to keep women and children safe, she said,
noting that in Utah, authorities prosecuted Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day
Saints leader Warren Jeffs under provisions covering sex with minors.
If the issue does reach the Supreme Court of Canada, the Muslim Canadian Congress
would seek intervenor status to argue against polygamy, Mr. Fatah said.

Heat's on PM over Khadr case

1 Some 185 Canadian groups and individuals have signed a letter to Prime Minister
2 Stephen Harper accusing his government of harbouring anti-Muslim sentiment for
3 refusing to repatriate Omar Khadr from the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay,
4 Cuba.
5 "We believe that your government can help change this perception by immediately
6 asking for Omar Khadr's return to Canada, his country of birth, where he can be
7 rehabilitated and eventually reintegrated into society," said the letter, written by Ihssan
8 Gardee, executive director of the Canadian Council on American Islamic Relations on
9 behalf of 185 signatories.
10 The latest pitch--which calls on Harper to act "without any further delay"--is one of
11 the largest efforts yet urging him to reverse his long-standing position he will let the
12 Americans deal with Khadr.
13 "We believe that your inaction with regards to this important case, compared to your
14 active involvement in other cases (such as the repatriation of Brenda Martin from
15 Mexico), has been, rightly or wrongly, interpreted by the Muslim community as
16 indicative that your government considers Canadian Muslims to be second-class
17 citizens," said the letter, that was sent Tuesday.
18 Khadr, who was born in Toronto, was 15 when he was picked up by the U.S. army in
19 Afghanistan during a shootout with American forces in 2002. He is accused of
lobbing a grenade that killed a U.S. soldier. He is the only westerner still detained at Guantanamo Bay; other nations have repatriated their citizens to face justice at home.

Cleared by RCMP, Canadian still can’t come home.

Despite writing several letters of support, Ottawa continues to deny passport or travel documents to marooned citizen.

More than a year ago, the Mounties' top anti-terrorist cop cleared Abousfian Abdelrazik, confirming he was neither a terrorist nor a criminal suspect. Despite that exoneration, the Harper government continues to deny the Canadian citizen a passport or travel documents and to thwart his five-year effort to return to his family in Montreal.

"The RCMP conducted a review of its files and was unable to locate any current and substantive information that indicates Mr. Abdelrazik is involved in criminal activity," Mike McDonell, the force's assistant commissioner for national security criminal investigations, wrote in a Nov. 15, 2007, letter.

Mr. Abdelrazik remains marooned in Sudan, where over the past five years he has been twice imprisoned. He is now penniless and living for the past eight months in "temporary safe haven" in the Canadian embassy in Khartoum, spending his days sitting in the lobby and his nights sleeping on a cot in the lobby.

Government ministers, meanwhile, continued to publicly finger Mr. Abdelrazik as an al-Qaeda operative, contending they cannot let him travel and their hands are tied by the Bush administration's decision to label him a terrorist and add him to the UN Security Council's air-travel blacklist.

The RCMP letter of exoneration, among more than 1,000 pages of documents - most of them heavily censored - is marked "Secret" and was part of a package prepared for Maxime Bernier when he was foreign minister.

After receiving the RCMP exoneration, the government told Mr. Abdelrazik in writing that it would "support" the formal removal of his name from the UN blacklist. Instead, according to sources familiar with the case, the Harper government simply passed along Mr. Abdelrazik's plea. The request was denied.

"Unless a government goes to bat for a delisting request, it has no hope," said a source knowledgeable with the arcane al-Qaeda blacklist.

Even after the UN committee refused the removal request, offering no reason, as is its habit, the Canadian government continued to say in writing to Mr. Abdelrazik that it "supported" his removal from the list.

Meanwhile, Mr. Abdelrazik continues to live inside the Canadian embassy in Khartoum, granted "temporary safe haven" by the same government that is denying him a passport or temporary travel papers as it has promised.

The cost of removing Mr. Abdelrazik seems to have played a part in the government's decision. In a "memo to ministers" marked "Canadian eyes only" and dated only days before the Harper government transmitted the delisting request to the Security Council last December, they were warned "it is possible that a plane would need to be chartered for Mr. Abdelrazik's return to Canada. The costs of the charter and the
40 government escorts would be prohibitive," ministers were advised by senior Foreign
41 Affairs officials.
42 Cost hasn't deterred the government in some instances. The Harper government paid
43 more than $80,000 to charter a private jet to fly convicted felon Brenda Martin back
44 to Canada from Mexico last May after a brouhaha of public attention about her plight.
45 Mr. Abdelrazik, who is Muslim and black, has a family, including several young
46 children, living in Montreal. Although the UN blacklist does include a travel ban,
47 there is a specific exclusion permitting any listed person to return home. The Harper
48 government has repeatedly acknowledged that all Canadian citizens have a right to
49 enter Canada and a right to temporary travel documents to get home, although it says
50 a passport is a privilege, not a right, of citizens.
51 "At least part of the government doesn't want him to return to Canada," said Yavar
52 Hameed, the Ottawa lawyer who is representing Mr. Abdelrazik.
53 Ottawa's spy agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, was also asked
54 about Mr. Abdelrazik, but its response, signed by CSIS director Jim Judd, is blacked
55 out.
56 "As long as they have him in the embassy, they can keep an eye on him, Mr. Hameed
57 said.

Extract 17 (Ottawa Citizen. February 1, 2009. Pg. A.1
All my human rights were taken away. ... I don't know what's going on in the world. I'm
still in 2006"; Bashir Makhtal is a Canadian trapped in an Ethiopian jail. Two years

1 Makhtal, Bashir A., writing this letter from an Ethiopian prison cell, in Addis
2 Maximum Security Fed. Pol. detention center, in Addis Ababa:
3 "Unfortunately, it was not possible for me to write this information before today. Even
4 now, I'm writing it with maximum risk and in a very difficulty condition and I don't
5 know if I'm going to succeed to get it out from this preson."
6 The words dash across the pages in a half-printed, half-written script. They are formal,
7 at times almost bureaucratic, but they speak of anger and fear and hope, of a Canadian
8 trapped in a foreign jail with no way to communicate with the outside except for
9 messages smuggled beyond prison walls.
10 The letter from Bashir Makhtal is a plea to the Canadian government dated May 2007.
11 He says he is an innocent man who wants his government to get him out. At this point
12 he'd been in an Ethiopian jail for five months without knowing what the charges are
13 against him.
14 He's still there.
15 Bashir Makhtal and about 100 other foreigners were swept up in "Africa's
16 Guantanamo," a little-known chapter of the U.S.-led war on terror in which a series of
17 illegal "rendition" flights took terror suspects from Kenya to Ethiopia, one of the key
18 allies of the U.S. in the Horn of Africa.
19 Once in Addis Ababa, the detainees were interrogated by security officials, including
20 agents of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation.
21 Over subsequent months, the detainees were released without charge -- all except
22 Bashir Makhtal and one Kenyan, who has essentially been declared a non-citizen by
23 Kenya. There's no such confusion about Bashir, who has been Canadian since 1994.
Officials at Foreign Affairs have protested to their Ethiopian counterparts in Ottawa and in Addis Ababa. They've extracted promises that Bashir's legal rights would be observed (they haven't been), that consular visits would be allowed (just two so far), and that he would be given a fair trial (instead he was brought, blindfolded and without a lawyer, before a secret military tribunal operating in Amharic, which Bashir doesn't understand.)

The government of Stephen Harper resisted doing anything at a senior level until late last December, when Transport Minister John Baird visited the Ethiopian ambassador in Ottawa to express his concerns -- two years after Bashir's arrest.

Three weeks later, Bashir's case was sent to civilian court and he was moved to a less restrictive prison. He has now met his lawyer and had three court appearances, each of them adjourned for lack of a translator.

Yesterday, Bashir's relatives were allowed to visit him for the first time. He gave them a message for the Canadian government -- one he has sent before. "Please tell my government I'm never, ever going to have a fair trial here," Bashir whispered.

Back in Canada, one person has lived and breathed this case as if his own life depended on it. Said Maktal is not a lawyer, or an activist, or a diplomat. He is Bashir's cousin, a 36-year-old chemical lab technician and Hamilton father of three. He and Bashir spell their surname slightly differently, but they grew up together and consider themselves brothers. Said is most at home with Bunsen burners and test tubes, but for Bashir's sake he has learned to lobby politicians, hound Foreign Affairs and organize demonstrations.

Said believes his cousin is no terrorist, that he was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. At no point has Ethiopia produced evidence to suggest otherwise. "I'm personally moved by the case," says Mr. Baird, who became involved after members of Ottawa's Somali community lobbied him to step in last summer.

"This gentleman was in a third country and brought to Ethiopia without any due process. It's just unacceptable, his experience to date."

So why didn't a senior member of the Harper government step in sooner to make sure the rights of a Canadian abroad were protected? Why is Bashir Makhtal still in jail?

To answer these questions we must ask another: Who is Bashir Makhtal?

"In 1969 I was born in Ogaden, Ethiopia, and fled to Somalia in 1976, because of the Ethiopian seppression and its cruel atrocities. Since 1976 till I was migrated to Canada in 1991, I was living in exile without the presence of my parents, brothers and sisters. I grew up in Mogadishu, Somalia with my exiled uncle and did all my schooling there up to secondary, which I graduated in 1986."

It is late afternoon in the shady courtyard of a comfortable home in Mogadishu. Nine-year-old Said is playing dice with his 12-year-old cousin, Bashir. They make an interesting pair: tall, lean, soft-spoken Bashir and small, round, chatterbox Said.

But the two have grown close in the year since Bashir arrived from Ethiopia after his own father died. They share more than blood -- they share the name of their grandfather, Makhtal Dahir, one of the leading figures of the early Ogaden resistance in the 1950s.

The people of the Ogaden, the majority of whom are ethnically Somali, have long fought to be independent of Ethiopia.

The fight has become so bloody during the past decade that critics of the Ethiopian
government make comparisons to Darfur. Ethiopia says it is responding to attacks by
insurgents determined to win independence.
"The fact that we carry the name of 'Makhtal' means Ethiopia was always after my
family, and so many of my relatives have been beaten, put in jail, you name it," says
Said.
Bashir immigrated to Canada in 1991. Within a few months the 22-year-old was
working as a security guard in Toronto while studying computer science at the DeVry
Institute of Technology. He became a Canadian citizen in 1994, and soon after got a
job as a programmer at the CIBC bank. A year after that, Said's family moved to
Kitchener.
Bashir appeared settled in his new life, hard-working and perpetually answering work
calls on his pager. But in 2001 -- after 10 years in Canada -- Bashir announced that he
wanted to start a trading business
in East Africa, potentially far more lucrative than his bank job.
It was a surprising move that Said didn't understand until after his cousin's arrest,
when he discovered that Bashir was financially supporting most of his seven siblings
in Ethiopia, along with numerous nieces and nephews.
Bashir's business trading second-hand clothes took him all around the region –
Djibouti, Kenya, Dubai. He would fill up a shipping container of clothes in one
country and sell it in another for thousands of dollars profit. By 2006, he was
successful enough to support a family, and in the fall he married Aziza Osman, a
Kenyan woman living in Nairobi. A month later, he left on a sales trip to Somalia and
Djibouti.
Under the rule of a Muslim fundamentalist group, the Islamic Courts Union,
Mogadishu had become stable enough to be worth a look for an adventurous
businessman. But the United States was deeply unhappy with such a strong Islamic
force in the Horn of Africa, and was supporting the rival Somali federal government,
which was widely loathed by the people for its reputed corruption. Ethiopia had troops
in Somalia protecting the federal government, which was reduced to operating in
another part of the country. Throughout the fall, Ethiopia threatened to invade
Mogadishu to oust the Islamic leaders.
In early December, Bashir called Said from Mogadishu. "He said 'Can you believe I went back to our old house?'" said Said. "He was excited.
But by then I had no confidence in the situation in Somalia. I told him to get out. He
told me not to worry."
A few days before Bashir's scheduled return to Nairobi, all flights to Kenya were
cancelled. By the time the Ethiopians invaded on Dec. 23, his best chance to get out
was to travel 1,500 kilometres by car to the Kenyan border. Somalis by the thousands
were fleeing the fighting, many of them streaming to the same border post, Liboi.
"On Dec. 30th, I was reached Kenyan border immigration through main and legal
road to obtain an entry visa as I used to do in Jomo Kenyatta Airport."
"Just outside of the immigration office, about 700 - 1000m, I was illegally arrested at
gunpoint and taken away from me my freedom and my valid Canadian passport,
which is still on the hands of Kenyan authority to my knowledge."
Weeks went by and Said did
not hear from Bashir, which was not unusual when his cousin was on the road. What was unusual was the call he got in early January from the Ogaden Community Association, asking him to come to the group's Toronto office. "Nothing to worry about, just come." Said went, assuming it had something to do with his late grandfather, Makhtal Dahir.

When Said arrived, one of the leaders took him into an office, closed the door and told him Bashir was in jail in Nairobi. His wife, Aziza Osman, had hired a Kenyan lawyer and sent word through the Ogadeni grapevine to find Bashir's Canadian relatives. Through his shock, Said got the message: It was up to him to fight for his cousin.

In the days that followed, Said called the consular office at Foreign Affairs, he talked to the Kenyan lawyer, he spent hours online and on the phone trying to understand what had happened.

The Liboi border post is a busy spot, accustomed to receiving waves of Somali refugees. By the time Bashir arrived at Liboi at the end of December 2006, things were extremely tense. Ethiopian jet fighters were flying overhead, villagers could hear gunfire in the night and the Kenyan government had beefed up security.

Rumours went around that border guards had orders to keep Somalis out, lest they be fighters for the Islamic Courts Union, the fundamentalist group the Ethiopians were purging from Mogadishu.

It's not clear why Bashir, travelling on a Canadian passport, was picked up. Said has heard that his cousin was carrying between $15,000 and $30,000, which he presumes was profit from the sale of the second-hand clothes in Mogadishu. Said speculates that hungry border guards got a whiff of Bashir's wealth and used arrest as prelude to a shakedown. Bashir was never charged with anything in Kenya, although after the rendition Kenyan police alleged -- without presenting evidence -- that he was a financier for the Islamic Courts.

During the first two weeks of his detention, Bashir's letter says, he was bounced from one Nairobi prison to another and subjected to five separate Kenyan police investigations, each of which concluded he had not violated any Kenyan laws. Canadian officials and his Kenyan lawyer were allowed to visit him, and he told them his passport had been taken away.

Then during one interrogation, Bashir noticed that one of his questioners was wearing the uniform of a Kenyan guard, but was clearly Ethiopian in his looks and speech. "From that moment on, he was scared they were going to send him to Ethiopia," says Said. "He knew they were going to say if he's a Makhtal, he must be ONLF."

Ethiopia considers the Ogaden National Liberation Front a terrorist organization, but it's not on the terror lists of the United States or Canada.

Suddenly, Bashir had trouble getting access to embassy officials and to his lawyer, who joined other lawyers in filing a motion for release of the dozens arrested at the border. A hearing was set for Jan. 22, 2007, but within days a prison guard told Bashir that he and the other detainees were to be deported to Somalia the next day. Such a deportation is illegal under international law since Bashir is Canadian, not Somali, and terrifying to an Ogadeni because Somalia was then under Ethiopian control. Bashir managed to make a frantic call to his lawyer, who called the
Canadian High Commission in Nairobi, but no help came in time.

Saturday, Jan. 20, Bashir and more than 25 others were led onto the tarmac in Nairobi, their legs shackled and their hands cuffed.

"I refused to board the aircraft and screamed, on the runway, loud and clear, that I'm Canadian citizen and you have no rights to deport me to Somalia with Ethiopian Army and my life is in danger if you do so. I asked to deported to my country instead."

Feb. 16, 2007, Said Maktal is at the Sussex Drive headquarters of Foreign Affairs to show consular officials a priceless document: a letter from Bashir smuggled out of an Ethiopian prison.

It is the first anyone has heard from Bashir since the rendition flight almost a month earlier, and it confirms Said's worst fears: the detainees were flown to Mogadishu and then to Addis Ababa. In spite of repeated denials from Ethiopian authorities, the letter proves they have Bashir. Said's hands shake as he shows the diplomats the letter.

"I was thinking Canada is a big country that gives a lot of aid to Ethiopia, my cousin is innocent, Canada will bring him back home as soon as possible," recalls Said. "But I had questions in my heart -- some of those diplomats had seen my cousin in Nairobi, yet they let him disappear. Who am I, who is Bashir, is the relationship between these two governments (Canada and Ethiopia) more important than our citizenship?"

Bashir's deportation echoes the "rendition" of Maher Arar, the Canadian software engineer deported to Syria by the United States in 2002. Between mid-January and early February 2007, Kenyan security transported at least 85 foreign nationals from Kenya to Somalia on three separate flights. A handful of others were later driven over the border. Most of them then disappeared, only to surface months later in Ethiopian jails.

The sweep has been documented by human rights groups, including several reports by Human Rights Watch.

"There are 22 other people whose names were on flight manifests, whose whereabouts we don't know anything about," says Jennifer Daksal, senior counter-terrorism counsel of Human Rights Watch.

About 18 different nationalities were represented -- Brits, Americans, Swedes, Kenyans and the lone Canadian, Bashir Makhtal. "The detainees from the United Kingdom were flown to Somalia but the British managed to get them released there, before they could be moved again," says Ms. Daksal.

Once in Addis Ababa, many detainees report being interrogated by the FBI and Ethiopian security about the Islamic courts Union and the ONLF. At around the same time, CSIS agents arrived at Said's home. Said says they had been investigating Bashir's life in Toronto, and told him they didn't believe Bashir was an extremist.

Foreign Affairs won't comment on specifics of Bashir's case, but it's clear the prison letter changed little. The Ethiopians continued to deny having Bashir, and no official protests or complaints from the embassy could change that. Diplomacy had hit a wall.

"I was so naive," says Said. "After that, I knew I had to find my own way."
206 He hired Maher Arar's lawyer, Lorne Waldman, and began to line up meetings with 207 MPs to pressure the Conservative government to step in. He created a website – 208 www.makhtal.org -- to publicize the Free Bashir Makhtal campaign. He stayed up all 209 night calling Ethiopia, cultivating sources in the prison and arranging to get some of 210 Bashir's relatives out of the country. In the mornings, he called Foreign Affairs for 211 news.

212 For a long time, they had little to say. In April 2007, Ethiopia finally admitted having 213 Bashir and the others, but refused to allow Canadian diplomats to see him. Bashir, 214 however, said plenty through smuggled letters and messages. In his letter of May 215 2007, he says that he was beaten and forced to record a false confession to various 216 crimes. Two months after that, according to Human Rights Watch, a fellow detainee 217 saw Bashir briefly and reported that "he was limping. He had a deep cut in one of his 218 legs. He looked weak. He looked so famished."

219 Foreign Affairs say it has made "numerous high-level representations" on Bashir's 220 behalf, including two visits to Addis by Alberta MP Deepak Obhrai, parliamentary 221 secretary to the minister of foreign affairs -- but not until well into 2008, when 222 Bashir had been in solitary confinement for more than a year. Sixteen months after 223 his arrest, Canadian diplomats were finally allowed to visit him, with Ethiopian 224 officials looking on. Around the same time, he was repeatedly taken before a secret 225 military tribunal conducted in Amharic.

226 "All my Human Rights were taken away from me and were abused.
227 I don't have access for
228 the justices, family,
229 my embassy and was deprived the information. I'm not allowed to have radio or to
230 get information from other people. I don't know what's going on
231 in the world. I'm still
232 in 2006."

233 For two long years Said has put everything into the fight for Bashir. He is tired of 234 sweet talk from diplomats, empty promises from politicians, midnight calls from 235 relatives. He's tired of struggling to be a good husband and father while also being a 236 good cousin.

237 But sometimes, in the lab late at night, Said thinks about his cousin sitting alone in 238 some windowless cell. That's when he'll take a break and say a special prayer.
239 "In Islam, we feel so close to God at night," says Said. "You sacrifice your sleep and 240 you pray and you cry. You feel the feeling of being close to God, that He might hear 241 you better."

242 Said's spirits got a boost last summer when several Somalis in Ottawa formed a 243 group to focus attention on Bashir's case. They organized a strategy session with 244 Amnesty International. Sitting in a room at the Sandy Hill Community Centre with 245 50 strangers who cared what happened to his cousin gave Said new hope.

246 "Whatever the case with guilt or innocence, this man deserves due process," says 247 Fowsia Abdulkadir, a public servant and prominent member of the Ottawa Ogaden 248 community. "So many Somalis travel in the Horn of Africa ... It's easy to see that if it 249 happened to Bashir, it could happen to me."

250 In the early stages of Bashir's story, Said felt like the politicians he met were

251
listening; John Baird, for one, told him last summer that Bashir's case was now "high profile." Said says he has seen no evidence of that.

He looks at the 2008 case of Brenda Martin -- in which a Conservative cabinet minister flew to Mexico to secure the release of the Canadian convicted of fraud -- and wonders why something similar wasn't done for his cousin a long time ago. Is it because Bashir is a black? Is it because he is Muslim? Or is it because the Canadian government doesn't want to help a citizen trapped in the war on terror?

Mr. Baird says Said's expectations were unrealistic.

"A foreign government can't just demand certain things from another government," he says. "The fact that you've got a senior minister involved I think shows the significant amount of attention we're paying to it."

Yesterday's visit from family was not only the first since he was arrested, it was the first time Bashir had seen his now elderly mother since she sent him to the safety of Said's family in Somalia at the age of 11. Although he tried to be upbeat in front of her, the relatives told Said they were shocked by how thin Bashir is, and they worried for his psychological state.

Bashir now has access to a lawyer and his case is in a public court, but experts say this is a time to step up pressure, not ease off.

"It is vitally important that Canada stay engaged in Addis Ababa and in Ottawa at very senior levels," says Alex Neve, secretary general of Amnesty International Canada. "It's still disappointing that the prime minister has not become involved in this case, as far as we know," Mr. Neve adds. "That's often what it takes to get another government to take notice ... to very clearly convey that Canada is genuinely concerned and demands steps be taken to protect the rights of the Canadian citizen involved."

Bashir is due back in court on Friday. Said will be waiting by the phone.


Canadians 'from all walks of life' come to aid of Abdelrazik; Former UN envoy joins lawyers, former government officials and ordinary citizens in denouncing treatment of Muslim Canadian

1 Stephen Lewis, a former UN special envoy, has joined more than 160 Canadians to purchase a flight home for Abousfian Abdelrazik, a Canadian citizen stuck in Sudan because the Harper government won't give him a passport.

4 Mr. Lewis, who was also Canada's ambassador to the United Nations in the 1980s, joins former solicitor-general Warren Allmand and more than a dozen lawyers and law professors effectively challenging the government's claim that the United Nations is to blame for the Kafkaesque predicament ensnaring Mr. Abdelrazik.

8 Although he has been cleared by the RCMP, CSIS and the Sudanese police, who imprisoned him apparently at Canada's request for nearly two years, Mr. Abdelrazik remains on the UN Security Council's blacklist of suspected al-Qaeda operatives.

11 "I'm really surprised and pleased with the variety of people who have wanted to
contribute in some way," said Jo Wood, an organizer of Project Fly Home, the group that has purchased a ticket for Mr. Abdelrazik. "They come from all walks of life, from students to labourers to university professors and artists," said Ms. Wood, 70, a member of the Ottawa branch of the Raging Grannies, an activist group of older women.

Unions, peace organizations and rights groups have also contributed. Contributions have come from across Canada and from Canadians living abroad. Most of the donations are small, $10 or $20.

Claudia Schibler, 53, a disabled Canadian veteran who served in Bosnia, said she was infuriated by the government's treatment of Mr. Abdelrazik.

"Some of us put on the uniform and risked life and limb for values that we [Canadians] are privileged to have," Ms. Schibler said. "I thought that people who came to our country and who hadn't known the freedoms that we have should be treated just like any other citizen," the former army sergeant said from her home in Halifax.

Mr. Abdelrazik, whose children live in Montreal, was arrested in Khartoum while visiting his mother in 2003. Foreign Affairs documents marked "secret" say his arrest and imprisonment was at Canada's request. Mr. Abdelrazik, a Muslim, says he was beaten and tortured in prison although Canadian Justice Department lawyers have tried to discredit those claims by suggesting he mutilated himself.

"Just like the Germans zeroed in on the Jews, we are zeroing in on Muslims ... this is so wrong," Ms. Schibler said.

After refusing him a passport for years, the Harper government promised in writing that it would give Mr. Abdelrazik a temporary emergency travel document if he could get a confirmed reservation for a flight home. Most airlines, including Air Canada, have refused to carry him because the Bush administration also put him on the U.S. no-fly list. However, when Etihad Airways, based in Abu Dhabi, agreed to fly him home last September, the government imposed a new condition: that he have a fully paid-for ticket.

Mr. Abdelrazik, destitute and living in the Canadian embassy in Khartoum for the past 10 months, is subject to an assets freeze because of the UN blacklist. The government also made clear that anyone giving him money or help might be breaking Canadian law.

"If they want to send us to jail, let them, but we cannot sit passively by while this government does nothing," said Archbishop Lazar Puhalo, a retired hierarch of the Orthodox Church in America and a contributor to the ticket purchase.

Audrey Macklin, an associate law professor at the University of Toronto, said Mr. Abdelrazik's case is only one of a series where the Canadian government has failed to protect its citizens abroad. "The fact that [in Mr. Abdelrazik's case] there are no charges makes Canada's obstruction [to his return home] all the more egregious," she said.

The government claims it must abide by the travel ban imposed by UN Resolution 1267 on those blacklisted, although a specific exemption allows for them to return to their country of citizenship.

Prof. Macklin scoffed at the government's implied threat to charge those buying the
ticket.  
"This is absolutely not an act of civil disobedience. There is nothing about our actions that violates any law ... [there would] simply be no basis for a conviction," she said.  
Boyce Richardson, an author and filmmaker, said it was "bloody awful" the way Mr. Abdelrazik is being treated by the Harper government. There seems, he said, to be "at least two classes of Canadian citizen," adding Mr. Abdelrazik is not the only case of a Muslim Canadian not being treated as a full citizen.  
David Orchard, a Saskatchewan farmer who has dabbled in Conservative and Liberal politics, added his view. "I don't like torture and I don't like Canadian citizens being tortured and I don't like our government asking foreign governments to do the torturing." He said he was appalled at the "the hypocrisy of our government condemning Sudan for human-rights abuses and then approaching them and asking them to pick up a Canadian citizen."  
Many of the contributors voiced dismay that more Canadians aren't angered by the government's lack of effort on Mr. Abdelrazik's behalf.  
"Too many comfortable members of society ignore those people being picked on and abused," said Daniel Saykaly, 58, vice-president of the human-rights group Palestinian and Jewish Unity. "The government is trying to block a citizen from coming home, yet they are giving him asylum in the embassy."

‘We’ve been victimized’; Three human rights complaints, three failures. Not so says the complainant

1 WATERLOO -If the controversy over Canadian human rights law and free speech could be said to have had a singular genesis, it was one evening two years ago at the Al Madina Egyptian restaurant in a Waterloo strip mall, when a group of York University law students sat down for dinner with their patron, Mohamed Elmasry, a professor of microchip design and national president of the Canadian Islamic Congress.  
2 At issue was the treatment of Islam in Maclean's magazine, and after considering criminal complaints or a civil case, the group decided on the quasi-judicial compromise, human rights commissions.  
3 The campaign against Maclean's that was born that night has now failed in three jurisdictions, and the public outcry at its perceived frivolity has drawn Canada's entire human rights bureaucracy, fairly or unfairly, into scandal and disrepute. The debate has expanded to include other cases, and drawn together many threads, from white supremacy and immigrant integration to media freedoms and the rise of the blogs.  
4 It will come to a climax on Monday when Richard Moon, a University of Windsor law professor, releases his independent review of the Canadian Human Rights Commission's mandate to fight hate on the Internet.  
5 "I don't use, actually, the word 'failed,' " Prof. Elmasry said of his complaints this week over a fine lunch at the Al Madina of braised chicken and stewed cauliflower, in his first interview since filing them in Ontario, British Columbia and federally. He called it "the right decision," took credit for sparking debate and said all three
commissions made the wrong decisions because of inappropriate pressure by media
and politicians, "in that order."
"The first point that I did learn from this exercise is that Islamophobia is alive and
well in Canada, in the media and also in politics," he said. "In all of this, we've been
victimized."
Prof. Elmasry said he represents more than 70% of Canada's Muslim population,
which he pegs at one million. Over two hours, he was friendly and forthcoming,
good-humoured if not actually funny, not as well informed on the particulars of
human rights law as his pro bono lawyer Faisal Joseph, nor as bullishly charismatic as
Khurram Awan, the front man of the young lawyers, who are popularly known, even,
in jest, by themselves, as the "Sock Puppets" because it was widely assumed they
were acting on Prof. Elmasry's behalf
Prof. Elmasry said both those men, in their numerous public and media appearances,
were always acting "upon my instruction."
He dismissed the most controversial episode of his four decades of public life -- his
declaration on the Michael Coren Show in 2004 that "anybody above 18 is a part of
the Israeli popular army" and thus a valid target -- by saying it was taken "out of
context," and his full beliefs about the Middle East can be found in his online
writings.
"I have political enemies, and they are entitled to advance their political agenda," he
said.
In his own agenda, Prof. Elmasry revealed a vision of human rights law that, while
not uncommon, is at odds with the established Canadian model, and he danced
around some of the philosophical and moral questions with which Prof. Moon has
likely been wrestling. Is it proper to bring the same complaint in multiple
jurisdictions? Do people have a right not to have their religion mocked or derided?
Should journalists enjoy a special exemption, and if so, what? Are violations worse if
a victim is a member of a cultural minority, and if so, how? Do human rights belong
just to individuals or also groups?
"Criticizing is not a big deal [in Islam]," he said, referring to the Dan-ish Muhammad
cartoons controversy. "You should understand there is a difference between
criticizing a religion, OK, comparing it to another religion, and to make a mockery of
the symbol of that religion. This is up to the legal system to decide."
Prof. Elmasry said Canadian law is deficient because it lacks the concept of "group
defamation," which would "make it easier" for tribunals to uphold complaints such as
his.
"There is individual human rights and there is collective, group human rights, and
both of them are very important," he said.
In fact, the Canadian Human Rights Act is explicitly directed "to the principle that all
individuals should have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for
themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have ..."
Nor is the common law tort of defamation, group or otherwise, addressed in Canada's
human rights law, which is meant to be restorative rather than punitive. Prof. Elmasry
said hate speech against a majority is less serious than speech against a minority
because the majority is "anchored."
"If somebody makes a joke that you're white, who cares?" he said.
This is also not a distinction with a basis in human rights law, which prohibits
discrimination on certain grounds such as race, but does not distinguish between
races.

In his campaign against Maclean's, which he emphasized was very costly, Prof.
Elmasry said his goal was to promote "hate-free free speech." At stake, he said, is a
potential genocide of Canadian Muslims. "It happened to the Jews in Europe. It
happened to the natives here in Canada. We don't want it to happen to us," he said.
He came prepared with a list of recommendations, some of which seemed improbable
and wonky, such as proportional representation in Parliament and mandatory voting
in elections, while others revealed his skeptical view of Canadian journalists and
politicians, and his willingness to tar his political opponents, many of whose names
he could not call to mind, as Islamophobes.

Keith Martin, for example, the British Columbia Liberal MP who proposed scrapping
the hate speech provision of the Canadian Human Rights Act, was "obviously"
motivated by fear of Muslims, Prof. Elmasry said.
"Before, section 13 [the federal human rights hate speech provision] was used mainly
by Jewish groups. Nobody really had any concern," he said. "There was not much
fuss."
"We are not politically engaged like the Jewish community. We have less senators,
MPs and MPPs than the Jewish community. We are a community under construction,
and then an earthquake came to challenge that community, which is 9/11," he said.
"Politicians ignore Islamophobia, while in the Jewish community, if there is any
indication of anti-Semitism, the politicians are up front, saying this is not acceptable.
This is the right way to do it."

He said he has begun to lobby "sympathetic ears" in Parliament for the establishment
of a National Media Council, modelled on the Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission, but including print and online media as well. It
would provide a forum for complaints, and advocate for what he called "fairness,
professionalism, ethnic diversity, all the good stuff."
"This would be a buffer between the readers, the viewers and the listeners and the
legal system," he said. "The media itself has to be convinced that the best guarantee
to free speech is to make sure that this council is in place.... The government has to
work in concert with the media."

He also said he will lobby for a review of media concentration, calling it "the
antithesis of democracy."
All in all, the man behind the curtain in the HRC debate revealed the importance of
clearer thinking about hate speech in the Internet age. On one hand, he advocates for
further restrictions on media, such as group defamation laws and a greater role for
government through a National Media Council. But on the other, he said the
problem of Islamophobia can be remedied by alternative media, meaning blogs and
Web sites, which currently include both his fiercest critics and a smaller number of
passionate supporters, all subject to a hate speech law that predates the Internet.
This is the tension with which Canadians must grapple after Prof. Moon presents his
report next week. Do we favour the balancing of human rights, with freedom of
expression weighed against freedom from hatred? Or do we take the absolutist view
that the answer to hate speech is more and better speech? Prof. Elmasry, for one,
In the evolving history of human rights law in Canada, the Internet has made a review of online hate speech laws necessary. But among those who can take credit for making it possible, Prof. Elmasry has few competitors, save perhaps the blogger and free speech advocate Ezra Levant.

"I don't want the media to be a public relations arm for the Canadian Islamic Congress. It's unrealistic. Or to promote Islam. Or to promote Muslim causes. Or to be a propaganda tool for XYZ issue," Prof. Elmasry said. "What I want is for them to be fair."

A national lobby group called yesterday for a swift police probe after vandals defaced a Dorval mosque for the second time in a year. But Mehmet Deger, president of the 1,500-member mosque, had a much different reaction.

Deger said he just wants to put the incident behind him and his congregation. He didn't even file a police report on the most recent spray-painting incident at the Turkish Muslim Association of Montreal mosque, he said. It took place about Jan. 26. The previous vandalism took place last June.

"The Quran says to forgive," Deger explained. "We don't want to press charges. I would just like to talk to the person or persons (responsible) - we would like to have a friendly discussion."

He hired a contractor last Friday to remove the spray-painted references to verses of the Quran, the Islamic holy book. Their content - and the handwriting - was similar to the first incident, reported to police last June 21, he said.

Deger spoke after the Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations in Ottawa asked for a swift police probe, calling this "a possible hate crime."

"In both instances," the council added, "the side of the mosque was spray-painted with the word 'Koran' and numbers that reference somewhat controversial verses of the Quran that are often taken out of their historical context and misinterpreted as implying that Islam teaches Muslims to wage wars against non-Muslims."

"The defacement of any place of worship is deeply offensive and hurtful," said Ihsaan Gardee, the council's executive director.

Montreal police Constable Helene Jubinville said no arrests have been made in the vandalism last year, and a formal complaint would be needed to start a new investigation.

The 250-seat mosque has been quietly operating at Neptune Blvd. and Nightingale Ave. since 1994, Deger said: "Nothing like this has ever happened to us before."

Radio host Lowell Green chastised for 'abusive' remarks about Muslims
Radio host Lowell Green contravened Canadian broadcasting standards when he made
"abusive and discriminatory" remarks against Muslims, the national broadcast
watchdog ruled yesterday.
According to the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC), Mr. Green launched
an "uninformed and unfair" attack when he told his CFRA audience in early December
that the majority of Muslims are fanatics and extremist behaviour is symptomatic of
the religion, not just a radical minority.
Mr. Green, the self-styled occupier of a mythical "Island of Sanity," had been inspired
by the story of British schoolteacher Gillian Gibbons whose elementary class in the
Sudanese capital Khartoum named a class teddy bear "Muhammad" and caused a
storm of outrage across the Muslim world.
Ms. Gibbons was forced to leave the country after being threatened with
imprisonment and death.
Mr. Green posed the question to listeners: "Is there something inherent in the Muslim
faith that promotes violence and oppression of women?"
In response to one Muslim caller who tried to defend Islam, Mr. Green responded
"baloney" and during another call told the sympathetic, but apparently non-Muslim,
caller she had "abandoned common sense" and was being "silly."
"Almost every act of terrorism around the world today is carried out in the name of
Islam," responded Mr. Green. "Don't tell me this is the work of a few fanatics."
The broadcast watchdog, an arm's-length organization funded by private broadcasters
and created by the broadcasters to rule on listener and viewer complaints, was
especially critical of Mr. Green for refusing to listen to pro-Islam callers, especially
those who were clearly informed about the religion. "The host has mounted a
sweeping, abusive and unduly discriminatory criticism of Islam," it said. "He
conceded none of the diversity that exists in Islam or among its adherents ... and
brooked no contradictory observations of persons who were admittedly Muslim,
informed about the religion, or of a different viewpoint."
Worse, said the CBSC report, was the manner in which the broadcaster dismissed
those who disagreed with him.
Mr. Green did not return calls from the Citizen yesterday, but the station did
broadcast the CBSC's decision, read by another announcer.
Under CBSC rules, stations violating rules must broadcast the decision, but there is
no other punishment.

A Canadian abandoned

More than one person has compared the plight of Abousfian Abdelrazik, the Montreal
man who has been living inside the Canadian embassy in
Sudan for almost a year, to that of Joseph K, the protagonist in Franz Kafka's chilling
The Trial.
Like Joseph K, who was prosecuted for reasons never explained, Abdelrazik's situation
is neither tolerable nor sustainable. Abdelrazik left Canada to visit his sick mother in
Sudan and now the Canadian government won't let him return, apparently because he
represents a security threat. What this threat is, no one seems to know.
So here we have a Muslim-Canadian who is stuck in Sudan because the Canadian foreign minister deems him too dangerous to come back to Canada -- but not too dangerous to be allowed to live (yes, live!) in the Canadian embassy in Khartoum. The government's bizarre, evasive and contradictory handling of the Abdelrazik case erodes the credibility of Canada's anti-terrorism apparatus. Here's what we know: After arriving in Sudan, as Abdelrazik tells it, he was arrested and tortured by Sudanese authorities. There are allegations it was the Canadians who requested his imprisonment. Abdelrazik was released. (CSIS has asked for a formal probe in the matter.)

His Kafka-esque dealings with the Canadian government were just beginning. He was originally told that he could return to Canada if he could pay his way home. In Canada, supporters raised money to buy him a ticket. Then the goal posts were changed, as he learned he'd have to get his name removed from a no-fly list. Finally, last week, Foreign Affairs Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon confirmed that he had denied Abdelrazik a passport "on the basis of national security," even though both CSIS and the RCMP say they have no current and substantive information linking him to criminal activity.

Now it's possible that a person can indeed be a security risk even if he has no ties to criminal activity. Maybe Lawrence Cannon has information that Abdelrazik secretly identifies with Islamic terrorists. That would theoretically make him a security risk, the same way that a Canadian who, say, self-identifies as a neo-Nazi might constitute a security risk. But that is not an argument for leaving him in limbo in Sudan. Canadians -- and certainly Abdelrazik himself -- deserve a better explanation. The term "security risk" can mean anything, from very big (the political extremist who has purchased materials to make a bomb) to very small (the political extremist who limits his activities to visiting nasty websites).

If Abdelrazik does represent a risk, it is likely a small one. Besides, Abdelrazik, like Omar Khadr, another Muslim-Canadian who has been kept in limbo outside Canada, is now a public figure, a cause celebre. His semi-celebrity would make it difficult for him, upon returning to Canada, to engage in the clandestine activity of terrorism, were he so inclined.

The Canadian government is suggesting that Abdelrazik is a security risk; if true, the risk ought to be a manageable one. Bring him back to Canada and put him under surveillance, if need be. This is a Canadian citizen, remember, one who has never been on the wrong side of the law, as far as anyone knows. Does he identify with Islamic radicalism? He says no. But even if he did, he would hardly be the only Canadian Muslim to do so.

The government can't simply round up every "security risk" and dump him -- or her -- off a cliff, which is the equivalent of stranding Abdelrazik in Sudan. Surely Canada can come up with a saner counter-terrorism policy than that.

Former judge wants to bar Muslims from university scholarships he funds

A retired judge who funds scholarships at two Canadian universities is asking that
those scholarships not be awarded to any students "of Islamic background," calling his decision a form of "retaliation" against the Taliban.

The Globe and Mail received a fax from retired Windsor, Ont., judge Paul Staniszewski outlining his decision, which he says he made after learning of the beheading of Polish engineer Piotr Stanczak at the hands of Taliban militants in Pakistan this month.

"I'm reacting to innocent people being killed," said Mr. Staniszewski, 84, when contacted by The Globe.

"I'm not in the business of killing people. I am in the business of sending messages."

Mr. Staniszewski described the possibility that some students would lose funding as a form of "tit for tat."

He funds scholarships at the University of Windsor and York University's Osgoode Hall Law School. The websites of both institutions list awards named after the judge and his wife.

Although Mr. Staniszewski has not written letters to the universities asking them to deny the awards to Muslim students, it appears unlikely he will get his wish.

"All I can say at this point is it's outrageous and we'd never accept those terms," a University of Windsor spokeswoman said yesterday when asked about such a request.

The University of Windsor website lists three bursaries in the Staniszewski name valued at $1,000 each, available to students entering first year from Windsor-Essex County secondary schools. Osgoode Hall lists two similar awards for eligible law students, one of which is given annually to a student enrolled in an ethics course.

According to the Osgoode Hall description of the scholarships, Mr. Staniszewski graduated from the school in 1954 and practised law for 13 years before being appointed a federal judge in 1967.

Arar urges journalists to learn from media coverage of his story; Panel on media and Muslims hears from Ottawa engineer who was deported, tortured

Maher Arar, the Canadian whose deportation and torture sparked a three-year inquiry, urged journalists to learn from the circumstances surrounding the media coverage of his case and change the way they do things.

"I'm not looking for an apology, as the time for a meaningful apology has passed," he said.

Instead, he wants to see change in how the media handles leaks of sensitive information from anonymous sources in cases such as his, and to question the motivations of those anonymous sources.

Speaking at a panel on media ethics and media coverage of Muslims before a full house at Carleton University's Porter Hall Monday night, Arar broke the media coverage of his story into five stages, based on time and tenor and urged the audience, many of whom were from Carleton's school of journalism, to learn from the way his story was covered and re-evaluate their role with anonymous sources.

"How important is your obligation to your sources?" he asked. "Is it more important than your obligation to society?"

Monia Mazigh, Arar's wife, spoke of her initial decision to keep the story of her
17 husband's arrest quiet.
18 She later led a very public campaign to rescue her husband from his Syrian prison cell
19 and acknowledged the media coverage helped Arar's detainment not go unnoticed.
20 But she also spoke of media coverage in the early days of the story as superficial and
21 expressed disappointment that certain details of his imprisonment, such as the name
22 of the prison where he was being kept, were not sought.
23 Arar and Mazigh were joined on the panel by CBC Radio journalist Evan Dyer, who
24 covered the Arar case, Citizen executive editor Graham Green and Carleton
25 University instructor Faiza Hirji, whose research includes communications issues
26 related to Muslims. The panel was moderated by Carleton journalism professor and
27 former Globe and Mail correspondent Jeff Sallot. A question-and-answer session
28 followed.
29 Arar, an Ottawa engineer, was detained at New York's JFK Airport on Sept. 26, 2002
30 as he waited for a connector flight to Montreal after a vacation in Tunisia. Twelve
31 days later, U.S. officials deported him to Syria, where he was imprisoned for 10
32 months and tortured. He was released in October 2003.
33 The three-year, $15-million Arar inquiry concluded false information given to U.S.
34 authorities by an inexperienced RCMP anti-terrorism team, which tagged Mr. Arar as
35 an "Islamic extremist," very likely set off a chain of events that led to his deportation
36 and torture. Arar commissioner Justice Dennis O'Connor also unequivocally cleared
37 Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian, of any links to terrorism.


Integrating Islam’s core values into Canadian life; Mother and daughter appreciate
freedom to debate

1 Islam is the world's second-largest religious group. Within each Islamic community
2 and denomination, different interpretations have sprouted from Islam's 7th-century
3 roots. How does that play out for Canadian Muslims?
4 Two Edmonton women agreed to talk about their Islamic faith, but for safety reasons
5 asked that their real names not be used.
6 "People sometimes use Islam as an excuse for things," says Rogi, a high-scoring
7 university student and a Canadian citizen who was born in Iran. A practising Muslim,
8 she navigates between old world views and life in the 21st century. Rogi believes that
9 true Islam comes from being a good person and relating to God through one's heart and
10 actions.
11 Her mother, Anita, grew up in pre-revolution Iran and left in the early 1990s. Both
12 mother and daughter enjoy the freedom that Canada gives them to debate, ask
13 questions, disagree and learn. In Iran the family would have been forced to face much
14 more extreme aspects of culture and faith.
15 "For example, if you change your religion in Iran, you can be executed," says Anita.
16 "You are not allowed."
17 Anita chose to let her family adapt freely after leaving Iran. Her daughter explains:
18 "When I was nine years old, my parents sat me down and said here's why our religion
19 says to cover, here's what it means, and this is how we cover. Now you think about it
and if it makes logical sense to you, then you can do it. And if you don't agree, don't do it."

Age nine is when many Muslim girls begin to pray and wear hijab, often interpreted as a head-covering but literally meaning modest dress. Roji chose not to wear hijab and felt more comfortable having an appearance similar to other elementary school children at that time. But her family doesn't believe choosing not to wear hijab makes her less close to God. "If you live in a Middle Eastern country you would feel more comfortable going out (with hijab). But here, you would be uncomfortable," says Anita. Though some Muslims might disagree with this thinking, the family has given careful thought to how they choose to live their lives here in Canada.

"In each country, they have different hijab," Anita says. "I believe it comes from each culture, not from Islam. If you go to Saudi Arabia, you can see only the eyes and they cover the whole body. In Iran, they wear Manteau, a long jacket that was instituted after the revolution in 1979. For hijab, each country and culture has a different mind."

Rogi concurs. "Even within ourselves as Muslims, we don't have a consensus about what is hijab, how should we pray, how should we interpret the Qur'an. So how can we expect Westerners to know about our religion when we can't really interpret it ourselves?"

Islam has two denominations: Sunni and Shi'a. Shi'a constitutes a smaller percentage of Muslims and is practised mainly in Iran. Many varying traditions have evolved within Muslim countries around the world, a reality that has influenced mother and daughter in how they choose to view Islam in Canada.

This family has taken Islam's core values as learned through the generations in Iran and translated them into a workable life in Canada. Anita's daily routine consists of praying three times -- morning, noon and night. She also participates in Ramadan when Muslims fast during daylight hours. Her daughter chooses not to fast and prays once a day, but feels that her connection to God is personal and from her heart and that ritual, though important, is less important than one's relationship with God.

The family reads the Qur'an, the Islamic holy book transmitted to the prophet Mohammed in 610 CE, to examine the context of its messages. When in doubt, they simply work hard to be good, modest and hardworking.

"After Sept. 11 so many people distrust Muslim people," Anita says. "But I hope one day we can prove we are very kind; we like each other and care about each other. In Islam you are not even allowed to kill a small animal. Even if a snake is coming for you, you can defend yourself but you should not kill it."

The family is troubled by the use of Islam for political reasons. "In Islam, suicide is one of the biggest sins, but people will blow themselves up in a crowd in the name of Islam -- they believe (in what they are doing); I think they really believe it because they've misinterpreted so much and they're just misguided. "They believe that they really will go to heaven because they've sacrificed themselves in the name of Islam but really, they have just committed a sin. We are taking the literal translations and then fighting. To me, it's offensive when people kill in the name of my religion."

The family has taken the deep message of Islam and worked through aspects they feel are inequitable. "It is OK for us to disagree, I think. We have to accept our
"I think we should have open debates about Islam and not be judgmental and critical. If we can get to that point, then we will be in a good place. I think we'll see the real Islam that says that we should love all people."


Their common goal

1 Junaid Subhan was 17 and just starting at John Abbott College when the Sept. 11 attacks on New York's World Trade Centre towers rocked his perception of what it meant to be Muslim in North America.
2 A West Island youth then torn between a passion for science and an interest in business, Subhan can't name an instance where he's felt he's been mistreated or discriminated against because of his religious background or beliefs. But in the backlash that followed the attacks - Muslims were stopped at the border, permanent residents like Adil Charkaoui arrested and youths like Omar Khadr detained without trial at Guantanamo Bay prison camp - Subhan began to rethink his career path.
3 At 25, Subhan is in his third year of law at McGill University, one of a growing group of young Muslims who see the legal profession as their chance to make a difference, as members of their own community and in the wider world to which they also belong.
4 "Now I feel I was born to be a lawyer," said Subhan, case comments editor of the McGill Law Journal this year and a founding member of the fledgling Muslim Law Students' Association (MLSA). The McGill club aspires to build lasting links among Muslim law students at Montreal universities while fostering a broader understanding of concerns as domestic as housing rights and as universal as countering racism, finding the balance between anti-terror measures and civil liberties, and sharia, the code of law based on the Quran.
5 Last summer, Subhan worked as an intern at a Manhattan law firm, where he helped out on a case involving a Kuwaiti detainee being held at Guantanamo Bay. "It's the most fulfilling thing I've done yet." Yet he believes this new generation of Muslim lawyers have an equally important role to play in helping to shape policy decisions. "Young Muslim Canadians are becoming increasingly politically active and I believe that in coming years Parliament will better reflect the diversity of opinion found among Canadians," said Subhan, who sees the Charkaoui case as a watershed in Canadian politics. "Mr. Charkaoui has already taught Canada and its people the greatest lesson he will ever teach them - civil liberties are a measure of the strength of our democracies, they are not simply proof of it."
6 Not all MLSA's members draw such a straight line between their choice of profession and the treatment of Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11.
7 McGill student Marya Sawaf says she chose to study law to counter what she calls "two perpetual waves of degradation in the Canadian, Islamic and international contexts" - the treatment of Muslims in general, and of Muslim women.
8 Entering a field where Muslim women have been largely absent, she hopes to help foster an image of "empowerment and independence that will inspire all Muslim women to break out of culturally imposed impediments to their dignity that are..."
This week, she and another female student, Safia Lakhani, organized a forum on landlord/tenant rights at a Muslim women's centre, the first of what the MLSA hopes will be a series of community clinics. "Law provides endless opportunities to influence and shape society, and an absence of Muslims in the legal field will only exasperate the distressing condition of Muslims and Muslim women," Sawaf said. "I want to be one of the few Muslim veiled females to heavily impact, influence and change views and attitudes towards Muslims, which both Muslims and non-Muslims alike hold."

A 21-year-old law student at Universite du Quebec a Montreal, Dania Suleman chose law because it seemed like a good way to marry intellectually stimulating discussion with concrete action. Though shaped by her Muslim "consciousness" and a desire to help others, Suleman sees community issues as part of a larger whole which includes her Canadian identity. "For me, it's about justice for all."

McGill law student Rodrigo Marillanca is helping to organize a panel next week that will explore the fine points of Islamic law. He sees his case as somewhat different because he chose law before he converted to Islam last year. "It's not just about being Muslim, because no matter where you are, there will be some minority that faces injustice. I was looking for a way to bring about social justice and the law seemed to be the best way to do that in our society today."

Minority report; Vancouver woman risks her life to expose the persecution of Azerbaijani Iranians

There is a haunted look in Fakhteh Zamani's eyes as she recalls guiding Iranian activist Vahid Davarpanah through the streets of Turin, Italy.
He asked Zamani to describe the buildings around them and she couldn't find the words because the streetscape was so unlike anything he would have seen in his native country. He could not see them for himself because he was blinded by one of the 90 pellets fired into his body by Iranian security forces with riot guns. His crime: protesting a cartoon published in a state-run newspaper that compared his people -- Azerbaijani Iranians -- to cockroaches and suggesting 10 ways of exterminating them.
Davarpanah was in his early 20s and unarmed at the time.
When Zamani asked him if he would do it all again, he said: "That was the best day of my life. For the first time we could go out and ask for our rights."
After the protests in May 2006, Davarpanah escaped to Italy, where he was treated for his injuries. When Iranian embassy officials came looking for him at the hospital, he fled to Switzerland, where his application to stay as a refugee has so far gone unanswered. He lives in that country without legal status, afraid to leave his apartment, blinded and alone.
Azerbaijani Iranians are ethnic Turks who form about a quarter of Iran's total population, which the CIA World Factbook pegs at about 66 million. Persians constitute just over half the population and other minorities, including Kurds, Arabs and Turks, form the other 25 per cent. Azerbaijani Iranians live in the northwest
corner of Iran, which is bordered by Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey. Like most Iranians, Azerbaijani Muslims practice Shi’a Islam, but they speak Azeri Turkish rather than Persian.

The plight of Azerbaijanis and other ethnic minorities in Iran has slowly taken over Zamani’s life. From her apartment in downtown Vancouver, she communicates by instant messenger with her network of contacts in Iran, who tell her -- often at great risk to themselves -- about Azerbaijani activists who have been detained, tortured or killed by Iranian police for demanding language rights. They are often accused of being separatists who want to break up Iran. Zamani, who is also Azerbaijani Iranian, takes down their reports, translates them and sends them to Amnesty International officials in London, who publicize the cases. She has also formed a non-profit organization in Vancouver called the Association for the Defence of Azerbaijani Political Prisoners (ADAPP), which she funds mostly out of her own pocket.

As an Azerbaijani growing up in Iran, Zamani said she experienced some discrimination, but was shielded from the worst of it because her parents were well known in the community. She grew up in Tabriz, the largest city in the Azerbaijani part of Iran. Her father's family had been landowners for generations, but in the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian revolution her family's land and belongings were seized, their house was burned down and her father was imprisoned and threatened with execution.

In school, Zamani and her classmates were forced to speak Persian, even though most were Azerbaijani and spoke only Azeri. After the revolution, the government amended the Iranian constitution to protect minority languages and cultures, but it was never enforced, Zamani says, recalling that her classmates were beaten or fined for speaking their native language.

"There is a story that this kid of a friend of ours -- he saved up his allowance, gave it to the teacher and said 'This is, like, 20 words of Azerbaijani ... and I'm paying you [the fines] in advance so I can speak it,'" she recalled. "I was not punished because [the school authorities] knew my parents. They would keep me in the principal's office and I would cry and refuse to speak."

Many Azerbaijani Iranians get frustrated and drop out of school, limiting their options later in life, Zamani said, adding that some become ashamed of their ethnicity. "Humiliating jokes and printing things -- like being called cockroach and donkey -- has become part of [Iranian] culture. They joke, and if you say 'This is insulting,' then they would turn to you and say 'You are not cool. Why don't you take insults?""

After high school, Zamani went to Ankara, Turkey. There she met her future husband, Shahrouz Torfakh, an Azerbaijani Iranian who had fled to Denmark after being imprisoned while still in high school for owning banned books. He was later accepted into Canada as a refugee. Zamani said his experience is one reason she does the work she does.

"He told me about his time in prison. They were teenagers and ... several times [guards] put a gun on their heads. Also, when he was in Denmark he had to be treated for the tortures he suffered. All his ribs were broken when he was in prison and his back was cut, just for owning books."

Zamani moved to Ottawa to be with her husband. She had strong enough marks in
66  math and science that she was accepted by the University of Ottawa on government
67  scholarships, even though she spoke no English. She completed an undergraduate
68  degree in physics with a specialty in microwave engineering, then moved to
69  Vancouver to work on an emergency preparedness project with a professor at the
70  University of B.C.
71  But just as she was getting settled in a new city, she heard about some Azerbaijani
72  teenagers who had been arrested in Iran. "One of them was a first-year university
73  student. He was in the same prison that my husband was in when he was a teenager.
74  He was studying architecture and my husband is an architect. Somehow I felt, what
75  would I want someone else to do for him in that time when he was there as a kid and
76  being tortured? So I thought of helping these prisoners. I called around and to my
77  surprise, some of these teenagers had been missing for months," Zamani said.
78  "I tried to find Iranian human rights groups who would help out and to my surprise,
79  they were not interested at all."
80  Zamani told her supervising professor that she was going to "do something for my
81  community for an hour or so [a week]." She looked for human rights organizations
82  willing to take on the cause. An official with one prominent international group told
83  Zamani that if families of detained activists wanted to make a statement it had to be in
84  Persian, Iran's official language. Amnesty International was more receptive; its
85  representatives told Zamani they would publicize these cases if she would document
86  and translate them.
87  Then on May 12, 2006, the cockroach cartoon was published in an Iranian national
88  newspaper and thousands of Azerbaijani Iranians took to the streets. The protesters,
89  mostly unarmed, were brutally repressed by security forces. In a 2007 report on
90  human rights in Iran, Amnesty International estimates that "hundreds, if not
91  thousands, were arrested and scores were reportedly killed by the security forces."
92  Zamani was overwhelmed with requests for help from the families of detained
93  activists. She used to contact the families by phone, but Iran's intelligence service has
94  now tapped the lines of known activists, forcing them to move their correspondence
95  to the Internet.
96  "As time went on and we got some publicity, I started receiving some reports that
97  people were imprisoned for speaking to me. At the beginning I did not believe that
98  the government would put my name on a court order. So I asked these people to scan
99  and send me a copy of the court order. After that, we started communicating through
100  the Internet and I saw court orders with my name on them, like, 'for speaking to
101  Fakhteh Zamani.'"
102  So far, activists charged with speaking to Zamani have been sentenced to six months
103  in prison. Some have been tortured, Zamani said, but not as much as prisoners
104  whose cases aren't made public.
105  Zamani began getting death threats herself when she started going on satellite
106  television and radio stations broadcast in Iran and talking about minority rights. Her
107  parents live in Iran and are regularly called in for questioning by intelligence service
108  agents. Zamani said her father tells the agents that they have no control over what
109  she does and that she doesn't listen to them. The authorities have already taken their
110  land, their home and many of their belongings.
"They are kind of safe," she said with a nervous laugh. "They have not much to lose except their lives. ... I told them on the phone that there is no way that I would be bullied."

Zamani is gaining an international reputation for her work. In March of 2008 she was invited to Washington to give a speech to the U.S. House of Representatives’ Iran working group. When she began talking about minority rights in Iran, she was interrupted, heckled and almost physically attacked by other Iranians, said Kathryn Cameron Porter, whose organization, the Leadership Council for Human Rights, organized the meeting.

"Of all the years I've been in Washington -- and I came here in 1980 -- it was the most difficult meeting I've ever attended," Porter said in a telephone interview from Washington.

"When Fakhteh spoke, several of the people got right in her face. It was very threatening. ... In Fakhteh's case, I think it was compounded by the fact that she was a woman," Porter said, adding that police had to be called to remove the half dozen men who were threatening Zamani. The men never identified themselves.

Zamani says she is always on guard, even though the Vancouver police have taken the threats against her seriously and worked hard to protect her.

"I am always afraid. ... The simple things in your life change. I used to look forward to flying and travelling, but now I face anxiety before travelling ... especially after being threatened in Congress, because I don't know where the threat comes from," she said.

"I used to go out jogging early in the morning. I stopped that after my first phone call saying that they would kill me.

"Very simple things that I used to do, I don't do."

Hepburn’s picks; The Tories’ plan to fill 18 vacant Senate seats before Christmas has sparked speculation about possible names; Columnist Bob Hepburn and reporters Linda Diebel and Daniel Dale weigh in their own nominees

1 Deborah Grey She made history in 1989 when she became the first MP to be elected to the Commons running as a Reform party candidate. She was also instrumental in the merger of the Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservative parties. Grey would make a good choice for the Senate because in her 15 years as an MP, she was considered a role model for women in the political arena.

2 David Crombie Once known as Toronto's "tiny, perfect mayor," he would be a perfect selection to the Senate because of his passion for urban affairs. A former Progressive Conservative cabinet minister, he has been a leading adviser on such critical city issues as the future of Toronto's waterfront, expressways in Hamilton and funding for school swimming pools.

3 Adele Hurley One of Canada's unsung environmental champions. Her experience in areas of environmental policy-making and project development make her an ideal choice. Currently the director of the Program on Water Issues at the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto, she co-founded the Canadian Coalition on Acid Rain in the 1980s, which was instrumental in the Reagan
administration strengthening its Clean Air Act.

17 Tarek Fatah A prominent spokesperson for secular and progressive Muslim issues who would bring a much-needed unique perspective to the Senate. A Toronto resident, he is the host of a weekly cable TV show, The Muslim Chronicle, and has written extensively for Canadian newspapers and magazines. He founded the Muslim Canadian Congress in 2001, a moderate group that has advocated for separation of religion and state.

19 Maude Barlow She is the national chair of the Council of Canadians, the country's largest citizens' advocacy organization. Her outspoken views on free trade, economic globalization and public control of water are supported by millions of Canadians and are not really reflected in the Senate now. She has been awarded honorary degrees from seven Canadian universities and been honoured around the world for her public policy work.

21 Glen Murray He was mayor of Winnipeg for six years and now is president of the Canadian Urban Institute. A leading proponent of both a "new deal for cities" and a strict climate-change policy, he was also the first openly gay mayor in a large city in North America. Originally from Montreal, his experience in Quebec, the West and Ontario makes him uniquely qualified.


1 Five Ottawans are among 60 people named to the Order of Canada in appointments announced yesterday by Gov. Gen. Michaelle Jean.

2 William Commanda, who was chief of the Kitigan Zibi Reserve near Maniwaki from 1951 to 1970, and is an elder of the Algonquin nation, was made an officer of the Order.

3 Mr. Commanda was honoured "for his leadership as an elder who has promoted intercultural understanding and has raised awareness of the traditions and legacies of Canada's aboriginal people."

4 Michael Kirby, a former Liberal senator, was named as an officer of the Order "for his contributions to public policy and good governance in Canada, and more recently, for his leadership of the Canadian Commission on Mental Health."

5 Former Federal Court judge Barry Strayer was named as an officer of the Order.

6 Mr. Strayer, who also served for 10 years as chief justice of the Courts Martial Appeal Court, was honoured "for his contributions to the Canadian legal profession, especially in the field of constitutional law, and for his role in bringing about the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

7 He was closely involved with the patriation of the Canadian Constitution, having started work on the issue in 1960 while working for the Saskatchewan government of Tommy Douglas.

8 He first came to Ottawa in the summer of 1967, returned in 1968 and has been here since, working on federal-provincial developments and developing the Charter.
While on the bench, he frequently had to deal with issues relating to the Charter, he noted. He retired in 2004, although he did sit from time to time as a deputy judge. Azhar Ali Khan, a former member of the Citizen's editorial board, federal government official and president of the Ottawa Muslim Association, was made a member of the Order "for his contributions as a leader in the Muslim community and as a journalist and volunteer dedicated to strengthening ties between people of diverse backgrounds and faiths."

"I'm very honoured and flattered," Mr. Ali Khan said. "I've received the Order of Ontario and the Queen's gold medal award, but this obviously is the top."

He said he is grateful that he had the chance to live in such a great country as Canada. "I'm just overwhelmed that Canada appreciated whatever little work I did" in helping keep Canada a great country or even improving it, he said.

Media distort Islam, women’s forum hears; Interfaith symposium aims to create dialogue among religions

Scum, hostile, lunatics -- all these descriptions have appeared in the news media to describe Muslims, says Ayesha Mian. The Muslim woman spoke Wednesday at an interfaith symposium sponsored by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association of Edmonton.

Mian was joined onstage by three other Edmonton women, representing Sikhism, Judaism and Christianity. The topic was "Portrayal of My Faith in the Media."

Discussing their faith communities, the women tried to dispel popular myths that are sometimes reinforced by television, newspaper and other media.

The Interfaith Symposium is an annual, women-only event held at the Bait-ul-Hadi Mosque, 7005 98th Ave., in an effort to create dialogue among faiths. A room full of women, ideas and delicious food -- all to create awareness and to dispel misunderstanding.

"Peaceful Islam is not very newsworthy," said Mian, communications secretary for the Edmonton Ahmadiyya branch and the forum's Islamic representative speaker. "The media often focuses on the actions of individuals pursuing their own worldly goals."

Mian told the audience of about 100 women that Islam is not a violent religion despite depictions of violence on television and in newspapers. "The translation of the word Islam means peace."

All the representative speakers offered examples of sensationalized descriptions of their religion in the media. The unfortunate result, they said, is that a few negative stories can brand entire religions in the public's eyes.

While the symposium is an opportunity for women to share perspectives, it also delivers a response to unfair, incorrect or biased views. Mian said the gathering provides an honest space to set the record straight about the core of her religion while giving others the chance to do the same.

"The most misrepresented aspect of Islam is jihad. Jihad has been interpreted by the media as meaning 'holy war,' but this is not the case," she said. "It means to exert
oneself." This refers to the struggle to become a better person, the struggle to preserve faith, and the struggle to convey the message of God.

Mian, like the other presenters, criticized news coverage that focuses on individual phrases, practices or even people as a way of summing up the face of an entire religion.

Sikh speaker Raj Gahun echoed this perspective, saying Sikhs are widely regarded as violent extremists based on media portrayal of a few individuals. "The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanek, (embodied) non-violence and service to the community."

Speaking for the Jewish faith, Shoshana Szlachter described the spreading of fear in the media throughout the ages relating to Jewish faith and culture.

Christian speaker Heather Jamieson suggested the mainstream media tend to avoid coverage of Christianity altogether, with the exception of sex scandals and other negative events.

The speakers also maintained the media have the power to present good stories, too. Gahun praised Canada's freedom of speech and how it can help political prisoners.

Media can give a voice to those in need, and free speech can generate the sharing of ideas and information. "Media gives us an opportunity to discuss our views, and a competition of views is good," Jamieson said. "(Today's media) requires us to take a fresh approach."

As a moderate Muslim, Mian believes the symposium is an excellent way to challenge popular views and share the core of all religions: basic human goodness.

The effort to prepare the presentations, inform Edmonton women of the event, and make samosas, pakora and sweets underlined the commitment to understanding and service. At the end of the forum, guests were invited to circulate to booths where they could ask questions and view materials important to each faith group.

"The main idea is to learn about each other. That is how we truly understand," Mian said later. "This is the true form of dialogue, without stereotypes or misconceptions."

Mian has been involved with the symposium for four years, and her mother, Samina Mian, is the president of the women's association.

The Ahmadiyya sect of Islam is one of 73 denominations. Its official website says it values the "constructive influence of Islam through social projects, educational institutes, health services, Islamic publications and construction of mosques." It has branches in more than 180 countries.

For more information, go to www.ahmadiyya.ca and www.alislam.org

For information on local events and to be notified about next year's symposium, contact Ayesha Mian at amian@ualberta.ca

Extract 31 (Toronto Star. January 28, 2009. Pg. L.1)
Forum aims to debunk stereotypes; U of T gathering probes lives of Muslim women

Arranging to meet someone new at a coffee shop, Hodan Osman exchanges a few brief appearance details to ensure she and the other person can find each other.

"I will be the Muslim," she deadpans, aware that her hijab and long dark skirt make her stand out.

She's okay with that.
It's the assumptions made about her because of the thin piece of material covering her head that are an issue, and something she hopes a symposium tonight at the University of Toronto will help remedy. "The first thing people see is my hijab," says Osman, a third-year public health student at U of T. "I have people coming up to me asking if my father makes me wear the hijab, or my brother does. Or they assume I don't speak English."

Osman, who grew up in Toronto, says tonight's event is meant to dispel assumptions and help non-Muslims understand why some women choose to wear the hijab. It's an expression of faith, she says, adding no one forces her to wear it. It's a choice she makes every morning as she prepares to leave the house. The fact that it is not part of the wider Toronto culture to wear the hijab only makes it a much more personal decision, she says. When every woman wears the hijab, as is the case in many Muslim countries, Osman says there is little debate about whether to go along.

But in Western society, the hijab is not the norm, so wearing one has less to do with conformity and more to do with expressing one's faith.

Tonight's event is part of Islam Awareness Month at the university, organized by the Muslim Students' Association. The symposium - Women Living Islam a Glimpse into the Lives of Muslim Women - runs from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Leslie Dan Pharmacy building at 144 College St.

It will feature talks by three women with unique perspectives on wearing traditional Muslim attire in Canada.

Calla Evans will talk about a documentary she made by following the lives of five Muslim women.

Sandra Noe, a recent convert to Islam, will discuss how friends and co-workers reacted to the change.

And Heba al-Shareet will describe what it was like to grow up as part of Winnipeg's small Muslim community.

In a feature dubbed Rent-a-Muslim, non-Muslims can be paired with a Muslim student who can answer their questions.

There will be a public question and answer period, Osman says, but Rent-a-Muslim recognizes that people might be shy about asking questions, for fear of appearing ignorant or rude. In that case, they can ask their questions in private, without fear of others hearing.

"The idea is that they will learn something, and take it back to their friends and family," says Osman. "With knowledge comes understanding."

Mounties 4, Muslims 4

1 Soccer match leads to Q and A on polarizing topics
2 Some of Canada's foremost counterterrorism cops secretly took on a group of young Muslims yesterday, in a pitched contest in downtown Toronto.
3 The result? A 4-4 tie.
4 Soccer matches, not typically seen as a means of advancing national security, can
apparently help get the ball rolling. At least, that sensibility led a group of Mounties
and Muslim youth to a downtown stadium yesterday, where an hour spent as soccer
adversaries was followed by a friendly question-and-answer session.
The idea behind the inaugural match was that common ground could be hashed out on
the Field Turf at the newly domed BMO Field.
Many Mounties and Muslims alike feel they get bad publicity these days. Playing
soccer was seen as a chance to bypass perception and the press, and explain
themselves to one another directly.
"It helped put into perspective that it's not an us-versus-them mentality," explained
Muhammad Robert Heft, the Muslim side's goalie and the event's organizer. "You're
dealing with a person now, not an idea."
Unfortunately, a Globe and Mail reporter and photographer were turned away from
the game, partly due to national-security reasons. When the journalists showed up
uninvited, some officers were concerned about their faces turning up in the
newspaper. Other Mounties apologized, saying Ottawa headquarters had not cleared
the match as a media event.
The Muslims were more media-friendly, speaking outside the stadium afterward.
The outspoken Mr. Heft, a Muslim convert recognizable in his trademark white
turban, runs a Toronto Islamic centre known as P4E. An avowed fundamentalist, but
one who is deeply critical of terrorism, he spent months organizing the match.
He said his time paid off, even just to see smiling cops running around with young
Muslim men. He described the Mounties as good sportsmen, even if he found them
pretty lax about enforcement.
"We didn't even have a referee in the game," he said. "... A couple of times, our guys
were offside and they [the Mounties] let them go."
Familiar, polarizing topics were touched on during the post-match discussion at
centre circle - such as the cases involving Maher Arar, Omar Khadr, and the 2006
roundup of 18 Toronto-area Muslims, mostly young, on terrorism charges. The
Mounties, including some officers who worked on these very cases, said they couldn't
say much about matters before judges.
After the match, Mostafa Hashamm, a bearded 19-year-old whose wife wears a veil,
said he is concerned about unwarranted police scrutiny just about "every time I
drive." But he found the Mounties to be "more open than I thought," and he said they
mostly talked about "how they can get rid of youth paranoia."
At the conclusion of the event, Mr. Heft, the organizer, thanked the Mounties for their
time.
Then, he said, he urged them to convert to Islam.

Alberta politician was Canada’s first Muslim cabinet minister

1 The son of a Lebanese immigrant who settled in the northern reaches of the province,
2 he represented Lesser Slave Lake. The commute to Edmonton almost cost him his life
3 On the evening of Oct. 19, 1984, a twin-engine Piper Navajo Chieftain belonging to
4 Wapiti Aviation smashed into the trees of a snow-covered hill about 260 kilometres
5 northwest of Edmonton, killing six of 10 people on board. Among the four survivors
was Larry Shaben, the first Muslim cabinet minister in Canada and among the first
Canadians of Arab descent to be elected to public office in the country. A politician,
businessman and community leader, Mr. Shaben was a Conservative MLA from 1975
to 1989 serving in three cabinet portfolios including minister of economic development
and trade.
Also surviving the crash were the pilot, a prisoner and his RCMP escort. With the
pilot and police officer severely wounded, Mr. Shaben and the prisoner, Paul
Archambault, scavenged wood and burned seats from the plane to keep the group
warm. Huddled around a smoky campfire, the four men spent a long, dark night in
sub-zero temperatures with virtually no emergency supplies. Hardest to endure,
however, were the moans from injured passengers who would not live to see the light.
The group was rescued 12 hours later.
Of all the events in Mr. Shaben's eventful life, the plane crash affected him most.
Publicly, it showcased his dignity, courage and humility. Refusing to be a victim, he
walked off the rescue helicopter even though he suffered broken ribs, a cracked
tailbone, two broken teeth and a battered face. The other survivors were carried out
on stretchers. Although the crash left him terrified, he knew he would have to fly
again and forced himself to board a plane three weeks later. "Not only did he get on a
plane," said his son Larry Shaben Jr., "but on a plane with the same airline."
As it turned out, Wapiti was shut down by Transport Canada less than two years after
the crash.
Privately, Mr. Shaben's brush with death hardened his resolve to use what time he had
wisely. For years after, he wondered why he lived while others died. Close relations
developed between the survivors. Mr. Shaben and Mr. Archambault - whose mischief
charges were dismissed - became good friends. Every year on the anniversary of the
crash, Mr. Shaben phoned the pilot to say "aren't we lucky to be alive?"
As if one wake-up call wasn't enough, another came just two years later. Mr. Shaben
and his wife, Alma Shaben, were driving an isolated stretch of highway east of High
Prairie, Alta., when they spotted a pair of stranded motorists in the ditch. Believing it
was his civic duty to stop, Mr. Shaben approached the two young men and asked if
they needed help. Instead of receiving gratitude, however, the couple was fiercely
beaten. Mr. Shaben was also bitten on the hand and part of his hair was burned.
As horrific as the attack was, his daughter Carol Shaben said it didn't deter her father
from wanting to help strangers in distress. She describes her father as an exemplary
role model. "He was my philosopher-guru."
Mr. Shaben drew on a remarkable pioneer past. One of five children born to Albert
Mohamed Shaben and Lila Kazeil, he was the grandson of Saleem Sha'aban (Sam
Shaben), a Lebanese merchant who immigrated to Alberta early in the last century. In
those days, Arab immigrants to northern Alberta settled in small towns and hamlets
but as their numbers grew mothers became eager to move to Edmonton, so that their
children could be educated and learn English. The Shaben family history is part of a
100-year-old tradition, writer Guy Saddy said recently in an article in The Walrus
magazine. It was "a made-in-Canada Islam," wrote Mr. Saddy, who is a nephew of
Mr. Shaben. "A pliant and less conservative version of the faith that grew out of the
western Prairie like a field of tall grass."
By the early 1920s, Edmonton harboured a small, tight-knit Arab community that did not shy away from their adopted society. Even so, integration is not assimilation. In the midst of the Great Depression, a group of Muslim women, including members of the Shaben family, tapped into the community’s spiritual yearning and initiated fundraising for what became Canada’s first mosque. The Al Rashid Mosque was erected in Edmonton in 1938 thanks to contributions from Muslim families, Arab Christians and even some Jewish families. For decades, if you arrived in Edmonton and were Muslim, you went to the Al Rashid Mosque, no matter if you were a Sunni, Shiite or Ismaili. Today, Edmonton has several mosques and other Islamic prayer centres such as Ismaili jamatkhana. In the 1980s, the Al Rashid fell into disuse and was threatened with demolition. But as Globe and Mail reporter Stephanie Nolen chronicled in 2000, the mosque was saved by a feisty group of Muslim women who fought city hall - and a community they say was sometimes overtly racist - and had it declared a heritage building and moved to the Fort Edmonton Park historic site. Mr. Shaben spent much of his youth at Al Rashid at a time when the mosque doubled as a community centre and a place of worship. Al Rashid hosted dances, dinners, interfaith suppers and community events as well as prayers. It was a place where children of immigrants could hang out even while exploring Canadian life and it was where Mr. Shaben first met his wife, Alma Saddy. In his late teens, he befriended a flamboyant and erudite British-born woman named Muriel Burton-Watkins who, along with her husband, sparked his enthusiasm for politics. They spent many Saturday afternoons passionately discussing philosophy, politics and religion. After attending the University of Alberta, Mr. Shaben worked in various sales and marketing, and management positions. In 1960 he and Alma married. Over the next six years, they had five children. Seeking a secure and steady income, the family moved to High Prairie, a small farming town about 370 kilometres northwest of Edmonton, where they bought a general-goods store. In 1975, after serving on town council, presiding over the local chamber of commerce, managing the senior hockey team, and serving as president of the constituency association for the Progressive Conservative Party, Mr. Shaben sought the Tory nomination for the riding of Lesser Slave Lake. He won, crediting the native community for his victory. While some constituents didn't feel comfortable with a Muslim as their MLA, the aboriginal population had no trouble electing a member of a minority group. In his acceptance speech, Mr. Shaben quoted the Arab poet, Kahlil Gibran, and was sworn into office with his hand on the Koran rather than the Bible. For 15 years he led a vibrant and productive political life. He was appointed minister of housing and utilities under Progressive Conservative premier Peter Lougheed, and later served under Don Getty. When expressed his views in cabinet meetings, "there was a remarkable quietness where everybody listened carefully to what Larry Shaben would say," Mr. Lougheed said. "His wisdom on a multitude of issues, was a very significant influence on the decisions of cabinet during that time." Retiring from politics in 1989, Mr. Shaben moved back to Edmonton where he focused on forging connections between different Islamic traditions and between the Muslim and other faith communities. His legacy includes spearheading the establishment of the Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities, the Islamic...
Mr. Shaben also played a founding role in the Phoenix Multi-Faith Society for Harmony, an interfaith organization dedicated to goodwill and dialogue between Christians, Muslims and Jews. Edmonton can claim a long tradition of support and respect between the city's Jewish and Muslim communities who often viewed themselves as having more in common than not. But as relations between the two groups in the Middle East deteriorated, local relations struggled too. On Oct. 31, 2000, two synagogues in the city were fire-bombed. Sol Rolingher, an Edmonton lawyer and Jewish community leader, recalls how the suspect was apprehended but then fled after being granted bail. The disappeared triggered near panic in the small Jewish community.

"That's when I turned to Larry," Mr. Rolingher said. "He was very open and drew together some senior members of the Muslim community and in the summer of 2001 they found him. He brought this person forward ... I said to Larry, 'You've done a great service to this community ... you can always count on me.' "

A month or two later, two jetliners crashed into the World Trade Center in New York. The reverberations were felt all the way to Edmonton. That very day, Mr. Rolingher and Mr. Shaben held a joint press conference to say: "We are Canadians first and religion should not be confused with politics."

The result, Mr. Rolingher said, was that Edmonton did not experience a major backlash against its Muslim community. Over the next four years the two worked closely, along with the Edmonton Police Service, to establish the Phoenix Society.

"Larry Shaben's name shone," Mr. Rolingher says. "He truly was the godfather - if there is such a role - of the [Muslim] community."

Activist seeks dignity for everyone; Calgarian tackles barriers between people
Her life is like a nomad's journal -- born in Medicine Hat, raised in Edmonton, lived in Ottawa, Quebec City and Geneva, prior to moving to Calgary in 2006.

She received her undergraduate degree in political science and sociology from the University of Alberta and earned her master's from the London School of Economics.

She was granted a fellowship from the United Nations through the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

"I got selected as part of their minority fellowship," she explained. "I was one of six people. Essentially, I spent time at the UN specifically focusing on Muslim women in Canada post-9/11: from an economic perspective, a social perspective and a political prospective, what were some of the ramifications?

"It was just amazing being the only Canadian there. You just realize how different the issues are. Every country faces human rights issues; it's just the degree. I think Canada has the infrastructure where we can deal with a lot of them, maybe not as best as we can, but you just come back and feel very lucky."

Ebrahim, whose parents emigrated from Kenya in the 1970s, spent five years with the federal government, when at 23 she was appointed the youngest special adviser to the deputy minister.

"I think it was at that point that I was able to see the breadth and the depth of public service," she said. "I began to appreciate what the public sector is and to make a career out of it.

"My passion is really just breaking down the barriers between people in general. The one thing I've learned from living in different parts of the world is that at the end of the day, people just want to be treated with the same level of dignity as anyone."

Forum aims to debunk stereotypes; U of T gathering probes lives of Muslim women

Arranging to meet someone new at a coffee shop, Hodan Osman exchanges a few brief appearance details to ensure she and the other person can find each other.

"I will be the Muslim," she deadpans, aware that her hijab and long dark skirt make her stand out.

She's okay with that.

It's the assumptions made about her because of the thin piece of material covering her head that are an issue, and something she hopes a symposium tonight at the University of Toronto will help remedy.

"The first thing people see is my hijab," says Osman, a third-year public health student at U of T.

"I have people coming up to me asking if my father makes me wear the hijab, or my brother does. Or they assume I don't speak English."

Osman, who grew up in Toronto, says tonight's event is meant to dispel assumptions and help non-Muslims understand why some women choose to wear the hijab.

It's an expression of faith, she says, adding no one forces her to wear it. It's a choice she makes every morning as she prepares to leave the house.

The fact that it is not part of the wider Toronto culture to wear the hijab only makes it a much more personal decision, she says. When every woman wears the hijab, as is
the case in many Muslim countries, Osman says there is little debate about whether to go along. But in Western society, the hijab is not the norm, so wearing one has less to do with conformity and more to do with expressing one's faith. Tonight's event is part of Islam Awareness Month at the university, organized by the Muslim Students' Association. The symposium - Women Living Islam a Glimpse into the Lives of Muslim Women - runs from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Leslie Dan Pharmacy building at 144 College St. It will feature talks by three women with unique perspectives on wearing traditional Muslim attire in Canada. Calla Evans will talk about a documentary she made by following the lives of five Muslim women. Sandra Noe, a recent convert to Islam, will discuss how friends and co-workers reacted to the change. And Heba al-Shareet will describe what it was like to grow up as part of Winnipeg's small Muslim community. In a feature dubbed Rent-a-Muslim, non-Muslims can be paired with a Muslim student who can answer their questions. There will be a public question and answer period, Osman says, but Rent-a-Muslim recognizes that people might be shy about asking questions, for fear of appearing ignorant or rude. In that case, they can ask their questions in private, without fear of others hearing. "The idea is that they will learn something, and take it back to their friends and family," says Osman. "With knowledge comes understanding."

Extract 38 (Toronto Star. March 7, 2009. Pg. GT. 4)
'You can be Egyptian and Canadian at the same time'; Warm welcome melted away Heba Elshamy’s Toronto winter blues

1 Why I Came here is a regular feature that explores the myriad reasons people choose Toronto as home. To see a video and share your own story, go to thestar.com/whycamehere
2 Hailing from Alexandria, Egypt's second-largest metropolis, Heba Elshamy was both excited and worried when she moved here to join her husband, Abdelfattah Moustafa, two years ago.
3 "I had never seen snow before. I couldn't imagine how it'd be like living in such a cold country like Canada," said Elshamy, 32, who has university degrees in archaeology and English.
4 "I was also very worried about all these new cultures, traditions and lifestyles in Canada, which were so different from where I came from."
5 The first eight months were the hardest for Elshamy, who came from a family with eight siblings.
6 "Our house was always crowded and life was always busy (in Egypt). I was in shock and despair here. When you go outside in winter, it's so cold and there is no one out on the streets," said Elshamy, mother of 31/2-year-old Hania and 1-year-old Karma.
7 "It was depressing."
But she soon received a warm welcome from staff and classmates at the Springhurst Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program in Parkdale.

Elshamy had worked alongside Belgian and English colleagues in Egypt, but she found this different.

"Here, I went to school in a class, meeting people from all over the world, from China, Mexico, South America and other Arabs I had never met before. It's so different from looking at someone's culture on the Internet. This is real life."

For some of her new friends, it was their first time interacting with a Muslim. "They thought we were all terrorists," she said with a chuckle. "But it helps them and me to become more open-minded. By asking questions, you learn to understand, tolerate and respect.

"It does not matter what my friends believe in, what backgrounds they are. I don't care as long as they are good people."

Elshamy has enrolled in a one-year course to become an early childhood educator, and teaches Arabic at Wexford Public School.

"This is the point about being in Canada. You don't have to forget your culture, and can be Egyptian and Canadian at the same time."


New wave of minority comedians gets attention

Ali Rizvi jokes that Muslims procreate by touching their thick, caterpillar-like eyebrows and that every four years, those brows turn into butterflies and fly away. "I am creating such an absurd stereotype because we have zero representation in the media, and some moron is actually going to believe me," says the Toronto-born comic. "That's the real joke."

Taking stereotypes to their absurd extreme is one way the up-and-coming Toronto comedian generates laughter and brings people of diverse backgrounds together in this multicultural city, where political correctness can hinder honest dialogue among communities.

"Comedy is a great medicine to get people to open their minds and hearts," says Rizvi, who grew up in neighbourhoods throughout the city and its environs, including the Esplanade, Regent Park, the Annex, Rexdale and Brampton. "I moved around so much," he laughs, "that I thought my folks were in the military."

The 30-year-old, born to Muslim immigrant parents from Pakistan, is part of a new wave of Canadian comedians of minority backgrounds. Last year, he opened for renowned comic Russell Peters, a Canadian of Anglo-Indian descent, in front of 8,000 people in Kitchener.

Yet Rizvi's path to a career in comedy has taken many detours. An only child, he grew up as a break-dancing latchkey kid. Not unlike his immigrant counterparts, he was pressured by his accountant father, Syed Ali Ahmed Rizvi, and microbiologist mom, Zakia, to become a professional and shine in the family's adopted homeland.

After graduating from Mississauga's Woodlands Secondary School, he enrolled in fine arts at York University - he had a talent for drawing and graffiti art, and excelled at breakdancing. He dropped out to study business at Ryerson, and then quit again to study television production at Seneca College. Rizvi owes his determination to
becoming a comic to the manager of the bank where he worked while pursuing a business degree. The banker refused to give Rizvi time off for an audition for the conservatory at The Second City. That's when he quit his job and business studies. He got into the two-year conservatory program. "It devastated my parents," recalls Rizvi, now an associate producer with MuchMusic.

In the early years Rizvi had flashes of success and moments of despair. After tanking in a 2003 performance in front of 800 people - only the third after his debut that year he quit for a full year. "I got heckled," he recalls. "It was rough. I was still doing sketch and improv, but no stand-up."

He never gave up his dream of being a solo performer, even after marrying his Kabul-born wife, Monika, and fathering son Roek, 2, and daughter Emma, 1.

And once Rizvi returned to comedy, things started to turn around. In 2006 he was featured on The Comedy Network as one of the "next generation of great Canadian comics." A year later, he was a finalist on the CBC comedy series The Second City's Next Comedy Legend.

Last October, he was one of six comics to perform in front of more than 1,000 at the Danforth Music Hall as part of CBC Radio One's annual Accent on Toronto.

This year, he headlines a cross-country Canadian tour with Yuk Yuk's and plans to break into the U.K., Middle East and Asian live comedy markets.

"I've always been told to get out there and kill the crowd," says Rizvi. "And I do it by bringing them to life."


We become what we behold

Poets and philosophers have long argued that the images and stories that surround us influence how we see ourselves and our communities. Commenting on the effect of television on our society, Marshall McLuhan went so far as to say that "we become what we behold. We make the tools, and the tools make us."

The CBC television drama, Little Mosque on the Prairie, is a great case in point. It paints a picture of a community where people from different backgrounds deal with problems and, in the process, model a version of multiculturalism that is Canada's greatest achievement as a nation.

I spoke with one of the lead actors of Little Mosque when he came to town last month to give a talk sponsored jointly by the Immigrant Access Fund and the Calgary Foundation. Zaib Shaikh plays the part of the young, educated Imam Amaar Rashid in the fictional small town of Mercy located somewhere in Western Canada.

"The show is changing the way the world sees itself," Shaikh said. "It has been shown in France, Switzerland, Israel and the West Bank. It is a show that means something to a lot of people."

It is a show that could only have been developed in Canada because we have confidence in our multiculturalism that other countries do not share.

"You know you are confident when you can laugh at yourself," Shaikh said. "Little Mosque allows all of us to laugh at ourselves. It especially allows us Muslims to laugh at ourselves."
The genius of the Little Mosque is that it portrays the Muslim community as a real community of real people. "We look at the fact Muslims are just like any another religion. There are lots of viewpoints, lots of different cultures, and we are all trying to do our best. And we screw up."

Creating a realistic portrait of a community is important because it helps people imagine themselves as part of the fabric of Canada. "I met a kid at one of these events," Shaikh said. "He came up and told me that his name was Amaar and that he had never seen anyone with a name like his on TV."

It is immensely important that this young Amaar sees himself as part of the Canada and not as part of a marginalized group. And it is not just Muslims who identify with Little Mosque. Shaikh has many stories of people from all ethnic and religious backgrounds approaching him in public to express how much they enjoy the show. "A Jewish doctor came up to me at a Maple Leafs game and said, 'I love the show. My family loves the show. We get it,' " Shaikh says.

The particular genius of Canada is that we have created a version of multiculturalism where "people from diverse countries can keep their dialogue within their community alive and be part of Canada. We have a country where you do not lose your identify but give of it," Shaikh said. "I get to be part of changing a perception of a religion. I can honestly now say I am proud to be a Muslim. I am even more proud to be a Canadian."

It is shows like Little Mosque that help people see the humanness of others. The show is a sitcom -- and a CBC sitcom -- but it more than just funny. It also paints of vision of how different cultures and religions can live and prosper together. It is a vision of multiculturalism that resonates deeply with Canadians (over a million people watch it weekly) and with people around the world. We become better by beholding such visions of multiculturalism.