AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES FOR RELIGIOUS PRACTICE IN CANADIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Sarah Snihurowych Lynch
Outline

- Definitions
- Research Focus & Research Question
- Literature Review
- Methods
- Findings
- Discussion
- Limitations & Future Research
DEFINITIONS
Key Definitions

- **Fundamentalism**: a movement or attitude stressing strict and literal adherence to a set of basic principles (Merriam-Webster Online, 2015)
- **Congregant**: a person who is part of a congregation: a person who is attending religious services or who regularly attends religious services (Merriam-Webster Online, 2015)
RESEARCH FOCUS & RESEARCH QUESTION
Research Focus: Availability of resources for religious practice in Canadian Public Libraries

Research Question: Do the number of religious resources in Canadian public libraries sufficiently meet the needs of religious users?
LITERATURE REVIEW
PART 1: Information Seeking Behaviour of Members of Fundamental Religious Groups

- Research is lacking
  - Available research focuses on clergy & theology students, not congregants
  - Does not address fundamental religious groups
  - Does not address a variety of religions
PART 2: Bias in Information Seeking Behaviour

- Bias influences information seeking behaviour
  - Trustworthiness & resonance with beliefs positively impact whether an information source is perceived as credible (Liu & Huang, 2005)
  - Social & organization norms affect the way people evaluate information (Rieh & Danielson, 2007)
  - Religious beliefs affect how & where members of fundamental religious groups search for information and what information they find credible
METHODS
Libraries & Religions Examined

◇ Libraries:
  ◇ Toronto Public Library (TPL) & Vancouver Public Library (VPL)
  ◇ Large public library systems from different regions of Canada

◇ Religions:
  ◇ Christianity, Islam, & Sikhism
  ◇ Major religions in Canada
  ◇ Some research available on information seeking behaviour of Christians and Muslims
Subject searches were performed for “Christianity” “Islam,” & “Sikhism”
Results labelled with terms applicable for religious practice were counted.
Terms Deemed Applicable for Religious Practice

- Adi-Granth
- Apologetic Works
- Bible
- Bible Stories
- Christian life
- Devotional Literature
- Doctrines
- Meditations
- Papal Documents
- Prayers and devotions
- Religious life
- Sacred books
- Sermons
- Spiritual life
Population Statistics

- Population statistics taken from Statistics Canada (2013a; 2013b)
- Based on the self-identification of respondents
- Fundamental sects not identified
- “Christian” includes 8 different denominations as well as an “Other Christian” option
FINDINGS
Collection Policies

- Both VPL & TPL:
  - Are committed to developing collections that best serve their users
  - Aim to build diverse collections which respect & reflect the cultural heritage of their communities.
  - Align with the former CLA’s “Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries” (2015)

- But do they carry a sufficient number of items for the religious needs of users?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Sikhism</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Philosophy, Sikh (21)</td>
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<td>Sikh gurus (13)</td>
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<td>Nanak, Guru, 1469-1538 (13)</td>
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<td>Islam (237)</td>
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<td>United States (183)</td>
<td>Religious life (9)</td>
<td>Jesus Christ (222)</td>
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<td>Prayers and devotions (9)</td>
<td>Religious life (221)</td>
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<td>Islam 20th century (147)</td>
<td>Adi-Granth (9)</td>
<td>Philosophy (217)</td>
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<td>Social conditions (134)</td>
<td>Hinduism (8)</td>
<td>Christianity 20th century (205)</td>
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<td>Biography (132)</td>
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<td>Spiritual life (204)</td>
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<td>Muslim women (121)</td>
<td>Religion (6)</td>
<td>History and criticism (186)</td>
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<td>Iran (116)</td>
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<td>Bible (181)</td>
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<td></td>
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### Number of Religious Resources in Toronto Public Library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Terms</th>
<th>Total Number of Results</th>
<th>Number of Results Applicable for Religious Practice</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>6686</td>
<td>1131</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>3126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>41</td>
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*Note. Data for the number of religious resources in the Toronto Public Library from http://www.tpl.ca/*.
**Number of Religious Resources in Vancouver Public Library**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Terms</th>
<th>Total Number of Results</th>
<th>Number of Results Applicable for Religious Practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>4612</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>2284</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>11</td>
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</table>

*Note.* Data for the number of religious resources in the Toronto Public Library from [http://www.vpl.ca/](http://www.vpl.ca/).
Religious Populations of Toronto and Vancouver in 2011

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<td><strong>Toronto</strong></td>
<td>2 576 025</td>
<td>1 953 370</td>
<td>1 394 205</td>
<td>212 350</td>
<td>20 405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vancouver</strong></td>
<td>590 205</td>
<td>301 770</td>
<td>213 855</td>
<td>13 244</td>
<td>16 815</td>
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</table>

*Note.* Data for the religious population of Toronto from Statistics Canada (2013a) and for Vancouver from Statistics Canada (2013b).
Comparison of Religious Populations

Vancouver
- 51% of the population self-identified as religious
  - 36% Christian
  - 2.3% Muslim
  - 2.8% Sikh

Toronto
- 75% of the population self-identified as religious
  - 54% Christian
  - 8% Muslim
  - 0.8% Sikh
DISCUSSION
Resources Available for Religious Practice

- 10.6 Million Items in TPL Catalogue
  - Percentage of items applicable for religious practice:
    - Christians = 0.0107%
    - Sikhs = 0.0004%
    - Muslims = unknown

- 2.7 Million Items in VPL Catalogue
  - Percentage of items applicable for religious practice:
    - Christians = 0.0019%
    - Sikhs = 0.0004%
    - Muslims = 0.0003%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Toronto</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Population that is Christian</td>
<td>54.1223</td>
<td>36.2340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Public Library Resources for the Religious Practice of Christians</td>
<td>0.0107</td>
<td>0.0019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Population that is Muslim</td>
<td>8.2433</td>
<td>2.2440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Public Library Resources for the Religious Practice of Muslims</td>
<td>None clearly indicated</td>
<td>0.0003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Population that is Sikh</td>
<td>0.79211</td>
<td>2.8490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Public Library Resources for the Religious Practice of Sikhs</td>
<td>0.0004</td>
<td>0.0004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Data for the religious population of Toronto from Statistics Canada (2013a) and for Vancouver from Statistics Canada (2013b). Data for religious resources in the Toronto Public Library from http://www.tpl.ca/ and for the Vancouver Public Library from http://www.vpl.ca/.
LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH
Limitations

- Members of religious populations might disagree about which resources are applicable for religious practice
- This study was narrow in scope
  - Not all potential variables were addressed between libraries, collections, populations, and religions
- Only an initial examination of resources was performed
Future Research

- Identification & examination of the needs of:
  - Religious library users
  - Members of *fundamental* religious groups
- Examination of other public libraries in Canada
- Examination of academic libraries?
Thanks!

Any questions?
You can contact me at ssnihuro@ualberta.ca
REFERENCES


References Continued


Credits:

- Escalus presentation template by SlidesCarnival (http://www.slidescarnival.com/)