

# AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES FOR RELIGIOUS PRACTICE IN CANADIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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# 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



Vancouver  
Public Library  
(VPL)

Toronto Public  
Library (TPL)

# Libraries & Religions Examined

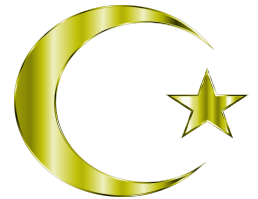
- ◆ Libraries:
  - ◆ Toronto Public Library (TPL) & Vancouver Public Library (VPL)
    - ◇ Large public library systems from different regions of Canada
- ◆ Religions:
  - ◆ Christianity, Islam, & Sikhism
    - ◇ Major religions in Canada
    - ◇ Some research available on information seeking behaviour of Christians and Muslims



**Sikhism**



**Christianity**



**Islam**

## Data Collection

- ◆ 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?**

# Results from Toronto Public Library

## Islam

### Subject

Islam (2,302)  
History (646)  
Religious aspects (632)  
Islam and politics (596)  
Politics and government (450)  
Relations (294)  
Islamic countries (293)  
Terrorism (266)  
Muslims (254)  
Islamic fundamentalism (219)  
Christianity (208)  
Islam and state (202)  
Middle East (201)  
United States (183)  
Christianity and other religions (150)  
Islam 20th century (147)  
Social conditions (134)  
Biography (132)  
Muslim women (121)  
Iran (116)

## Sikhism

### Subject

Sikhism (269)  
History (31)  
Juvenile literature (31)  
Sikhs (25)  
Philosophy, Sikh (21)  
Canada (20)  
India (18)  
Biography (16)  
Sikh gurus (13)  
Nānak, Guru, 1469-1538 (13)  
Sacred books (12)  
Doctrines (11)  
Religious life (9)  
Prayers and devotions (9)  
Ādi-Granth (9)  
Hinduism (8)  
Fasts and feasts (7)  
Religion (6)  
Religious aspects (5)  
Relations (5)

## Christianity

### Subject

Christianity (5,272)  
Religious aspects (2,672)  
History (1,017)  
Christianity and other religions (605)  
United States (565)  
Relations (459)  
Religion (421)  
Church history (390)  
Christianity and politics (378)  
Judaism (337)  
Christian life (325)  
Catholic Church (273)  
Islam (237)  
Jesus Christ (222)  
Religious life (221)  
Philosophy (217)  
Christianity 20th century (205)  
Spiritual life (204)  
History and criticism (186)  
Bible (181)

# Number of Religious Resources in Toronto Public Library

<b>Search Terms</b>	<b>Total Number of Results</b>	<b>Number of Results Applicable for Religious Practice</b>
Christianity	6686	1131
Islam	3126	None indicated
Sikhism	275	41

*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

<b>Search Terms</b>	<b>Total Number of Results</b>	<b>Number of Results Applicable for Religious Practice</b>
Christianity	4612	50
Islam	2284	8
Sikhism	178	11

*Note.* Data for the number of religious resources in the Toronto Public Library from <http://www.vpl.ca/>.

# Religious Populations of Toronto and Vancouver in 2011

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Religious Population</b>	<b>Christian Population</b>	<b>Muslim Population</b>	<b>Sikh Population</b>
<b>Toronto</b>	2 576 025	1 953 370	1 394 205	212 350	20 405
<b>Vancouver</b>	590 205	301 770	213 855	13 244	16 815

*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%



***Comparison of Religious Populations in Toronto and Vancouver with Resources Available for Religious Practice in Toronto Public Library and Vancouver Public Library (In Percentage)***

	Toronto	Vancouver
Percentage of Population that is Christian	54.1223	36.2340
Percentage of Public Library Resources for the Religious Practice of Christians	0.0107	0.0019
Percentage of Population that is Muslim	8.2433	2.2440
Percentage of Public Library Resources for the Religious Practice of Muslims	None clearly indicated	0.0003
Percentage of Population that is Sikh	0.79211	2.8490
Percentage of Public Library Resources for the Religious Practice of Sikhs	0.0004	0.0004

*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](mailto:ssnihuro@ualberta.ca)

# REFERENCES

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