

Fact Sheet:

Des identités musulmanes : analyse discursive des négociations identitaires d'étudiantes universitaires et immigrantes en Finlande et au Québec

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Project Description and goals:

The *Religion and Diversity Project* accorded me a Graduate Research Grant in order to do a field study in Finland. The plan of my comparative doctoral dissertation project provisionally entitled *Identity Discourses facing Multiculturalism in Quebec and Finland – A case study of female Muslim immigrant students in Helsinki and Montreal* included observations and 10 interviews with Muslim female students in the capital region of Finland. The essential research questions for my field work focused on how Muslim immigrant female students define their religiosity and their experiences about immigration and multiculturalism. As such, my field trip to Finland had an essential role in successful development of my doctoral dissertation project.

Methodology:

During my 1.5 month's stay, I had an opportunity to interview all together 15 Muslim female students in Helsinki and Turku, the first and the second largest immigrant cities in Finland. In the beginning of my stay I faced some difficulties in the recruitment process in Helsinki city mainly due to a lack of Muslim student associations on campuses. Consequently, soon after my arrival I decided to enlarge my study to another city, Turku. All together I contacted approximately ten Muslim associations and twenty other persons/researchers/university staff members/well-known Muslims in Finland in order to find potentially interested participants for my study.

Nine of the interviews were carried out in Helsinki and six of them in Turku. All in all, I had participants from eight countries (Turkey, Indonesia, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Bosnia, multinational, Brazil).

Results:

This field trip proved the pertinence of my comparative doctoral study project between Finland and Quebec as it helped me to better understand differences between these contexts. It also confirmed the importance of my study topic on Muslim female students' religious identities and perceptions on immigration and multiculturalism in both contexts, as it includes views of persons to whom multicultural politics are often addressed. In Finland, immigration in has only increased recently and multicultural politics are still under development. When it comes to Quebec and its more rooted multicultural politics and philosophies, the political context is in constant mutation, especially recently due to the provincial elections held in September 2012. As such, new pathways of thinking can be created for both study contexts.