8

Teaching Sexuality, Teaching Religion: Sexuality Education and Religion in Canada

Heather Shipley

Sexuality education continues to spark debate across numerous national contexts; opposition to education about sexuality frequently points to the vulnerability of youth and conflicts of morality for students, parents, and teachers. As the debates about sexuality education gain momentum within media and spark public controversy, the topics at the heart of the debates often connect to parallel flashpoints regarding religious identity, religion in public, and 'national values' (also tied to immigration, diversity, and us/them binaries). These two sets of public controversies are not isolated from one another, as witnessed when new sex education curricula are introduced (and subsequently protested by particular religious groups) and when religious freedom claims are in the headlines (and gender and sexual minorities groups voice their concerns about the limits and extensions of religious freedoms). However, the continued portrayal of sexuality and religion as inherently oppositional misses the nuance of both categories and ignores intersectional identities and the challenges of living at the intersections of religious and sexual diversities. Further, the assumption that religion is the 'location' of harm toward Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or

H. Shipley (✉)
Department of Classics and Religious Studies, University of Ottawa, 55 Laurier Avenue, Room 10124, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5, Canada
e-mail: hshipley@uottawa.ca

L. Allen, M.L. Rasmussen (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Sexuality Education*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-40033-8_8

Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI)[1] communities ignores the prevalence of discrimination in non-religious or 'secular' spaces. This chapter highlights these debates within a Canadian context to explore the construction of both religious and sexually diverse identities as represented in recent debates about sexuality education, considering the ways these debates portray religion as inherently homophobic and anti-feminist based on particular conservative religious voices that have become dominant opponents to sexual diversity. As sexuality education, and curricula about sexuality, develop it is important to consider the future of education about sexuality as also the future of education about religion, secularity, and ideology.

Youthful experiences within educational institutions have been the source of much consternation and interest; recently, an increasing amount of research has focused on youth identities as expressed by youth themselves (Yip and Page 2013; Yip et al. 2011; Page et al. 2012; Regnerus 2007; Freitas 2008; Taylor and Snowdon 2014a; Young and Shipley 2015). While much concern has focused on youthful vulnerability within education environments, including the sexuality and sexual identities of their teachers (Rayside 2010), recent research on youth seeks to integrate voices of young people to flesh out the ways young people experience, identify, and challenge assumptions and to connect with young people's considerations about sexuality, sexuality education, and their experiences of this education (Taylor and Snowdon 2014a, b; Renold and Ringrose 2011; Shipley 2014; Young and Shipley 2014; Yip and Page 2013; Rasmussen 2004). Because youthful vulnerability (to exposure toward diversities of sexualities) is frequently cited as the reason this education should only occur at home, under the guidance of parents who also transmit moral and ethical values, it is critical to ask young people to reflect on these issues. While sexuality curricula will not be developed solely by what youth want to be taught—nor would any curricula—considering the experiences, insights, concerns, and responses of young people regarding gender and sexuality is a necessary component of the process.

Further, while sexuality education is the source of ongoing debates regarding young people (across the globe), it frequently appears as inherently problematic for 'religion,' broadly conceptualized. The relationship of religion to gender and sexuality is varied and complex, yet often it is very narrowly portrayed with particularly religious beliefs and positions becoming overgeneralized as 'the religious' view regarding gender and sexuality. The complex

[1] A note about terminology; I am using the acronym LGBTQI to refer to multiple spaces and experiences of sexual diversity, recognizing that there are other acronyms that are current or in use. When I refer to LGBT or other shortened formats, it is simply to acknowledge the way the scholar or policy I am citing refer to the sexual minority groups in their article and policy.

relationship of religion, secularity, and ideology as regards gender and sexuality will be explored here, specifically to challenge the notion that 'religion' is inherently exclusive and that 'secularity' is inherently inclusive. This chapter will focus on current debates about sexuality education and their connection to religion and secularity within the Canadian context.

Researching Lived Religion, Sexuality, and Identity

Pioneering work in the areas of gender and sexuality studies has sought to challenge normative assumptions and imposed standards on the categories of gender and sexuality (Foucault 1978; Butler 1993; Burn 1995; Weeks 2011; Halberstam 1998; Kinsman 1996, among others). In the last several decades a vast amount of work has been done to create new spaces for the experience of gender and sexuality outside traditional norms (Burn 1995), beyond the framework of male and hetero–normativity (Irigaray 1984), and with the goal of destabilizing the categories of gender and sexuality thus rendering them more representative of individual identity and lived experiences (Jagose 1996). Within feminist theoretical movements and grassroots activism, there have been numerous branches of critique, including the integration of intersectionality as determining double disadvantages for women who are also racial minorities (Crenshaw 1991), who are disadvantaged based on class (Crompton 1989), income (Johnson 2002), or disability (Parker et al. 2007) to name a few. And although the debates within any theoretical area cannot (perhaps should not) be resolved neatly, the perception of both gender and sexuality has significantly expanded as a result of the activism and theoretical critiques from feminism, markedly changing the understanding about these identity categories and influencing the way gender and sexuality are discussed, even outside academic dialogue (Ursic 2014; Shipley and Young 2014).[2]

Research on religious identity is not yet as advanced as the study of gender and sexuality; religion continues to possess a typically narrow perception within public dialogue, in part influenced by media coverage of particular religious individuals and groups (from conservative religious groups who oppose same-sex marriage or abortion to more violent representations, such as the

[2] Note here, I do not intend to imply that this equates to an inherently inclusive or welcoming experience for normative or alternative genders and sexualities; I mean only that our language has significantly developed in the last several decades, so that diversities of these identities are better known within the public imagination.

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)/the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)).[3] However, religious identity is also diverse, nuanced, and rarely contained within normative or static boundaries (McGuire 2008; Beckford 2012; Beyer and Ramji 2013). As the field of religious studies continues to demonstrate, the category of religion is, at best, misunderstood.[4]

Although religion is often represented within narrow parameters in media (or legal discourse) these representations do not accurately portray the diversity of practice, ideology, and belief that is encompassed within and across traditions (McGuire 2008; Davie 1994; Beckford 2003, 2012; Woodhead 2013). Lived religious identities are nuanced and complex, rarely do individuals align within the tick boxes that are found on surveys or adhere rigidly to a set of practices and beliefs as set out within, that is, Christianity or Buddhism (Young and Shipley 2014; National Household Survey 2011; Beyer and Ramji 2013). And yet when 'religion' is discussed within public spaces (e.g., media or legal decisions), it is essentialized into a winnowed set of traits and beliefs (Hoover 2006; Knott et al. 2013; Shipley 2015a, b); within law, this often corresponds to particularities of belief and practice as expressed by individuals involved in the case itself (Beaman 2012; Berger 2008). Frequently, these essentialized portrayals are translated into much broader discourses as what religion 'looks like' (Knott et al. 2013; Beaman 2012).

As the grammar of religion develops (Shipley 2016b), it has been suggested that religious studies scholars can learn from gender and sexuality studies scholars when considering diversities of religious identities (Ursic 2014). As Elizabeth Ursic argues, rarely do individuals identify solely as Lutheran or Hindu in contemporary society; most people who identify within a religious framework bring together political, social, religious, and personal characteristics when describing and defining their religious/spiritual identities (2014, 29). Ursic suggests we would benefit from considering the use of trans and bi when discussing religious identities; using trans-religious to describe individuals who combine multiple traditions and bi-religious to describe participation in more than one tradition (2014, 31). Broadening the category and parameters of religious identity could then seek to capture the nuance with which religious/spiritual/ideological lives are lived, hopefully then transferring into a more accurate perception of 'religion' outside academia (Wallis 2014). As demonstrated by Ursic's own research, and mirrored in a Canadian data set (Shipley and Young 2014), research participants have expressive and reflective language for

[3] This is demonstrated most often in media generalizations regarding 'religion' in reporting, as argued by Hoover 2006; Knott et al. 2013, among others.

[4] There is a vast literature on the category of religion from a historical and theoretical perspective. It is outside the scope of this particular chapter, however there is a growing debate about the category itself and the lack of reflexivity within academia regarding 'religion,' see for example, Arnal and McCutcheon 2012.

discussing their gendered and sexual identities but yet often are unable to find comparable language to express the fluidity and nuance of religiosity (see also Young and Shipley 2015). Individuals often turn instead to expressing themselves as spiritual (but not religious), non-religious but ethical (or holding deep values), and so on, finding the language of 'religion' to be confining for their own identities (Shipley 2016b; Young and Shipley 2015).[5]

And while the academic literature regarding religious identities is currently undergoing significant development, a core issue that continues to be problematic is the assumption that 'religion' is always inherently opposed to sexual diversity, gender equality (or diversity), and to sexual orientation equality rights (Shipley 2016a; Wilcox 2009; see especially Hunt and Yip 2012). This assumed inherent clash often appears regarding legal controversies (i.e., same-sex marriage, discriminatory policies regarding either gender or sexual orientation, see Shipley 2016a), but is also regularly a subject of concern when it comes to teaching about gender or sexuality (CBC 2010a, b, c; The Sault Star 2011; Taylor and Peter 2011a, b; Rayside 2010). This assumed clash ignores the ways that religious groups and individuals argue in support of gender and sexuality equality (Young 2015a; Shipley 2016a),[6] and further ignores the individuals who live at the intersections of religious/spiritual and gender or sexual diversities (Yip and Page 2013; Wilcox 2009; Taylor and Snowdon 2014a; Cho et al. 2013).

The continued portrayal of religion as the 'natural' opponent to gender and sexual diversity has several important implications: individuals (including youth) who live at the intersections of these categories report that they repress or ignore one or the other identity trait depending on where they are and who they are with (Yip 2015), some stating that while they do not feel an internal tension in being both religious and queer, they find LGBTQI associations can be hostile toward religion or that religious groups can be unwelcoming toward LGBTQI individuals (Yip 2015; Young and Shipley 2014).

[5] It is clear that religious studies (particularly here, the study of religious identities) would benefit from the work that has been done within the fields of gender and sexuality studies, but it seems that the problem of 'non-religious' has not yet been resolved; increasingly, individuals identify as non-religious, which is often mistaken for anti-religious or hostile toward religion in some fashion (Halafoff forthcoming; Shipley 2016b, among others). This assumption misses the mark when it comes to the complex interweaving of ethics and values expressed by the 'nones' (a forthcoming edited collection on *Youth, Religion and Identity*, edited by P. Beyer, P. Gareau, and S. Bullivant, Brill Academic Press, considers this subject in detail). The subject of the rising 'nones' and the connections between religious and non-religious identities are outside the scope of this chapter, but a great deal of recent research demonstrates the similarities in expressions and values between those who identify as religious and those as non-religious.

[6] Notably in Canada, the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto first began marrying same-sex couples in the 1970s and spearheaded the campaign for marriage equality. See Shipley 2016a.

Second, the assumption that we can locate harm toward LGBTQI communities within religious spaces (as a 'religious' issue) ignores the widespread and pervasive experiences of discrimination based on gender and sexuality in non-religious or 'secular' spaces, including particularly schools (Taylor and Peter 2011a; Shipley 2014).

With a growing body of evidence to demonstrate that religiosity is more than an anti-feminist or anti-homosexual space and data that demonstrates discrimination toward LGBTQI communities is not relegated to religious beliefs or spaces, it is time to think more carefully about what continues to fuel discriminatory attitudes and to reflect on how sexuality education might serve to connect gender, sexuality, religion, and secularity and move forward inclusive experiences in schools.

Flashpoint: Youth and Education

As mentioned at the outset of the chapter, youthful expressions of their identities have increasingly become of interest within academia; integrating voices of young people to expand understanding about how young people articulate their own identities and how they respond to policies that effect their experiences, particularly within schools (Freitas 2008; Cherry et al. 2001; Collins-Mayo and Dandelion 2010; Regnerus 2007; Smith and Smith 2009; Young and Shipley 2014; Shipley and Young 2015; Yip and Page 2013). Education policy and curricula are often hotly debated topics, generating support and opposition from a wide spectrum of parties. Within the Canadian context, a recent debate in Ontario has focused on the introduction of a new sex education curriculum as part of the Health and Physical Education curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education; Sex Information and Education Council of Canada). A new sex education curriculum was introduced and put on hold in 2010 (CBC News 2010b, c, d), and has since been reintroduced (with additions) in 2015; it was implemented in September 2015 (The Star 2015a; The Globe and Mail 2015). The core focus of the controversy over the modifications has been the introduction of gender identity and sexual orientation within the curriculum in grade 3; the naming of specific body parts in grade 1; and with the 2015 modifications, the introduction of consent into the curriculum (The Star 2015b). I will elaborate on the controversy itself momentarily.

Education has been a site of contention for many years, with schools often seen as the place where 'good' citizens are formed (Gleason 1999). As a result, what is taught in schools (and therefore what 'kind' of citizens are being formed) is the source of frequent tension (albeit, not often related to math curricula) (Mckay 1997; Mckay and Bissell 2010; Maticka-Tyndale 2008;

Gleason 1999). In addition to debates about what is being taught, there have been controversies over who is doing the teaching—gay and lesbian educators in the 1980s and 1990s in particular were the source of concern and speculation (Rayside 2010); speculation and discrimination which continues today (CBC 2010a).

These debates—specifically regarding gender, sexuality, and religion—connect to broader national debates about tolerance, accommodation, religious freedom, and equality (Berger 2008; Beaman 2012; Bakht 2009). Although these broader debates can only be referenced in brief within the space of this chapter, it is important to recognize that the sites of contention regarding equality and freedom are experienced across age demographics and across institutional and public settings. The debate about the sex education curriculum in Ontario has garnered much public attention in part because it connects to broader questions about national values and diversity (Young 2015b; Shipley 2015; Cossman 2007, 2009).

Education policy in Canada is managed provincially; each province or territory creates and monitors education policy, which is to be compliant both with provincial human rights codes and federally with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Berger 2014). As such, each province's sex education curriculum has had its own trajectory, controversy, and current location; Québec removed its formal sex education from the curriculum, asking teachers instead to introduce the topics organically in other classes (Montreal Gazette 2015). Recently, it has been noted that this organic instruction has been tantamount to zero instruction regarding sex education, so Québec has announced it will reintroduce sex education as part of a mandatory curriculum (Montreal Gazette 2015). The province of Alberta was required to add sexual orientation to its human rights act and, after nearly a decade from first instruction, as it was poised to do so, it concurrently added education policy (to the human rights act) stating that any teacher who would be teaching on topics such as religion, human sexuality, or sexual orientation in class must first notify parents. Parents could then remove their children from these classes, without academic penalty (Young 2015). These are just two examples of the current location (and existence of controversy) regarding sex education in provinces outside Ontario; teaching about gender, gender identity, sexuality, and sexual orientation is not consistent or comprehensive across Canada.

Ontario's Health and Physical Education Curriculum was last updated in 1998 (Ontario Ministry of Education), a decade later the process of revising the curriculum began, which included a series of consultations with experts and surveys sent out to parents within the province (CBC 2010d). After two years of development, the new curriculum was introduced in April 2010 and was also put on hold in April 2010. I have discussed that debate at length

elsewhere (Shipley 2015a, b; Young and Shipley 2014). What was particularly interesting during the 2010 controversy was the way that a handful of individuals who opposed the curriculum became generalized as representing 'the religious' view regarding gender identity and sexual orientation (Shipley 2015a, b). When the curriculum was reintroduced in 2015 by the current Premier, Kathleen Wynne, media coverage became much more nuanced about the opposition, noting that it was only 'a few' specific groups who had been vocally opposed in 2010 (CBC 2015). It is difficult to know why the media coverage became more reflexive five years later, but what has reoccurred is the appearance of the same instigators of opposition in the current debate about sex education (CBC 2015; The Star 2015; The Globe and Mail 2015).

The initial debate regarding the curriculum in 2010 is notably short; it was proposed on April 20, 2010, and put on hold until April 23, 2010. The then Premier Dalton McGuinty stated that the proposed curriculum needed to be reviewed with the province's 'religious and multiculturally diverse' (CBC 2010c) composition in mind. Analysis of the media coverage of the controversy revealed that the opposition to the curriculum was generated from a small group of repeated voices; primarily, Charles McVety of Canada Christian College (Shipley 2015). The reintroduction of a new sex education curriculum, with additions to the original 2010 proposal, was met again with opposition from McVety. The major difference in the 2015 introduction has been that Premier Wynne has said that the curriculum is going ahead even with the protests; it was implemented in September 2015.[7] This has created space for more sustained opposition, and larger numbers of groups attending the protests outside provincial legislature (The Star 2015a, b; The Globe and Mail 2015; CBC 2015). Journalists have noted that when they ask individuals in the protests to explain what they oppose in the curriculum, many admit they have not read the curriculum itself (The Star 2015b) and instead they repeat incorrect information about the curriculum (specifically, they repeat incorrect details that McVety has commented on in many media outlets) (The Star 2015b; Power and Politics 2015).[8]

As already mentioned, debates about the conflict between religion and gender or sexual diversity are also seen outside education spheres; numerous legal

[7] Wynne was criticized for her 'lack' of qualification to implement education policies when the new sex education curriculum was introduced. She responded to the criticism in the legislature as such: "Is it that I'm a woman? Is it that I'm a mother? Is it that I have a master's of education? Is it that I was a school council chair? Is it that I was the minister of education?" (CBC 2015b).

[8] Furthermore, as was noted during one interview with a mother in Ottawa who had taken her children out of school in protest, was that while she repeated during the interview that she was opposed to her children being told about oral and anal sex (and this was why she was protesting), she was in fact discussing these topics while they were in the room (CBC 2015c).

cases in Canada have caught the public interest, where equality rights based on gender or sexual orientation are seen to be oppressed or opposed by religious freedom claims. Much of the consternation about the sex education curriculum—and the 'religions' that are protesting it—connects to these broader debates about religious diversity and religious freedom (Rayside 2010; The Star 2011). The most dominant voice in opposition to the curriculum has been Charles McVety, an evangelical Christian and self-identified conservative political activist. As this debate has been occurring, another debate about evangelical Christianity and sexual equality within education is also gathering steam, as Trinity Western University (an evangelical Christian university in Langley, BC) has sought to create a law school within their university—facing opposition based on their Community Covenant, which forbids same-sex sexual activity on campus (among other things).[9] Within both debates, although the opposition stems from specific religious groups—some members of the evangelical community, or in the case of the sex education curriculum, some members of the evangelical community and some Muslim groups, these voices are represented as 'religion' in broad strokes.

Both conservative Christianity and Islam are regularly framed as inherently oppressive when it comes to equality and freedoms based on gender or sexuality and also as under attack in secular society (Bramadat and Seljak 2008). And while clearly there are religious groups and individuals who oppose teaching about sexual diversity or gender identity in schools, what is critical for a discussion about the nuance of identity is the recognition that numerous religious groups and individuals also support inclusivity and teaching about diversity (Power and Politics 2015; OECTA); further, many individuals identify across religious and 'queer' categories, they are not mutually exclusive (Wilcox 2009; Taylor and Snowdon 2014a, b).

Unfortunately, the religious voices that are captured in these debates are often voices in opposition. As witnessed during the push for marriage equality in Canada, religion was primarily framed as that which be 'under threat' by same-sex marriage, not as that which had spearheaded the equality campaign or stood in support of marriage equality (Shipley 2016a). The same is true in debates about sexuality education; the Ontario Catholic English Teachers Association came out very strongly in favor of the new curriculum when it was announced (LifeSite News 2015). The current Premier, who is standing her ground that it move forward this fall, is a member of the United Church of Canada. And yet 'religion' continues to be framed as *the* opposition to sexuality and gender equality. In the next section, I will consider how sexuality

[9] For more, see Mathen and Plaxton 2014; Craig 2013.

education is also religious education and vice versa, in a bid to challenge the treatment of the categories as incompatible.

Teaching Sexuality, Teaching Religion

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I am interested in exploring how teaching about sexuality (and gender) is also teaching about religion, secularity, and ideology; and vice versa. Rather than considering these topics to be separate from one another, I want to consider the ways they are inextricably linked; how decisions about healthy sexuality and challenging sexual norms are also connected to our own personal expectations, values, and (for some) belief systems. Further, the assumption that 'being religious' is tantamount to being opposed to learning about sexuality or sexual diversity needs to be challenged, as demonstrated by research particularly among young people about sex education in their schools.

One frequent source of consternation when it comes to sexuality education and young people connects to youthful vulnerabilities regarding sex, sexuality, and education: teaching about sexual orientation or gender identity often becomes equated with advocacy (The Globe and Mail 2010; The Sault Star 2011; The Star 2011). Critics of the introduction of same-sex relationships and families within education argue that the introduction of these materials confuses young people (The Star 2011), when in fact the data shows that young people are not only aware of sexual diversity by the time it is introduced in the classroom (if it is taught) (McKay and Bissell 2010), but that young people who learn about sexual diversity and LGBTQI identities early on are more likely to be inclusive of diversities of sexualities (The Atlantic 2014); it does not 'make' anyone gay or lesbian to simply instruct them about sexual diversity.[10]

One of the misconceptions that exists about young people and sexuality is the idea that young people are becoming increasingly sexually active, and at younger ages, and that young people are increasingly engaging in casual sexual encounters (see e.g., Freitas 2008; for rebuttal see Maticka-Tyndale 2008). However, a review of reporting of sexual attitudes and behaviors in Canada has shown that the biggest changes in attitudes and behavior occurred in the 1950s and 1960s; young people's sexuality and sexual behaviors have not varied significantly since then (Maticka-Tyndale 2008). Further, Maticka-Tyndale asks why people assume that an increase in partners (at any age)

[10] And to play a devil's advocate, would the mere fact that instruction has been solely about heterosexual families and heterosexuality actually not eradicate the world of anything other than heterosexuality at this point?

means that the sex is more casual (2008). Youth respondents in a Canada-wide study also show that although the perception is that young people are engaging in frequent, casual sexual encounters, the majority of the respondents did not themselves engage in casual sex (Shipley and Young 2014).

The representation of young people's sexual behaviors does not connect to what young people express or how they interact regarding sexuality. Youth also express dissatisfaction at the over-sexualized expectations they feel are attached to being young (Shipley 2016b; Connell 2005; Ringrose et al. 2013) and to what they see as the hyper-sexualization of society (Shipley and Young 2014, 2015; Page 2014). What is clear, and what needs to be addressed, is that '[s]exual harassment and unwanted sexual comments are experienced by the majority of female and gay adolescents of varying ages and this is the most prevalent form of sexual abuse' (Maticka-Tyndale 2008, 87). LGBTQI and female youth experience the highest prevalence of sexual harassment, abuse, and violence. The 2015 Ontario sex education curriculum added teaching components about consent,[11] sexting, and online bullying.[12] Education experts, consulted on the curriculum, have stated that the modifications to the curriculum will assist in earlier identification of unwanted sexual contact (Mckay and Bissell 2010); factual transmission of information about healthy sexuality and healthy relationships; and will generate more positive and inclusive experiences for young people who might feel or appear gender or sexually 'normative' (Taylor and Peter 2011a; Naugler 2010; Fetner et al. 2012; Søndergaard 2012).

What is not explicit in the sex education curriculum in Ontario is that all these pushes toward inclusivity and healthy personal experiences are also driven by values and ideologies—ones that are borne in response to the pervasive experiences of harm and self-harm that continue to occur among young people (CBC 2014; The Chronicle Herald 2013; CBC 2011). Ideological perspectives about sexuality and sexuality education are also ideologies about personal health, healthy relationships, understanding consent and sexual relationships, and awareness and inclusivity toward gender and sexual diversity. As is demonstrated in media coverage regarding these topics, the dominant religious voices that are heard in these debates are voices that stand in opposition to the introduction of these topics in the classroom. And too often, opposition to changes in curriculum result in either a modification of the

[11] In tandem with the modifications to the sex education curriculum, particularly the addition of consent to the curriculum, Wynne has launched the "Who Will You Help?" sexual assault prevention campaign; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opPb2E3bkoo

[12] Two recent tragedies are evidenced in the suicides of Amanda Todd (CBC 2014) and Rehtaeh Parsons (The Chronicle Herald 2013).

curriculum (or completely halting the implementation) or further provisions to allow parents to remove their children from the classroom (the recent case of Alberta is a notable example of this, see Young 2015b). Ignoring the voices of religious groups and individuals who support the modifications to the sex education curriculum, and who believe that teaching about gender identity and sexual orientation are important, continues to perpetrate the notion that religion and sexuality diversity are always already in combat, without any room for more nuanced considerations about the intersections of religion, gender, and sexuality. It also permits the mistaken notion that the secular sphere is inherently inclusive, which is inaccurate. I will return to this momentarily.

As stated by Maticka-Tyndale:

> Unfortunately, our ability and commitment to working out ideological disagreements about the delivery of sexuality education and sexual health services has considerable room for improvement. All too often we respond to disagreements by allowing parents to restrict their children's access to education and services. This reinforces divisions between groups and detracts from the weaving of a cohesive social fabric by creating two classes of adolescents (and future adults): those who have had education and access to care and those who did not. Canada needs to lead the way in developing models of sexuality education and health care that respect and weave together diversities and differences whether they are differences in ethnicity, attitudes toward sexual orientation, or religion (Maticka-Tyndale 2008, 91–92).

Further, although the debates about religious freedom and sexual orientation (in schools and nationally) in Canada presuppose opposition from Muslim and evangelical Christian groups (CBC 2010b, c; Maclean's 2010; The Star 2010), research on Somali Muslim youth in Toronto showed that most of the young people in the study were accepting and supportive of instruction on sex and sexuality. Participants commented that the curriculum was important because it provided awareness of sexually transmitted diseases and sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, and pregnancy prevention (Collet 2007). Further, they challenged the idea that learning about sex was the same as encouraging young people to have sex (Collet 2007, 146). One respondent stated that while his mother was uncomfortable with the sex education curriculum in his school, she deferred to his judgment as to whether he should stay in the class and he chose to continue with the course, feeling that the teaching was about taking precautions and being aware (Collet 2007, 147). As Collet concludes '[t]he foregoing case demonstrates that far from falling 'victim' to a secular–religious divide, the respondents featured here were very

much actors and co-creators in their identification processes' (2007, 150). Although the assumption is that the research group would oppose the sex education curriculum and integrated gym classes, these young people were able to integrate aspects of religious, cultural, and social life in ways that were not contradictory, but rather a sign of their own identity negotiation. These experiences '[do] not signify that these Somalis are, as a whole, fundamentally confused and culturally disoriented. Indeed, they may be at the forefront of creating new identity constructions' (Collet 2007, 148).

While it is rarely acknowledged that ideological and religious motivations might incline toward teaching about gender and sexual diversity, another important element to bring into the dialogue is that discrimination based on gender or sexual diversity is not relegated or restricted to religious spaces; it transcends the religious/secular 'divide.' In a Canada-wide survey regarding bi, trans, and homophobic attitudes in schools, Taylor and Peter found that 70 % of all participating students reported hearing expressions, such as 'that's so gay,' every day in school; 48 % reported hearing more explicit remarks, such as 'faggot, lezbo and dyke' on a daily basis; 10 % of LGBTQI students said they heard homophobic comments coming from teachers on a daily or weekly basis (2011a, 15–17). And, as Taylor and Peter discovered, homophobic disciplining was not necessarily condemned by teachers and parents, some parents who were 'so terrified of their kids turning out gay that they would rather see them unhappy than see them unheterosexual' (2011a, 11).

In a study of students involved in gay–straight alliances (GSAs) or other LGBTQI groups in school, students reported that the groups had limited ability to promote their association or be active within the schools, even though they were formally permitted to have these groups (Fetner et al. 2012). Students said that restrictive school policies limited the ability of these groups to be active within the school, and mostly the policies only provided them with a meeting space (Fetner et al. 2012, 196). Further for some members, involvement in a GSA or LGBTQI group at school created a previously unexperienced 'backlash, making visible some of the hostility to LGBTQ people that had previously been hidden' (Fetner et al. 2012, 197).

Ignoring the daily experience of gender and sexuality discrimination in non-religious spaces, focusing instead on religion as 'the problem' ignores and allows the continued experience of harm and harassment to sexual minority youth. The introduction of gender and sexual diversity within education curricula is an important, but only beginning, step. The continued experiences of discrimination in schools show that policy and official documentation can only do so much; schools in Canada are required to commit to equality rights provisions and non-discrimination policies as set out by the *Charter*

and provincial human rights codes. And yet homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and gender-negative comments are frequent experiences (Taylor and Peter 2011a, b; Shipley 2016b; Fetner et al. 2012). The ability for teachers to instruct young people on these sensitive topics also warrants attention. Some organizations offer workshops aimed at both teachers and students regarding healthy sexuality (e.g., Planned Parenthood Ottawa), but it is clear that a more formal system is required.

Future Challenges: Teaching Diversity, Experiencing Inclusion

While this chapter has focused on debates surrounding sexuality education in a Canada-specific case, and connected the debates about education to larger discourses about national values, the challenges faced in the implementation of sexuality education continue to be numerous. Ontario's new curriculum was implemented in September 2015, but very little detail has been provided as to what kind of training teachers have or will receive to instruct their classes on this sensitive material. Schools are required to commit to inclusivity policies and yet LGBTQI and female youth experience discriminations (both verbal and physical) on a regular basis. This discrimination has the ability to 'follow them home' via email, texting, and other forms of cyberbullying (Søndergaard 2012; Naugler 2010).

While much attention is paid to particular religious actors who vocally oppose sexuality education and teaching about gender and sexual diversity, this chapter has challenged the assumption that religion only ever opposes diversities of gender and sexuality. Further, it is evident that discrimination based on gender and sexuality transcends the religious–secular divide. The assumption that secular or non-religious spaces are inherently inclusive also needs to be challenged, with mounting evidence that discriminatory attitudes are found across religious and secular spaces. Developing thoughtful sexuality education, and recognizing that healthy sexuality and the recognition of sexual diversity are also religious and ideological values, is a beginning step in the larger challenge of creating inclusive spaces for young people. Teaching about sexuality is always also teaching about a number of other topics and categories, particularly religion, secularity, and ideology. Recognizing the multifaceted nature of sexuality education will facilitate the development of a more comprehensive strategy for creating curricula that reflect the intersections of

other aspects of identity when sexuality is foregrounded. Teacher education[13] is key as is closing the gap between policies about inclusion and the daily experiences of exclusion for gender and sexually diverse youth.

References

Arnal, W., & McCutcheon, R. T. (2012). *The sacred is the profane: The political nature of "religion"*. London: Oxford University Press.

Bakht, N. (Ed.). (2009). *Belonging and banishment: Being Muslim in Canada*. Toronto: TSAR Publications.

Beaman, L. G. (2012). Battles over symbols: The 'religion' of the minority versus the 'culture' of the majority. *Journal of Law & Religion, 28*(1), 67–104.

Beckford, J. A. (2003). *Social theory and religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beckford, J. A. (2012). Public religions and the postsecular: Critical reflections. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 51*(1), 1–19.

Berger, B. (2008). The cultural limits of legal tolerance. *Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence, 21*(2), 245–277.

Berger, B. (2014). Religious diversity, education, and the 'crisis' in state neutrality. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society, 29*(1), 378–395.

Beyer, P., & Ramji, R. (Eds.). (2013). *Growing up Canadian: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Bramadat, P., & Seljak, D. (Eds.). (2008). *Christianity and ethnicity in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Burn, S. M. (1995). *The social psychology of gender.* McGraw-Hill series in social psychology.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. New York: Routledge.

CBC News. (2010a). Lesbian teacher told to work from home, group says. Retrieved on April 28, from http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2010/04/28/bc-little-flower-academy-lesbian-teacher.html

CBC News. (2010b). Sex ed opponents claim victory in Ontario. Retrieved on April 23, from http://www.cbc.ca/canada/toronto/story/2010/04/23/ontario-education.html#ixzz15MdtPaEC

CBC News. (2010c). Sex-ed change needs 'rethink': Ont. Premier. Retrieved on 22 April, from http://www.cbc.ca/canada/toronto/story/2010/04/22/sex-ed.html

CBC News. (2010d). McGuinty supports new sex ed curriculum. Retrieved on April 21, from http://www.cbc.ca/canada/toronto/story/2010/04/20/ontario-sexed.html

[13] The subject religious education is currently a hot topic in the UK, as many consider the challenges of how to teach religion and religious identity. See Wallis 2014.

CBC News. (2011). Gay Ottawa teen who killed himself was bullied: Jamie Hubley was a figure skater and the only openly gay boy in his school. Retrieved on October 18, from http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2011/10/18/ottawa-teen-suicide-father.html

CBC News. (2014). Cyberbullying has 'hugely disproportionate impact on women and girls. Retrieved on August 8, from http://www.cbc.ca/news/cyberbullying-has-hugely-disproportionate-impact-on-women-and-girls-1.2731195

CBC News. (2015). 'Anal, oral sex' not school topics, Ottawa mom says. Retrieved on May 5, from http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/anal-oral-sex-not-school-topics-ottawa-mom-says-1.3060978

Cherry, C., Deberg, B. A., & Porterfield, A. (2001). *Religion on campus*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Cho, S., Crenshaw, K., & McCall, L. (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis. *Signs, 38*(4), 785–810.

Collet, B. A. (2007). Islam, national identity and public secondary education: Perspectives from the Somali diaspora in Toronto, Canada. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 19*(2), 131–153.

Collins-Mayo, S., & Dandelion, P. (Eds.). (2010). *Religion and youth*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Connell, E. (2005). Desire as interruption: Young women and sexuality education in Ontario, Canada. *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning, 5*(3), 253–268.

Cossman, B. (2007). *Sexual citizens: The legal and cultural regulation of sex and belonging*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Cossman, B. (2009). Sexual citizens: Freedom, vibrators, and belonging. In L. C. McClain & J. L. Grossman (Eds.), *Gender equality: Dimensions of women's equal citizenship* (pp. 289–306). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Craig, E. (2013). The case for the Federation of Law Societies rejecting Trinity Western University's proposed law degree program. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law, 25*(1), 148–170.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241–1299.

Crompton, R. (1989). Class theory and gender. *The British Journal of Sociology, 40*(4), 565–587.

Davie, G. (1994). *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without belonging (Making contemporary Britain)*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Fetner, T., Elafros, A., Bortolin, S., & Dreschsler, C. (2012). Safe spaces: Gay-straight alliances in high schools. *Canadian Review of Sociology, 49*(2), 188–207.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: An introduction. Volume 1.* (trans: Robert, H.). New York: Random House, Inc.

Freitas, D. (2008). *Sex and the soul: Juggling sexuality, spirituality, romance, and religion on America's college campuses*. London: Oxford University Press.

Gleason, M. (1999). *Normalizing the ideal: Psychology, schooling, and the family in postwar Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education and Training. (1998). Health and physical education (The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8).
Halafoff, A. (Forthcoming). Whatever: Religion, youth, and identity in 21st century Australia. In P. Beyer, P. Gareau, & S. Bullivant (Eds.), *Religion, youth and identity.* Leiden: Brill Academic Press.
Halberstam, J. (1998). *Female masculinity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Hoover, S. (2006). *Religion in the media age (media, religion and culture)*. New York: Routledge.
Hunt, S. J., & Yip, A. K. T. (Eds.). (2012). *The Ashgate research companion to contemporary religion and sexuality*. Farnham: Ashgate.
Irigaray, L. (1984). *An ethics of sexual difference*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Jagose, A. (1996). Queer theory. *Australian Humanities Review*. Retrieved from http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-Dec-1996/jagose.html
Johnson, R. (2002). *Taxing Choices: The Intersection of Class, Parenthood, Gender and the Law.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
Kinsman, G. W. (1996). *The regulation of desire: Homo and hetero sexualities*. Montréal: Black Rose Books.
Knott, K., Teemu, T., & Poole, E. (2013). *Media portrayals of religion and the secular sacred: Representation and change*. London: Ashgate.
LifeSite News. (2015). Ontario bishops' general secretary has been actively supporting Wynne's child abusive sex-ed. Retrieved on March 6, from https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/ontario-bishops-general-secretary-calls-tory-politician-pathetic-for-opposi
Maclean's. (2010). Religious groups fight changes to Ontario sex ed curriculum. Retrieved on April 22, from http://www2.macleans.ca/2010/04/22/religious-groups-fight-changes-to-ontario-sex-ed-curriculum/
Mathen, C., & Plaxton, M. (2014). Legal education, religious and secular: TWU and beyond. Ottawa Faculty of Law working paper no. 2014–06. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2428207
Maticka-Tyndale, E. (2008). Sexuality and sexual health of Canadian adolescents: Yesterday, today and tomorrow. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality, 17*(3), 85–95.
McGuire, M. (2008). *Lived religion: Faith and practice in everyday life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Mckay, A. (1997). Accommodating ideological pluralism in sexuality education. *Journal of Moral Education, 26*(3), 285–300.
Mckay, A., & Bissell, M. (2010). Sexual health education in the schools: Questions and answers (3rd edn). *SIECCAN*. Retrieved from http://www.sieccan.org/pdf/she_q&a_3rd.pdf
Montreal Gazette. (2015). Will Quebec learn lessons from Ontario's new sex-ed program? Retrieved on February 26, from http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/will-quebec-learn-lessons-from-ontarios-new-sex-ed-program
National Household Survey. (2013). *The Daily.* May 8. Retrieved from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/130508/dq130508b-eng.htm

Naugler, D. (2010). Wearing pink as a stand against bullying: Why we need to say more. *Journal of Homosexuality, 57*(3), 347–363.

Ontario Ministry of Education. The Ontario Curriculum: Secondary. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/health.html

Page, S. J. (2014). Sexuality and Christianity: Understanding the attitudes and negotiations of young adults in the UK. In G. Vincett & E. Obinna (Eds.), *Christianity in the modern world: Changes and controversies* (pp. 95–118). Farnham: Ashgate.

Page, S. J., Yip, A. K. T., & Keenan, M. (2012). Risk and the imagined future: Young adults negotiating religious and sexual identities. In S. Hunt & A. Yip (Eds.), *The Ashgate research companion to contemporary religion and sexuality* (pp. 255–270). Farnham: Ashgate.

Parker, G., et al. (2007). Double discrimination? Gender and disability in access to the labour market. *European Social Fund, Social Policy Research University*. Retrieved from http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/pubs/pdf/double.pdf

Planned Parenthood Ottawa. Training. Retrieved from http://www.ppottawa.ca/programs.aspx?id=30

Power & Politics. (2015). Ontario's sex-ed curriculum. Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Politics/ID/2664214688/

Rasmussen, M. L. (2004). That's so gay! A study of the deployment of signifiers of sexual and gender identity in secondary school settings in Australia and the United States. *Social Semiotics, 14*(3), 289–308.

Rayside, D. (2010, June 1–3). *Sex ed in Ontario: Religious mobilization and sociocultural anxiety*. Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Canadian political science association, Montreal, QC. Retrieved from http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2010/Rayside.pdf

Regnerus, M. (2007). *Forbidden fruit: Sex and religion in the lives of American teenagers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Renold, E., & Ringrose, J. (2011). Schizoid subjectivities? Re-theorizing teen girls' sexual cultures in an era of 'sexualization'. *Journal of Sociology, 47*(4), 389–409.

Ringrose, J., et al. (2013). Teen girls, sexual double standards and 'sexting'. Gendered value in digital image exchange. *Feminist Theory, 14*(3), 305–323.

Shipley, H. (2014). "Religious and Sexual Orientation Intersections in Education and Media: A Canadian Perspective," *Sexualities*, Special Journal Issue "Sexuality and Religion," Ria Snowdon and Yvette Taylor, eds, *17*(5/6): 512–528.

Shipley, H. (2015a). Challenging identity constructs: The debate over the sex education curriculum in Ontario. In P. Dickey Young, H. Shipley, & T. Trothen (Eds.), *Religion and sexuality: Diversity and the limits of tolerance* (pp. 97–118). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Shipley, H. (2015b). The space in between: Religion, sexual identity, media and education in Ontario. In L. G. Beaman & L. Van Arragon (Eds.), *Issues in religion and education: Whose religion?* (pp. 211–230). Leiden: Brill Academic Press.

Shipley, H. (2016a). Religious freedom and sexual orientation: Equality jurisprudence and intersecting identities. *Canadian Journal of Women and Law 27*(2): 92–127.

Shipley, H. (2016b). Apathy or misunderstanding? Youth's reflections on their religious identity in Canada. In P. Beyer, P. Gareau, & S. Bullivant (Eds.), *Religion, youth and identity*. Leiden: Brill Academic Press, under review.

Shipley, H., & Dickey Young, P. (2014). Values and practices: How are youth in Canada integrating religion and sexuality in their daily lives? In H. Shipley (Ed.), *Globalized religion and sexual identity: Contexts, contestations, voices* (pp. 276–294). Leiden: Brill Academic Press.

Shipley, H., & Dickey Young, P. (2015). "Christianity, Gender and Identity among Canadian Youth," *The Brill Handbook of Global Christianity*, S. Hunt, ed, Brill Academic Press: 327–345.

Smith, C., & Smith, P. (2009). *Souls in transition: The religious and spiritual lives of emerging adults*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Søndergaard, D. M. (2012). Bullying and social exclusion anxiety in schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 33*(3), 355–372.

Taylor, C., & Peter, T. (2011a). Every class in every school: Final report on the first national climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools. *EGALE Canada*. Retrieved from http://archive.egale.ca/EgaleFinalReport-web.pdf

Taylor, C., & Peter, T. (2011b). We are not aliens, we're people, and we have rights' Canadian human rights discourse and high school climate for LGBTQ students. *Canadian Review of Sociology, 48*(3), 275–313.

Taylor, Y., & Snowdon, R. (Eds.). (2014a). *Queering religion, religious queers*. London: Routledge.

Taylor, Y., & Snowdon, R. (2014b). Mapping queer, mapping me: Visualising queer religious identity. In H. Shipley (Ed.), *Globalized religion and sexual identity: Contexts, contestations, voices* (pp. 295–312). Leiden: Brill Academic Press.

The Atlantic. (2014). Is it possible to teach children to be less prejudiced? Retrieved on March 31, from http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/03/is-it-possible-to-teach-children-to-be-less-prejudiced/284536/

The Chronicle Herald. (2013). Who failed Rehtaeh Parsons? Retrieved on April 9, from http://thechronicleherald.ca/metro/1122345-who-failed-rehtaeh-parsons

The Globe and Mail. (2010). Muslims, Christians challenge Ontario's more explicit sex ed. Retrieved on April 22, from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/muslims-christians-challenge-ontarios-more-explicit-sex-ed/article1542657/

The Globe and Mail. (2015). Ontario's sex ed curriculum teaches society's values, and that's good. Retrieved on May 8, from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/editorials/ontarios-sex-ed-curriculum-teaches-societys-values-and-thats-good/article24329359/

The Sault Star. (2011). Religious group attacks anti-bullying law—Says McGuinty not a good Catholic. Retrieved on December 7, from http://www.saultstar.com/PrintArticle.aspx?e=3396249

The Sex Information and Education Council of Canada. Retrieved from www.sieccan.org

The Star. (2010). Analysis: Dalton McGuinty's sex-ed surrender motivated by politics. Retrieved on April 23, from http://www.thestar.com/news/ontario/article/800039

The Star. (2011). Anti-bullying bill a front for 'sex ed' agenda, groups say. Retrieved on December 6, from http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/politics/article/1097682--anti-bullying-bill-a-front-for-sex-ed-agenda-groups-say

The Star. (2015a). Busting the myths around Ontario's new sex-ed curriculum. Retrieved on May 5, from http://www.thestar.com/yourtoronto/education/2015/05/05/busting-the-myths-around-ontarios-new-sex-ed-curriculum.html

The Star. (2015b). Fact-checking 10 claims made by parents against the Ontario sex-ed curriculum. Retrieved on May 4, from http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/05/04/fact-checking-10-claims-made-by-parents-against-the-ontario-sex-ed-curriculum.html

Ursic, E. (2014). Bi the way: Rethinking categories of religious identity. *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society, 3*(4), 29–34.

Wallis, S. (2014). Ticking 'no religion': A case study amongst 'young nones'. *DISKUS: The Journal of the British Association for the Study of Religions, 16*(2), 70–87.

Weeks, J. (2011). *The languages of sexuality*. New York: Routledge.

Wilcox, M. (2009). *Queer women and religious individualism*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Woodhead, L. (2013). Liberal religion and illiberal secularism. In G. D'Costa et al. (Eds.), *Religion in a Liberal State* (pp. 93–116). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yip, A. K. T. (2015). When religion meets sexuality. In P. D. Young, H. Shipley, & T. Trothen (Eds.), *Religion and sexuality: Diversity and the limits of tolerance* (pp. 119–140). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Yip, A. K. T., & Page, S. J. (2013). *Religious and sexual identities: A multi-faith exploration of young adults*. London: Ashgate.

Yip, A. K. T., et al. (2011). *Religion, youth and sexuality: Selected key findings from a multi-faith exploration*. Nottingham: University of Nottingham.

Young, P. D. (2015a). Who speaks for religion? In L. G. Beaman & L. Van Arragon (Eds.), *Issues in religion and education: Whose religion?* (pp. 307–320). Leiden: Brill Academic Press.

Young, P. D. (2015b). Severely normal: Sexuality and religion in Alberta's Bill 44. In P. D. Young, H. Shipley, & T. Trothen (Eds.), *Religion and sexuality: Diversity and the limits of tolerance* (pp. 45–66). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Young, P. D., & Shipley, H. (2015). Belief, not religion: Youth negotiations of religious identity in Canada. In J. Wyn & H. Cahill (Eds.), *Handbook of child and youth studies* (pp. 861–873). New York: Springer.