

Chapter **14****Montréal**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Whereas religious revival movements have recently spread throughout the globe, in great part due to migration, public management of new urban religious landscapes is strongly influenced by historically rooted relationships of societies to religion and religious institutions. Comparing the United States with Western European countries, Foner argues that the role of religion as a resource for negotiating immigrant inclusion in host societies is anchored in local factors, such as in the religious backgrounds of immigrants and processes of secularization in the host country. In the United States, most newcomers are Christian; conversely, in Western Europe, many immigrants are Muslim. Moreover, as Foner points out, Western European nation-states are more reluctant to respond to civic claims based on religion, including new religions, since these countries generally consider themselves to be more secular than “the religiously involved United States.”<sup>1</sup> These nation-states, and France in particular, have generally emerged out of conflict over the political claims of hegemonic religious institutions. In Canada, the multicultural model is based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that was enacted in 1982 as part of the constitution of Canada; it guarantees respect for the ethnocultural identities of Canadian citizens, no matter what their religion or system of beliefs. In the province of Québec, which is part of the Canadian confederation, such recognition is framed as a mutual contract whereby acceptance of cultural pluralism is promoted in exchange for commitment by newcomers to the host society’s values and beliefs.<sup>2</sup>

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In Canada, as in the United States, migration policies and administrative practices have long encouraged the immigration of Christian Europeans. However, the immigration law reforms of 1968 opened the door to new source countries with non-Christian populations, giving rise to a more ethnically and religiously diverse population. This change occurred just as Québec was experiencing what has come to be known as the “Quiet Revolution.” As the political system became liberalized in the 1960s, the once-hegemonic Catholic Church lost control of social institutions (schools, hospitals, social welfare). In consequence, Québec society became thoroughly secularized and far more open to religious diversity.<sup>3</sup> Recent years have seen an ever-increasing number of places of worship in the province, especially in cities.<sup>4</sup>

Census figures show that in 2001, 706,965 residents of Québec reported having been born abroad, accounting for 9.9 percent of the total population. The relative demographic weight of immigrants in the population has been growing steadily: in 1996 immigrants accounted for 9.4 percent of the province’s population, whereas in 1951, they represented only 5.6 percent of the province’s population.<sup>5</sup> In recent years, the numbers of Muslims among immigrants have increased markedly, such that this population in Québec increased by 140 percent over the 1990s.<sup>6</sup> Most of them come from countries that were part of the French sphere of influence in the past—Lebanon and Morocco and, in recent years, mainly Algeria. Concerns about the integration of this culturally diverse religious group have recently stirred debate over the adjustments to be made by the receiving society, and, indeed, over whether the host society can reasonably be expected to adapt to this new population.

Upon their arrival, newcomers face risks of social isolation, as well as the lack of social networks and knowledge about practical resources in their new home country. A variety of social actors and groups play a part in the settlement trajectory of immigrants, including public institutions, nongovernmental and non-profit organizations such as the YMCA, ethnic associations, and religious groups.<sup>7</sup> Funded by contributions from various sources, public and private, non-religious groups such as local organizations provide material, psychological, and symbolic resources to newcomers. Montreal counts a large number of religious organizations that are also committed to conducting such activities, although they are not generally accorded public recognition or funding for these purposes.

Annick Germain and her colleagues in urban studies found some 800 places of worship in Montreal, of which 35 percent were occupied mainly by immigrant minorities.<sup>8</sup> Most new places of worship belong to non-Christian religions or to Christian evangelical congregations, the latter attracting mostly immigrants of African, Haitian, Latin American, or Filipino origins. However, though immigrants from a particular country may predominate in these

groups, it is unusual to find a religious group whose members are all drawn from a single ethnic category; rather, most include immigrants from more than one national origin and often have at least a few native-born Québécois members. Religious diversity in Québec has not been the source of conflicts that have occurred elsewhere (Paris, Los Angeles). This may be a factor of the cosmopolitan values that have considerable influence in Québec—a question we return to at a later point.

Mossière's study of a Congolese Pentecostal church based in Montreal shows that pastors and other religious leaders act as cultural brokers between immigrants and the host society.<sup>9</sup> Here we examine more generally the question of the role that religious groups play in the adaptation of newcomers to the receiving society. How are these groups organized, and what kind of services do they offer to their members? How do religious groups function, in terms of their belief system, as institutions, and as communities, so as to provide immigrant minorities with social networks, identity, and a sense of belonging? In what ways do these congregations differ from others that have sprung up in the same period (post-1960) but whose members were mostly born in Québec?

Our research in North African mosques, Congolese and Salvadorian Pentecostal congregations, Hindu temples, Tamil Catholic churches, and many other groups shows that individuals and religious institutions are often highly mobile; among immigrants, religious mobility continues well after migration. Not only do individuals often go from one congregation to another, or even one religion to another, but also groups themselves are likely to change location depending on access to space and changing needs. We will explain how, beyond their role in assisting members with the material aspects of settlement, religious groups offer new forms of sociality (that is, social relationships) that shape new identities and replace, at least to a certain extent, the social groups and ties left behind in the home country. We then discuss how religious beliefs and faith shape the way migrants adapt to the receiving society and their relationships with the host population. Finally, we briefly compare religious groups made up mostly of immigrants with those formed by nonimmigrants in recent decades.

## TIMELINE

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|--------------|---|
| <b>1951:</b> | Immigrants represent 5.6 percent of Québec's population   |
| <b>1968:</b> | Canadian immigration laws are reformed: quotas are increased and immigrants from southern countries may now enter the country |
| <b>2001:</b> | Census reports 706,965 (9.9 percent) of residents of Québec were born abroad; September 11 attack in New                      |

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- York City increases negative stereotypes of Muslims and of foreign religiosities
- 2002:** Québec's Muslim population increases 140 percent since 1990
- 2003:** Annick Germain identifies 280 immigrant majority places of worship in Montréal out of a total of 800
- 2006–present:** Géraldine Mossière visits Montréal's Congolese Pentecostal church; Pr. Meintel receives funding to coordinate a research study of religious pluralism in Montréal

**IMMIGRANT RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES**

Several authors have noted that the Protestant and Catholic churches of early European immigrants to North America often supported new arrivals. Early evangelical churches often found converts among new migrants, such as the Cape Verdeans studied by Meintel.<sup>10</sup> The same can be said of Jewish congregations in regard to the immigrants of their faith who arrived from Russia and Eastern Europe. However, the influence of religious institutions and ideologies on more recent waves of immigrants coming from more southern, non-European countries has only recently been documented. In the United States, two large-scale studies<sup>11</sup> have established the major role played by religious communities in the daily life of immigrant members, and show that they have a decisive impact on the settlement of newcomers, providing them both institutional and social anchoring.<sup>12</sup> According to Warner, migration experiences make religiosity more meaningful for newcomers even though their religious beliefs and practices may change in the process.<sup>13</sup> In some cases, immigrants adapt religious principles or practices to the habits and customs of the new society. For example, although the Muslim day of rest is typically Friday, many mosques organize their activities on Saturdays or Sundays in North America.

Ebaugh and Chafetz argue that in the United States, church-based networks offer the most sustained and reliable support for immigrants helping them become familiar with their new environs more quickly and easily.<sup>14</sup> Not only do religious congregations usually offer material support as well as counsel with legal matters, but also the leader is likely to play a role of counsellor or "spiritual father," this term being widespread in evangelic settings.<sup>15</sup> Hurh and Kim find that among Koreans in the United States, religious practice is more regular than in the homeland, to such a point that for some, religiosity becomes a prominent part of their lifestyle. For such immigrants, religion is as much an identity and a system of meanings as a source of psychological comfort.<sup>16</sup> In

Canada as in the United States, Evangelical congregations are organized through small cells and units that agglomerate and give a role to each members in such a way that all of them interconnect and develop strong collective solidarity.<sup>17</sup>

Sociologists of religion consider immigrants' religious commitment to be a voluntary act based on a personal choice that corresponds to the logic of what Yang and Ebaugh define as "the new voluntarism" that characterizes contemporary religious congregations in North America. Immigrants are often targeted for proselytizing by newer religious groups.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, long-established churches try to attract new arrivals by incorporating ethnic and cultural practices in worship activities.<sup>19</sup> In her comparison of Catholic and Evangelical Salvadoran churches in three American cities (San Francisco, Washington, and Phoenix), Menjivar observes that Catholics organize educative and information programs targeting a large audience of Christian immigrants while Evangelicals are more likely to convert newcomers on a one-to-one basis, and then change their ethics as well as their social and economic behavior. Mossière has found that some congregations are so active in regard to their immigrant members that they develop close links with congregations in the home country of their members.<sup>20</sup>

Bramadat has noted the important role of religious symbolism and discourse in migrant narratives.<sup>21</sup> For example, the Theravada Buddhist temples of Regina introduce a new kind of social setting to North American urban landscapes, such that immigrants originating from non-Western countries frequently move between these familiar cultural and social spaces and the receiving society.<sup>22</sup> In general, the literature on religious communities in the migratory context focuses mainly on the articulation of ethnicity and religion.<sup>23</sup> For example, by continuing to practice their Buddhist faith and practices, Tibetan groups in Ontario have overcome the hardships of adaptation to their host environment, while preserving ethnic and religious cohesion.<sup>24</sup> Dorais shows that in Montreal, Buddhist religious practice is useful for preserving family continuity and ethnic identity among Vietnamese immigrants.<sup>25</sup> Beyond the comfortable cultural and social milieu they provide and the spiritual needs they satisfy, some immigrant evangelical groups also preach to their members the importance of insertion in the receiving society through economic and social mobility.<sup>26</sup>

When immigrants continue to practice the same religion in the new country, the structure of the group is likely to change and sometimes, religious activities are as well. In some cases, immigrants from a given country of origin collectively adopt a new religion; typically, the mainstream tradition of the hosting country. In the United States, Ng contends that "in the process of conversion, immigrants come to learn the American way through a creative development of their

own cultural categories, symbols, and practices.”<sup>27</sup> The case of Chinese immigrants’ conversion to Christianity in the United States is indicative: Christian congregations offer various concrete forms of help, such as picking up arriving students at the airport, inviting new immigrants to dinner, or helping them prepare to pass driving tests, in the hope that they will become members of the church.<sup>28</sup> In Canada, Winland has studied Hmong refugees in Ontario who were assisted in settlement by Mennonites and who adopted the Mennonite religion; our own study includes a Korean Presbyterian church in Montreal, whose members converted after immigrating in many cases.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, in her work on Indonesian Chinese settled in Toronto, Nagata has shown the positive aspect of sharing a religious identity with natives of the host country as it constitutes a “message that the immigrants are willing to express some ideological and normative solidarity with their hosts, and to present an ethnic image acceptable to the latter without necessarily generating an actual forum for strong social relationships or intermarriage.”<sup>30</sup>

Not only do migrant religious communities provide essential resources for newcomers in the host society, but also they establish new spaces of socialization where identities and social relationships challenged by the migratory process are recomposed. Certain social roles may be imported from the home country, whereas gender and intergenerational relationships may be redefined under the influence of the norms that prevail in the host society.<sup>31</sup> For instance, women are likely to get new responsibilities for transmitting religious and cultural (mainly linguistic) knowledge to the younger generation of the group.<sup>32</sup> Haddad, who studies Muslim women in the United States, shows that by being more present in public spaces and by gaining access to mosques, they are likely to experience a change of social status. However, the author also finds that some Muslim leaders are still very reluctant to let women participate in the mosque’s activities since they never do so in the homeland; also, certain issues such as homosexuality are highly taboo.<sup>33</sup> There is a general consensus that religious groups have a significant impact on the political, economic, social, and cultural experience of immigrants, and that they function as a bridge between the host society and immigrants. In this chapter, we will show how religious behavior can change with migration and give examples of how religious beliefs and practices are adapted to the new context.

## THE STUDY AND ITS METHODS

Our analysis is based on a broad ethnographic study<sup>34</sup> of religious diversity in Québec (Canada) as it has developed since the 1960s. Although the study includes religious groups in Québec’s outlying regions as well as in Montreal,

the present analysis is based on data collected in the metropolis, and focuses mainly on religious groups made up of immigrants. The research, still in progress, aims at documenting the new religious diversity that has appeared in the aftermath of the Quiet Revolution as well as the meaning of religion in the everyday lives of the Québécois today.

Over the past two years, observations have been carried out on religious groups that either represent (1) religions established in Québec since the 1960s (e.g., Baha'I; Neoshamanism, including Druidism and Wicca); (2) new forms of religious practice in long-established religions (the case of some Jewish and Catholic congregations); (3) religions imported by immigrants (Islam, Hinduism, certain forms of Buddhism); or (4) congregations of established religions that include a substantial proportion of immigrants among their members.

Although the project concerns the whole of the province, most of the data has been gathered in Montreal, the province's largest and most multicultural city. Thus far, observations have been carried out on a total of 79 groups; of these, 29 have been studied in-depth with extended participant observation and interviews of members and leaders.

<b>Group Type</b>	<b>Case Studies</b>	<b>Limited Studies</b>
Muslim	5	13
Jewish	2 (1 in progress)	5
Catholic	6 (4 in progress)	8
Non-Evangelical Protestant	1 (in progress)	3 (1 in region)
Evangelical	5 (2 in progress)	18 (in progress)
Hindu	1	10
Buddhist	2	6
Modern religions		6
Neoshamanic (networks)	5	7
Personal development and new Age groups drawing on oriental spiritualities	2	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>79</b>

Observations have been carried out on religious rituals and other religious activities such as neighborhood prayer groups as well as on social activities, such as communal meals and picnics, funding events, and courses that are sponsored by religious groups. We examine members' personal religious practices as well as the perspectives of religious leaders. Interviews have been conducted with members who have diversified social profiles in regard to sex,

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age, profession, matrimonial status, and level of commitment to the group. These focus on individuals' personal and religious trajectories, as well as the role of the religious group in their everyday lives, the level of economic, social, and ideological commitment to the community, and when relevant, religious activities pursued outside the group's purview. The results presented here show some of the patterns that have emerged from the research to date. Not surprisingly, our data confirm that a wide range of resources is now available in Québec's religious "market." However, more surprising patterns have also emerged. For example, we find that both individuals and religious traditions are highly mobile and adaptable and that most of our informants have changed groups or religious affiliation at least once in their lives. Some established religions have adjusted to religious transformations brought by immigrants and to the new trends of charismatic religiosity that have become visible in Montreal's religious landscape. For example, there are many Catholic churches where immigrants are able to find religious expression in their own language, musical forms and prayer styles, such as those where Tamil Catholics worship.<sup>35</sup> A number of these offer charismatic services, in part so as not to lose members to Evangelical groups. In fact, Tamils do not have a Catholic parish at present, but rather a "mission" that serves the religious needs from across the city. Charismatic Catholic healing services in Tamil are held in a parish church in another part of the city. On these occasions, Tamil priests visiting from Sri Lanka or Toronto perform the laying on of hands for the throngs of worshipers who line up for healing, the men in dark suits and the women making a rainbow of colourful saris. On some occasions, rather than laying on hands himself, the priest asks worshippers to do so for others in the congregation.

This paper focuses on religious groups whose members are mostly immigrants. We find that these groups are organized in such a way as to give a central place to the experience and needs of newcomers and they have great influence on how their immigrant members adapt to Québec, as well as their relationships to Québécois of other origins, including the native born, and their interactions with the institutions of the host society.

**RELIGION: COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, AND ETHNICITY**

Most of the immigrant religious groups in our sample are organized as "congregations." According to Yang and Ebaugh, immigrant congregations are characterized by "the increased voluntary participation of members in religious functions, a lay-centered community, and multiple functions of the religious community."<sup>36</sup>

In his research on a Muslim group in our study, Boucher shows that the mosque functions as a community center, becoming a sacred space only for worship and prayers. Solidarity and feelings of belonging are generated on the basis of religious references held in common and the shared experience of migration.<sup>37</sup> His work shows how the religious group helps replace community ties fractured by migration and plays a major role in the settlement process of members in the receiving society: more than simply a place for worship, the mosque is a community space open to all Muslims. Upon arrival in the region, new migrants receive the keys of the building so as to be able to come and go autonomously. According to its leader, the mosque provides a “social space for mutual help. For example, when some of us go to pick up halal meat, we all go to the slaughterhouse together. People share . . . The best help is from belonging, when you share the same objective of transcendence, where you are recognized for who you really are. This is the best help. You maybe didn’t eat that evening but nonetheless you feel satisfied after being together, because it’s worth so much more, it recharges your batteries.”

To give another example from our research, Betbeder’s work on Hindus in Montreal shows that temples are organized as personalized spaces where members re-create a family atmosphere that helps compensate for ties with families and friends in the home country that have become attenuated by distance.<sup>38</sup> In Sri Lankan temples in Montreal, she observes that, unlike the custom in the home country, religious deities are portrayed as representations of a cosmic family, so that the temple is devoted to Durga as mother goddess, with her husband Shiva, and their two sons Ganesh and Murugan. In the migratory context where family relationships and roles are challenged by underemployment and the cultural norms of the host society, presenting and worshipping these deities as a family acquires new importance and meaning; through devotion centered on family life among the gods, these temples offer a “family” context to migrants whose social ties have been fractured by migration. Somewhat like the mosques that we have observed, Hindu temples provide a space for socializing and, bring the diasporic community together in the new country.

The immigrant religious groups in our study tend to form communities based on common values, symbols, and practices, as well as deep feelings of belonging. Religious rituals often constitute key moments in the life of the group when the community is reinforced. Coexperience of the sacred, by shared verbal practices and habitual gestures, fosters the creation of an effervescent community of feelings and, in many cases, ecstatic experiences. In Pentecostal congregations, ritual techniques using music, hymns, and well-staged sermons, engender deep emotional sharing between members and inspire physical expressions of faith (dancing, jumping, clapping, screaming,

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embracing). In this kind of atmosphere, individual manifestations of religiosity and personal religious experience are encouraged. Most new members relate their attraction to Pentecostal congregations to this freedom and relative autonomy of expression such that those who were Catholic before converting contrast it with what they see as the more austere liturgy of Catholic churches.<sup>39</sup>

**IDENTITY TRANSMISSION**

Most immigrant religious groups we have studied organize weekend or evening courses. Some of these are focused on religious themes (ethics; sacred and choral music; study of the Bible, Quran, or other sacred texts). Church-based social activities also gather members sharing common interests as in the Congolese congregation, where meetings are also organized for married couples on how to keep a marriage healthy and how to care for the partner. Religious groups also sponsor classes in French, English, ethnic music, traditional dance, and for Vietnamese Buddhists, martial arts. Whereas some of these activities attract adults, many address the needs of the younger generation. In Hindu temples, for example, leaders organize conferences about cultural diversity in Montreal and they also participate in public events like blood donation campaigns or marches to encourage kidney donations. By promoting multiculturalism and shaping civic behavior, such activities help the second and later generations make sense of



Members of a Congolese evangelical church during Sunday worship, Montréal, Canada (ca. 2007). (Photo by Géraldine Mossière.)

identities and affiliations that are strung between ancestral homelands and the country where they are born and raised.<sup>40</sup> By learning the language of the Holy Scriptures, young Hindus absorb their parents' religious philosophy, while developing a vision of Hinduism that transcends the ethnic frontiers that characterize India (e.g., between Indians from the north of the country versus those from the south).

Identity transmission in many immigrant communities implies religious socialization as much as it does passing on cultural and social practices. In some instances, religious leaders take on symbolic parental authority or act as substitutes for a missing parent. For example, pastors sometimes play the role of a social father by advising teenagers about marriage and family life, and other subjects. In Evangelical churches, the biparental family model is promoted, and single women are encouraged to hope for a responsible breadwinner husband.<sup>41</sup> Congolese pastors also oversee the care given to young refugees who arrive in Montreal as unaccompanied minors; typically the public agency that oversees the reception and protection of unaccompanied minors seeks to place them with families in their own ethnic communities. Congolese Evangelical pastors and Catholic priests play an important role in giving counsel and support to young Congolese who arrive alone in Canada and help find families to take them in.<sup>42</sup>

Sociability among members is encouraged in immigrant religious groups; for example, the Congolese and Central American Pentecostals in our study enjoy a communal meal after Sunday worship.<sup>43</sup> Hindu parents bring their children to Indian classical dance or music classes, and other events where they can practice speaking their parents' mother tongue. Such activities strengthen community ties among members but can also create social differentiation within the group, since they are usually structured by age, gender, and socioeconomic situation. Teenagers, for example, may organize evening gatherings to socialize between the sexes and talk about sexuality in ways that are in line with the religious tenets of their group, whereas men may meet to share meals and exchange about employment or business opportunities.<sup>44</sup>

### **LOCAL RESOURCES NETWORKS AND MUTUAL AID**

The organizational structures of local religious groups rely more on network dynamics and the affinities of individuals, than on geographical logic.<sup>45</sup> Functioning as "community centers,"<sup>46</sup> they support newcomers in the settlement process by providing members with material, social, and emotional resources, along with recreational activities, information, and advice for finding

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employment and housing usually transmitted by word of mouth. In addition to examples already given, let us mention the “murids,” or Senegalese Muslim brotherhoods in our study that offer substantial material assistance to any member who is newly arrived from Africa. This includes providing housing and hospitality, often for months. Members of the mosque studied by Boucher in a city north of Montreal habitually offer newcomers information on housing, jobs, and government services, as well as a welcoming social environment. It is assumed that once established, the new arrivals will give similar help to others.

The beliefs and the ethics that immigrant religious groups foster also provide symbolic resources such as vocabulary and language for immigrant members to reassess the hardships induced by migration. In Pentecostal congregations sermons delivered by the pastor give meaning to the migratory experience and members’ everyday life, in the same way as the conversion narratives that figure in weekly services for Central American Evangelicals.<sup>47</sup> Verses from the Bible are cited so as to shed light on members’ personal experiences, whereas biographical events are revisited through the prism of biblical teachings in such a way that everyday challenges become divine signals.

A Sunday sermon on the subject of debt observed by Mossière serves as an illustration. On this occasion, the pastor compared credit facilities with traps set by Satan—traps that the believer is meant to overcome by the strength of his or her regular and diligent religious practice. “God doesn’t want you to live on social welfare! That is not the place for you, go back to your studies!” In the case of well-educated Muslim immigrants who have settled in Montreal, Maynard has met men who have found value in the experience of deskilling by intensifying their activities in the service of the religious groups. In sum, religious belief reframes the experiences of migration, resettlement, and difficulties experienced in the host society such as discrimination and unemployment and allows immigrants to reinvest them with positive meaning through constant reference to the presence and intervention of God in their lives.<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, use of such resources by members varies considerably. Whereas most are actively committed to the community, some only join the group for religious activities and worship.<sup>49</sup> Informal resources offered by religious groups to their immigrant members do not substitute for public institutions and government-provided services; rather, they complement the resources provided by the state and often convey information about them to new arrivals.<sup>50</sup> Finally, as in the case of unaccompanied minors taken in by Pentecostal families,<sup>51</sup> religious groups often offer

services that the public system is unable to give, for lack of human or financial resources.

### **RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND ETHNICITY**

All the religious leaders interviewed in the study affirm that the ethnic origin of members is not an issue and that their doors are open to all well-intentioned believers. Although some congregations are more pluriethnic than others, virtually none of the groups in our study is composed of members originating from a single country. Rather, like Nagata we find that language is often influential in defining the social boundaries of the religious group.<sup>52</sup> Tamil Catholic services are usually held in the Tamil language, and those of the Vietnamese Catholic congregation now under study are in Vietnamese, though a few Québécois (non-Vietnamese) spouses may be present. In most cases, immigrant religious congregations tend to support ethnic identifications that are somewhat broader than those their members held before migrating. In some cases, members and leaders assert the primacy of religious belonging over ethnic differences. This is the case, for example, of the Muslims who frequent the mosques in our study; similarly, Evangelicals often mention that their fellow church members are from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

At the same time we find that most of these congregations are made up of members who share general cultural similarities, a common language and come from the same general region of the world. For example, there are many Latin American Spanish-speaking congregations in Montreal, including the Central American Spanish-speaking congregation studied by Recalde (2009) whose members come from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, for new immigrants from various regions of the Indian subcontinent, Hindu temples are often a focal point of social participation and offer an arena where common cultural and religious practices are emphasized.<sup>54</sup> In the immigration context, for example, the cults of the gods Shiva and Vishnu that were part of some members' backgrounds have lost ground, and boundaries between members in the city's temples are based on cultural heritage rather than particular cults or beliefs. In fact, most Montreal Hindus identify primarily as Hindus and social divisions are more likely structured according to levels of education rather than by region of origin. In one of Montreal's temples, populations coming from very different areas of India place their respective divinities on the same altar, while each community holds its own rituals. Although different groups may conduct rituals at different times, the divinities of all remain on the same altar. As Betbeder's informants explain, these religious adjustments are compatible with Hindu tradition, which holds that gods and goddesses are

merely intelligible representations of the Divine. Betbeder's research, which includes observations in four temples in the Montreal area, shows that this encompassing pan-Hindu vision grows broader as the social status of believers rises and that it continues expanding in the second generation, such that temple environments tend to grow ever more inclusive over time.

Though ethnic boundaries are often blurred in religious groupings, the reverse is not the case for the groups we studied; that is, we did not find much in the way of pan-religious gatherings among immigrant groups. However, the one exception we encountered suggests that the host society context may play a role. The Tamil Catholics studied by Melissa Bouchard typically share pilgrimages and processions with their Hindu neighbors in Sri Lanka; however, when Hindus accompanied their Tamil friends on a pilgrimage to a sanctuary in the Montreal area, local Catholic authorities objected.<sup>55</sup> For the Tamil Catholics, including Hindu friends and in some cases, relatives, to such gatherings is part of what they see as a Tamil way of living their Catholicism. Moreover, Bouchard notes, some Tamil Catholics visit Hindu temples on occasion.

The dynamics of ethnic inclusion and exclusion in religious groups vary, partly depending on whether the religion of the group is closely linked to the culture of the milieu of origin as is the case, for example, with Vietnamese Buddhism and ancestor worship. Though Buddhism finds followers all over the world, for those who frequent the pagoda studied by Detolle,<sup>56</sup> it is linked to cults of the ancestors traditional to Vietnam. In this pagoda, proselytism is nonexistent; at the same time, visitors are welcomed, and are free to participate as they wish, and are even invited for a vegetarian meal at the end of religious celebrations. However, traditional Vietnamese values of inhibition, modesty, respect for elders, and dignity prevail and make for a culturally different religious milieu than that of other Buddhist groups in our study where native-born Québécois predominate.

In such cases as just described, the religious group tends to perpetuate the practices and symbolism of the homeland. Language also makes a difference; Spanish, for example, is the mother tongue of Montrealers of various national origins and is understood by many others, whereas few non-Tamils and non-Vietnamese speak the language of those groups. Finally, as we have seen for certain Pentecostal groups that actively proselytize beyond social boundaries, ethnicity may become a second-order identity, less important than religion.<sup>57</sup>

### **IMMIGRANT RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND THE HOST SOCIETY**

Whereas the role of religious groups in the life trajectories of immigrants is widely documented, the impact of these groups on how members relate to the host society is still being debated. Assimilationist models of the past tended to

regard ethnic belonging as an obstacle to full participation in the host society. More recently questions have been raised in the mass media about whether Muslim immigrants can be fully integrated into the host societies where they live. We have found that overt religiosity on the part of immigrants (whatever their religion) may be criticized by counselors, potential employers, and others. For example, we have learned that a counselor in a Montreal social agency complained about an African (Evangelical) client who “talks about God too much.” In another case, a well-educated African immigrant was unable to find employment. Eventually one of his employment counselors discovered that this was because he mentioned church activities on his curriculum vitae.

A number of recent studies portray immigrant religious communities as facilitating adaptation to the new society by providing a space where identities can be renegotiated.<sup>58</sup> In this sense, Hurh and Kim’s work indicates that religious commitment among immigrants is not determined by the level of participation in the host society, length of residence, age, sex, education, economic status, or sociocultural assimilation.<sup>59</sup> Mossière’s study of a Congolese Pentecostal church shows how ethnic, family, religious, and gender identities are reorganized in ways that facilitate in part members’ adjustment to the receiving society without preventing them from acquiring other social resources outside the religious group.<sup>60</sup> Maynard has studied a Muslim group mainly comprising Moroccan immigrants where members are encouraged to let go of the “myth of return” (to Morocco) and instead, take part in civic activities in Montreal and contribute to the society where they are living.<sup>61</sup> In some cases, however, we note that religious groups attempt to shield members from what are perceived to be the moral dangers of the wider society (drinking, sexual promiscuity, etc.).<sup>62</sup> We explore this issue further in the following section.

### **SYMBOLIC CAPITAL AND (DIS)CONTINUITIES BETWEEN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND HOST SOCIETY**

Symbolic capital (for example, educational, cultural, and linguistic resources that are valued by others) is a key factor in negotiating inclusion in a receiving society,<sup>63</sup> as it influences access to economic and social resources. Although Muslims have been the object of negative stereotypes in Québec as in Western countries generally since 2001,<sup>64</sup> our research (which includes 11 Muslim groups) shows that such images affect how individuals of the group concerned are included or excluded from participating in public life and the social institutions of the society where they live. Although Muslim believers may also identify by ethnicity, social class, or level of education, they shape their relationships with the dominant group in terms of their religious belonging,

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which they consider a source of pride and a positive distinction that distinguishes them from others. One man interviewed by Maynard explains that, despite the criticism of Muslim beliefs as regards women's roles he encounters in Québec, he is proud of abiding by Divine Law. Pointing his finger toward the sky, he declares: "At the end of the day, it's He who will judge." Some believers perceive the hostility or suspicion encountered in the host country as challenges to their faith imposed by the Lord, and therefore a means of spiritual advancement.

Muslim immigrants themselves are active in the process of representing their group to the wider society. After interviewing members of a mosque that receives a great deal of media exposure, some of it unfavorable, Maynard concludes that his subjects present Islam as a resource that provides an interpretative grid for believers to frame and give value to such experiences as well as a vocabulary within which they can rework their identity as Others.<sup>65</sup> A collective Muslim "we" emerges out of a dialogue whereby the identity assigned by the dominant group is not only accepted, but also given value. However, asserting Muslim identity in the face of negative stereotypes also means reworking it so as to divest it of invidious qualities ascribed by others. For example, Muslim women refuse the notion that the veil means "oppression" of their gender and assert that wearing it is their personal choice. Maynard finds that religious faith is sometimes used as a way of rehabilitating the standing of the group and its members; it becomes the framework for an alternative moral order to the one where the group is stigmatized.

Similarly, we find that Black (Caribbean- and African-born) Evangelicals engage in a process of self-construction by using Pentecostal idiom to overcome racism. For instance, one Haitian believer who converted to Pentecostalism a few years ago finds in her faith the tools for transcending memories of racism: "Now I don't see this one as Black or this one as White. We are all human beings doing the work of God. I have White friends, we talk on the phone, but they have been baptized . . . You have to differentiate whether or not people are baptized."<sup>66</sup>

We sometimes find that religious doctrines of new groups are presented as converging with dominant values in the host society. For example, Hindu philosophy advocates a vision of the world whereby all life forms take their meaning through interactions between each other. Accordingly, Hindus in Montreal have presented their religion as a holistic philosophy of life, rather than as religious dogma.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, a Muslim scholar in Québec, Khadiyatoulah Fall (2007), has argued that Islam has its own notion of "reasonable accommodation" (the term currently used in Québec to describe how social pluralism should be managed); that is, the concept of

“Arrouhsatou,” or “compromise” that allows adaptation of religious practice to the social and physical environment.<sup>68</sup> We should also add that there are groups from proselytizing religions such as Islam, Caodaïsm, and Evangelical Christianity that do not hide their agenda of eventually converting the whole Québécois society; one might say that Québec is in fact a missionary field for them. The Latin Americans studied by Recalde see saving lost souls in Québec as their mission in Québec and obligation toward God.

Issues surrounding the occupation of physical space by immigrant religious groups show the impact of negative stereotypes. At present, the growing needs of religious groups in Montreal for places of worship exceed the existing supply of religious facilities in the city.<sup>69</sup> The majority of the groups in our study, immigrant and nonimmigrant, are of modest financial resources and have difficulty finding affordable, appropriate rental space; this is all the more the case for immigrant groups. When they have sought to purchase property, Tamil Catholics, Congolese Pentecostals, and North African Muslims have all faced objections by owners or neighbours. Traffic difficulties and noise are common objections; however, it is likely that other factors are at work. We note, for example, that several years ago, when Tamil Catholics of the Catholic mission studied by Bouchard sought to buy a Catholic church that was for sale because its congregation had shrunk in recent decades, they were rebuffed by the remaining parishioners.<sup>70</sup> Though difficult to prove, it is likely that this refusal was motivated to some degree by ethnic prejudice.<sup>71</sup>

### **FAMILY MODELS AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE**

For most immigrant groups in Québec, the encounter between different world views seems to show most clearly in differing interpretations of family models.<sup>72</sup> Such models are, of course, bound up with religious beliefs and rituals, as our current research shows. For example, Hindu marriages seal unions not only between two persons, but also above all, between two families, one that is sacralized through religious ritual. The notion of marriage as a religiously sanctioned, nearly unbreakable bond that unites two families, and not only two individuals, is at variance with prevailing notions of couple relationships in Québec, where cohabitation without marriage and divorce are extremely common.

The Tamil Catholics studied by Bouchard distinguish between arranged marriages considered the norm, and “love” marriages seen as risky, especially love marriages with Hindus. In effect, her informants believe, family norms (including arranged, endogamous marriages) support the maintenance of religious traditions and Catholic faith. Some Tamils express regret that

Québec society does not provide better examples for young people; they see a causal relationship between the low levels of religious practice among the Québécois and the breakdown of family structures, as expressed in high rates of divorce, cohabitation without marriage, single-parent families and children born out of wedlock. A priest interviewed by Bouchard points proudly to the low divorce rate among Tamil Catholics.

The Congolese Pentecostal leader in Géraldine Mossière's study also distances himself from the Québec family patterns. His teachings regarding the gender roles are clear. In accordance with the family model conveyed in the Holy Scriptures, he asserts that a man's role is that of breadwinner, whereas a woman's duties are to be discrete and modest, in matters of dress among others. Moreover, he expresses the hope that the "irregular" situation of single mothers in his congregation is only temporary; ideally, such a woman should marry a Pentecostal man as soon as possible.<sup>73</sup>

Similar critiques of the host society's family models are voiced in a Latin American Evangelical group studied by Recalde.<sup>74</sup> In this case, and unlike the group studied by Mossière where efforts are made to convert native-born Québécois, religious activities are designed so as to occupy virtually all the members' free time, reducing the likelihood of interaction with non-Evangelicals. This group also distrusts public institutions, including courts of law, schools, hospitals, and governments, and encourages believers to simply "turn to God" rather than seek recourse for problems in nonreligious institutions.

Overall, immigrants are wary of the family and couple patterns they see in the wider Québec society. Those who practice a religion, we find, are also dismayed by the much-diminished religious practice of the social majority that has given rise to current family patterns. Thus, they are all the more motivated to transmit their religious faith and practices to their children, as they hope to inculcate the family and gender norms of their religion as well.

### **RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE WIDER SOCIETY**

Apart from the somewhat sectarian approach adopted by a few religious groups such as that studied by Recalde,<sup>75</sup> most immigrant religious groups build their identity through the contacts they establish with the dominant society. In one of the mosques studied by Maynard that we will call "Mosque A," he finds that the members base their identity on a clear dichotomy between "us" and "them," with a strict boundary between Muslims and the rest of Québec society.<sup>76</sup> In this case, the aim is not to isolate the Muslim community, but rather to emphasize its distinctness within the host society. With this objective, the imam who used to lead the group (he is no longer in Québec)

delivered public conferences on Islam to Québécois-born adults and scholarly groups to represent “the Muslim community” to the general public: “Even though there is a clash between us and the society, we have to do it otherwise, we will be locked in our place.” However, in the same mosque, Maynard also met other Muslims who expressed disagreement with this imam’s positions while in another Muslim group he studied, he found less emphasis placed on differences between Muslims and others, and more on the contributions that “good Muslims” (i.e., practicing Muslims) can make to the wider society.

Several Montreal Hindu temples also organize activities that contribute to society as a whole and thus make the group known to a wider public, the premise being that mutual understanding and recognition are possible through education.<sup>77</sup> A similar position has been taken by leaders of certain mosques in Montreal, notably those of Sufi Muslims. Yet another mosque in our study situated in a smaller city where there are few immigrants as compared to Montreal, has maintained a very discreet profile until now. However, the group is beginning to move toward becoming somewhat more socially visible.<sup>78</sup> In short, attitudes regarding visibility in the host society vary between religious groups, even within the same tradition.

Apart from the orientation given by leaders as to how the group is positioned in the wider society, within the same group members may vary widely in how they see relationships with the dominant group. Some Muslims in “Mosque A” hold that non-Muslim lifestyles and beliefs are too different from those of Muslims for there to be social mixing and so choose to limit their personal networks to Muslims exclusively. Nonetheless, a minority who go to the same mosque expresses more openness. For example: “I like to adapt, I can be with everybody, I can be with nobody. I have friends from the university, I go out with them, but I am not on their side. I can go to the mosque, but I am not on their side either.”

The range of positions individuals take regarding the dominant society is to some extent a factor of subjective attitudes regarding religious identity, and personal beliefs and practices. Maynard identifies two profiles among his Muslim interviewees: whereas the first is deeply anchored in religious performance and follows a dogmatic approach to Islam, the second emphasizes moral values carried by the Qur’anic message without advocating a narrow interpretation of religious precepts.

## CONVERGENCE AND ADAPTATION

In recent years, public debate about the place of religion in the public sphere has centered around issues such as how religion is presented in public schools, the Sikh kirpan, Muslim veils, and the Jewish aruv.<sup>79</sup> Immigrant religious

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groups have developed various strategies for dealing with added public attention along with existing challenges of fitting into a secular society. Often these groups choose to emphasize the commonalities between the religious community's vision of the world and the dominant Québécois worldview. Hindus modify rituals such as cremation, which in India, would be performed along a riverbank, to conform with Québec law. Certain Hindu festivals involving sacred fireworks are supervised by police and firemen because of the crowds involved and the danger of fire. Even gurus visiting from the home country interpret Hinduism in ways that are geared to making it more accessible and acceptable in the host environment.

Pentecostal congregations display similar strategies of integration. A Congolese pastor explains that sermons and Pentecostal norms are aimed at making members into "good citizens" and promoting their social and economic participation and mobility in their new country.<sup>80</sup> This perspective is illustrated by his pastoral approach, which he terms "The Church in the City." By this, he means that, "the Church must contribute to the society's development by equipping believers to be more efficient and productive."

In Pentecostalism, the notion of citizenship usually includes active behavior oriented toward economic prosperity, in accordance with Protestant values such as work, discipline, and economic accumulation. All these are values that fit well with prevailing norms in capitalist societies, including Québec. Seen in this light, the religious community can have a positive effect on an immigrant's adaptation into broader society.<sup>81</sup>

As mentioned earlier, family ties and gender roles are often seen differently from the models promoted in the wider society. The same Congolese pastor who preaches that men and women should adopt gender roles prescribed in the Bible also runs seminars to help members adapt to Québécois laws and norms. One typical activity that he organized was entitled, "How to Interpret Marriage as a Christian, in Accordance with Québec Law." Similarly, child-rearing practices are promoted that reinforce parental authority, but in conformity with Québec law, which prohibits the sorts of corporal punishment that is common in African and Caribbean societies. Most religious groups we have encountered espouse a discourse of integration or adaptation, and see their members as social actors who have a positive contribution to make to Québec society. Religious leaders often mention the important role of immigrants for the province's prosperity, cultural enrichment, and social development.

In the church studied by Recalde, religious rhetoric presents proselytizing as a way of improving Québec society. Socioeconomic mobility and educational achievement are presented as ways of contributing to Québec

society and overcoming the image of Latin Americans as members of street gangs and drug traffickers. In their view, Evangelical immigrants are endowed with the mission of saving Christian souls in a province one of them describes as “devastated for decades because of the collapse of Catholicism.” Concerned by the urgency of Québec’s “spiritual situation,” the group works hard to bring in new members.

In a similar vein, Maynard observes that some Muslim groups seek to assert their presence in the public sphere with the intention of transforming it, while others attach less importance to the public status of their religion and only wish to practice it without hindrance. Although the imam mentioned earlier tried to promote a public presence of what he considered to be the “real” Islam, he was often at odds with other Muslim leaders. In other cases, religious leaders emphasize gratitude to the receiving society (e.g., the Vietnamese Buddhists who invite political figures to all their major celebrations, and regularly give thanks to Canadian public servants in their prayers).<sup>82</sup>

#### **TRADITION AND TRANSITION**

Religious leaders and believers who follow the same religion that they did before migrating tend to think that their religious practices have not substantially changed since migration. Nonetheless, we find many instances where religious practices have been adapted to conditions in Québec, beyond the cases mentioned earlier where changes were made for legal reasons. For example, Tamil Catholics find new sites for pilgrimage in Québec; in the homeland, pilgrimages are usually performed on mountains also held sacred by Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims. This expression of devotion may result in miracles and healing, as reported by some of the Tamils interviewed by Bouchard. Tamil believers seek to perpetuate this practice in Québec’s Catholic traditional sites of pilgrimage such as Mont Rigaud in the area of Montreal. On one occasion, the rituals involved in the pilgrimage (these include a procession of a statue of the Virgin followed by a celebration of the Eucharist) were followed by a family picnic with food provided by the organizing committee. Bouchard notes that Tamil pilgrimages are an occasion for a social gathering and for strengthening family ties, and that their Hindu friends are usually invited as well. Although this religiously inclusive practice is normal in the homeland, it faces strong opposition from Catholic authorities in Québec, who are dismayed to see Hindus taking communion and by the picnicing and socializing on the pilgrimage site. They argue that the pilgrimage sites are not designed to host such a large population. In fact, the site is equipped to receive a few hundred pilgrims, not the some 5,000 Tamils who

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came on one recent occasion. Recently, local Catholic authorities have imposed restrictions on admission on the site, something much regretted by Tamil Catholics, who feel that their traditional forms of religiosity are not welcome in Québec.

Another example of religious change after migration is to be found in a Vietnamese pagoda in our study where new chants have been introduced by the Chinese members (a minority in this pagoda), with the help of DVDs imported from Taiwan.<sup>83</sup> Muslims consider the ritual sacrifice of sheep for the annual celebration of Aid el-Kebir (commemoration of Abraham's total submission to God) as religiously significant, but its performance in Western urban contexts has proven so complicated that many avoid it or send remittances to family back home to have the ritual performed there. Muslims also send charitable donations (that is zakat, a religious obligation) home for the family to distribute among the poor; others decide to volunteer in nonprofit, charitable organizations in their host country.

In some cases we find a deliberate effort to not change practices based on religion despite the difficulty of maintaining them in Québec. In one of the mosques Maynard observed, the imam's sermons were aimed at adapting Muslim behavior in a non-Muslim context while adhering to the rules of Islam. Since the prohibition on paying interest makes it nearly impossible for Muslims to acquire a home in Québec, the imam proposed that the mosque develop a real estate project where members could purchase property directly from the mosque without paying interest, and thus adhering to Muslim rules. In another mosque Maynard has studied, members prefer to respect the spirit of the rule rather than the rule itself: they contend that the principle is that wealthy people should not abuse the poor by imposing usurious rates of interest. By their interpretation, as long as the loan is made with at a reasonable rate of interest, a Muslim may acquire a house without breaking his religion's rules. Both positions can be found among Muslims in Montreal, the first being more typical of conservative believers.

For the most part, religious traditions imported from countries where immigrants originate do not form the basis of religious ghettos, but rather are renegotiated in ways that provide believers with ideological resources for adjusting to a new social and cultural context. On the individual level, we find considerable religious change over the life course, whether it takes the form of conversion or not. For example, we find changes in how religion is practiced and the intensity of religious practice. Further changes can be expected as religious groups evolve over time and the second generation comes of age; already we find groups introducing French or, more rarely, English, so as to accommodate younger cohorts.

To conclude, let us mention some of the trends that we find across immigrant religious groups that distinguish them from groups mainly composed of members born in Québec. As we have seen, groups formed by immigrants tend to be concerned with (1) giving members the help they need to adapt to the new society; (2) providing symbolic resources that allow migrants to give value to the difficult experiences associated with migration; (3) providing community structures that help compensate for social ties and support that have been attenuated by migration<sup>84</sup>; (4) positioning the group and its members in the new society in ways that are valued in religious terms. The nonimmigrant groups in our study are typically less preoccupied with their place in the wider society, and take their members' status as Québécois and Canadian as a given. At the same time, they are usually less developed on the community level; in many cases, nonimmigrant groups provide religious and spiritual services but little in the way of sociability for their members.

At the same time we note certain convergences: just as immigrant religious groups offer symbolic resources for dealing with the difficulties of migration and settlement, so other groups allow their members to reframe the problems of modern living (family issues, illness, unemployment) in ways that give them value. On the individual level, we have noted that some migrants change religion or the congregation to which they belong over their life trajectories; if anything, such changes are even more evident among nonmigrants. Nonmigrants who practice any kind of religion (often termed "spirituality" by those concerned) tend to frequent groups different from the religion of their primary socialization or to frequent several kinds of groups at the same time. Finally, we note that virtually none of the groups in our study are entirely composed of members of the same ethnic origin; moreover, most immigrant religious groups have at least a few members who were born in Québec.

Our research in Québec confirms Foner's argument that North America provides a relatively favorable environment for immigrant religions and shows how immigrant religious groups themselves take an active role in shaping how their members fit into Québec society. Moreover, there is reason to believe that the vitality of immigrant religious groups and the diversity of religious resources they bring in Québec are likely to have an impact on the social and political dynamics of the province and on the religious behavior and identifications of future generations of Québécois.

## NOTES

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AUQ: We have deleted the duplicate entry "Judith Nagata... 116-130".

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77. Betbeder, 2009.
78. Boucher, 2009.
79. The kirpan is a ritual sword worn by Sikh men; the *eruv* is an area that is usually demarcated in a symbolic way by a string or wire where observant Jews can circulate and carry objects at times when this would normally be forbidden.

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80. Mossière, 2006.
81. Mossière, 2006; Menjivor, 2003; Ebaugh and Chefetz, 2000.
82. Détolle, 2009.
83. Ibid.
84. It is interesting to note that when earlier generations of Québécois migrated to New England cities, they were accompanied by priests who set up schools, community presses, and parishes that offered what Raymond Breton has called “institutional completeness” to the immigrant community and assured not only the salvation of the faithful but also the survival of the French language and cultural distinctness over succeeding generations. See Raymond Breton, “Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 70 (1964), pp. 193–205.

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