

Religion, Conviviality and Complex Diversity

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Abstract

Religion is often presented as a likely cause of social division and conflict. However, research on religious groups carried out in Montreal and several other areas of Quebec shows that in religious contexts, persons from different ethnic minorities connect with each other and, importantly, with those of native-born, majority background. I focus on the affinities, solidarities and convivialities that arise in contexts of complex diversity in Montreal and in smaller regional towns and cities in the province. Conflicts and tensions arise along ethnic lines in some of the religious groups we studied in Quebec. Nevertheless, the convivialities that complex diversity has occasioned in the religious domain are much more evident in our findings. These include religious communities where ethnicity is secondary as well as interreligious collaborations involving members and leaders from different religious traditions. Such initiatives are particularly evident in regional towns and cities.

Keywords: conviviality, complex diversity, religion, Quebec, migration

Introduction

Though much discussion of religious diversity is focused on immigrant religions and particularly Islam, religious diversity is by no means isomorphic with ethnic diversity. Nor is religious diversity simply the result of increased immigration or even immigration from a wider range of source countries. These simple observations bring up some interesting issues as regards how religion works into the multiple diversities that characterize much of the world today. While not denying that the multiplicity of diversities involves many possible lines of fracture, I argue that they also make for many unusual kinds of convivialities, including some that involve members of the sociocultural majority.

In this paper, I will focus on the results of research on religious groups carried out in Montreal and several other areas of Quebec. I prefer the term “complex diversity” for reasons explained in the next section; however, my focus

is not so much on how to name the diversity of our era as on its implications and potential as regards social relations: the affinities, solidarities and convivialities that it makes possible. One could easily frame the discussion in terms of the fractures and conflicts such diversity is likely to present. In a study of the Alum Rock area of central Birmingham, Karner and Parker (2011: 357) found “contradictory but coexisting tendencies towards both conflict and conviviality, both local exclusions and inter-ethnic strategies for improvement, both material and infrastructural deprivation and newly emerging political alliances.” I have chosen to focus mainly on the convivialities we observed in the religious domain because they far outnumber the cases of conflict and tensions we found.

Crul (2015) suggests that those working on super-diversity do well to take more into account the studies of intersectionality (Bilge) produced

by feminist scholars. He also finds that there has not been sufficient account given of the internal diversity of ethnic groups. I would add that, similarly, the internal diversity of religious groups has often been overlooked. Most of the religious groups in our study, including those where most members are immigrants, comprise individuals of different ethnic and national origins and sometimes, different social classes. At present, religion is often presented as a cause of social division and conflict, and understandably so, given the dangers of radicalization in the name of religion. However, I seek to show here that religion can also be a source of social bonding and solidarity across ethnic and other social divisions. This is one reason why I focus mainly the forms of conviviality that complex diversity has occasioned in the religious domain; religion provides an arena where persons from different ethnic minorities connect with each other and, importantly, with those of native-born, majority background in a particularly powerful kind of sociality. The other reason is that, in fact, new solidarities, convivialities and alliances far outweigh incidents of conflict within or between religious groups in the findings of our study on religious diversity in Quebec. I have included virtually all the cases of tension and conflict that our team observed so as to provide as balanced a picture as possible.

Super-Diversity, Complex Diversity and Scale

Though cognizant of the aspects of contemporary diversity that are very much of our era, including the availability of cheap phones in much of the world (Vertovec 2004) and other advances in telecommunications, transnationalism etc., I am somewhat more comfortable with the term “complex diversity” (Kraus 2011) rather than super-diversity (Vertovec 2007). The term “super-diversity” tends to put emphasis on the unprecedented, fundamental, transformative aspects of today’s social diversity (Blommaert 2013); likewise, Vertovec (2015) speaks of “wholly new” social formations. However, speaking from the vantage point of North America, continuities

with the past are more apparent¹. Casanova (2013) for example, speaks of the “vibrant religious super-diversity” of eighteenth century American colonial towns (p. 115). In my own work on Cape Verdean transnationality (Meintel 2002), I showed how transportation and communication between Cape Verde and New England were far more developed in the sailing era than for much of the twentieth century, and that there were many Cape Verdeans who were living authentically transnational lifestyles before the restrictive American immigration policies of the early 1920s. I am in agreement, however with Vertovec’s (2007: 1043) observation that present-day transnationality is far more intense than in the past, given changes in telecommunications and the greater accessibility of air travel. My aim here is not to minimize the changes in today’s diversity as compared to that of the past, but simply to suggest that these developments appear to have had a longer history in other parts of the world such as Canada and appears less radically new and unprecedented than in continental Western Europe.

According to Crul (2015) super-diversity has not taken off as a concept in the U.S. “where the framework of assimilation still pretty much kept its dominant position in the analyses of outcomes for migrants and their children” (2015: 55). Though in agreement with Crul’s view that the concept has less traction in North America than in Western Europe, his explanation for this does not apply so well to the Canadian context, where multiculturalism as official policy dates back to 1971. There, the tradition of multiculturalism as government policy over decades seems to have normalized diversity in the national identity. The sociologist Elke Winter (2011) argues that multiculturalism has transformed the notion of “Canadian”, that Canadian now means “multicultural.” Moreover, source countries for immigration to Canada, including Quebec, have been diversifying for some time, going back to policies initiated

¹ See also Ingrid Piller’s (2014) interesting critique of super-diversity as a “Eurocentric” concept in regard to the historical reality of Montevideo, Uruguay.

in the postwar years (Ongley and Pearson 1995: 770). In short, the long presence of complex diversity makes “super-diversity” seem not quite so new as it appears in Europe.

Yet another factor that may play a role in making today’s diversity seem less dramatically new in Canada (and perhaps elsewhere) than in Western Europe; namely, the dominant ideology about difference. Writing about the United Kingdom, Berg and Sigona (2013: 351) note that “people are increasingly more willing to express diversity – of lifestyle, sexual orientation and so on – openly, further adding to the complexity and to the differences that make a difference...”. Arguably, this tendency manifested sooner on the societal level in North America than in Western Europe. Over 25 years ago, Kwame Anthony Appiah (1994: 62) wrote “as a gay Black man” in the United States of the individual concerns of authenticity and personal identity that were already making themselves felt in North America and the challenges this posed for conceptualizing recognition, a notion that seemed only to apply to broad categories (of gender, ethnicity, nationality, etc.) and to ignore their internal diversity.

Scale

The issue of scale has become increasingly prominent in discussions of contemporary diversity. As Glick Schiller et al. (2006: 612) put it, “the scale of cities reflects their positioning within neoliberal processes of local, national, regional, and global rescaling.” The authors note (p. 613) that small-scale cities that are less well-positioned in the global context than major metropolises, “are particularly important locales in which to obtain insights to move migration research beyond the use of the ethnic group as the unit of analysis and beyond the hegemony of a single model of migrant incorporation.”

Some of our research concerns religious groups in smaller cities and their environs. It is here, in fact, that “super-diversity” bears a certain relevance, because, in general, ethnic, religious and cultural diversities are fairly new to these settings and their administrative apparatuses are

not necessarily equipped for receiving migrants who present multiple diversities. For example, Saint-Jérôme, a town about an hour from Montreal, now hosts Bhutanese refugees from Nepal who are Hindu or Evangelical Protestant, Africans from various countries and regions of Africa who may be Catholic, Muslim or Evangelical, as well as Latin Americans from several different countries, also religiously diverse. Though new mechanisms have emerged in such settings to help newcomers get established, on the whole, local administrations are still ill – prepared for long-term issues that are likely to arise after the initial settlement process; in the school system, for example.

To resume the discussion so far, the dramatic newness of contemporary diversity that is emphasized in discussions of super-diversity is less evident in Canada and the United States than in Europe, though probably for different reasons in each case. Because today’s diversity appears as the result of processes that have been going on for some decades, North American scholars such as myself are not as ease with the term as many European scholars seem to be. That said, the terminology used to describe today’s diversities is not my main concern here; rather, my focus from here on will be on the convivialities that may emerge in contemporary contexts, notably in the religious domain. Before addressing that issue, I first describe the research on which my analysis is based.

The Research

Our team study² sought to document the religious diversity that has developed in Quebec

² The other researchers who collaborated in the project were Claude Gélinas, Josiane Le Gall, Khadiyatou Fall, François Gauthier and Géraldine Mossière. Raymond Lemieux, Gilles Routhier, Sylvie Fortin and John Leavitt. The research was funded by a team grant from the Fonds de recherche du Québec Société et culture (FQRSC) and by the Social Sciences and Humanity Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Publications of the team members are available at http://www.grdu.umontreal.ca/documents/Publications_Religion,Modernit%C3%A9,Diversit%C3%A9_religieuse.pdf

since the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s, a period of rapid secularization and liberalization and to examine the meaning of religion in the daily lives of Quebecois today. Though the great majority identify as Catholic, regular church attendance is the lowest of all the Canadian provinces (Wilkins-Laflamme 2014). Our methodology was “experience-near” (Wikan 1991), influenced by phenomenological approaches such as those of McGuire (2008), Csordas (1994, 2001); Goulet (1993, 1998); Turner (1994, 1996). At the same time, we applied the same research tools (interview and observation formats) to all the groups, with adjustments where necessary. 132 groups in Montreal were studied, and 97 others in and around smaller cities, including Sherbrooke (pop. 154, 600), Saguenay (pop. 143, 690), Saint-Jérôme (pop. 68, 456) and Rawdon (pop. 10, 416). Of the total of 229 groups, 79 were the sites of extended ethnographic study (participant observation over several months, as well as interviews with leaders and members). In terms of religion, the groups represent: 1) currents established in Quebec since the 60s, primarily by native-born Quebecois (e.g., the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Reconstructionist Judaism, Wicca, shamanism); 2) religions brought by immigrants (Islam, Hinduism, certain forms of Buddhism); 3) congregations of long-established religions (e.g. Catholic, Presbyterian) where immigrants predominate. If any groups were neglected in our study, they were the more traditional Catholic or Protestant groups that made up mainly of those who represent the social majority (i.e., those born in Quebec of French or English background). It is possible that we missed cases of friction or exclusion arising when new immigrants join such groups; this is a theme we hope to explore in future research. However, we have studied somewhat less mainstream groups (e.g., Spiritualist, Ashtanga) that are becoming quite diverse ethnically and I have included them in the analysis here.

For the in-depth studies, research assistants³ observed religious rituals and other activities, such as neighbourhood prayer groups; social activities like communal meals and picnics and educational activities sponsored by the group. The in-depth studies took at least three months, often much longer. Semi-structured interviews lasting about an hour and a half, if not more, were carried out with at least three members (usually more) and one leader. An effort was made to interview individuals varying by gender, age, matrimonial status and level of commitment to the group. Subjects covered include migration history (when relevant), the individual’s religious trajectory, the role of religion (or spirituality) in their everyday lives, and the degree of their involvement (economic, social, ritual) in the group along with any religious activities pursued outside the group’s purview. The assistants then submitted a report covering a long list of themes presented in the analytical grid common to the project; among other things, these included doctrines, beliefs and norms, governance and structure, relations with other religious groups of the same or different denomination, the place of worship, rituals, embodied practices, use of communication technologies, religious activities such as retreats or pilgrimages, healing practices, social activities, social differentiation within the group by ethnicity, gender, class, worldview (health, food, education, family relations, money, death, etc.), non-religious activities sponsored by the group (e.g. language classes for French or a heritage language), religious socialization of children, converts or new members, relations with the wider society (sectarian tendencies, integration) and with the public sphere, evolution of the group over time. For individual members, analytical themes included their religious identity/identities and trajectory, personal religious practices, conversion or change of affiliation. In the research carried out in regions outside Montreal, the same tools were used, with some adaptation

³ Unless otherwise stated, all the research presented herein is that of the team researchers or assistants.

to the logistics of doing research in more distant places, requiring observations to be restricted to the summer months in some cases.

Field assistants were graduate students in anthropology, religious studies and other fields. Their training followed a field school model with all field notes read by several researchers. Group discussions about fieldwork were particularly important for the assistants. Doing participant observation on religion in one's own society requires considerable reflexivity (Meintel and Mossière 2012) and all the more so for neophytes. Typically, fieldworkers must situate themselves in respect to the beliefs of their informants and decide the extent of their participation and subjective involvement in the religious activities they are studying. Assistants and researchers were almost never asked to give account of their personal beliefs as a condition of doing research; for the most part, the researchers were given a cordial welcome and in some cases, their presence seemed to be taken as a form of validation. This was particularly the case for congregations made up mostly of immigrants, which have sometimes been subject to negative media coverage⁴.

Religion and Diversity

It is common to link religious diversity to immigration, but in the case of Quebec, other factors also play a role, notably the increased mobility of the native-born population and the influence of the Internet. Some tens of thousands of Francophone Catholics have converted to other religions since the 1960s, such as Evangelical Protestantism and more recently, Islam, but a far greater number can be characterized as religiously mobile. One of the surprises of our study was the wide range of groups defining themselves as religious or spiritual that are frequented by the native-born. This may not appear

in statistics on religious affiliation because most often the groups involved do not oblige a change of affiliation. Typically, they include nature – centred spiritualities (Druidry, shamanic currents, Neopaganism), yogic spiritualities (Kundalini Yoga, Vipassana, etc.), Spiritualism and Buddhism. Often those who frequent them continue to identify as Catholic and keep some connection with the Catholic Church. Some born-Catholics even frequent Evangelical groups without converting and consider them their “spirituality” rather than as their new religion.

Immigrants now represent 12.6 % of the Quebec population according to 2011 figures⁵. Of these, the majority (58.2%) are Christian, and 37.7 % are Catholic⁶. Many groups of the same national origin are already religiously diverse when they arrive, and this has long been the case (see Helly 1997); Haitians, for example, may be Evangelist, Catholic or Voodoo; similarly, Vietnamese may be Buddhist, Catholic or Caodaist. While some immigrants, particularly from Africa or Latin America, have converted to Evangelical or Pentecostal religions in the country of origin, others do so after arrival. Another factor contributing to religious diversity that has received little scholarly attention: the sometimes surprising number of immigrants who consider themselves “of no religion”; this is the case; for example, for 16 % of Algerian immigrants, based on 2011 statistics (Castel 2016); overall, more immigrants claim to be of no religion (14.7 %) than non-immigrants (11.6 %)⁷. We should add that the meaning of “no religion” is likely to vary from one group to another, as we have found for the term “spiritual but not religious”, when comparing born-Catholic Quebecois with the Americans studied by Fuller (2001).

⁴ Apart from concerns about radicalization in Muslim groups, there have been reports in the Quebec media of misuse of funds by African evangelical pastors. Media attention has also been focused on alleged child abuse in certain Jewish and Christian sects along with suspect healing practices in other groups.

⁵ http://www.veq.ca/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/Analysis_Immigration-in-Quebec-2014.pdf. p. 1. (accessed July 18, 2016).

⁶ Figures based on 2011 Household Survey (Canada) microdata provided by Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme.

⁷ http://www.veq.ca/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/Analysis_Immigration-in-Quebec-2014.pdf. p.6. (accessed July 18, 2016).

Several of the researchers in our team had long experience studying issues of migration and ethnicity before undertaking the study described here. In earlier work, we found that, for many immigrants, religion was a more important identification than ethnicity; moreover, in a study of migration to the outlying regions of Quebec that I directed, the research showed that immigrants were willing to travel long distances to meet with a religious group but not for ethnic association activities. Why would this be so? I believe that the answer lies in the fact that religion operates differently from ethnicity as a basis of affiliation and social ties.

As compared with ethnic affiliations, religious belonging involves a particularly powerful form of social connectedness. Apart from their ritual functions that I have described elsewhere (Meintel 2014) we found that religious collectivities often accomplish a great deal of largely unrecognized social labour that allows refugees and other migrants to resettle successfully (Meintel and G elinas 2012). Usually the mutual aid given by longer-established church members and new arrivals is complementary to government services and usually includes information on what is available, help in finding a job or lodging; sometimes help and support offered goes far beyond that offered by the State: for example, Congolese clergy (Catholic or Pentecostal) assist unaccompanied minors arriving from Condo by finding them host families; Senegalese murids offer food and shelter, sometimes for months, to new arrivals. Such assistance is often seen as part of the shift to a congregational model made by many immigrant religious groups (Yang and Ebaugh 2000). At the same time, we should remember that this kind of help is framed in the social relations of trust based on presumed moral consensus and a shared relation to sacred reality that characterize religious solidarity. We should also mention various groups composed of mainstream Quebecois seek to integrate newcomers; for example, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mennonites in and around Sherbrooke offer extensive material and moral support to recently arrived immigrants, some

of whom eventually convert. Religious groups address not only material needs but also symbolic ones are; often religious activities offer a context where members can reframe the tribulations associated with migration (unemployment, discrimination, exile) in a way that gives them value (Meintel and Mossi ere 2012).

Religious sociality is often multiethnic in character; we have found that religious sociality often bridges the divide between the social majority and ethnic minorities. In our work, almost all congregations formed mainly by immigrants usually host more than one national group and have at least a few French-speaking Quebecois members. For example, a number of Pentecostal congregations in Montreal include people from several Latin American countries as well as a handful ethnic mainstream, born-in-Quebec, members. The cultural and social dynamic is often the reverse of what immigrants find in the wider society (Meintel and Mossi ere 2012). That is, the predominant language, music and style of worship would reflect the region of the world whence most of the members originate, as well as the social life around the religious groups. As one Russian woman member of an Orthodox church in a small town about 150 km from Montreal put it, "this church is the one place where I don't feel like an immigrant."⁸ A number of Quebec-born converts of French ancestry also frequent the church; the notion of "real orthodoxy" is tinged with cultural notions for the Russian immigrant members, whereas Quebecois converts conceive it in purely religious terms. In both cases, members seek to be buried in the cemetery adjoining the church. For the immigrants, this is partly a question of family tradition; for the converts, it symbolizes their full integration to the Orthodox religion (Moisa 2011). In Catholic charismatic groups and Evangelical churches in where most members are of Latin-American origin, liturgy, hymns and social activities involving members are carried out in Spanish. Native-born Quebe-

⁸ Field observation, Daniela Moisa, postdoctoral researcher.

cois members (often married to an immigrant in the group) generally understand Spanish. Meals shared among the members and music that sometimes accompanies them after Mass reflect the Latin-American origins of the majority.

Conviviality

The notion of conviviality as I am employing it here emerges from two sources; one is that of the anthropology of the Amazonian region where researchers such as Overing and Passes (2000) draw inspiration from Ivan Illich's *Tools for Conviviality* (1973) to describe a sociality among social equals, characterized by sharing, mutual aid and trust, with a propensity for the informal and performative rather than the "formal and institutional" (p. xiii-xiv) (see also Rosengren 2006). In modern religious contexts, conviviality as we have observed it entails these qualities of Amazonian conviviality and is similarly framed in a common metaphysics of "human and non-human connectedness"; that is, it entails a common relationship with a transcendent reality.

The other strain of thought I draw upon is that of Paul Gilroy who describes conviviality as

"a social pattern in which different metropolitan groups dwell in close proximity, but where their racial, linguistic and religious particularities do not – as the logic of ethnic absolutism suggests they must – add up to discontinuities of experience or insuperable problems of communication" (2006: 40).

Gilroy's notion of conviviality emerges in a modern, urban context and emphasizes the potential of going beyond racial, ethnic or religious differences in situations of multiple diversities. Conflict and racism still exist, but in conviviality he finds the potential for overcoming these.

Conviviality is similar to what Schiller *et al.* (2011) describe as a "cosmopolitan sociability"; here, religious or ethnic anchoring (Grzymala-Kazłowska 2015) coexists with openness toward others in daily social interaction. Noble (2013), who adopts Gilroy's notion of conviviality, speaks of cosmopolitan habits characterized by "pragmatic openness" as forming the convivial dimen-

sions of diversity that can often be found in urban life. Appiah's (2006) work on the ethics of everyday cosmopolitanism that is often rooted in ethnic or religious affiliations evokes a dynamic of coexistence and exchange that is quite similar to the notions of conviviality presented here as does Werbner's on "vernacular" (2006) and "working class" (1999) cosmopolitanism.

At the same time, conviviality goes further than certain forms of cosmopolitanism such as the peaceful coexistence described by Germain et Radice (2006), regarding certain neighbourhoods in Montreal. Others; e.g., Ollivier and Fridman (2004) and Shweder (2000:170, quoted by Hannerz 2007:69) present cosmopolitanism as a matter of elitism, much as it was in the era of the "Grand Tour" (Tomasi 1998, 002). Somewhat similarly, Beck (2006) approaches cosmopolitanism as an ideology that has evolved beyond nationalism and, presumably, narrower loyalties such as religion or ethnicity, leaving little place for "everyday" or "vernacular" cosmopolitanism.

New Religious Convivialities

In what follows, I describe some of the new religious convivialities that our research in Montreal brought to light; these include interethnic socialities that are unprecedented for immigrants as well as for the host milieu. Also new is the tendency observed in a number of immigrant religious groups to build bridges with various sorts of outreach activities. Later we turn to the somewhat different dynamic that the team observed in smaller, regional localities.

"Ethnic" churches made up of members from the same country of origin are part of Montreal's past, as has also been the case in the United States (Yang and Ebaugh 2000). A few groups whose members are of the same national/ethnic background; for example, Tamil and Laotian Catholic missions. In these cases, the diocese has established nongeographical congregations to accommodate the newcomers. However, the great majority of the religious groups we found in Montreal are composed of people of different origins, even when most are immigrants.

The Spanish-speaking congregations (of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal or Evangelical churches) include immigrants from various Latin American countries and, inevitably, a few native-born French speakers who have learned Spanish in the context of marriage to one of the immigrant members. Ruiz (2014, p. 56) describes the musical scene in a Spanish-speaking Evangelical church: "The musicians are mostly in their thirties; the regular participants are a Colombian drummer, a Panamanian pianist, a bass player from Venezuela, a young Mexican violinist, a Haitian who plays the bongos. A Quebecois girl and several Latin American women form the choir ... The musicians adapt the hymns to popular Latin American music, but they prefer to perform modern tunes ... sometimes the young people organize presentations with dancing to the rhythms of rock, pop, hip-hop, rap and electronic music. »

In most of the Evangelical (including Pentecostal) groups we have studied, we find the "solidarity of belief" (Glick Schiller et al. 2011: 204) that prevails over differences of national origin and those between the majority and immigrant minorities. Beyond their ethnic affiliations, the members of such churches consider themselves brothers and sisters in Christ such that ethnic differences are considered of secondary importance. For example, in the congregation studied by Géraldine Mossière (2006), Congolese predominate, but there are members from half-a-dozen other French-speaking countries, as well as a number of Haitians and a handful of native-born French-speaking Quebecois. For some, their experience in the church has allowed them to get past experiences of racism in the wider society: "I don't see who is black, who is white, ... we are all working doing God's work" (53).

A Vietnamese pagoda observed by Detolle (2010) counts about 500 people among the regular attendees, including some forty Chinese and a number of Sri Lankans who do not understand the Vietnamese language, the predominant language in the pagoda. Smaller organized groups link people by language who help each other in case of need. At the same time, several members

speak of the "language of the heart" by which participants understand each other without words. A Chinese woman explains:

"... people are so nice, we work together, we practice together, like one family. When I see the people here I never say 'he's Chinese' or 'he's Vietnamese', I don't make difference. The most important thing for us is: do not discriminate. Like, 'be close with Chinese people and not that close with Vietnamese'. It's not the way Buddha taught us." (Detolle, unpublished field notes).

One of the Indian Hindu temples in Montreal observed by Anne-Laure Betbeder (2012) presents another case where religious solidarity overrides differences that might have been insurmountable in the home country. The temple, constructed in 1997-8 in a middle-class suburb, hosts members originating from several different regions of India. The gods venerated in the temple reflect the diverse origins of the group and the pan-Indian approach favoured since its inception.

The same temple exemplifies a tendency that seems fairly widespread among immigrant religious groups in Montreal. That is, the temple sponsors blood drives, marches for organ donations, and conferences about cultural diversity, while encouraging members to do volunteer work. We have found the same effort to foster social and political involvement in the host society in many Islamic centres and mosques, immigrant Evangelical churches and a Vietnamese Caodaist temple. Members are encouraged to vote and to participate in the wider community. For example, a number of Caodaists spent days helping flood victims in the regional town of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu in 2011 (Maillé-Poulin 2016). Various mosques in Montreal participated in a "Mosque Open Doors" event in 2012; individual mosques also hold such events from time to time.

Groups made up mainly of native-born Quebecois appear to becoming more diverse ethnically. When I began research on a Spiritualist congregation in 2000, it was made up almost exclusively of French-speaking Quebecois brought up in the

Catholic faith. Over time, it has come to include immigrants from many different national and religious origins. Catholic churches in the city are also becoming more ethnically diverse. In a Catholic parish I have observed since 2009, Congolese members have become increasingly prominent in ritual activities (giving communion, serving at the altar and reading biblical texts for the Mass from the pulpit). Similarly, a non-immigrant Buddhist group in our study (Laurent Sédillot 2009) shows signs of becoming more ethnically diverse, as East Asians, Latin Americans and a few Africans begin to attend its meditation workshops. The hundred or so members of the Ashtanga yoga *shala* (centre) reflect the makeup of the city's population; they include French- and English-speaking individuals born in Quebec, some of whom are of immigrants or ethnically mixed parentage, as well as young adult immigrants from Australia, the United States, Morocco, France, Belgium, Vietnam, Japan, China, India, Armenia Italy and Haiti (Bouchard 2013: 62). In these cases, ethnic or national origin is irrelevant in the social relations among participants.

Our observations in Montreal show almost no instances of friction along ethnic lines within religious collectivities, though the Ethiopians and Eritrean Evangelicals studied by Ferran⁹ (2015) present something of a mixed case. In 1989 they formed the church that eventually was named Ammanuel, despite the conflicts that have opposed their home countries. It presently numbers some 150 members. Most are Ethiopian and speak Amharic; the Eritreans, who speak Amharic as well as Tigrinya, their own language, are in the minority. In 2012, some thirty Eritreans, professing their desire to worship in their own language, founded their own church; according to their minister, some still harbour ill feeling toward Ethiopians despite their common faith. We should also note two instances of inter-ethnic tension, both involving Tamil Catholics

(Bouchard 2009) in their relations with native-born Quebecois Catholics. In one case, the Tamils sought to purchase a Catholic parish church whose congregation was dwindling in numbers but were refused. Another case of minor conflict arose when Tamil Catholics from Sri Lanka made a pilgrimage to a shrine in the Montreal area. The Tamil style of pilgrimage involves inviting Hindu friends to Mass and communion there, celebrating and picnicking on the grounds, behaviour considered objectionable by the local religious authorities.

Regional Variations

Outside Montreal, religious conviviality plays out somewhat differently than in Montreal. Because regional towns and cities are less centrally situated in the global economy, they attract fewer immigrants, despite decades of policies oriented to channel immigrants and refugees toward regions outside of Montreal, in part to compensate for the movement of regional youth toward the metropolis (Vatz Laaroussi 2011). Thus ethnic diversity is present but to a much lesser degree than in Montreal.

Immigrants (including refugees) in the regions we studied are usually not numerous enough to form their own religious groups with the exception of a few Islamic mosques and prayer centres. Moreover, Muslim groups are if anything more discreet than in Montreal in regard to their physical presence, occupying private or rented spaces with little or no signage. The leader of a centre for North African Muslims situated in a small regional town asserts that he lives among Haitians, Quebecois, Africans, not just Muslims, and does not want to live in a ghetto. He encourages members to adopt what he calls a certain "invisibility" so as to avoid hostility toward Islam, speaking critically of a man who attracted attention with his Islamic dress and beard.

Many religious groups located outside Montreal are still composed entirely of Francophones born in Quebec. Typically, as Gélinas and Vatz Laaroussi (2012) observe in Sherbrooke, immigrants join congregations (Catholic, Baha'i, Men-

⁹ Ferran collaborated with our project but the research mentioned here was carried out separately from our work.

nonite, Evangelical and others) where the native-born predominate. Here they find a space of interethnic relations where the majority-minority dynamic does not operate in the same way as in the wider society. "They are more likely to meet the native-born on an equal footing ..." (2012: 43). In one striking, if atypical, case, a Pentecostal church in Saint-Jérôme, is made up of Bhutanese from Nepal and Africans from several countries, including Senegal and the Republic of the Congo. The pastor is Quebec-born and rituals are held in French, with bilingual Bhutanese translating for their compatriots.

A striking difference between Montreal and the regions concerns interreligious convivialities. In Montreal, impecunious congregations of different currents are likely to rent the same space at different times or share the same building with other religious groups. Closer ties and mutual aid sometimes develop, as between a small multiethnic group of Messianic Jews and the equally diverse Baptist church that shares their rented space and with whom they feel a certain religious kinship. However, interreligious collaborations are most evident in the smaller towns and cities in our research. Spatial proximity fosters contact between groups of different religious traditions in these localities, while small numbers and limited means lead to sharing resources and collaborating for civic and charitable causes. Sometimes these collaborations are organized by leaders working together; in other cases, they seem to be ad hoc affairs.

In Sherbrooke, some of the Muslims who prefer not to frequent the two existing spaces of worship for Muslims (a mosque and an association based at the local university) meet in a Catholic church basement for weekly prayers. A devoutly Catholic woman in Saint-Jérôme who wished to help immigrants obtained space in a Catholic church complex where immigrants of various religious traditions (Pentecostal, Hindu) could hold their rituals along with Catholics; the same space also hosts other services for immigrants and for the needy of the region (Boucher 2015). Weekly craft activities organized by a

Catholic lay group bring together Africans, Bhutanais and locals of different religions. In nearby Rawdon, a yearly "Sharing Gathering" (*Fête du partage*) is organized by a local NGO, *Alliance des Nations*, in collaboration with the municipal government, where different religions and spiritual currents set up displays and hold activities open to the public¹⁰.

As in Montreal, ethnic differences are rarely a source of tension in religious collectivities, but we did find one exception. An Islamic centre in the Saguenay region of Quebec has seen the rise of marked divisions between Senegalese members and more recent arrivals from North Africa regarding issues of language, ritual and politics. In recent years, sermons are downloaded from Mecca in Arabic, a language not spoken by the West Africans who originally predominated in the centre. Moreover, they transmit a more conservative version of Islam than the Senegalese espouse. Some of the West Africans have ceased attending regularly and have formed a prayer group among themselves that meets in a private home.

Another case that bears mentioning is that of a Catholic parish in Sherbrooke; this parish includes a sufficient number of Latin Americans as to hold Masses in Spanish and has a Spanish-speaking committee of parishioners along with a French-speaking one. The result is, according to the pastor, "two solitudes; they cross paths, but that is all" (Gélinas et Vatz Laaroussi 2012 : 46). Finally, we observed anti-Muslim sentiment in several Evangelical groups; in one case, an Evangelical leader said in a meeting of representatives of different religions that he wanted to exclude Muslims from an interreligious coalition in a regional town. However, this was rejected by the Catholic clergy present, who argued that the Pope recognizes Islam and receives Muslim leaders. In the end, the Muslims were included.

In the regions, local populations have long been quite homogenous and their institutions

¹⁰ <http://alliancedesnations.org/fete-du-partage-sharing-party/> (accessed July 18, 2016).

historically less adapted to ethnic and religious diversity than is the case in Montreal. The differences in the convivialities that develop in such localities illustrate the importance of scale when looking at today's complex diversity. From the local point of view, a few thousand immigrants and refugees of different national and religious origins appear as a kind of super-diversity. Religious convivialities in the regions often bring migrants into social contact with native-born Quebecois and become an important mechanism for anchoring newcomers in their surroundings and strengthening the social fabric of the local community.

Conclusion

I have argued that religion-based social ties function somewhat differently from ethnic ones and that religious sociality can offer a powerful base for social relations where ethnic differences are often secondary. We have seen that believers of different traditions can be linked by mutual aid and interreligious collaborations for civic and charitable ends. This is especially true of smaller, regional communities where proximity, small numbers and limited resources make such collaborations more likely.

On the whole, our team research found conviviality within and between religious groups to be far more evident than are conflicts. To what extent might our results be relevant beyond Quebec and Canada? Ethnic diversity within religious groups and interreligious collaborations have not received extensive attention from social scientists. Ebaugh (2003: 233-234) mentions the possible difficulties that may arise in American multiethnic religious groups; e.g., the fact that when some ritual activities are held in the language of an immigrant group, parallel congregations may develop, as was the case of Catholic church in Sherbrooke mentioned earlier. Other

challenges for creating unity in the group that Ebaugh notes concern the incorporation of ethnic customs and the participation by newcomers in the governance of the group. Glick Schiller et al. (2006), on the other hand, allow us to understand that ethnicity is far less relevant than status as a Christian in the churches they studied in Halle, located in the former East Germany, and Manchester, New Hampshire. Both of these are small-scale, non-gateway cities, which the authors contrast with the metropolises ("gateway cities") where issues of diversity are most often studied, such as Berlin and London. (In Canada, these would be Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.)

In the churches that Glick Schiller and her colleagues describe, immigrants of various origins and locals develop networks of support with their fellow born-again Christians and are incorporated as evangelists and Christians into the wider society and into transnational networks. Similarly, Hülwelmeier (2011: 450) describes a predominantly Vietnamese Pentecostal church in Germany that "embraces all newcomers without regard to their political past, class or ethnic background or identifications with their resident nation-state." Finally, Eade's (2012) work on the increasing ethnic and ritual diversity of Anglican, Methodist and Catholic congregations in Britain such as indicates that the kinds of convivialities we found in Quebec may also be the case there. Also, the strength of Interfaith networks in Britain (Baumann 1996) suggests that collaboration and mutual aid between religious groups of different traditions are also likely to be found there. In the spirit of Gilroy's (2006) work on conviviality, I would suggest that it is as important to pay attention to the new cohabitations, solidarities and alliances that today's diversity occasions as it is to examine any new lines of social fracture that it engenders.

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