

Innovation Funding Project Report and Student Stipend Report

Barbara Thériault

Project Title : *La religiosité et le corps des détenues*

1. Project Goals

This project started with the crafting of an instrument to assess religion in a qualitative manner. For this purpose, we devised a board game. Our original intention was to locate experiences of transcendence, the “wholly other,” within space (a city landscape). Drawing on Georg Simmel’s insights, we wanted to take into account the objective and subjective forms of religion; we hoped to tie these two dimensions together by mapping the realms of religion. Besides developing an instrument to assess religion in a qualitative manner and revisiting theories related to transcendence, an aspect moved to the centre of our analyses: the inmates’ bodies and religious artefacts. For this reason, they were at the centre of our analysis. Whereas the first part of the project focused on the interviews, the second part benefitted from participant observation.

2. Researchers and Students Involved

- Barbara Thériault, prof. UdeM
- Étienne Guertin Tardif, MA student, UdeM
- Monica Grigore, Ph.D. candidate, UdeM

3. Methods

Participant observation as well as individual and group interviews.

4. Ethics, permissions

We received permission from the university and the ministry.

5. Summary of Activities

- Finishing the fieldwork
- Writing field notes
- Analysing the data
- Seminars and conferences

6. Provisional Findings

An important finding of our original study at the jail was that experiences of transcendence are embodied. As it turned out, the body was a place of transcendence. This resonates with studies on “embodied devotional practices.”

Material objects, religious artefacts, are conspicuous at the jail. They are conveyed different meanings. They notably help establishing and maintaining relationships with supernatural characters, family and friends (McDannell). Wearing religious artefacts and keeping them close to one’s body—in one’s cell, one’s bed—seems particularly important for inmates.

7. Outputs

Conferences

- “Der Rosenkranz. Religiöse Formen und Mode in einem Frauengefängnis,” 2 July 2013, Frankfurt/Oder (Thériault).
- “Wearing the Rosary. Religious Forms at a Women’s Jail,” 30 June 2013, Turku, ISSR (Thériault).
- Comment on *Imprisoned Religion. Transformations of Religion during and after Imprisonment in Eastern Germany* (Becci), 30 June 2013, Turku, ISSR (Thériault).
- “Religion et prison. Le cas d’un centre de détention du Québec,” colloque de l’ACSSUM, 5 April 2013, Montréal (Guertin Tardif).
- “Religion qualitativ erfassen. Ein Vorschlag,” Europa-Universität Viadrina, 12 December 2012, Frankfurt/Oder (Thériault).
- “Religion verorten. Eine Untersuchung im Frauengefängnis,” Goethe-Universität, 13 November 2012, Frankfurt/Main (Thériault).
- “Religion verorten. Eine Untersuchung im Frauengefängnis,” Institut für Kulturwissenschaften, 6 November 2012, Leipzig (Thériault).

- “Mapping the Realms of Religion. The Case of a Montreal Jail,” *New Forms of Public Religion*, AHRC/ESRC RELIGION AND SOCIETY PROGRAMME, The Divinity School, St John’s College, 5 September 2012, Cambridge (Thériault and Guertin Tardif).
- “Mapping the Realms of Religion (The Case of a Jail),” ISORECEA, 21 April 2012, Iasi, (Thériault).

Seminar (Religion and Diversity Project)

- 10 May 2013, CCEAE, with Susan Palmer.

Teaching in Jail

- “Café socio [la Burquette et les signes religieux],” Centre de détention Tanguay, 30 April 2013, Montréal (Thériault, Grigore, Guertin Tardif).

8. Finances

Student Information:

Research Stipend

Student thesis project: Please outline the student’s thesis/research topic and how it relates to the *Religion and Diversity Project*. Where applicable, include a thesis/research paper title.

- - Étienne Guertin Tardif: “Dramaturgie de la pastorale. Le cas d’un centre de détention du Québec” (supervisor: B. Thériault); start: September 2012- end: December 2013; Etienne’s thesis relates directly to the project as it uses the fieldwork conducted at the jail.
- - Monica Grigore: “Influencer le sort. Croyances et pratiques religieuses dans l’orthodoxie roumaine” (supervisor: B. Thériault); start: September 2009 – end: May 2014; Monica’s work is theoretically linked to the project.

Breakdown of Expenses				
Student Funding*				
	Amount	Name	Dates	Project
Student Stipends	1500	Tardif, Étienne	8 April-8 June 2013	
	1500	Grigore, Monica	8 April-8 June 2013	
	1200	Tardif, Étienne	1 May-1 June 2013	
Student Assistantship				