

## **Fact Sheet:**

*The Public Management of Religious Diversity in Quebec and Ontario*

Solange Lefebvre

Innovation Funding Project, 2011-2012

## **Project Description and Goals:**

The initial goal of this project was to develop and implement a methodology and research process in Quebec that could subsequently be implemented in other Canadian provinces. With the assistance of William Hoverd, a postdoctoral fellow, the project was extended to consider Ontario and to develop comparison between Ontario and Quebec. In Canada, each province regulates religious groups and practices in a variety of ways. In this project the aim was to collect a corpus documents that highlight the management of religion and religious diversity in an individual province and then comparatively between provinces. This corpus included legal documents, program documents, mission statements and other texts which helped to clarify the mandates, actions and criteria used by government bodies as they manage religious diversity.

While the initial goal was to identify and collect information on important actors, dates, texts, and laws in the management of religious diversity, it became clear that these goals were too large for the time available for the research. Instead, the team focused on three specific areas in each province: health, education and women's rights. For each of these areas the team collected a corpus of documents and data that allow for a greater understanding of the way religious diversity is managed. Preliminary findings have been compared between Ontario and Quebec as a way to better understand the similarities and differences in the way religion is management.

## **Methodology:**

This research focuses on three specific areas of provincial governance where religious diversity is publically managed by either the state directly, or by publically funded agents of the state. These three areas are: Health, Education and Women's Rights.

## **Student Involvement:**

- Erin Le Brun, Université de Montréal

## **Results:**

Comparisons across the two provincial sites of analysis were possible regarding the public management of religion. In regards to the public management of health in the two provinces, the team has collected data ready for analysis across four categories: 1. Provincial Government sources, 2. Hospital Structures, 3. Chaplaincy and 4. Individual Hospitals. In the case of the public management of religion in the Education sectors, direct comparison could be made across the two provinces was only possible to a limited extent. Direct comparison would be much easier if a longer term historical study was able to be undertaken. This is because the two provinces have encountered similar problems, but at different times. For example, Quebec has moved away from offering religious schooling (outside of a few private schools) whereas Ontario has a separate Catholic school and independent school (many of which are religiously based) system. Thus, issues surrounding the funding prioritisation of religious schooling are no longer strong issues in Quebec. In contrast, court cases regarding the place of religious expression in

the classroom are more recent phenomena in Quebec, whereas, they were prevalent in Ontario in the 1980s and 1990s.

### **Dissemination:**

#### Presentations:

- **Lefebvre, Solange.** 2012. “The Public Management of Religion and Québec and Ontario,” *The Religion and Diversity Project Team Meeting*, Cambridge, United Kingdom, September.
- Co-presentation of research project at MCRI Research Meeting at University of Montreal, March 2012 by **Erin Lebrun** and **William Hoverd**.
- Presentation of initial findings in Quebec health at ACFAS in Montreal (April 2012).

#### Productions:

- A cohesive developed project methodology regarding how to research the public management of religion by province in Canada.
- Detailed data collection regarding the areas of public management of religion in health, education and women’s rights.
- A systematic data organisation system organised across topics and province in Dropbox.
- A data organisation system which is cross referenced by an annotated literature review summarizing all documents obtained during the data collection.
- Data base and methodology was made available for all team members in September 2012 on the MCRI website.

#### Student Projects:

- **Erin Le Brun** partly based her Master’s thesis project entitled: « Impacts de la syndicalisation des intervenants spirituels en milieu de santé » (2013 - supervisor : **Solange Lefebvre**) on this research project.