

## Fact Sheet:

*La religiosité et le corps des détenues*

Barbara Thériault

Innovation Funding Project, 2012-2013

## Project Description and 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.

The original intention was to locate experiences of transcendence, the “wholly other,” within space (a city landscape). Drawing on Georg Simmel’s insights, the team members wanted to grasp objective and subjective forms of religion; they 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, two particular aspects moved to the centre of their analyses: the inmates’ bodies and religious artefacts. Whereas they focused in the first part of the project on interviews, they benefitted in the second part from participant observation.

## Methodology:

- a) Participant observation
- b) Individual and group interviews.

## Student Involvement:

- Étienne Guertin Tardif, Université de Montréal
- Monica Grigore, Université de Montréal

## Results:

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

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

## Dissemination:

Conferences

- **Thériault, Barbara.** 2013. “Der Rosenkranz. Religiöse Formen und Mode in einem Frauengefängnis,” Frankfurt/Oder, Germany, 2 July.
- **Thériault, Barbara.** 2013. “Wearing the Rosary. Religious Forms at a Women’s Jail,” *ISSR*, Turku, Finland, 30 June.



- **Thériault, Barbara.** 2013. “Comment on Imprisoned Religion. Transformations of Religion during and after Imprisonment in Eastern Germany,” *ISSR*, Turku, Finland, 30 June.
- **Guertin Tardif, Étienne.** 2013. “Religion et prison. Le cas d’un centre de détention du Québec,” *Colloque de l’ACSSUM*, Montréal, Québec, 5 avril.
- **Thériault, Barbara.** 2012. “Religion qualitativ erfassen. Ein Vorschlag,” *Europa-Universität Viadrina*, Frankfurt/Oder, Germany, 12 December.
- **Thériault, Barbara.** 2012. “Religion verorten. Eine Untersuchung im Frauengefängnis,” Frankfurt/Main, Goethe-Universität, Germany, 13 November.
- **Thériault, Barbara.** 2012. “Religion verorten. Eine Untersuchung im Frauengefängnis,” Institut für Kulturwissenschaften, Leipzig, 6 November 2012.

Seminar (*Religion and Diversity Project*)

- 10 May 2013, CCEAE, with **Susan Palmer**.

Teaching in Jail

- **Thériault, Barbara, Étienne Guertin Tardif and Monica Grigore.** 2013. “Café socio [la Burquette et les signes religieux],” Centre de détention Tanguay, Montréal, Québec, 30 avril.