

The Public Management of Religious Diversity in Quebec and Ontario

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Project Goals and Rationale

The initial goal of this project is to develop and implement a methodology and research process in Quebec that could subsequently be implemented in other Canadian provinces. Because William Hoverd was able to take on this research in the Ontario context, the project expanded to include a collaboration and comparison between the two provinces. In Canada, each province regulates religious groups and practices in a variety of ways. In this project the aim is 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 would include legal documents, program documents, mission statements and other texts which help to clarify the mandates, actions and criteria used by government bodies as they manage religious diversity.

When the project began, the aim of the first phase (fall 2011) was to identify and collect information on important actors, dates, texts, and laws in the management of religious diversity. In phase 2 (January to May 2012) the intention was to integrate collected data in a qualitative analysis software (QDA minor for those working out of the University of Montreal). The researchers would then agree on a system to appropriately code all materials collected. The analysis would then focus on the ways in which religion, rights, freedom of conscience, equality between religious groups, religious diversity and ethnicity are either recognized or not in emerging management policies. This project began with the following three hypotheses drawn from the MCRI project: (a) there appears to be a contradictory logic visible throughout the discourses and practices around religious diversity, which is understood as both a benefit and a problem; (b) these discourses are often based on a vision the “other” that accentuates difference, and, (c) seek a delicate balance between individuals, minority groups and majority groups.

As the research got underway, it became apparent that the goals of this project were too large for the time allotted to this project. We decided to focus on three specific areas in each province: health, education and women’s rights. For each of these areas we collected a corpus of documents and data that allow for a greater understanding of the way religious diversity is managed. The method section below details our system for collecting and organizing data. We then proceeded to compare preliminary findings within and between the provinces of Quebec and Ontario seeking to better understand the similarities and differences in the way religion is management.

Researchers

1. Erin LeBrun has been responsible for research on Quebec during this project. She is currently pursuing a Masters in practical theology at the University of Montreal where her project focuses on impact of the province-wide unionization of spiritual care professionals in Quebec on the evolution of this profession. At the university she

works as a research assistant for Dr. Solange Lefebvre on projects under the SSHRC funded MCRI Religion and Diversity Project. Erin is also a spiritual care professional who works in Montreal hospitals as a result she has been able to contribute a unique and important insider view to the health component of the study.

2. Dr William James Hoverd has been responsible for the Ontario research for the project. William is a DFAIT Government of Canada Commonwealth Fellow resident at the SSHRC Funded MCRI, the Religion and Diversity Project at Ottawa University. This research has allowed him to make a contribution to the Religion and Diversity project research environment. As a New Zealand scholar of religion this project has allowed him insight into the specific issues surrounding the public management of religious diversity within Ontario and Quebec.

Method

At the end of year one of the research project a systematic methodology has been developed and implemented. This research focuses upon 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.

The two researchers were each responsible for investigating these three areas in their respective province. Consequently, Erin LeBrun was responsible for Quebec and William Hoverd was responsible for Ontario. This research reviewed provincial level documents, primary sources from the institutions responsible for managing religious diversity, investigations of support groups and services which had religious origins as well as site visits, Google searches and a review of relevant academic literature relevant to the data collection. It also included talking to practitioners and experts within the fields that were being researched. All areas in which the State mentioned religion, employed religious actors or attempted to regulate religion were noted and collected.

The researchers worked on the same area concurrently and would meet by Skype every week. Thus, for example, the research and methodological approach focusing upon the public management of health in each province developed simultaneously. This concurrent process allowed the researchers to point each other into potentially fruitful sources of data. This process also allowed for comparative topics and investigations to be developed. After the initial collection, this data was reviewed by each researcher and then each subject area was cross checked with the other province to identify if any further information could be collected. Once collected the data was organised systematically by both researchers into a variety of documents, through a combined online dropbox system which gave both researchers and Solange Lefebvre access to monitor the research progress and full access to all the data.

The specific method details for the project are recorded in a separate document which is an important part of the project research. Currently, this method document precisely records the method and data organisation for the areas of Health and Education. The Women's Rights section of the research is still being finalised and when it is completed the project methodology will be included in this document.

Summary of Activities

Throughout the year, there were four meetings that brought together researchers Wil and Erin with principle investigator Solange Lefebvre and Religion and Diversity Project Director, Lori Beaman. These meetings served to direct the project, review findings and tackle challenges in the development of a methodology. Wil and Erin met weekly by Skype in order to refine their approaches review and compare findings.

In mid-March, Wil and Erin presented the project and preliminary findings at a meeting of the Montreal researchers involved in the MCRI project organized by Babara Thériault at the University of Montreal. In addition, this project has led to two conference presentations. Erin presented some of the findings on the management of religious diversity in Quebec Health Care in April 2012 at ACFAS in Montreal. This presentation is in the process of being edited for publication. Finally, Wil Hoverd will be presenting the initial findings at the Religion and Diversity Project Team Meeting at St John's College, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Provisional Findings

At the end of year one, the research project has collected detailed data upon the public management of religion in the health, education and women's rights sectors in Ontario and Quebec. As previously mentioned the women's rights material is still being finalised. When it comes to the public management of religion in the health and education sectors in Quebec and Ontario, the issues which have been found within these two areas tend to match each other. These findings are detailed below:

Ontario Public Management of Religion in the Health Sector

1. Provincial Government Sources
2. Hospital Structures
3. Chaplaincy
4. Individual Hospitals

Quebec Public Management of Religion in the Health Sector

1. Provincial Government Sources
2. Hospital Structures
3. Chaplaincy
4. Individual Hospitals

Ontario Public Management of Education

1. Provincial Government Data
2. Academic Articles
3. Province Specific = Catholic Schooling in Ontario

Quebec Public Management of Education

1. Provincial Government Data
2. Academic Articles and Chapters
3. Province Specific = Court Cases
4. Province Specific = Spiritual Animators
5. Province Specific = Private Schools

We found that in the case of health direct comparisons of the public management of religion could be made across the two provinces. In regards to the Public Management of Health in the two provinces we have 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 to a certain 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.

In summary, at the end of year one of the research project the project methodology has been developed. The findings for the management of religion within the sectors of health, education and women's rights have been collected and are now ready for analysis. At this stage the project is now ready to be both extended into new areas and to apply a further in-depth critical comparative analysis of the public management of religion in each province.

Outputs

1. A coherent developed project methodology for how to research the public management of religion by province in Canada.
2. Detailed data collection regarding the areas of public management of religion in health, education and women's rights.
3. A systematic data organisation system organised across topics and province in dropbox.
4. The data organisation system is cross reference by a annotated literature review which summarises each of the documents stored in the data collection.
5. Presentation of initials findings in Quebec health at ACFAS in Montreal (April 2012). This presentation is currently undergoing revisions for publication.
6. Co -Presentation of research project at MCRI Research Meeting at University of Montreal, March 2012 by Erin Lebrun and William Hoverd.
7. Presentation of initial Findings to be presented at the Religion and Diversity Project Team Meeting at St John College, Cambridge, United Kingdom. September 2012.
8. The data base and methodology will be available for all team member in September 2012, on the MCRI website.

Finances

8000\$: Salary for Erin Le Brun : 7966.75\$ (around 330 hours)