



# **Religion among Second Generation Immigrant Youth in Montreal and Canada**

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# First phase

- Second generation immigrant youth, aged 18-27— those born in Canada of immigrant parents or those under 10 years of age upon arrival;
- Immigrant young adults from Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim Families.

# 3 patterns

- 1 – Highly individualistic
- 2 – Lack of subgroup identification
- 3 – Muslims more clearly situate themselves

# 3. Research in Montreal

- South East Asian Catholic: 7 subjects, 5 female and 2 male
- Haitian Catholic: 8 subjects, 6 female and 2 male
- Haitian Protestant: 8 subjects, 6 female and 2 male
- Sub-Saharan African Protestant and Catholic: 11 subjects, 9 female and 2 male
- South American Catholic: 4 subjects, 2 female and 2 male
- Eastern European and Middle Eastern Orthodox: 9 subjects, 5 female and 4 male

# Questions

- When you talk about your “society” do you refer first to Canada or to Quebec? ...
- How can Canadian multiculturalism (or Quebec interculturalism) be improved? Or is this possible?
- Is there such a thing as “Canadian culture”? Quebec culture?
- Do you practice a religion? Do you feel at all restricted in the practice of your religion?

- 1. Sense of belonging
- 1.1 French as an identity marker
- 1.2 Cultural identification
- 2. Level and freedom of religious practice

# Multiple identities

- ... If I am at McGill University, I will say I am Canadian but if I am at UQAM and with francophone Quebecers, I feel more like a Quebecer. (South American)

# 1.1 French language as identity marker

- If I feel more like a Quebecker, it's because I feel more attached to the language, also a bit to the culture as compared to the rest of Canada.  
(...) (L. South American Focus)

# 1.1 French language as identity marker

- ...This is why I am a fervent supporter of Act 101 ... there is one thing that brings us all together around the table here—besides the fact that we're all human beings—it's that we can discuss and debate together in French , in a language in which we can all understand each other ... As for me, I'm very skeptical about multiculturalism. (Orthodox Focus)

## 1.2 Cultural identification

- There is a tendency of Haitian and sub-Saharan African young adults to identify exclusively with their culture of origin
- Tendency of young adults of Asian, South American, Eastern European, and Middle Eastern origin to assume an in-between identity.

## 2. Level and freedom of religious practice

- Of the 47 respondents, 26 said they were practicing, 17 non-practising, 2 on a spiritual quest, 1 atheist and 1 subject gave no information on this topic.

- Haitian Catholics like Protestants practice their faith in complete freedom; however, we note that it is this group which most firmly affirms its cultural difference and even sees itself as a victim of discrimination. Their discourse is clearly less in tune with the discourses on religion now circulating in Quebec.

- African focus: I'm a Protestant, I'm practising, uh... So, I'm practicing not just because my parents are Protestant, but because it's something I need. For a time I tried, I didn't know if I truly believed. You know at a moment where you have doubts. And then there was this emptiness, but I realized that I had deep anxiety. For a little while I stopped praying, I felt such anxiety, I said, I need to go to church, I need to pray. Then I realized that I pray every day, not because someone tells me to pray, but because I need it to start my day, to feel good ... (African Focus)

- I really feel that society permits me to live as I wish. However, at a more local level, I feel restricted in relation to my family. My family, they don't really know what I think; they think I'm like them, that I believe like them. Sometimes I just let things go: even if it's completely the reverse, I don't believe in it. I have another vision of religion ... How is that if it [Christianity] is not universal, but introduce a question like that in my family, it would start a war! (R, Orthodox Focus )