

**Newcomer Strategic Negotiations of Religious/Secular Identities and Spaces**

Examining the Tension between Structure and Agency in Processes of Immigrant  
Settlement in Ottawa, Canada

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## **Abstract**

This research project proposes to examine the role of religious/secular identities and spaces in processes of newcomer settlement. By focusing on how newcomer participants performed socio-spatially contingent religious/secular identities and experienced religious/secular spaces fluidly, I shed light on the importance of these negotiations of identity and space as settlement strategy. I examined these settlement strategies through participants' navigation of religious organizations and other spatial contexts such as the workplace, school and home. Informed by their individual agency, participants were shown to perform identities and experience different spaces in such a way as to address a variety of structural constraints and settlement challenges. This thesis research was conducted using a feminist geography framework, drawing on qualitative research methods. I relied on a mixed-methods approach, using participant observation, individual semi-structured interviews and mental maps to collect data. My data collection took place in Ottawa, focusing on the settlement experiences of 11 newcomers to the National Capital Region of Canada.

## Résumé

Ce projet de recherche propose d'examiner le rôle des identités religieuses/séculières ainsi que les espaces religieux/séculiers dans le processus d'établissement de nouveaux arrivants. En observant la performativité des identités religieuses/séculières et l'expérience vécue dynamique des espaces religieux/séculiers chez mes participants, j'illumine l'importance de ces négociations identitaires et spatiales en tant que stratégies d'établissement. J'ai examiné ces stratégies d'établissement chez mes participants à travers leur navigation d'organismes religieux et d'autres espaces tels que le lieu de travail, l'école et le domicile. À travers leur agentivité individuelle, les participants ont su performer des identités et naviguer divers espaces de manière à répondre à de nombreux défis d'établissement. Cette recherche se penche sur un cadre de géographie féministe, employant des méthodes de recherche qualitative. J'ai adopté 'une approche à méthodes-mixtes en me servant d'observation participante, d'entrevues individuelles semi-dirigées ainsi que des cartes mentales pour produire mes données. Ma collecte de données prit place à Ottawa, où j'ai examiné l'expérience d'établissement de 11 nouveaux arrivants à la Région de la Capitale Nationale.

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## Introduction

Geographies of religion were once considered to be a fading interest within the larger geographical enterprise (Kong, 2010). But there now is a growing consensus that religion is an increasingly significant field of geographical research (Kong, 2010; Sheringham, 2010). In the context of migration studies and newcomer settlement, the geographical study of religion has examined the ways in which religion contributes to the understanding of migrant service provision (Clope, Beaumont, 2012) and the formation of identity for new migrants (Garbin, 2013), among others. In my thesis research, I build on existing work with the aim to advance understanding of migrants' negotiations of religious/secular spaces and identities in their settlement processes. By shedding light on newcomers' navigation of religious/secular spaces and performances of religious/secular identity as a strategic response to settlement challenges, I also contribute to the understanding of newcomers' individual agency in negotiating structural factors in the settlement process.

First, I examine newcomers' participation in and engagement with religious organizations, which can serve as a beneficial space to mobilize human and social capital. These forms of capital facilitate newcomers' settlement process by mitigating some structural constraints such as lack of access to settlement information and social support networks. Moreover, I am interested in the influence of gender, notably gender roles and conceptions of femininity and masculinity, on newcomers' participation in religious organizations. Specifically, I wish to better understand how gender impacts newcomer men and women's navigation of religious/secular spaces and performance of religious/secular identities as a settlement strategy. In doing so, I seek to illuminate how religious engagement may have different settlement outcomes for newcomer men and women. My focus will then turn towards newcomers' performance of contextually appropriate religious/secular identities in a variety of spaces, including religious organizations as well as the workplace, educational institutions, home and public spaces. I will



examine how these performances serve as strategic individual acts responding to various structural factors – such as the secular “policing” of workspaces – which can facilitate newcomers’ settlement. Thus, my research will contribute to scholarship on the nexus between migration, settlement and geographies of religion by shedding light on the importance of performing fluid identities in a context of settlement. This study will also provide insights into the tension between structure and agency in the settlement process by examining how newcomers manage to negotiate between constraining factors and their ability to act through their performance of contextually appropriate identities.

In the current neoliberal context of many Western countries — including Canada — researchers have noted the withdrawal of the welfare state from social service provision, thus creating significant shortcomings in service provision (Beaumont, Dias, 2008; Cloke, Beaumont, 2012). This reality has left many vulnerable populations such as newcomers in an increasingly precarious situation. In light of this state withdrawal, private actors have come forward to fill service provision gaps (Hebdon, Jalette, 2008). In the case of newcomer settlement and integration services, religious organizations have emerged as important actors in response to community needs (Sheringham, 2010; Wills et al. 2009). Given this context, increasing research in the area of religion and migration has been undertaken to examine the role of religious organizations in the settlement and integration processes of newcomers. The focus of my thesis is also on the influence of religious/secular identities and spaces, such as religious organizations, in the settlement process of newcomers. But while most of the current research examines settlement through the role of religious organizations as service providers, I am interested in examining how newcomers themselves as active agents participate in and engage with religious organizations and perform context dependent religious/secular identities as a settlement strategy. In turn my research will serve to frame newcomers’ religious participation and performance of religious/secular identity as a strategic negotiation of constraining factors which may shape their settlement process.

Thus my focus is not so much on the role of religious organizations in processes of settlement. Rather, I examine the conditions that lead to newcomers' participation within religious organizations and how these individuals' strategic negotiations of religious/secular space and identity in the context of these organizations and society in general influence their settlement experience. Below, I present my research objectives and general arguments, as well as an outline of the thesis.

### *Research Objectives*

The main goal of this research project is to examine the significance of newcomers' navigation of religious/secular spaces and performances of religious/secular identity in the context of the settlement process. I seek to examine these spatial navigations and performances of identity as potential settlement strategy on the part of newcomers. In addressing this main objective, I also contribute to debates on the tension between structure and agency in migration and settlement studies. I wish to better understand how newcomers' spatial experiences of religion and performances of religious/secular identity as settlement strategy may be informed by negotiations of structural and agential factors. Specifically, my three main objectives are as follows:

1) The first objective is to examine newcomers' mobilization of religious identity and navigation of religious space in the context of settlement. I seek to achieve this by focusing on newcomers' participation within religious organizations as a potential settlement strategy. Why do newcomers participate within religious organizations, and how does their participation and engagement within them influence their settlement process? In doing so, I will shed light on the structural and agential factors that may encourage religious engagement, as well as the potential settlement benefits of religious participation. Therefore, by first examining the motivations for and outcomes of newcomers' navigation of religious organizations in a settlement context, I will also advance understanding of newcomers' negotiation of structural constraints on their settlement strategies.

2) The second objective is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the potential settlement benefits of newcomer men and women's participation within religious organizations. Given that migration is both a gendered and gendering process, I wish to examine how gender dynamics influence newcomers' negotiation and experience of religious spaces and identities. As the literature review outlines below, structural constraints are negotiated differently by individuals depending on a variety of factors, including identity markers such as gender. I will therefore examine how gender, notably the re-negotiation of gender roles and conceptions of femininity and masculinity, influence newcomer men and women's engagement within religious organizations. By examining how gender may play a role in religious engagement, and in turn influence settlement outcomes, I add nuance to the understanding of newcomers' navigation of religious organizations in their settlement process. I wish to illuminate gender as a potentially enabling and/or constraining structural factor that influences newcomers' navigation of religious space.

3) Thirdly, I seek to conceptualize the ways in which newcomers perform religious/secular identities in order to effectively navigate through different spaces, including religious organizations but also beyond these. By examining how various factors such as space and its social context may influence performances of religious/secular identity, I wish to provide insight into the fluid and dynamic nature of religious/secular identities and physical spaces. In so doing, I will provide insights into the importance of performances of religious/secular identities and contextually dependent experiences of religious/secular spaces as settlement strategy. Also, by examining the structural and agential factors that bring forth these performances, I provide insight into newcomers' negotiations of structure through their individual agency in their settlement strategies.

In order to meet these objectives, I adopted a feminist approach using a qualitative methodology, including participant observation, individual interviews and mental maps. My research was conducted with

Francophone Christian newcomers to Ottawa, a second tier immigrant destination<sup>1</sup> in Canada. The findings and analysis produced in the context of my research allow me to advance three main research arguments.

### *Research Arguments*

In chapter 3, I argue that newcomers actively engage within religious organizations in order to address different settlement challenges. Newcomers perform fluid religious/secular identities within the space of religious organizations to access and mobilize various resources such as human and social capital in order to enhance their settlement outcomes. For example, performing secular identities within religious organizations allows newcomers to tap into networks of information (e.g. concerning employment, housing) and to develop beneficial friendships which facilitate settlement. Most of the literature on settlement and religious organizations, however, focuses on the role of these organizations in service provision, thus neglecting individual newcomers as active agents in their own settlement process. I argue that newcomers' agential negotiation of structural constraints (e.g., state restructuring, lack of settlement service provision) lead them to participate within religious organizations as a beneficial settlement strategy. This religious engagement offers potentially beneficial outcomes, as mentioned above. Therefore, I propose an understanding of religious organizations not as settlement service providers. Rather, I explain that participants engage in religious organizations as a strategic response to structurally-driven settlement challenges. Religious organizations thus act as beneficial settlement spaces which allow newcomers to improve their own settlement outcomes.

In chapter 4, I posit that while religious organizations are experienced as a settlement space in which newcomers may develop and mobilize beneficial forms of human and social capital, all newcomers do not do so equally. In fact, my findings reveal that newcomer women mobilize various forms of capital

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<sup>1</sup> Second-tier immigrant destination refers to a metropolitan area with a recent migrant population between 40 000-100 000 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005).

within religious organizations more effectively than their male counterparts. This is done, for example, through the creation of mutual networks of support and volunteer work. I support my argument with an analysis of the re-negotiation of gender roles through international migration as well as participants' conceptions of masculinity and femininity in the space of religious organizations. These structural factors, alongside divergent agential volitions among men and women participants allow us to understand the strategic navigation of religious organizations as a settlement strategy predominantly employed by women.

Finally, in chapter 5 I argue that newcomers' performances of religious/secular identities both within religious organizations and in society in general represents an important settlement strategy. Participants performed appropriate context dependent identities informed by their structural context and their individual agency in understanding these structures. By underlining participants' acute awareness of their socio-spatial surroundings, I shed light on the importance of negotiating structure through strategic performances of religious/secular identity. Many participants' performative settlement strategies, which included performing secular identities in order to "fit-in" with co-workers in the workspace and to create friendships, were made possible through their understanding of the spatial and social context in which they found themselves. Therefore, it is argued that space was a determining factor in the performance of context dependent identities. Moreover, socio-spatial contexts represent a structural factor that may enable and/or constrain certain performances. My findings show that socio-spatial contexts informed a variety of performances of identities, and thus newcomers' identities were performed fluidly. These fluid performances were shown to fit within a wide ranging spectrum of religious/secular identities which all corresponded to specific social and spatial settings. It is therefore impossible to examine newcomers' performances of religious/secular identities as settlement strategy without addressing the socio-spatial contexts, structural factors and individual agency which may inform them.

## *Thesis Outline*

In what follows, the first chapter will provide a review of the literature in order to contextualize my project within existing research conducted by geographers, migration and gender theorists and sociologists. In particular, I will discuss the main theories, concepts and debates in the fields of religion, migration and settlement, structure/agency and structuration theory, as well as performativity, identity and space. In addition, the review will highlight concepts, theories and issues on which my research builds in order to advance understanding of newcomers' navigation of religious/secular space and performance of religious/secular identity as settlement strategy. In Chapter 2, I present my research methodology. After a description of my case study, I explain my methodological approach as well as my research design, data collection and analysis, positionality and limitations of my research. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 will present my research findings in relation to the research objectives and arguments outlined above. In Chapter 3, I examine how newcomers navigate religious organizations as part of their settlement experience and strategy. In particular, I focus on newcomers' creation and mobilization of human and social capital within religious organizations as a strategic response to constraining structural factors. Thus, participation within religious organizations represents a strategy that may provide settlement benefits to newcomers and is informed by newcomers' negotiations of their spatial environment and structural constraints. Next, in Chapter 4, I pay attention to the gender(ed) dynamics that influence newcomer men and women's different levels of participation within religious organizations. I examine the different factors that lead to a greater presence of women within religious organizations, and provide insight into the subsequent settlement outcomes for newcomer men and women. Moreover, this will improve understanding of how newcomer men and women address constraining structures such as gender roles and conceptions of femininity and masculinity differently in their settlement context. In Chapter 5, I turn to the question of performativity of religious/secular identities as settlement strategy. Based on my findings, I frame newcomers' performances of religious/secular identities as contextually dependent. That is, newcomers perform along a spectrum of

religious/secular identities in response to the social and spatial context in which they find themselves. Thus these fluid and spatially contingent performances are informed by both structural factors and individual agency. I argue that newcomers, through individual agency, strategically navigate constraining structures in their performances of religious/secular identity to improve settlement outcomes. The concluding chapter will summarize my main findings and arguments while also providing directions for future research.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Literature review**

This literature review will cover themes, concepts and theories central to my research project, including the role of religious organizations in newcomer settlement, the concepts of structure and agency, as well as the performativity of identities. In addition, I will show how my project builds on existing research in order to further understanding of newcomers' strategic performances of religious/secular identities and navigation of religious/secular spaces in their settlement processes. This examination of performative identities and strategic navigation of space will allow me to shed light on newcomers' negotiations of structural factors and individual agency in their settlement experience, a research area in migration and settlement literature that has not been discussed in great detail. The chapter is organized in three main sections. First, I will discuss the role of religious organizations as beneficial spaces in the settlement processes and experiences of newcomers. Drawing on the works of Alba & Foner (2008) Chaze & George (2009) and Mooney (2013) among others, I will explain how my research advances knowledge of religious engagement as an important settlement strategy which can help newcomers subvert structural barriers to settlement. Next, I define the concepts of structure and agency and discuss structuration theory, and show how these have been used and applied in migration and settlement studies. In particular, I will demonstrate that little research has been conducted on the negotiation of structure/agency in the field of immigrant settlement and geographies of religion, which my research proposes to do. Finally, I discuss the concept of performativity. Drawing on the work of feminist theorists and feminist geographers such as Butler (1993), Nelson (1999) and Doan (2010), I will explain how the notion of performativity can be useful to frame newcomers' performances of religious/secular identities as spatially and socially contingent. That is, the socio-spatial context in which an individual finds himself will influence the way he/she decides to perform identity. Therefore, by examining newcomers' fluid performances of religious/secular identities, I will also



shed light on the influence of newcomers' negotiations of structural constraints in the context of settlement, a field of research which has not been addressed in great detail in the literature.

### **1.1 The role of religious organizations in newcomer settlement processes and experience**

Much of the literature on religious organizations and migration examines the role of these organizations in social service provision. In contrast, my own research focuses on the potential benefits of religious organizations as spaces where newcomers may foster and mobilize resources such as human and social capital that may facilitate their settlement process. In this section, I discuss a number of studies that have examined the role of religious organizations in processes of newcomer settlement in order to provide context for my research. But given the limited body of literature on religious organizations as spaces that enable newcomers' strategic responses to structural constraints, this section sheds light on the need for more scholarship on religion, migration and settlement, an area to which my own project aims to contribute.

Religious organizations can play an instrumental role in many aspects of newcomers' settlement processes insofar as they can provide a variety of benefits to newcomers. Many studies cite the lack of access to useful information as an important structural barrier to newcomer settlement (Mooney, 2013; Chaze, George, 2009). In their research on the settlement of newcomer South Asian women in Toronto, Chaze and George (2009) demonstrate that the greatest challenge for these women was a lack of access to useful information with regard to the differences between their countries of origin and Canada. Therefore, newcomers need access to information pertaining to climate, differences in culture and values as well as available settlement resources. Religious organizations help newcomers adapt to their society of settlement by providing access to these types of useful information. In the context of religious organizations, newcomers can connect with "native born co-religionists" (Levitt, 2008) who are often familiar with the country of settlement. These individuals can share their valuable information and

experiences with newcomers, creating useful informal information networks (Levitt, 2008) which can address some of the constraining factors pertaining to lack of access to information. Religious organizations also offer more formal information concerning housing, basic food supplies, support from NGOs and foundations, as well as availability of health services (Rivera-Sanchez, 2005). Other important information found within religious organizations pertains to employment opportunities (Connor, Koenig, 2013; Rivera-Sanchez, 2005).

Access to employment opportunities is instrumental to newcomer settlement. Yet finding employment represents a significant challenge for newcomers (Reitz, 2007; Reitz et al. 2014), often due to the devaluation of migrant workers' credentials and experience in the Canadian workforce (Bauder, 2003). In this context, religious organizations often act as important resources that can help newcomers subvert structural barriers to employment (Mooney, 2013). For example, "(I)migrant involvement in the activities of churches, mosques, or temples may provide them with access (...) to organized assistance on the job market, or to more general status-bridging social capital" (Connor, Koenig, 2013). Beyond organized assistance to find employment, religious organizations are also useful to newcomers by providing volunteer opportunities. Some of these opportunities include mentoring or teaching courses, as well as opportunities to become involved as community leaders (Sinha, Handy, Greenspan, 2011). Such volunteering opportunities can provide migrants with increased interpersonal, communication and managerial skills, as well as substantive knowledge (Scott, Selbee, Reed, 2006) making them more employable. Volunteering within a religious organization also represents an opportunity for newcomers to have their work recognized. Reference letters and recognition awards given by religious organizations to newcomers for their volunteer work may demonstrate to potential employers the acquisition of experience and valuable skills (Handy, Greenspan, 2009). Beyond the increased employability newcomers can gain through volunteer work, the respectability gained can also translate into greater opportunities of leadership and

service within religious organizations that can increase the social status and thus the mobility of new immigrants (Alba, Foner, 2008).

While religious organizations can help newcomers through access to information and volunteer work to increase their employment prospects, it often takes time for immigrants to find employment. Therefore, newcomers who may not have any social ties within their country of settlement must often count on financial support networks. In these circumstances, religious organizations act as a “major source of social and economic assistance for those in need” (Hirschman, 2004: 1207). Having some sort of financial support during the transition period from one country to the next can have an extremely positive influence on the settlement experience of immigrants.

Religious organizations also contribute to newcomers’ settlement process through complementary educational programs (Connor, Koenig, 2013). In many ways, religious organizations act as recreational centers and civic spaces. Many churches offer useful programs such as citizenship classes, language classes, afternoon school for children as well as initiatives to promote voting and campaigning in elections. Churches can also act as spaces for civic festivities such as national holidays (Rivera-Sanchez, 2005). These various programs and initiatives can help new migrants learn about secular services and opportunities available within the public sphere, while also learning about their settlement country’s different cultures and values. This cultural learning process is an important aspect of newcomer adaptation and settlement. As Dwyer et al. (2013) demonstrate, some religious organizations are actively involved with newcomer congregants in this cultural learning experience. They give the example of a Sikh temple in Vancouver where there are “signs in the langar hall reminding visitors they must sit at chairs and tables and not on the floor” (Dwyer, Tse, Ley, p.32). This temple is contributing to its members’ cultural adaptation process by clarifying certain cultural norms found in the country of settlement and thus newcomers adapt to their new environment more effectively.

Much of the literature on the role of religious organizations stresses the importance of creating a sense of belonging. Religious organizations are often said to help newcomers overcome feelings of isolation and exclusion in the society of settlement. Hirschman (2004) explains that immigrant participation in religious communities and activities is an integral part of integrating a new society. This form of social engagement and participation can help foster a sense of belonging for newcomers. Furthermore, “religious membership offers a refuge in the sense that it creates a sense of belonging and participation in the face of loss and the strains of adjustment” (Hirschman, 2004: 1228). Religious organizations can thus act as support networks for many immigrants, replacing common feelings of alienation and loneliness with those of hope, purpose and meaning. In fact, the opportunity for newcomers to create social relationships with other newcomers from their country of origin is beneficial. These relationships can help newcomers foster a sense of comfort and familiarity within their new environment (Larsen et al, 2004). By becoming more familiar with their country of settlement, it is easier for newcomers to feel as if they belong. Therefore, in many cases participation within religious organizations can create a level of security, trust and comfort that secular organizations cannot offer (Cadge, Levitt, Jaworsky, Clevenger, 2013).

Religious organizations also help foster feelings of belonging through the occupation of space by making newcomers more visible in the urban landscape (Rivera-Sanchez, 2005; Garbin, 2013). Garbin describes the act of parading by the Kimbanguist Church in London, UK and Atlanta, USA, as “a collective act of inscription of particular modes of belonging in the public domain” (2013: 693). By parading in public, religious organizations can help create an identity as people who belong to a specific society. In light of this, Garbin argues that religious identity is performed in public (e.g., through marching and festivals) to acquire a sense of belonging through the spatial appropriation of the urban landscape. By performing a religious identity in public, individuals effectively sacralize their new environment, rooting their identity in space, and embody the right of their communities to belong in their country of settlement (Werbner, 1996). This is echoed by Rivera-Sanchez (2005) who argues that the practice of religious ceremonies, beyond the

religious aspects, is transformed into “an affirmation of belonging to a vital space” (20). These authors underline the fact that religious practices are performed in the context of religious organizations in order to establish a sense of belonging and community in a new environment. Given the significance of performing religious identity to foster a sense of belonging for many newcomers, more research is needed to understand how the performativity of religious identities may influence the settlement process of newcomers.

Religious organizations are also said to play a key role in newcomer settlement through the potential to create social networks within these organizations (Dwyer, Tse, Ley, 2013). Social networks allow the formation of important relationships and also foster civic engagement within migrant communities (Larsen et al. 2004). These social networks are not limited to the religious sphere; they often extend within the public sphere (Rivera-Sanchez, 2005). For many newcomers, creating useful social networks can be a daunting task, as they face a new environment in the country of settlement which may be difficult to navigate. Religious organizations often offer places of worship that are inviting to new migrants. Often times social support networks such as those offered by the state are more bureaucratic and less approachable for newcomers (Mooney, 2013). In religious organizations newcomers are often more comfortable and can interact with people who are more familiar with their situation, increasing their access to institutional support that favors the creation of social capital through social networks (Dwyer, Tse, Ley, 2013; Connor, Koenig, 2013).

The concept of social capital is important to the study of social networks. Putnam (1993) describes it as the “features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (2). Portes (1995), however, argues that resources such as social networks do not constitute social capital in and of themselves. Rather, “the concept refers to the individual’s capacity to mobilize them (resources) on demand” (12). Portes thus posits that not all individuals have the same ability to mobilize certain resources. Therefore, an individual’s capacity to mobilize social relationships,

useful networks of information, and so on, constitutes social capital. In the context of my research, I adopt Portes' understanding of social capital as my findings demonstrate that not all newcomers mobilize resources equally.

It is also necessary to distinguish between different types of capital, specifically bridging and bonding social capital (Larsen et al. 2004). Bonding social capital constitutes the networks, trust and relationships between neighbours, or people from the same socio-economic class, whereas bridging social capital is further reaching and implies the connection and formation of networks between members of different groups or classes (Larsen et al. 2004). Bonding social capital, which is a precedent to bridging capital, does not typically result in collective action. In many cases, lower income and more marginalized populations have difficulty transforming bonding social capital to the further reaching bridging social capital. My research will thus examine how my participants mobilize various resources to develop both bonding and bridging social capital.

Multiple studies (Dwyer, Tse, Ley, 2013; Connor, Koenig, 2013) have demonstrated that religious organizations contribute to newcomers' settlement through the formation of social capital. However, the study of social capital has often been accused of omitting the dynamics of gender that are present within the creation of norms, trust and networks that may constitute social capital (O'Neil, Gidengil, 2006). While not completely absent from the study of social capital, various categories of identity are often excluded from the subject. In my research I thus examine the ways in which gender informs newcomers' participation and engagement within religious organizations. In turn, this will help illuminate how gender influences newcomers' negotiations of structural constraints to settlement, as well as how these negotiations shape differential access to and mobilization of social capital. Religious organizations undoubtedly provide valuable resources that may be mobilized into forms of social capital (Connor, Koenig, 2013; Alba, Foner, 2008), but I ask: how does the capacity to mobilize this social capital differ among newcomer men and women in light of structural and agential factors?

Finally, most studies on the role of religious organizations in newcomer settlement processes frame these organizations as social service providers. While this is undoubtedly often the case, these studies often neglect to pay attention to the individual newcomers and their experiences of settlement from their own perspectives. This effectively strips newcomers of their individual agency by focusing solely on how religious organizations facilitate, assist and contribute to newcomer settlement. In my research, I examine how newcomers perform religious identities and participate within religious organizations, and discuss how this religious engagement can help them negotiate various structural factors (e.g. lack of access to settlement services, employment, social networks). Therefore, by better understanding how newcomers' participation within religious organizations can represent a beneficial settlement strategy, I contribute to the scholarship on the importance of individual agency in negotiations of structural factors within the context of settlement. This allows me to focus more specifically on the role of individual newcomers in their own settlement process, as well as the importance of understanding religious organizations as beneficial spaces of social gathering that facilitate the mobilization of important resources such as human and social capital.

## **1.2 Structure, agency and structuration theory**

In this section, I provide a review of the current literature on the concepts of structure and agency. Drawing on contemporary research, I define each of these concepts alongside examples of their application in migration and settlement studies. While many scholars in migration studies engage with the concepts of structure and agency, an epistemological dichotomy still pervades in the field. That is, researchers are often guilty of prioritizing one concept over the other despite efforts to reconcile structure and agency within their research (King, 2012). In turn, I will discuss Giddens' (1984) structuration theory as a potential tool to overcome epistemological challenges in migration research, while also illuminating structuration theory's shortcomings in its attempt to address the structure/agency binary. I then draw attention to the fact that

research surrounding the concepts and negotiation of structure/agency in the study of newcomer settlement remains relatively limited when compared to studies on other aspects and stages of migration (e.g. decisions and motivations to migrate, migratory movements, and so on). I thus propose to address this gap in the structure/agency literature through my examination of newcomers' performances and experiences of religious/secular identities and spaces. By examining how socio-spatial contexts inform newcomers fluid performances of religious/secular identities and dynamic experiences of religious/secular spaces, my research provides insight into the tension between structure and agency in newcomer settlement processes.

### *Structure*

For the purposes of my research, I draw on Morawska's (2001) understanding of structure. According to her, structure can be defined as "patterns of social (including economic and political) relations and cultural formations constituted through everyday practice of social actors [...] [with] differential capacity to enable and constrain human agency" (52). Structure can vary in character, scope, dynamic and durability, but represents the multitude of factors that constrain (but may also enable, as will be discussed below in the section on structuration theory) individuals' decision making and action taking processes.

In migration studies, structural factors that have been examined include the role of immigration policies (Hoerder, Walker, 2012; Baglay, Nakache, 2014), labour markets (Bauder, 2006), and more recently borders and security controls (Leitner, Preston, 2012; Mountz, 2013, 2014), among others. Moreover, ethnicity and race (Boswell, Ray, 2012), gender (Ray, Rose, 2012) and socio-economic status (Darden, Fong, 2012) also represent structuring factors in migratory processes and experiences. Studies on the experiences of temporary migrants to Canada such as low-skilled Mexican seasonal agricultural workers (Basok, 2004; Preibisch, Hennebry, 2011) illustrate the impact of socio-economic status on decisions to migrate and on migratory experiences once in the country of settlement.



With regard to the specific settlement process, structural factors that influence immigrant settlement and integration include housing (Ghosh, 2014), service provision (Trudeau, Veronis, 2009; Veronis, 2013), labour market dynamics (Bauder, 2003; Reitz, 2007), language (Creese, 2003), and more generally processes of racialization and discrimination (Boswell, Ray, 2012; Bannerji, 2000). For example, Bauder (2003) argues that migrants face challenges accessing employment through the systematic devaluation of their credentials, which excludes them from the upper segments of the work force. Canada's process of recognizing foreign credentials thus acts as a constraining structure which negatively impacts newcomer settlement. With regard to language, Gillian Creese's (2003) research on the "policing" of linguistic accents among African migrant women to Canada points to a powerful barrier which acts as a deeply constraining structure. Creese argues that the "Canadian English" accent acts as a figurative and material border which effectively excludes "African English" accents. She illustrates through her findings how "African English" accents lead to decreased access to material benefits such as employment opportunities and access to housing when compared to individuals who possess a "Canadian English" accent. Moreover, accents also serve to inform perceptions of who belongs in Canada, essentially framing African women as "Others" through this linguistic border. Therefore, African accents in Canada serve as a constraining structure as it limits African migrant women's access to material benefits and frames them as second-class citizens. Similar processes have been noted with regard to Francophone immigrants in Canada, both in Quebec and in Francophone minority contexts (see Gilbert et al., 2014; Veronis, 2015).

The religious context in Canada can also represent a constraining structure to some. As Buckingham (2010) illustrates, Canada is an increasingly secular society, with increasingly secular school systems and work spaces. This can make it more difficult to perform an overtly religious identity in public. Nevertheless, she also illuminates the fact that certain religious freedoms and rights are protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as by the Supreme Court of Canada. In this sense, Canadian society can be said to enable certain religious practices.

Other studies reveal how religion can act as an important discriminatory structural factor, especially when it comes to racialized minorities. As Cowan (2008) explains, religious diversity in the Canadian context can lead to fear and religious intolerance among some individuals. He explains that constructions of fear surrounding religious diversity, which are often the product of sensationalist media coverage, can lead to homogenizing social relations. For some, extreme behaviour which represents the exception now becomes the rule, as “all Hindus become potential Thuggess, all Jehovah’s Witnesses a threat to state security, and all polygamists sexually abusive. Similarly, every plane, every train, every automobile becomes a potential threat” (p.81). This fear of the “other” is a common experience for racialized minorities, and represents an incredibly constraining structure. As Hamdon (2010) explains, the racialization (conflation of race, ethnicity, nationality and religion) of religious minorities, specifically Muslims, is both normative and material. It leads to a construction of us vs. them, which serves to alienate minorities. It also results in discrimination in employment, health care and education. Racialization and discrimination also manifest themselves through vandalism of religious property, such as places of worship. While my participants were not Muslim, racialization, as Hamdon (2010) explains, serves to conflate race, ethnicity nationality and religion. Therefore, racialization and religious discrimination can represent a structural factor for my participants who are visible minorities.

### *Agency*

Schwandt (2001) defines agency as individuals’ capacity to “perceive their situation, reason about it, consciously monitor their actions, form motives, and so on” (4). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) also convey the idea of individual decision making and action taking as a process integral to agency. They define the concept of agency as actors’ engagement that is embedded in a specific spatiotemporal context and informed by and also influencing the structures to which individuals respond through their actions. Building on these definitions, I employ the concept of agency in my research to refer to the thoughts and actions taken by individuals to address the structural factors and processes that they face. It is also important to

note, however, that because structure is so varied, agency is also exerted in multiple ways depending on the individual and the context.

Agency is central to many studies on migration, notably to examine migrants' decisions to move. For example, Bastia's (2013) work on Bolivian women's migratory movements to Argentina illustrates their engaged thought process and subsequent migratory patterns. She explores the concept of autonomy to highlight how these women exercise agency. Bastia argues that Bolivian women are increasingly taking ownership of their own movements, and thus display greater agency in their decisions to migrate. According to Bastia, these women migrate in order to strengthen and reproduce family, regardless of their own self-interest. They are able to assess their situation, and decide to migrate in order to access more beneficial opportunities in Argentina. These migrations are even at times undertaken without their husbands. These women's ability to assess their situation and act by moving beyond traditional patriarchal migratory movements, effectively leaving "with or without their husbands" is indicative of their individual agency.

Sutama Ghosh's (2013) research on Bangladeshi migrant women in Toronto also highlights the significance of agency in migratory movements. One of her research participants explained that she adopted migration as a strategy, perceiving this movement as her "only chance" (725) to escape the constraints of the patriarchal Bangladeshi society. This woman understood her family's context and thus acted towards improving her opportunities. It is important to note, however, that these two examples by Bastia (2013) and Ghosh (2013) represent different realities and lived-experiences. Agency is influenced by various intersecting factors such as gender, ethnicity/race and class, among others. In fact, Bastia's participants were mostly Bolivian low-skilled female workers, which explains their migration to neighbouring Argentina. On the other hand, the Bangladeshi women in Ghosh's study were highly-skilled

and therefore were able to access greater mobility by undertaking a geographically more important migration to Canada.

Turning to studies on settlement processes and experiences, Veronis and Ray (2014) illustrate how newcomers exert agency in their migration and settlement strategies once they arrive in the destination country. In a study on the life course and settlement strategies in the transborder city of Ottawa-Gatineau, Veronis and Ray show that many Francophone newcomers from sub-saharan Africa choose to settle in Ottawa because of the bilingual education opportunities available to their children. They perceived this education as beneficial to their children, allowing them to eventually access more highly-skilled employment opportunities as opposed to unilingual (English or French) individuals. Thus, these migrants' assessment of potential opportunities and benefits of education language policies in the province of Ontario (where bilingual education is available to newcomers) vs. in Quebec (where newcomer families have access to French-language education only) informed their decisions to migrate to and settle in Ottawa.

The literature on religion and migration also provides examples of individual agency. As mentioned, newcomers often turn to religious organizations to access different services such as housing or employment information (Hirschman, 2004), education programs (Connnor, Koenig, 2013) as well as providing a sense of familiarity and comfort (Larsen et al. 2004). As newcomers often have many needs and few resources (Hirschman, 2004), their ability to understand their situation and mobilize in the context of religious organizations in order to access different resources is indicative of their individual agency.

### *Structuration Theory and the Challenge of Reconciling Structure and Agency*

Issues regarding the role of structure and agency are integral to contemporary research on migration. But researchers are often challenged to effectively describe how migrants negotiate the role of structural forces vs. their individual agency. Many studies grapple with the difficult task of examining migratory processes through the lens of both structure and agency. As King (2012) explains, often times

researchers fall victim to an epistemological dichotomy which leads them to prioritize the examination of one concept over the other. Nevertheless, as the discussion on structure and agency illustrates, both processes influence migratory outcomes, albeit in different manners. Therefore, to improve research on migration a concerted effort must be made to reconcile both structure and agency by examining how they are negotiated in order to paint a more accurate portrait of migrants' lived experiences.

Anthony Giddens' structuration theory provides a tool to reconcile the tension between structure and agency, and may provide an epistemological answer to this issue. In his 1984 book entitled *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration*, Giddens develops structuration theory as a way to overcome the structure and agency binary opposition. He argues that structure influences individuals' actions, but that these actions in turn also inform structure. According to Giddens, structure does not only constrain behaviour but also enables individuals to act in certain ways. Moreover, he describes individuals as possessing agency, in the sense that they are consciously aware of their surrounding context. Therefore, individuals act in a way to address the realities of the structure around them, both constraining and enabling. Their individual agency allows them to operate with a certain degree of freedom (depending on the context) despite being at times constrained. As this summary of structuration theory illustrates, Giddens was interested in providing a framework through which researchers could examine the negotiation of structure and agency at the individual level.

Nevertheless, critiques have been made to structuration theory. For example, Archer (1995) offers a critical realist critique of structuration by arguing that inherent within it is a "duality of structure," which conflates structure and agency. By examining the two alongside one another, Archer argues that structuration theory makes it impossible to observe structures themselves. Structuration requires that structure be examined through agency, which would be responsible for reproducing structure. Critical realists see structure as initially emerging through agency, but after a certain point it exists independently

of the agency that allowed it to emerge (Bakewell, 2010). Therefore, observing structure through agency as structuration theory proposes would become useless, as structure eventually exists without agency informing it. Nonetheless, while critiques of structuration do exist, it provides a framework through which to examine actors' negotiations of structure and agency.

Richmond (1993) draws on structuration theory to examine the relationship between structure and agency. He proposes examining structure and agency along a continuum that ranges from rational (proactive) and constrained (reactive) actions. We could thus understand actors' negotiations of structure/agency, in short their actions, as the outcome of both agency (proactive) and structure (reactive). Conway (2007) also takes Giddens' (1984) work in a similar direction by describing migration as both flexible in terms of migrants' decisions to move (agency), and contingent, alluding to the factors (e.g., global capital flows, unequal resource distribution, core-periphery relations) that may constrain individuals towards migrating (structure). Finally, Morawska (2001) provides an interesting structuration model as she explains that "migrants' activities are neither simply the products of structures nor their agential volitions but of the dialectics of the power to and power over as these actors define and pursue their purposes, playing with or against different structures" (54).

Some studies on settlement experiences have addressed the constraining/enabling nature of structure, as well as the influence of agency in negotiating these. Veronis' (2014) work on the experience of newcomers to the transborder city of Ottawa-Gatineau illustrates how structure may be conducive to enabling action. Ottawa's designation as a bilingual city is a factor that draws many immigrants to the region. Francophone immigrants who also want to practice their English often perceive Ottawa as an ideal destination. Therefore, the bilingual status of Ottawa acts as a structure that enables many migratory movements to the region. Also, newcomers' understanding of Ottawa as a bilingual destination and their subsequent decision to move to this city highlights newcomers' agency in negotiating structure. Yet the

lived experience of Francophone immigrants to Ottawa is at times less than ideal. Veronis demonstrates through participants' testimonies how access to French language services is often challenging despite the designation of Ottawa as a bilingual municipality. Therefore, while bilingualism enabled migration to the area for some, its application and lived experience can also act as a constraining factor in Francophone newcomers' settlement process. This example illustrates how researchers might reconcile structure (both constraining and enabling) and agency when examining migratory motivations and actions, which remains the aim of structuration theory.

### **1.3 Performativity as a tool to examine the tension between structure/agency**

As the previous section explains, migration scholars have often been challenged with negotiating the tension between structure and agency. Structuration theory was presented as a potential epistemological and methodological tool to address this challenge. I now turn to the concept of performativity as an alternative framework through which to examine individuals' agency and their negotiation of different structural factors. This will allow me to add to the scholarship on the tension between structure and agency in settlement processes. I will begin by defining the concept, after which I provide examples of its application in contemporary geographical research as well as migration studies. Finally, I will explain how I intend to apply this concept in my research in order to examine newcomers' negotiations of religious/secular identities and spaces and the outcomes of these negotiations on their settlement experience.

Judith Butler (1993) defines performativity as a ritualized repetition of actions that are constrained by the social norms of a specific time and place. Whereas Butler draws primarily on the concept of structure to conceptualize performativity, Nelson (1999) describes performativity as the actions taken by individuals who are "geographically concrete subject[s] that [are] constituted by dominant discourses, but [are] potentially able to reflect upon and actively negotiate, appropriate or resist them" (332).

Therefore, Nelson describes performativity more alongside the concept of agency. In my research, I draw upon and reconcile both these understandings to define performativity as individuals' actions and displays of identity which are informed both by structure and individual agency. Performativity is thus the product of the individual negotiation of structure and agency as well as the socio-spatial context in which an actor finds her/himself.

An interesting example of performativity in the context of migration and settlement is Ghosh's (2013) examination of performances of South-Asian identity in Toronto. She demonstrates through her participants' testimonies how these newcomers negotiate the structure/agency tension to perform the most context appropriate identities. For example, one participant explained how he did not refer to himself as "Indian" when asked about his heritage in public. Instead, he would describe himself as South-Asian, performing a more general identity as opposed to a more specific Indian one. This was done in order to avoid discussing common stereotypes about India such as the caste system and prevalent corruption. Therefore, by coming to the conclusion that common perceptions about India (structure) made for uncomfortable situations, this participant decided (agency) to perform a more beneficial identity in public. On the other hand, Indian youth were shown to at times explicitly perform an Indian identity as their classmates were curious about their culinary practices and cultural symbols such as Bollywood. This performance even led some non-Punjabi Indian youth to share practices such as Bhangra as it made them feel "accepted" by their white friends who associate it with South-Asian identity in general.

While the above example illustrates the link between performativity and identity in the context of settlement, the concept of performativity has been examined in a variety of studies ranging from various fields of research. In fact, geographers have contributed a great deal to the understanding of performativity by focusing on the influence of space on performance and identity. More specifically, geographical research on performativity has shed light on how performances of identity are informed by the spatio-temporal



context in which individuals exist. Doan's (2010) study on the influence of socio-spatial factors in her own performance of gendered identity as a trans-gendered woman illustrates the complex relationship between space, performance and identity. She explains that "gender at home in front of a mirror was nothing like the dance that is gender in a public place" (645). The socio-spatial context in which she found herself would directly impact how she decided to perform her gendered identity. In a public setting such as a mall, she has to perform in an overtly feminized manner to "pass" as a woman. The "policing" of other individuals made it such that to be accepted by others as a woman, her performance of gender had to align with preconceived notions of what it means to be feminine. This example clearly reflects the influence of structure and space on performance and identity. The specific location in which Doan found herself (e.g., a public mall) as well as the individuals and their preconceived notions of femininity (structure) in this space directly influenced how she performed her gendered identity. Furthermore, this example reveals the importance of agency as Doan illustrated her capacity to decide how she wished to be perceived by performing a specific identity – or alternatively, her ability to perform an identity that corresponded to perceived norms of femininity. Doan's study is thus illuminating as it effectively demonstrates the dynamic interaction between space, the individuals performing identity in this space, as well as understandings of the nature and social dynamics of specific spaces. The way individuals perceive the space in which they find themselves as well as the other individuals in this space directly influences how they choose or are constrained to perform various identities.

While Ghosh (2013) effectively illustrates the importance of performing specific identities in order to achieve settlement goals such as feeling accepted and "fitting in", Doan (2010) highlights the importance of space in performances of identity. My own research focuses on newcomers' settlement strategies and experiences, but also on how space and social contexts influence the performance of their identity. In particular, I examine how newcomers negotiate religious/secular spaces and identities through socio-spatially appropriate performances of identity. Therefore, by examining how participants perform context-

dependent religious/secular identities to improve settlement outcomes, the concept of performativity will allow me to also shed light on the tension between structure and agency in newcomers' settlement processes. While much of the literature on structure/agency within migration studies focuses on the motivations to migrate and the migratory movement itself, less is known about structure and agency in the process of settlement and on migrant negotiations of identities and spaces. Settlement is an integral part of the migratory process. I will therefore shed light on this less well understood aspect of the migration process by using the concept of performativity in order to study how newcomers address various structural barriers and constraints in their settlement process. Specifically, the focus will be on newcomers' strategic navigation of religious organizations which represent beneficial spaces to mobilize human and social capital in the context of settlement, as well as the negotiation of religious/secular identities and spaces through spatially appropriate performances of identity to facilitate their settlement process.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Methods**

My research project focuses on newcomers' navigation of religious organizations and performativity of religious/secular identities as settlement strategies. I examine how participating in religious spaces and performing contextually appropriate identities can help newcomers subvert structural barriers to settlement. Such issues related to identities and space are better served by qualitative research methods that enable detailed understandings of the social experiences of participants (Esterberg, 2002), as well as the rationale behind why and how participants choose to act in specific ways (Cameron, 2010). I thus adopted a mixed-methods approach, including key informant interviews, participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews and mental maps for my data collection. While the thesis is written in English, the data collection took place in French because the participants and social spaces that were the focus of this research are Francophone. As a bilingual individual, I faced few difficulties working in both languages. The project received approval from the Research and Ethics Board of the University of Ottawa (file # 06-14-22).

The mixed-methods approach used in this research was inscribed within a feminist geography framework. Feminist geography is interested in the spatiality of power relationships and oppression. By focusing on how newcomer men and women negotiated settlement challenges, (e.g. difficult access to employment opportunities), through socio-spatially contingent performances of religious/secular identity, feminist geography allowed me to “map the complex relationships between (...) identities, places, and power” (Nelson, Seager, 2005). Feminist geography and the critical lens it provides has allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the influence of structure and agency in the settlement processes of newcomer men and women in Ottawa. The subsequent sections explain in detail the components of my research methodology, including my case study, recruitment, sample population, data collection and analysis methods, as well as the ethical issues related to the project.

## 2.1 Case Study

I conducted my research in Ottawa, which is referred to as a second-tier immigrant destination in Canada (CIC, 2005), because it receives fewer newcomers than larger metropolitan areas such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. In 2011 foreign-born residents accounted for 22.6% of Ottawa's total population, slightly above the national average of 20.6%. Moreover, in 2011 Ottawa was the sixth most important point of entry for foreign born residents to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2013). Due to the importance of Ottawa as a newcomer destination, there are many settlement agencies and other networks providing immigrant services in the city (Veronis, 2013). Moreover, there is a significant movement of Francophone immigration to Ottawa which creates an interesting dynamic of migration in a Francophone minority context<sup>2</sup> (Veronis, Couton, forthcoming). All but one of my research participants were Francophone newcomers to Ottawa, a city which is predominantly Anglophone. Therefore, their status as Francophone immigrants in an Anglophone context also needs to be taken into account in their settlement experience. First, many participants who were not fluent in English had to learn to speak the language as part of their settlement process – including to access services, communicate effectively, and find a job. Indeed, Francophone immigrants in Ottawa face challenges accessing a range of services in French as these are limited and at times inadequate when compared to services in English (Veronis, 2013). Therefore, the settlement context for French-speaking newcomers in a minority context certainly differs from that of English-speaking immigrants who can more effectively navigate in public and access settlement services.

Moreover, all but one of my participants were visible minorities as they were of African (Burundi, DRC, Cameroon) and Haitian origin, with one participant migrating from Colombia. My participants' status

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<sup>2</sup> In the case of Ottawa, minority context refers to the presence of a Francophone minority community in a province where the majority of the population is Anglophone. Such communities are also known as Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs) in Canada, that is groups of French- or English-speaking Canadians who live in a province where that language is in minority (CIHR, 2010). This broad definition applies to all Canadians – not simply newcomers – and does not account for the specific regional differences between different OLMCs. Ottawa counts with a significant Francophone minority population, which plays an important role in attracting Francophone newcomers and is thus important to mention in order to help shed light on the context of newcomers in my study.

as linguistic minorities thus intersected with their identity as racialized minorities, effectively adding other challenges to their settlement experience. As Hamdon (2010) explains, racialization of minorities leads to various forms of discrimination, notably in the context of employment, health care provision and education. These intersecting linguistic and racial minority identity markers can combine to create a process of “double minorisation” (Huot et al. 2013). In this context, my research participants may have had to face settlement challenges and different forms of discrimination on the basis of two of their most visible markers of identity: language and racial/ethnic origin (in addition to their immigrant status). It is therefore important to consider my participants’ multiple identities, and how these inform their settlement experience and process.

The focal point of my research was the *Église Sacré-Coeur*, a Catholic church located on the campus of the University of Ottawa. Almost all my research participants (eight out of eleven) frequented this church, while the other participants frequented different Catholic churches. I was initially looking to recruit participants from a single organization to produce a more coherent case study, highlighting the lived experiences of newcomers within a specific religious organization. But as explained below, challenges in my recruitment process forced me to recruit participants outside of this religious organization. All participants were practicing Christians who regularly frequented a religious organization in Ottawa.

## **2.2 Key Informant Interviews**

This research project began by using key informant interviews to orient the research process. I first conducted informal interviews over Winter 2014 with personal professional contacts I created as an employee at the *Centre de services communautaires Vanier* (CSCV) working with newcomer teens in a settlement program. These professional contacts include social and settlement workers who act as gatekeepers within Vanier, a Francophone neighbourhood in Ottawa, working daily with newcomers in the area. These key informants helped me to establish a list of potentially informative contacts in the Vanier neighbourhood. After gaining a clearer understanding of the religious organizations and leaders in the

community, I contacted one religious organization, the *Église Évangélique Eben-Ezer*, which agreed to be the focus of my research. Due to insufficient communication and lack of interest on the part of the *Église Évangélique Eben-Ezer*, however, I was unable to move forward with this organization as a starting point. After discussing other options with personal contacts, I contacted the priest at the *Église Sacré-Coeur* on the University of Ottawa Campus. Father Pierre-Olivier Tremblay agreed to meet with me and we discussed my research, its objectives and potential sampling methods. Father Tremblay expressed interest in my thesis project and thought his church would be a good starting point for my research as it has an important newcomer population. He agreed to let me visit his church in the context of my research, and I began recruiting research participants.

## **2.3 Recruitment and Sample Population**

### *2.3.1 Recruitment*

Alongside Father Tremblay, I decided that it would be useful to attend mass for several weeks and meet the congregants who frequent the church. I was also invited to introduce myself in front of the congregation after mass several times to present my research. I took this opportunity to invite any interested individuals who fit the selection criteria to contact me to participate in the research process. I handed out recruitment posters with the research title, objectives and researcher contact information. Using this technique, I was able to recruit four interested individuals who agreed to participate in my research. After recruiting these four initial participants, I relied on a snowball sampling method to recruit other participants. For example, after conducting my first interview with a newcomer woman I met at the *Église Sacré-Coeur*, she suggested I go to a youth group in which many young adult newcomers from the church participate and engage in various activities. After having been invited and going to a dinner and conference at this youth group, the *101 Parent*, I was able to meet other interested individuals who participated in my research. In addition, other individuals that I met at the church invited me to their prayer group. At this prayer group I was put in contact with other congregants who also subsequently participated

in my research. Therefore, by making a few initial contacts at the *Église Sacré-Coeur*, the religious organization frequented by most participants, I was put in contact with other individuals who also fit my research criteria and were interested in participating. This snowball method was appropriate to acquire the sample size I was looking for.

This sampling method was useful in the context of conducting research on newcomers (Atkinson, Flint, 2004; Biernacki, Waldorf, 1981) who are often more socially isolated than other social groups (Hirschman, 2004). Using a snowball sampling method truly did allow me to overcome some of the challenges facing accessibility to a migrant population, being myself an outsider to this population. I did not personally know recent newcomers to Canada who fit my research criteria. But by accessing the religious organization through Father Pierre-Olivier, then introducing myself to the congregants and making a few contacts, these individuals were able to point me towards other people who I would not have been able to reach otherwise. This word-of-mouth snowball sampling also allowed me to build an important relationship of trust with participants. Some participants were in more precarious situations than others, and were perhaps at first somewhat reluctant to participate. Because I was introduced through someone they already knew, they were more open to meeting me and perhaps participating, while also making the interviews less stressful. Building on common contacts shared between potential participants and myself helped comfort participants who might otherwise have been wary of participating.

### *2.3.2 Sample Population*

In deciding on the sample population for this project, I wanted to develop a relatively diverse group of newcomer participants in terms of gender. Due to difficulties with recruiting participants, however, the sample population I managed to recruit is not necessarily ideal in term of its size and gender composition. I had set out to recruit 12-16 individuals, but was only able to recruit 11. I wanted to target an equal number of male and female adults (18 years or older). More women were interested in participating (8 women/3

men) and I was unable to recruit more men to make my sample population even in terms of gender. Gender balance was important because I wanted to examine how gender roles and conceptions of femininity and masculinity might be a structural factor influencing religious engagement as a potential settlement strategy. I therefore wanted to give a representation of both newcomer men and women's experiences. Yet the fact that more women participated was probably a reflection of increased religious participation on the part of women when compared to men, which my findings illustrate below. Nonetheless, I still focused on analyzing the role of gender in decisions to engage in religious organizations and potential settlement outcomes, as the gender imbalance in my sample population simply reflects my findings discussed in Chapter 4.

All the participants practice the Christian faith regularly; they participate in a religious service at least once per week. Moreover, they are all relatively recent newcomers to Canada, as their arrival dates ranged from 11 months to nearly eight years at the time of the interviews. The number of years spent in Canada was important insofar as the participants have entered the country recently enough to still be adjusting to their new society, learning about the various religious organizations and resources at their disposal, adapting to their new structural context and developing strategies within their country of settlement. Recruiting participants who were still relatively recent newcomers in Canada was significant to examine how they experienced the space of religious organizations and performed religious/secular identities in the new structural context of their new society.

### *2.3.3 Participant Profiles*

A total of 11 newcomers participated in my research project. All participants arrived during or after 2007 (see Appendix A for a detailed table of participant profiles). In terms of their immigration category, the majority of participants came to Canada as international students (six), with others applying through the economic class (three) as well as family reunification (one) and as a refugee (one). This breakdown of



immigration categories highlights the relatively high social status of my participants. Only one participant came to Canada under the more precarious refugee category. But his status is now more stable having since graduated from a college program and found regular employment in his field of studies. All participants were either still students, or working professionals, which differs significantly from the lived experience of a new refugee to Canada, for example. The relatively high social status of my participants definitely impacted the way they experienced settlement. While I did not study more vulnerable groups of newcomers, it is safe to assume that my participants had greater access to settlement information and resources thanks to their immigration categories and social status as international students and skilled professionals.

All six international students came to Canada with the goal of eventually obtaining permanent residency and living and working in Canada. Coupled with the economic migrants (three), the vast majority of participants (nine out of eleven) came to Canada for career purposes. All participants migrated to Canada alone. One participant was immediately reunited with her husband, while two other participants were eventually re-joined by family members in Canada.

Participants came from a variety of countries, with the majority coming from Haiti (five) and Burundi (four), with Cameroon (one) and Colombia (one) making up the rest. I did not attempt to recruit participants from a specific country or region. In this sense, my analysis is not generalizable to a specific community of newcomers. Moreover, my research does not take into account the different realities experienced by newcomers from various countries settling in Ottawa (e.g., pre-established communities, available resources, linguistic/cultural barriers, etc.). For example, all participants were fluent in French before arriving except for Claudine from Colombia. Her settlement process was undoubtedly different as she first learned to speak French to communicate in Ottawa. While participants may have different lived experiences based on their context of migration, I focused on their specific settlement experiences and

analyzed the themes these participants had in common. In this sense, I had the opportunity to hear about a diverse range of lived realities, with many similar experiences that participants shared.

## **2.4 Participant observation**

Participant observation played a significant role in allowing me to better understand the social context and lived experience of participants within the religious organization I was studying. The process of ethnographic observation was useful to my research as it “treats people as knowledgeable, situated agents from whom researchers can learn a great deal about how the world is seen, lived, and works in and through ‘real’ places, communities and people” (Cloe et al. 2004: 169). This was important in my research as I was specifically interested in examining my participants’ settlement experience as they understood it. I was not interested in religious organizations’ role in newcomer settlement. I wanted to understand how my participants understood their settlement context, and how they perceived the importance of their participation within religious organizations and performances of religious/secular identity in this experience. It was therefore important to draw from my participants’ lived experiences. By observing them in the context of religious organizations, and understanding them as the situated agents that they are, I gained a better perspective of the settlement implications of their participation in religious organizations. Moreover, participant observation is useful as it allows us to better understand “the ways in which embodiments, memories, emotions and feelings [tie] together places and social/personal identities” (Cloe et al. 2004: 180). This is particularly important to my research. I was interested in examining the relationships between religious/secular identities and spaces. For example, how did the performance of identity in religious organizations influence newcomers’ experience of this space in the context of settlement? Or, on the other hand, how did specific spaces such as workspace environments influence how newcomers decided to perform fluid religious/secular identities? By first observing how participants engaged and interacted with each other in the context of religious organizations, I began to better

understand how religious/secular identities and spaces influenced one another. Below, I describe the different processes of observation I carried out throughout this research project.

In the context of my research, I was invited by participants to participate in different religious activities. I was therefore able to begin understanding more about the *Église Sacré-Coeur* and its members. My first opportunities for observation were in the context of Sunday mass, in which I participated for four consecutive weeks. In this setting, I observed the different individuals who frequented the church, and listened to the issues discussed in the priest's sermons. I was also able to gain a better understanding of the church's community life as after each mass, community members would step to the front to talk about any events taking place in the upcoming week, such as community dinners, fundraisers and different activities such as concerts and committee meetings. This gave me an initial glimpse into the different services and opportunities for engagement within the church, which helped inform my subsequent interviews.

I was also invited to participate in a prayer group which took place after Sunday mass. This group was comprised of church members of Haitian origin. This opportunity for participant observation also contributed to providing background information for my research. I was able to witness the amount of time these individuals invested in religious practice. Moreover, after the prayer session was done, the members stayed for about an hour to socialise and eat a few snacks they had brought. This opportunity to socialize and discuss with members, some of whom were research participants, was very informative. I was able to understand the function of this prayer group beyond the spiritual element. The group's members used this opportunity to catch up with friends, exchange information about upcoming events and some members even asked for help with an upcoming fundraising campaign. I thus began to see this setting as serving multiple purposes, which helped inform the direction my research took.

Finally, I also participated in an event hosted by the *101 Parent*, a catholic community group led by a group of nuns. This event was frequented by a number of my participants who were international

students, and was also very informative. We took part in a dinner, after which a presentation on mental health was given. While the event was in no way religious, it took place in a religious space at the *101 Parent*. Moreover, all regular attendees were engaged Christians, who actively practiced their religion. It was their common identity that brought them together to this event. I thus began understanding my participants' religious identity as a factor that opened the gate to other opportunities for socializing, accessing information and engaging in their settlement society in a variety of manners. Once again, these observations helped inform my research process as I increasingly became interested in the linkages between religious/secular spaces and identities and how my participants negotiated these.

The information I collected during my participant observation, albeit very informative, was not used in the context of my findings. Rather, this observation allowed me to begin contextualizing my research project. It gave me a better starting point to conduct research, and helped me develop a more accurate interview guide than would have been possible without prior observation. It also helped me during the analysis of the qualitative data as observing newcomers engage within religious organizations and interact with other individuals provided me with concrete examples of the social experience of religion. Discussing with participants at church after the prayer group and seeing how they interacted in this environment helped me first visualize what participants would later discuss with me in the context of individual interviews. The way in which participant observation and individual interviews complemented each other highlights the importance of adopting a mixed-methods approach in my study. My own engagement in my participants' religious participation enhanced my later understanding of their navigation and social experience of religious organizations.

## **2.5 Semi-structured interviews**

For this thesis project, I conducted 11 individual interviews which lasted about 50 minutes each. Consent was given by each participant prior to the beginning of the interviews. These were audio recorded with the permission of participants to simplify the transcription process. The time and place of the

interviews varied according to the participant. I always allowed participants to choose, while also offering up potential options for meeting times and places. Often we met in my office at the University of Ottawa. Other times we met at a coffee shop, at the church or on university campus.

The type of interview used in this research was semi-structured individual interviews, often referred to as in-depth interviews (Esterberg, 2002). In this case, an interview guide with predetermined questions and themes was developed (see appendix B). In the interview stage, questions focused on the following themes: the role of religious organizations, settlement and the structural challenges newcomers face, religious identity in various spaces/places. More specifically, participants were asked about the outcomes of participation within religious organizations in processes of settlement. Moreover, the interviews also centered on the themes of gender roles and conceptions of femininity and masculinity. We also discussed questions pertaining to the performativity of religious/secular identities as settlement strategy, and how these performances were understood as negotiated responses to structural factors. Participants were asked questions regarding how they understand the fluidity of their own religious/secular identities, how they negotiate and perform them throughout various spaces, and how they believe this informs their settlement experience. While the questions in this type of interview remain open-ended, my role as interviewer was one of “interventionist.” At times, for example, the conversation veered off to topics that were unrelated to the research issues and I had to re-orient the discussion all the while ensuring the participant was sharing information as s/he understood the question.

Semi-structured interviews present many advantages for this type of research project. First, this type of interview has been described in feminist writings as a valuable tool to study marginalized groups (Devault, 1999; Kitchin, Tate, 2000), such as migrants who have often not had the opportunity to express their opinions or share their own stories. Thus using in-depth interviews can give voice, allowing them to explain their experiences and ideas which can help us “move beyond our own experiences and ideas and

to *really* understand the other person's point of view" (Esterberg, 2002: 87). By giving newcomers a platform to express how *they* understood the importance of religious identities in their own settlement processes, I was able to better understand their social experiences than through other methods such as surveys or structured, close-ended interviews. For example, I was interested in dynamics of gender and the ways in which gender may influence how newcomers choose to perform certain aspects of their religious identities. I was also interested in examining how these performances impacted newcomers' settlement through their ability to mobilize social and human capital. I quickly realized that women seemed to be more involved in religious organizations than men, performed religious identities in these spaces more often than men and created social networks at church with greater ease. These findings were interesting, and it appears that overall, women seem to have an easier time settling in Ottawa, at least in the context of their religious engagement. Without me asking about it because it was outside of the scope of my research objectives, many men and women participants explained that men often frequent different locations than church such as the gym to create social relationships and to facilitate their settlement experience. In turn, this clarified why men are less present than women in religious organizations. Moreover, the women did not necessarily have an easier time adapting; they were just doing so in different spaces than men. These findings therefore changed the understanding I had of my participants' settlement. Had I not left the interviews open ended, the participants might not have explained to me the different spaces of social gathering that men and women use.

According to critics, semi-structured interviews lack in scientific validity because they do not allow for statistical analysis or generalizable results (Schoenberger, 1991). But as Schoeneberger (1991) argues, it is important to understand when this statistical generalizability should be omitted in order to produce a more in-depth account of social processes rooted in specific historical and geographical contexts. In this case, I was clearly unable to produce generalizable results, but these interviews did allow me to address a number of issues in-depth which would have been more difficult without this method. For example, every

participant gave detailed background information on their country of origin and how they experienced religious and secular life before coming to Canada. It was extremely important for me to trace back the participants' previous religious experiences before coming to Canada as I wanted to understand how they perceived their roles in Canadian religious organizations and how these roles impacted their religious participation and potential settlement outcomes. Without drawing on their personal (historical, geographic etc.) contexts, it would have been difficult for me to understand why women participants saw Canadian religious organizations as useful spaces to develop and mobilize social capital by performing effective religious and secular identities. It was the transition from one country to another that made these organizations truly beneficial spaces for these women who could now assume different roles and responsibilities within the church. Without the in-depth nature of these interviews and the capacity to trace back participants' historical and social contexts, the dynamic and re-negotiated gender roles and responsibilities within religious organizations would not have been made evident to me.

Using interviews can also be a beneficial tool to understand how meanings, opinions and experiences differ between people of varying class, age, gender and ethnicity (Dunn, 2005). This proved to be useful in the context of my research to tease out the differences between the lived experiences of newcomer men and women for example. By comparing how men and women participants negotiated the tension between structure and agency differently through their religious engagement, I was better able to understand the ways gender influenced how newcomers addressed structural constraints, and the effect this had on settlement outcomes. In-depth interviews allowed me to effectively address the themes of identity and performativity. Without being able to truly go into detail and discuss what identities and their performances mean with my participants, I could not have understood and my participants could not have discussed how gendered identities influenced religious participation, and in turn settlement outcomes. For example, male participants discussed at length masculine identities and what it means to be masculine in a variety of different contexts, both Canadian and other. Without having discussed with my participants

how African and Haitian men and women perceive masculinity and the challenges newcomer men face with being open about emotions and feelings, I could not have understood some of the men's reluctance to engage in religious organizations. The capacity for in-depth interviews to tease out these complex realities helped me to gain a more accurate insight into the process and experience of settlement as it was lived by my participants.

## **2.6 Mental Maps**

Alongside the individual interviews, I used mental maps as a tool to probe participants further on the interplay between the spaces they frequent, a variety of structural factors and the different identities they choose to perform. Mental maps are a useful method as they can help shed light on how specific places can be interpreted and experienced in different ways (Powell, 2010). This is useful to illustrate the fluid manner in which participants were shown to perform identities. I used these mental maps towards the end of each interview. The participants each created a mental map with my help, and once the map was completed it was used to discuss a number of interesting themes emerging from the interviews. In this sense, it was an effective tool to foster discussion of a number of themes that were more difficult to address because of their theoretical or abstract nature.

Participants' mental maps were not sketch maps, but cognitive maps. Instead of trying to re-create a physical representation of spaces, they highlight how participants understood or perceived certain locations. To begin, each participant had a blank sheet of paper and a pen, and they were asked to write out on the paper the places they frequent on a regular basis. The places that were visited more frequently took up a greater part of the page to illustrate their relative importance. Each space was given a title such as home, work, school, church, etc., with the ones frequented more often taking up more space. After this, they were asked to write for each space the different ways in which they identified in these specific spaces. For example, for home one participant wrote that she identified as a sister, but also as a caretaker. For



church, one participant wrote that she identified as a Christian, but also as a friend. This illustrated the fact that this individual went to church to worship, but also for reasons of friendship and camaraderie. The objective of explaining how participants identified in certain spaces was done to help the participants think about the many ways one person identifies and acts in a certain space, and the factors that might influence this performance of identity. It also allowed me to see the different ways the participants perceived themselves. Finally, for each space, the participants were asked to explain whether they thought a certain space was religious, secular, or fluid (potentially both). This was useful to understand how they perceived specific locations, but it also made the participants realize how some spaces may be experienced differently according to the socio-spatial context (e.g. structures such as individuals "policing" behaviour, understandings of certain spaces as strictly secular etc.).

Once the map was completed, I went over the map with the participants and asked improvised questions concerning what they wrote. For example, I asked someone who wrote that church is fluid what might lead him to experience this location in different (religious and secular) ways. Which activities are more religious or secular in this context? Does the way you perceive a certain space change the way you identify in it? The maps proved to be very useful because they synthesized the many spaces of daily activity and made it clear for participant and researcher how individuals identified and understood different spaces. Without the map to guide my questioning and to let the participant begin thinking about these complex issues, it would have been difficult to ask questions related to the themes of performativity of identities, and how performance is influenced by structure/agency, and its impact on settlement. Moreover, the maps really helped me and the participants understand how religious and secular spaces and identities can be conceived of as dynamic and dependent on socio-spatial context. Mental maps served to meet the research objective of examining the influence of negotiations of structure/agency on performativity, and how these negotiations and performances informed participants' processes of settlement.

## 2.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis took place throughout the whole research process. Before the completion of the entire data collection I began analyzing the data to better understand the themes and ideas discussed by the participants. All interviews were recorded (with permission) and transcribed verbatim. Once the transcripts were completed, the systematic data analysis phase began by using coloured codes within the text in order to reflect themes that were deemed important (see appendix C for coding themes). Other themes which were not pre-determined were also added to the analysis throughout my research as they came up in the interviews. The questions developed in my interview guide, as well as those which were improvised in the context of semi-structured discussion with participants, revolved around these themes which I wanted to address.

After coding for the various themes, the transcripts were summarized and organized by theme in a table (Appendix D). This table included previously established themes as well as emerging themes. All excerpts pertaining to specific themes were grouped together in this table to better understand how they related to each other. This summary of the transcripts helped me grasp how the participants understood the themes and chose to discuss them. This acted as the initial step in coding and understanding the qualitative data. Once a clearer picture of the compiled data had been produced by reading and coding *within* each transcript, I proceeded to conduct a second reading of the data *across* the different interviews and mental maps. This allowed me to compare how the themes were discussed throughout the various interviews by different individuals. This second analysis allowed me to tease out important themes and topics of discussion that I had not initially thought of myself. By comparing the perceptions of different participants and seeing common themes emerge, my data began to reveal important trends that I was able to analyze. These two different phases of coding enabled me to truly interact with the data and better understand what conclusions could be drawn from the interviews and mental maps.

## 2.8 Positionality

First and foremost, it is important to stress that “we are not neutral, scientific observers, untouched by the emotional and political contexts of places where we do our research” (Skelton, 2001). We are products of our social experiences that shape who we are and how we think. In light of this, it was imperative to consider my positionality (the identity factors that constitute who I am) and how it could have impacted the research process. My place of privilege in Canadian society relative to that of a potentially vulnerable population such as newcomers could have placed myself in a position of power which might have been perceived as intimidating by some participants. It is important to understand, however, that positionality and power operate differently in varying contexts; to truly navigate these complicated relationships, one must always be cognizant of how his/her own positionality relates to that of the participants. There is no general rule to conduct “proper” research that accounts for these power relations. Nevertheless, I tried to remain a reflexive researcher by constantly thinking about the research I was conducting, why I was conducting it, and how it represented my participants (Skelton, 2001).

I myself was an outsider to the group of individuals that I was researching. I am not a newcomer, nor am I well connected to any group of newcomers to Canada. Also, most of my participants were women. These realities may have impacted the way my research took place. For example, being a man may have made some women less comfortable doing an individual interview, and they would have revealed more information to a woman researcher. Moreover, I was conducting research on the theme of religious identity. All my participants were practicing Christians, whereas I identify as an Atheist. I did not openly tell any of my participants that I am an Atheist. I found this to be problematic at times because when asked by participants which religion I practiced I answered that I was raised Catholic. This is true, but not entirely truthful. I felt that my position as an Atheist could compromise my relationship with participants, making them feel uncomfortable talking about their religious beliefs and identities. Finally, as a university researcher I occupy a place of relative power. In light of this, I tried to make every participant feel welcome

and comfortable. As best I could, I made participants feel as if we were working together, showing gratitude for the information that they were passing on to me. Yet it is important to keep in mind that I am still the one who is most likely to benefit from my exchanges with my participants.

My positionality as researcher and how it was perceived certainly influenced how participants understood me with regard to the outsider/insider barrier. While I may have been an outsider in the sense that I do not belong to the religious organization which was the focus of my research, for example, my identity is fluid and so is that of the participants. In some cases, I may have been considered as an insider (partially) by some participants (for example Eric who has experience working and studying in a university setting). Being a minority Francophone in Ottawa like the participants and the fact that I have worked in different settlement initiatives may also have helped to create an insider power dynamic with some of my participants. The fact of the matter remains that identities are fluid and to consider myself solely as an outsider is problematic as it dismisses the multitude of different power relations that may take place throughout the research process. Nevertheless, there were times where I was quite visibly an outsider, and those times needed careful reflection to understand how they shaped the research and knowledge produced.

## **2.9 Limitations**

The greatest limitation in this research project was the sample population. Most of the participants (8/11) were women, despite the fact that I was hoping to establish a relatively even sample in terms of gender. It proved to be much more difficult to recruit men than women, and eventually due to time constraints I needed to proceed without completing any more interviews. It might have been more difficult to recruit men than women since I did most of my recruiting at religious organizations and as my research demonstrates, women are more present than men within religious organizations. Moreover, my research participants also underlined the fact that many men are often less willing than women to discuss certain

issues that can be more emotional. While not a foregone conclusion, it could point to a certain reluctance among some men to discuss their settlement process, an undoubtedly emotional experience, with a stranger. As this research also illustrates, women were more apt to create social networks in the context of religious organizations than their male counterparts. This made it interesting to see how women performed certain identities in the context of these organizations as strategies to facilitate their settlement. It was, however, less obvious how and where men develop similar social networks, although several participants pointed to spaces such as the gym. Therefore, it would be interesting to study other spaces of social gathering to better examine which identities newcomer men perform in different spaces to facilitate their own settlement process.

## Chapter 3

### Navigating Religious Organizations as Settlement Strategy

There is ample literature concerning the vast scope of challenges and obstacles newcomers face when arriving to a new country, especially with regard to settlement and integration processes. These challenges include finding employment (Reitz, 2007; Reitz et al. 2014), a lack of information concerning climate and bureaucracy (Chaze, George, 2009), as well as feelings of anxiety and alienation that can leave newcomers feeling excluded from the new country and society (Nagel, Staeheli, 2011). As the literature review in Chapter 1 indicates, numerous studies already demonstrate the multiple ways in which religious organizations can help newcomers deal with and manage these challenges. In this chapter, I will draw on this literature to document the case of newcomers to Ottawa who have found religious organizations to be a useful space to help guide them through a sometimes difficult settlement process. My aim is to illuminate how newcomers' participation within religious organizations acts as a settlement strategy as it allows them to subvert certain structural barriers and settlement challenges which may influence their settlement process.

While existing research tends to frame religious organizations as useful resources for settlement in and of themselves through the provision of various social services, I wish to nuance this view through my research findings. I will demonstrate that the religious organization in my research, the *Église Sacré-Coeur*, can rather be understood as a social space of gathering that can facilitate the creation and mobilization of human and social capital. By engaging and participating within this religious organization, newcomers were able to tap into beneficial settlement resources. These resources, however, were not offered as direct settlement services. Rather, the responsibility fell upon newcomers themselves to effectively engage within this organization. They did so by performing fluid religious/secular identities which allowed them to create and mobilize beneficial forms of human and social capital. In this sense, my findings draw attention to

newcomers' individual agency in actively engaging within religious organizations to positively influence their own settlement processes.

In this chapter, I will shed light on the various ways that religious organizations represent useful social spaces to mobilize human and social capital. I explain that by participating in religious organizations and performing fluid religious/secular identities, newcomers are able to mobilize valuable networks of information, cultural learning and adaptation experiences as well as networks of mutual support between community members. Therefore, I will propose an understanding of religious organizations as socially dynamic spaces that can contain both bridging and bonding social capital and that can serve as a starting point for newcomers' further settlement. This perspective moves beyond the more common understanding in the existing literature where religious organizations are often described as social service providers actively involved in the integration and settlement processes of newcomers.

### **3.1 Access to information and guidance**

One recurring theme when discussing structural challenges newcomers face in a country of settlement is the lack of access to useful information (Mooney, 2013; Chaze, George, 2009). In their research on the settlement experience of newcomer South Asian women in Toronto, Chaze and George (2009) posit that the greatest challenge, and thus the most pressing need for newcomers is access to information concerning the major differences between their country of origin and the country of settlement. This lack of information pertains to a variety of different issues ranging from climate, culture and values, to useful services and resources available to them. This reality was echoed by all participants in my research. When asked what she thought to be the greatest challenge or need for newcomers settling in Ottawa, Anne, a 24 year old professional from Burundi who arrived to Canada as an international student in 2009, stated that:

Moi je pense qu'on a surtout besoin d'information, ce qu'on nous dit dans notre pays et ce qu'on retrouve ici c'est différent, ça n'a rien à voir. Je pense qu'on a vraiment besoin de personnes qui nous donnent les vraies informations.<sup>3</sup>

Newcomers' need for greater access to settlement information was also discussed by others; Corine, a 28-year-old post-doctoral fellow from Cameroon who arrived in Canada in 2011 as an international student remarked how:

Certains des obstacles concernent les procédures, des étapes administratives, on ne sait pas quoi faire, quels papiers il faut donner, etc. C'est très compliqué, et je ne sais pas comment dire mais l'accès à (....) l'apprentissage de la langue anglaise n'est pas toujours évident.

For Corine, the greatest challenge was accessing information concerning administrative and bureaucratic steps she had to take after arriving in Canada. She did not understand the new procedures she had to take to settle in Canada, and this was exacerbated by the fact that she had trouble accessing English language training. The fact that Corine had difficulty accessing information and navigating bureaucratic hurdles because of her lack of fluency in English highlights one of the common challenges for minority Francophone newcomers in an Anglophone context (Veronis, 2014). This structural challenge was also felt by other participants. In light of this difficult access to information, many participants explained that they turned to religious organizations such as churches and religious community centers to access useful settlement information. Déborah, a 20-year-old student from Haiti who arrived in Canada in 2010 through family reunification said that her church offers legal counselling for newcomers within the congregation. Information sessions with a lawyer from the community are offered at different times to answer questions pertaining to changing immigration and citizenship policy. This makes it easier for these newcomers to navigate through the complicated bureaucracy of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

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<sup>3</sup> All quotes from participants are included in French to preserve the meaning of the quote as best possible. An English translation of each quote is provided in Appendix E. Each quote is organized by chapter and placed in order of appearance in this chapter. Included with the translation is the French quote, the participant's name and the page number as a reference.



While Déborah's example highlights a specific settlement service offered by her church to newcomers, the experience of most participants, specifically those who frequented the *Église-Sacré Coeur* (8 of the 11 participants), does not reflect this reality. Rather than providing settlement services, the *Église-Sacré Coeur* was experienced more as a social space of gathering where newcomers could mobilize resources themselves through religious engagement.

At noon on weekdays, the *Église Sacré-Coeur* opens a hall where congregants are welcome to come, have lunch and discuss among themselves and with Father Pierre-Olivier Tremblay, the church's Priest. This opportunity attracts many young newcomers. While the discussion sessions do not address a specific need among newcomers, they offer a social space where individuals share their life stories and experiences, which can be both encouraging and informational. This was highlighted by Claudine, a Colombian woman in her early thirties who arrived in Canada in 2011 through family reunification and now works in a clerical office. When discussing her initial experience at her Latino church, which offers a similar discussion group as the *Église-Sacré Coeur*, she stated that:

Je pense que la première chose (...) que je trouvais, c'est la langue. J'ai dit *wow* pouvoir écouter quelque chose en Espagnol c'est bon, et avoir des gens qui étaient comme moi, et entendre les histoires (c'est) comme, *ah* moi je suis un immigrant, pouvoir écouter les histoires de vie, et de succès, ça t'encourage.

In her discussion of some of the benefits of participating at church, Claudine draws attention to the important access to information and the joy of being able to understand the language being spoken. She explained that it was encouraging to hear other newcomers' success stories, and to be able to do so in Spanish, her mother tongue, was all the more comforting.

Anne, the 24-year-old student from Burundi who frequents the *Église-Sacré Coeur*, also noted that the congregants, the priest and the two nuns at her church are engaged and involved in the community. These

members of her religious community also represent a significant source of information and guidance on a variety of matters, whether religious or not.

(O)n a un prêtre très dynamique et tu lui poses des questions sur la religion, ou sur la vie en général et il va te répondre, et les gens sont très ouverts, notre prêtre est très dynamique. (...) (M)ais comme j'ai dit on a des gens super dynamiques, et si tu les approches et dit que tu n'as rien (information) trouvé, ils vont te donner des ressources. On a deux sœurs en particulier qui sont vraiment géniales, c'est des personnes qui cherchent toujours à améliorer la vie de communauté.

As Anne explained, being part of a dynamic and dedicated church community allows her to find useful resources and information through other church members. Moreover, she explained how the priest and the two nuns at her religious organization are always open to answer questions and help find information, and are always looking to find ways to improve community life. Therefore, by drawing on her religious identity and participating at church, Anne is able to tap into beneficial networks of information. This is interesting as it sheds light on the secular benefits of religious engagement. The relationships Anne sustains in the context of her church have opened the door to accessing secular information, which can be beneficial in a context of settlement.

This capacity for religious organizations to create spaces for newcomers to access information, to share their personal experiences with others and to be heard by fellow congregants can be a comforting experience. Another participant, Nicole, a professional in her early thirties who arrived from Haiti in 2009, indicated that she has felt especially welcome in the context of religious organizations. She emphasizes that these meetings and discussion sessions have allowed her to connect with other individuals, some with whom she still maintains relationships today.

(J)'ai trouvé le Portique (guidance group at church), et ça je trouve ça extraordinaire. L'accueil, les gens peuvent se rencontrer là, c'est beau. Et oui, tu peux saluer quelqu'un, je rencontre des gens à travers le portique, même des gens avec qui je parle (encore) aujourd'hui.

Nicole's capacity to create valuable friendships in the context of religious organizations has been extremely beneficial to her. In her interview she described the challenge of starting over in a new country and the feeling of alienation that came with having no friends or family ties in the place of settlement. But through the *Portique*, the discussion and meeting group at the *Église-Sacré Coeur*, she was able to create important relationships that have helped her deal with the challenges of settlement after her international migration. Therefore, while Nicole participated at church as a continuation of her religious practice in Haiti, this religious engagement has translated into secular benefits. In fact, relationships that she has fostered in the space of her religious organization now prevail beyond this space. She remains in contact with some of these individuals, and these relationships represent an important resource for her to address emotional constraints such as loneliness and anxiety, which she described in her interview.

Through these examples, it becomes apparent that religious organizations provide welcoming social spaces that foster the possibility to develop and mobilize various forms of human and social capital. Newcomers who participated in my study found it hard to access information. By going to guidance groups or information sessions held at their religious organization, they have been able to meet other newcomers as well as established Canadians that can help guide them with useful information. The ability to form lasting social relationships in the context of these organizations is also an important element, since loneliness and exclusion are among the many challenges participants cited. Therefore, by performing a religious identity and being actively engaged in their religious organizations, the participants in this study were shown to effectively mobilize beneficial settlement resources. While the *Église-Sacré Coeur* did not offer much in terms of direct settlement services, it does represent a social space of gathering where newcomers developed social networks and relationships that facilitated their settlement process.

These social networks do not necessarily represent social capital in and of themselves, but have the potential to be translated into social capital through, for example, the exchange of useful information.

As Portes (1995) explains, “The resources themselves are not social capital, the concept refers to the individual’s capacity to mobilize them on demand” (p.12). Nevertheless, newcomers’ ability to mobilize these networks in order to tap into valuable information, for example, indicates access to important social capital. For newcomers it is not enough to simply frequent religious organizations. They must develop relationships in this setting, and mobilize these relationships towards specific needs, such as accessing information and finding comfort through friendship. These findings underline the key role religious organizations play in providing social spaces where newcomers can find support to facilitate their integration and settlement process. While some institutional services such as the provision of legal counselling described by Déborah are beneficial, my research participants put greater emphasis on the informal access to information made available through the fostering and mobilization of social relationships in the context of religious organizations. The capacity to access this information represents a valuable form of social capital that allows newcomers to better understand their new environment, and thus makes their settlement process less daunting.

### **3.2 Canadian Experience: Information, Employment and Volunteer Work**

Finding employment is another common challenge that newcomers face in the settlement process (Reitz, 2007; Reitz et al. 2014), which is related to the systematic devaluation of migrant workers in the Canadian labor force (Bauder, 2003). This challenge is linked to the afore-mentioned structural barrier of access to information. For example, participants often explained that at first they did not understand the process of preparing a C.V. and of applying for jobs, and that they discovered that church was a good starting point to begin looking for employment. One participant mentioned that while church is by no means a recruitment agency, by going to church newcomers can speak with knowledgeable individuals who are employed and might know of various job openings. In other words, religious organizations in themselves cannot help newcomers find employment, but do help by providing the social space for

newcomers to create valuable social relationships with other congregants. Newcomers can then mobilize human and social capital by meeting new people in a community setting and tap into useful networks of information. Eric, a 45-year-old economic migrant from Haiti who arrived in Canada in 2007 remarked that:

(I)l n'y a pas de lien direct avec le marché de l'emploi (à l'église), ce n'est pas un endroit où on va trouver des opportunités précises d'emploi, ce n'est pas une agence d'emploi. Par contre, en développant des relations de proximité avec des gens qui vivent ici depuis longtemps, qui ont des emplois, ça permet d'avoir de l'information générale mais utile, sur des événements, occasions qui peuvent démarrer un processus. Mais l'attitude de l'immigrant est aussi importante, il faut avoir l'esprit ouvert, être curieux, d'aller vers les gens, les événements, qui ne sont pas disponibles à première vue. Mais en fréquentant cet environnement on peut se stabiliser, et ensuite être plus ouvert à de l'information qui peut déboucher sur de l'info plus spécifique.

This account is indicative of the importance of religious organizations in terms of creating social capital for newcomers. As Eric explained, by being actively involved in church newcomers can develop relationships with other Canadians who are employed, and who might themselves be tapped into valuable networks of information concerning job opportunities. The church therefore provides a social space where newcomers can access information about employment. It is also important to note how Eric understands the importance of individual agency in one's own job hunting process. Individuals must make efforts to seek out this information and to create relationships that will build their human and social capital. This effectively highlights newcomers' sense of individual agency and responsibility; they must take it upon themselves to seek out information and opportunities that may improve their settlement outcomes. This example also sheds light on the importance of religious identity and participation in religious organizations as a way to subvert settlement barriers. By actively performing a religious identity through participation in religious organizations, Eric shows that newcomers can develop beneficial social relationships which may provide employment information. Thus, religious identity and participation can act as a gateway to secular benefits, helping to address a common settlement challenge. While the church as a space can allow newcomers to tap into valuable employment information, it falls upon the individual to take the necessary time and effort to mobilize this social capital by creating and maintaining social relationships and networks.

My findings resonate with Portes' (1995) earlier quote concerning the importance of mobilizing social capital. The social capital does not lie in the resource itself, in this case the religious organization. The actual valuable social capital lies in the capacity for newcomers to attend these religious organizations and to develop meaningful relationships. Once this is done, newcomers can mobilize these networks to tap into employment information which can in turn be beneficial to their settlement processes. Based on my findings, participants in my study do not consider religious organizations as settlement service providers. Rather, these organizations provide social spaces of gathering where newcomers can develop and mobilize different forms of social and human capital. The mobilization of these forms of capital, however, is predicated on newcomers' performance of religious identity in actively participating and engaging with others at church.

Although information concerning employment is of great value to newcomers, on its own it often is not sufficient to find employment. Even equipped with useful information on potential job opportunities, many newcomers struggle with downward mobility that limits their prospects of employment (Handy, Greenspan, 2008), effectively limiting the usefulness of this information. This reality was not lost on the participants, most of who described difficulties finding employment. Claudine from Colombia explained that:

Bien sûr c'est un défi, car même si tu parles la langue, c'est difficile. Dans mon cas je ne parlais pas anglais ou français, et quand j'ai pris la décision de trouver un emploi (...) le seul endroit où on m'acceptait c'était un restaurant où les patrons reçoivent beaucoup d'immigrants et il sait qu'il peut profiter de ça. Les immigrants ont toujours le pire travail, ils vont profiter de toi et oui, c'est difficile si tu n'as pas d'expérience canadienne.

She described how hard it is for immigrants to find a meaningful job, and how the only opportunities often are low paying jobs such as working in a restaurant. Without Canadian work experience, Claudine says newcomers often find themselves in the worst work environments. Nevertheless, religious organizations can help with the difficult task of finding employment in a number of

ways. For example, they provide opportunities for volunteering, which can be translated into Canadian work experience. Anne explained:

(face au) manque d'expérience professionnelle (Canadienne), on peut démontrer qu'on a fait du bénévolat, qu'on a été au service de la communauté, et c'est drôle car ceci sont des choses que l'on a fait au sein de nos communautés ou pays, mais qu'on ne compte pas comme expérience de travail, car c'est normal. Ici chaque chose que tu fais tu peux le transformer en expérience et le vanter (pour trouver un emploi). (...) Mes premiers emplois, l'église m'a fourni des lettres de référence pour mon travail de bénévolat avec la chorale et cela m'a beaucoup aidée.

Scott, Selbee and Reed (2006) show that volunteering opportunities can help newcomers develop a variety of skills that are conducive to greater employability, such as interpersonal skills, communication skills, substantive knowledge and managerial skills. As Anne indicated, her volunteer work within her church allowed her to market herself to employers by offering more employable skills. Moreover, her church gave her letters of reference, indicating to potential employers how she had been of service to her community, gaining work experience in Canada. Therefore, by volunteering at church, she invested time and effort in her community, which helped her develop human capital in the form of new skills and connections which she in turn mobilized towards finding employment. Once again, the religious organization in this case did not offer specific services towards settlement. Rather, as an active agent well aware of her situation, Anne participated in volunteer opportunities which were eventually translated into Canadian work experience. This work experience helped her subvert the structural constraint of not having any Canadian work experience to market herself in her search for different employment opportunities. Anne's volunteer work at church was informed by her performance of religious identity: she was giving her time and effort to benefit her church. Yet Anne's testimony also indicates how she understood that by performing this religious identity in the context of volunteer work, she could draw secular settlement benefits. As it will be explained below, Anne is not simply "using" her church to improve her settlement outcomes. Nevertheless, her individual agency does allow her to understand the secular benefits of performing a religious identity and being actively engaged in her religious organization.

Beyond the creation of marketable skills and the recognition of Canadian work experience, volunteer work also helped another participant forge social relationships and learn about the country of settlement. Lia, a young student from Burundi who arrived to Canada through family reunification in 2012 remarked that:

(I)ls (Église) ont besoin de gens qui servent l'eucharistie, les lectures, il y a du bénévolat lors de la rentrée scolaire. On demande des gens pour le barbecue, pour accueillir les gens. Ça permet l'intégration à travers la rencontre de gens mais aussi en apprenant les coutumes du Canada.

Lia's learning experience through volunteer work was conducive to her settlement process. By helping out at her church in a variety of capacities she developed social relationships from which she was able to learn useful information concerning Canadian customs. It is also important to note that these volunteering opportunities can produce different beneficial social relationships. On the one hand, volunteer work can lead to the development of bonding social capital. For example, Lia was able to meet other newcomers from Burundi at the *Église Sacré-Coeur*, which has a vibrant Burundian community. Creating relationships with newcomers from the country of origin can be very beneficial, for example by fostering a sense of familiarity and comfort (Larsen et al. 2004), as I will show later. This example of valuable bonding social capital was important for Lia because the relationships she created with individuals from the same background (economic, social, geographic etc.) allowed her to develop a sense of continuity from her country of origin. On the other hand, volunteer work has also proven useful for Lia as it has also allowed her to develop valuable bridging social capital, which is further reaching and implies the creation of relationships with individuals outside of one's networks of proximity (Larsen et al, 2004). This bridging social capital is extremely important, as Lia's example has demonstrated. By meeting and developing relationships with native born Canadians through her volunteer work at her church, she has been able to gain valuable information concerning Canadian culture and customs, which can contribute to her settlement process. Thus, through her religious engagement at her church, Lia was able to develop and



mobilize both bonding and bridging social capital. Once again, the relationship between performing a religious identity, in Lia's case through her volunteer work at church, and accessing secular benefits is an integral aspect of participant's settlement. Religious organizations were shown to provide secular settlement benefits for newcomers who actively participated in the religious life of their organization.

In light of these findings, my participants experienced religious organizations as gathering spaces where valuable information (e.g., concerning employment) and opportunities (e.g., volunteer work) could be accessed. For the most part, however, these opportunities were not offered as direct services to facilitate newcomer settlement. Rather, through the performance of religious identity which manifests itself through continued engagement and participation within religious organizations, participants were shown to access important settlement benefits. Thus, performing religious identity and understanding the benefits of actively engaging with others in the context of religious organizations represents an important settlement strategy for newcomers.

By becoming involved in church life, it's possible for newcomers to create important social capital that can also be translated into opportunities of leadership and responsibility. In their study, Alba and Foner (2008) demonstrate that these opportunities for leadership can often lead to prestige and greater social mobility. This was the case for a member of the Lao community in Louisiana who became the financial manager of his Buddhist temple. In turn, such opportunities can improve newcomers' economic outcomes. Similar opportunities for leadership and responsibility within religious organizations were also made available to a number of my research participants. Corine highlighted this by sharing that:

J'ai commencé à interagir avec les gens lorsque j'ai commencé à participer à des groupes. Je n'étais plus juste fidèle qui suit la messe, mais je voulais servir l'église, et c'est là que j'ai commencé à rencontrer du monde. J'étais à la chorale, on fait des sorties, on va se balader, on va au *sugar festival*, je ne sais pas, des activités canadiennes avec la chorale.

Corine's experience further highlights the importance of individual agency. By deciding to become more than just a worshipper but also a contributing member to her religious organization, Corine was able to access social capital through a variety of social networks. She participated in different social outings and learned about her country of settlement through her new social networks, effectively inserting herself more deeply within Canadian society. This example reiterates the fact that religious organizations did not provide direct settlement services to newcomers. Rather, they offer a space where Corine could develop social relationships which in turn helped her to learn about Canada. This learning experience which contributed to her settlement experience was made possible through her performance of religious identity. Through her religious engagement at church in a variety of groups such as the choir she strategically mobilized beneficial settlement resources.

Eric has also benefited from his responsibilities at church. Being qualified as a professional accountant, he was asked to take on some of the accounting duties at his religious organization. This has allowed him to become an influential member of his religious community. Every time I attended mass at his church, I noticed Eric was well known by many congregants. He spoke to many individuals and seemed to be part of an extensive social network at church. This was made even more obvious when I attended a prayer group at his church. Eric led many of the prayers in front of everyone, and seemed to be in a leadership role within his religious community. This could stem from his position of leadership in dealing with the organization's finances. When congregants meet to discuss the financial state of the church, Eric is among the leaders who preside over the meeting. This has clearly allowed him to become acquainted with many other congregants, and has afforded him a certain social prestige, as made evident by his interactions with others at mass and during the prayer group. By taking on a leadership role at church, Eric's settlement experience has benefitted. He has been able to develop an important social network and acquire a position of importance that has been gratifying. As he explains, volunteer work has allowed him to develop:

(...) des relations humaines plus intenses, chaleureuses, car quand il s'agit juste d'aller à la messe, les interactions sont limitées. Mais avec le bénévolat il y a des occasions de rencontres, des célébrations et il y a un sentiment de construire quelque chose, d'être utile et c'est gratifiant de se sentir comme si on amène quelque chose pour améliorer la vie de certaines personnes. C'est valorisant.

In this quote, Eric effectively highlights that to truly benefit from the potential resources contained within religious organizations, one must go beyond simply attending mass. When newcomers actively engage in church life, for example through volunteer work, they can develop meaningful relationships which help improve other people's lives. Eric's performance of religious identity, which is reflected through his commitment to volunteer work at the *Église Sacré-Coeur*, has greatly benefitted his settlement experience.

In this section, I demonstrated a number of ways in which religious organizations offer spaces where newcomers can tap into beneficial social and human capital. This can be done by gaining valuable Canadian work experience and by creating social networks that facilitate learning experiences. In turn, these opportunities and resources help newcomers subvert various structural barriers to settlement. But accessing this social capital is contingent on newcomers' capacity to develop these resources (e.g., social networks) and to mobilize these towards beneficial purposes such as settlement. By performing religious identities in the context of religious organizations, newcomers are better positioned to reap secular settlement benefits. Thus, the understanding of religious organizations as beneficial social spaces and the subsequent appropriate navigation of these spaces represents an important settlement strategy on the part of participants. The following section will elaborate on how my research participants engaged within religious organizations to foster experiences of cultural learning and adaptation, which can be very useful to their settlement process.

### **3.3 Religious Organizations as Spaces of Cultural Learning and Adaptation**

The previous section described several benefits of volunteering within religious organizations. Beyond the examples stated above, a number of participants also described how volunteering in the

context of a religious organization was beneficial to their settlement process through experiences of cultural learning and adaptation to the country of settlement. Examples of newcomer cultural learning and adaptation in a religious context have been noted in other studies. Dwyer et al. (2013) explain that in Vancouver, members of a Sikh Temple are adapting to Canadian society by creating their own perceptions of what it means to be Canadian in a multicultural society. Newcomers at this temple practice their traditional Sikh rituals and combine these with elements of mainstream Canadian society that are shared by second and third generation members of the Temple. There is a sharing of different cultural practices among members that help newcomers learn about Canadian values and practices, while remaining connected to the values informed by their country of origin. They thus create an identity as Canadian Sikhs by sharing different cultural discourses (mainstream Canadian and traditional Sikh values) effectively creating an identity rooted in their own specific migratory context. In this section, I will provide insight into how my research participants' performance of religious identity and participation within religious organizations has allowed them to tap into experiences of cultural learning and adaptation. I will demonstrate that volunteer work within a religious organization has the potential to provide newcomers with experiences of cultural exchange which act as important opportunities for sharing and learning which benefit settlement. Therefore, I shed light on another way in which appropriate navigation of religious space can represent beneficial secular settlement strategy.

When discussing the importance of religious organizations in providing cultural learning experiences, Eric, an accountant from Haiti explained that:

Au début c'était un terrain inconnu, j'ai osé le faire (bénévolat) en voyant où ça allait me mener, mais avec l'expérience j'ai constaté que c'était important au point de vue de ma socialisation, (...) pour développer des relations humaines plus intenses, chaleureuses, (...) et il y a un sentiment de construire quelque chose, d'être utile et c'est gratifiant de se sentir comme si on amène quelque chose pour améliorer la vie de certaines personnes. C'est valorisant. Et aussi au point de vue de la connaissance des mentalités, des façons de faire, des autres qui viennent d'autres communautés dont la culture m'est étrangère. Le bénévolat m'a permis de mieux les connaître et eux-mêmes de mieux me connaître donc on peut plus travailler ensemble aux mêmes objectifs.

Eric's experiences reveal not only that volunteer work is beneficial to obtain Canadian work experience, but also that volunteer work itself provides an experiential learning opportunity. Through his volunteer work, Eric was able to learn about cultures which were previously foreign to him. Moreover, he was also able to share his own culture with others, effectively fostering a cultural learning environment within his religious organization. By sharing these cultural learnings, Eric explains how members of his religious organization were better able to work together towards the same objectives. Therefore, engaging in volunteer work at his church does not only serve religious purposes such as contributing to his religious community. Beyond the skills that Eric provides to his religious community, he also accesses valuable learning experiences which further his own settlement experience.

This element of sharing information concerning cultural practices and values was an essential aspect of adapting to the country of settlement for many participants. Nicole from Haiti said that:

*Il ne fallait pas que je m'intègre, il fallait que je m'adapte, car s'intégrer c'est oublier ses valeurs, s'adapter c'est porter tout ce que tu as en acceptant ce que l'autre a à offrir.*

Nicole understands the importance of sharing cultural information with others. After highlighting how she perceives the differences between integration and adaptation, she explains that to truly feel as if she was adapting to her country of settlement, she believes it is important to not only maintain her own values, but to accept new ideas she is learning in the context of her religious organization. By remaining active within her church, Nicole is able to learn about other cultures, and remain connected to her own set of values and beliefs. In this sense, religious participation serves the dual purpose of allowing her to connect more deeply with her settlement society, but also creates comfort and continuity through the preservation of cultural practices. This cultural exchange and learning experience was only made available to Nicole through her volunteer work at her church. Once again, religious organizations were not providing a direct service; it is

the social space that her church offers that allowed her to develop important human social capital by sharing and learning with others.

By becoming involved in this exchange of cultural information, newcomers are effectively creating valuable bridging social capital. As mentioned, many newcomers experience structural challenges to settlement because of a lack of information. But, in the context of their religious organizations, they are able to meet individuals who share different life courses and experiences. By connecting with Canadian-born individuals and/or more established immigrants, newcomers can tap into networks of information that allow them to better understand their new environment. They can learn about social norms, cultural practices and aspects of everyday life that can facilitate their immersion into Canadian life. Mathieu, a professional from Burundi in his mid-twenties who arrived to Canada as a refugee, reveals how volunteer work has allowed him to connect with other individuals and participate in important learning activities.

Ça (volunteer work) m'a aidé à aborder des gens, tu peux rencontrer des gens (aux organismes religieux) qui vont dire «Ah je n'ai jamais patiné » « Prend mon numéro de téléphone et je t'apprends ». Car habituellement les nouveaux arrivants se retrouvent ensemble, et donc qui va t'apprendre à patiner?

Mathieu highlights the fact that newcomers usually find themselves in the same social networks, and this limits their cross-cultural learning experiences. Thus, by going to activities organized in the context of his religious organization, he was able to meet individuals who knew how to skate and were willing to teach him. What might seem like an inconsequential step in his integration experience, learning to skate was actually very important, as it helped him feel as if he was engaged in a typically Canadian activity which he had never experienced previously. Therefore, it is clear in this context that the performance of religious identity on the part of Mathieu allows him to access secular settlement resources. By going to church and trying to meet new people, he is able to participate in activities that were previously closed off to him. In order for Mathieu to learn to skate, he needed to meet people who would be willing to teach him. By

developing social relationships at his church, Mathieu is able to participate in secular activities. Thus, religious participation served as the catalyst for his immersion into a typically Canadian activity.

While religious engagement has clear benefits for settlement, simply going to church was not enough in Mathieu's case. Mathieu went on to explain that there are numerous small details concerning the way of life in a new country that newcomers must learn. According to him, it is important for newcomers to want to learn about these details to be able to learn about Canada and Canadians. This highlights the importance of individual agency in carrying settlement strategy. Newcomers cannot simply attend mass, they must navigate religious organizations strategically in order to tap into resources they believe will be beneficial.

Il faut aussi que le nouvel arrivant ait envie de connaître ce Canadien, et vice versa et ce n'est pas facile d'aborder cela. On parle anglais ou français? Poignée de main ou *hug*? Tu sais, et tout ça entre en jeu, ces petits détails (...).

Mathieu understands that he must want to learn about his new country in order to make social connections with other individuals which will allow him to access information that will translate into social capital. An important element that newcomers must learn, according to Mathieu, is the social nuances that make up interactions. He brings up the example of whether to hug or shake a hand when meeting someone. Religious organizations allow newcomers to meet Canadians and immigrants who have been living in the country for a more substantial period of time. In this context, they can learn about such cultural and social nuances. Often times, newcomers are confined to ethnic enclaves, or limited networks of friends and family who have similar migratory experiences to Canada. But, by becoming involved in church activities, newcomers can connect with individuals who can help them bridge this information gap through experiences of cultural learning and adaptation. Again, the experiences of my participants indicate that religious organizations have been useful in providing them with a space of social gathering. By performing religious identity in this space, newcomers can access various opportunities for engagement and

participation. These in turn help newcomers develop and mobilize networks of information and social relationships which benefit their settlement experience.

### **3.4 Social Networks of Mutual Aid: Religious Motives, Secular Benefits**

These findings shed light on my research participants' awareness of the useful opportunities for engagement within religious organizations. While participants' accounts show the various benefits that newcomers derive from becoming actively involved in church life, the findings also need to be nuanced. It is therefore important to underline that the majority of participants clearly stated that they are not using religion instrumentally towards the specific goals of improving settlement outcomes. That is, they go to church primarily for religious purposes, and not merely to benefit from potential access to information, resources and the social capital that can then be developed and mobilized. Participants' awareness of this issue was raised in a number of interviews. Anne, for example, affirmed that:

Bien oui, ça (appartenir à une organisation religieuse) peut servir à des fins autres que spirituelles, (...), et quand on partage les croyances c'est plus facile de tisser des liens, donc la religion a des bénéfices autres que théologiques. Mais je ne crois pas m'être servie de ma religion à des fins spécifiques. (...) (C)omme je l'avais dit, avant (au pays d'origine) j'étais plus passive. Ici j'ai une façon de m'intégrer au sein de la société à travers l'église, mais je ne pratique pas différemment. J'ai peut-être trouvé une nouvelle conscience que je peux contribuer à ma communauté religieuse mais ça n'a pas vraiment changé mes pratiques religieuses.

In this account, Anne explains that she realized that there are potential "secular" benefits to be had by going to church. She stresses, however, that this realization did not lead to changes in the way she practices religion. She does not go to church primarily with the goal of accessing useful services or information; rather, and this was the case with most participants, she and others understand that the more they invest themselves in their religious community, the more resources this community can offer in return. Ève, a student from Burundi who arrived in Canada in 2009 as an international student, realized this when she said that:



(L)’église est un lieu où on peut rencontrer des gens, si on a un peu de chance, qui pourront nous aiguiller un peu vers certains services. Mais je pense qu’en tout cas à Sacré Cœur par exemple, il n’y a pas vraiment de structures qui sont conçues pour ça. On y va souvent pour prier, et pour les Burundais c’est normal. Chez nous on va à la messe pour faire sa prière et on rentre chez soi. Et c’est dans la communauté, l’église fait partie de la communauté mais au Burundi la communauté est partout, chez nous on aura plus d’info dans les familles qui sont très grosses et là pour nous aider, mais dans notre tête on va à l’église pour prier.

Ève explains that religious organizations are a place where information and resources can point newcomers in the right direction, but parishioners go to church primarily for spiritual reasons, in her case to pray. Similarly, most participants stated that there was no instrumentalisation of their affiliation to religious organizations towards specific settlement purposes. While performing religious identity through active engagement within religious organizations certainly represents a useful strategy to improve settlement outcomes, this is not the primary reason participants give so much of their time and effort to their religious communities.

I want to note that during the interviews, many participants became somewhat uncomfortable and at times even defensive when I asked if they consciously went to church for purposes of settlement. While all participants realized there were benefits derived from participating in religious organizations, they wanted it to be clear that it is not the reason why they go to church; rather, it is to practice their faith in God. The secular outcomes are but one benefit of going to church and practicing their faith. The church does not provide direct services, but as Corine put it, there is a wealth of resources in the community, so that there will always be someone who will find a way to help you out. While this is not the primary goal of religious participation, all participants noted the benefits of engagement in religious organizations, including Corine:

(i)l y a une richesse (d’information et de ressources) dans la communauté qui fait en sorte qu’il y a quelqu’un qui connaît quelqu’un, qui connaît quelqu’un, tu comprends? (...) (C)’est possible de pouvoir exploiter la richesse de la communauté.

By understanding the potential for beneficial outcomes of religious engagement, most participants have been able to become involved in their religious communities (e.g., choir groups, prayer groups, and other tasks such as communion). This involvement has allowed them to draw benefits in the form of valuable social relationships and Canadian work experience. To illustrate, Corine also explained precisely how valuable these relationships are by stating that:

Je déménageais d'appartement et je ne connaissais personne et c'est que des gens de la paroisse qui sont venus m'aider à déménager, et c'est des gens que je ne connaissais pas depuis longtemps.

This example illustrates one of the many ways in which participants' religious community contributed to their settlement. Of course, Corine did not go to church to find people to move her belongings, but after having been a member of the choir for a short while, she already had many people from her religious organization ready to help her. This experience highlights the important social value contained in these networks. Religious organizations as a social space thus remain a place of worship and spirituality for the participants; nevertheless, they also are a place where social relationships can be fostered. These can then translate into networks of mutual aid and a deep sense of community that are an invaluable form of social capital for newcomers. By developing communal networks of support, newcomers such as Corine can feel a sense of belonging to their society of settlement because they are part of a larger network of individuals who can rely on one another. Moreover, these social networks help newcomers address some of the very concrete challenges of settlement such as moving to a new apartment.

These networks of mutual aid were an important resource for my research participants. But for these networks to be beneficial, newcomers need to be co-implicated in one another's settlement processes. One of the strengths of these social networks is that they contain many individuals who can contribute to help others. Mathieu stressed this important co-implication of newcomers in their respective settlement processes when he remarked that:

Une fois qu'il (nouvel arrivant) est dans un réseau social et qu'il arrive à réussir dans ce réseau, il va être fier de lui, et il va savoir qu'il ne l'a pas fait seul, et ça c'est gratifiant pour lui et pour les gens qui l'ont aidé, et donc quand il aura un ami qui vient aussi, il dira est-ce qu'on peut faire de même pour mon ami?

As Mathieu's quote highlights, newcomers' success is contingent on the help of others, and this cooperation is gratifying for everyone involved. He went on to add that once a newcomer has incorporated a network and has received help, he will look to help out his friends. This finding illustrates the importance of newcomers being mutually involved in their settlement processes to be as successful as possible. Religious organizations such as the *Église Sacré-Coeur* group together a large number of individuals, many of these newcomers. By remaining connected through this social space, my participants were able to receive help as well as contribute to facilitate the settlement experiences of other newcomers. Through providing the space for a large network of newcomers to remain connected and engaged, religious organizations contribute to participants' settlement experience by helping them develop and mobilize resources which address a variety of settlement challenges.

### **3.5 Sense of Belonging, Friendship and Community**

Many newcomers also face the challenge of lacking a sense of belonging. Nearly all my research participants noted feelings of loneliness in a society that is much more individualized compared to their countries of origin. In addition, they mentioned several common challenges in settling in a new country, such as feeling various degrees of stress and anxiety in the face of unemployment and other precarious situations, as well as a considerable emotional distance from their traditional customs and practices. The existing literature (e.g., Cadge, Levitt, Jaworsky, Clevenger, 2013; Levitt, 2008) addresses the role that religious organizations can play to help deal with these challenges. My own findings reveal that research participants developed a sense of comfort and purpose through their religious involvement, which helped to deal with these challenges related to international migration. For many participants, the sense of

comfort and purpose developed in the context of their religious organization helped create a sense of belonging within the broader country of settlement. Ève remarked that:

Je pense qu'à travers les activités que j'ai pu faire (à l'église) j'ai retrouvé ce sens de communauté qui me manquait quand je suis arrivée. Donc on s'intègre en disant qu'il y a moyen de vivre quelque chose qui a du sens en gardant nos valeurs qui sont inspirées par la religion à la base, mais qui sont aussi culturelles et que l'on peut pratiquer, les matérialiser, en faisant des trucs, et ça fait des liens, ça fait des gens qu'on voit, ça fait des vies qu'on observe, des trucs à faire et des histoires à construire.

As she explained, being able to practice her faith allowed her to connect with like-minded people and not only keep her values and customs but to actually live them. Her involvement in the church helped give meaning to her life, and even though she went through difficult times, it made her realize that life as she chose to live it would go on. The role of religious organizations to help newcomers preserve their customs and traditions from the country of origin was also highlighted by other participants, such as Claudine.

Oui, ça te donne un sentiment d'appartenance à ton pays (d'établissement). Il y a un petit rituel qui se passe de la même façon que dans ton pays (d'origine), alors c'est comme si tu es dans ton pays pour une heure.

Being able to worship in a manner similar to how they used to in their countries of origin makes many newcomers feel as if they truly belong to their new society. In this sense, church as a social space seems to transcend, at least in a way, international borders. This transcending of international borders which allows for a certain continuity of religious life from one country to another paints my participants' religious organizations as transnational spaces. While the corporal separation remains, religious engagement allows newcomer participants to access a transnational environment which is in some ways reminiscent of their countries of origin. Through their performances of religious identity in the context of religious organizations, participants were better able to cope with the strain of international migration. It made the difficult process of settling in a new country more manageable.

This focus on transnational space is interesting in the context of my research as it provides a prelude into the fluidity of identities and spaces which will be the focus of Chapters 4 and 5. Religious organizations which can act as transnational spaces according to my participants blur the international borders between African/Haitian/Colombian and Canadian spaces. While my participants are clearly in a Canadian space while at church in Ottawa, the religious performances that take place in these organizations remind them of their countries of origin. In this case, while physically in Canada, for an hour or so they can experience Colombia through religious practice, as Claudine explained above. This effectively transports them to an emotional space that transcends Canada's borders. These findings reveal how physical spaces of religious organizations can be experienced both as "Canadian" and/or "Colombian," highlighting the fluidity of the spaces of lived experience. Moreover, by performing religious rituals in Canada that she used to perform in Colombia, Claudine is essentially performing a Colombian identity. Through her religious performance, she can transport her Colombian identity with her to Canada. This fluid transnational performance blurs the boundaries between Claudine's Canadian and Colombian identities, which has beneficial outcomes for her settlement process. While in the following chapters I will address this issue in more depth, it is nonetheless interesting to begin noting how identities and spaces are performed and experienced fluidly.

The transnational reality of religious organizations and practices helped some participants carry on their religious lives as if nothing had changed, and this continuity seemed to give many participants, including Anne, a sense of comfort and joy.

Je suis ici depuis 5 ans, et à l'église je connais le quart des gens, et ça fait du bien de les saluer, de chanter, donc ça fait comme si on fait partie d'une famille, et par rapport aux sentiments d'anxiété, moi je me suis joint à la chorale dès ma première année, et trouver des gens avec qui je pouvais chanter mon amour pour Dieu ça m'a vraiment permis de maintenir le cap, car ce n'est pas évident quitter sa famille du jour au lendemain, de venir à un pays où on ne connaît personne. Donc vraiment la religion m'a vraiment aidé à rester qui je suis aujourd'hui.

For Anne, being able to go to church to sing and practice her faith as she used to in Burundi allowed her to deal with feelings of anxiety. While she has left her family behind to come to Ottawa, religion has helped her build a new “family” to help her cope with the challenges of international migration. When considering the accounts of Ève, Claudine and Anne, it becomes more evident that participation within religious organizations facilitates the creation of a sense of belonging for newcomers. These organizations serve as social spaces where newcomers can effectively create bonding social capital with other newcomers who may be living similar situations. The creation of social networks in the context of religious organizations can help newcomers deal with feelings of anxiety, alienation and a sense of being uprooted from their former lives. This in turn can lead individuals to develop a sense of community and belonging which can help them address the various challenges that come with international migration and subsequent settlement.

Lia also provided an example of how her performance of religious identity, shown through her participation in the choir, has led to secular settlement benefits.

(J)e fais partie d’une chorale où nous chantons à des différentes nationalités (groupes d’individus). Peu importe qui cherche une chorale, ils peuvent nous avoir (engager) alors ça nous ouvre à la société (...) donc il y a beaucoup de gens que je connais car j’ai chanté à leur messe, ou je les ai vu à la chorale.

As she explains, Lia’s participation in the choir has enabled her to meet people in places she would never have otherwise frequented. Her religious performance is beneficial in the sense that it serves as a gateway to other segments of society. She participated in the choir as part of her religious practice, but in so doing has reaped substantial benefits which may improve her settlement outcome. Furthermore, Corine who also sings in the choir showed that doing so has allowed her to learn much more about her new country. By singing with native born Canadians, and creating friendships that endure outside of the church setting, she has been able to learn about Canadian traditions and ways of life which were previously unknown to her.

(La chorale) m'a aidé à faire des amis comme ça, et ensuite c'est « oh tu ne veux pas aller prendre un verre après la chorale? » Ou « passe-moi ton numéro de téléphone, tu veux aller voir le hockey? Tu comprends le hockey? » Non je ne comprends rien au hockey mais on va te montrer! Donc c'est tout, on va aller patiner, du coup intégration, et je récupère là-bas, et là au travail c'est mes collègues, donc ce n'est pas la même relation mais je me sens comme si je peux participer, ils parlent de choses que mes autres potes m'ont montré donc j'appartiens plus, ça m'aide à me sentir plus acceptée aussi.

This opportunity to create relationships with “native born co-religionists” (Levitt, 2008) has proven to be meaningful for many of my participants. Earlier, I explained that relationships with native born Canadians can represent important cultural learning experiences. Furthermore, they play an important role in fostering a sense of belonging to the country of settlement. By investing their own time and energy in church initiatives, such as the choir, participants have been able to form relationships and social networks outside of the context of religious organizations. The ability for these participants to create relationships that endure outside of the church setting is meaningful because they feel a sense of belonging not only within the realm of the church, but also in a variety of different spaces such as hockey games, schools, seniors' residences and so on. Therefore, religious participation helps lay the groundwork for newcomers to engage within other segments of Canadian society. In so doing, they can more effectively learn about their new country which helps facilitate their settlement process. These organizations can be understood as important social spaces of gathering that allow newcomers, through their individual agency, to put into action settlement strategies through their performance of religious identity and active religious engagement. These strategies help newcomers address various structural challenges to their settlement process.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

To summarize, my research findings suggest that religious organizations represent significant social spaces potentially rich in social and human capital. These findings add to the existing literature on the issue of religious organizations and newcomer settlement where the main focus is on the role of these

organizations as social service providers (Connor, Koenig, 2013; Hirschmann, 2004). In the case of my study, my findings demonstrate that religious organizations play an instrumental role in the settlement process of newcomers, but not as direct providers of settlement services; rather, as all my participants agreed, the significance of religious organizations lies in their role as a social space of gathering where newcomers can develop and mobilize invaluable human and social capital. Most of the benefits related to settlement discussed in this chapter were the product of performances of religious identity and committed engagement within religious organizations on the part of my participants. By actively participating in various activities such as discussion groups and by offering their time as volunteers, the participants of this study were able to create meaningful social relationships. After having created these networks in the context of religious organizations, participants were then able to tap into these networks when they needed access to resources such as employment information, Canadian work experience, help to move, and even to foster a sense of belonging. Therefore, the social and human capital mobilized in these religious organizations was the product of committed participation in religious organizations on the part of participants as active agents, and represents an important settlement strategy in the face of structural constraints. These findings highlight the individual agency of newcomers in their own settlement process, in contrast to much of the literature where the focus is on the role of religious organizations in newcomer settlement.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to note that access to social capital is not equal among all newcomers. There are differences in the ways individuals negotiate settlement challenges. Therefore, the ways in which newcomers engage in fostering and mobilizing settlement resources within religious organizations can depend on a variety of factors, notably gender. In the next chapter, my aim is to shed light on the ways in which gender influences newcomers' navigation of religious organizations. More specifically, I will examine how gender norms and conceptions of masculinity and femininity influence newcomer men and women's performance of religious identity and participation in religious organizations.



In so doing, I demonstrate how settlement strategies developed in the context of religious organizations may differ between men and women participants.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Gendered Participation within Religious Organizations and its Impact on Newcomer Settlement**

In Chapter 3, I demonstrated that performing religious identities and participating within religious organizations can be beneficial to newcomers for their settlement process. By actively engaging in religious organizations, newcomers are able to effectively foster and mobilize human and social capital that facilitates their experience of settlement. The different resources and forms of capital mobilized within religious organizations helped newcomers mitigate certain structural barriers such as lack of access to information. These resources and human and social capital came in the form of networks of mutual aid, access to information concerning potential employment as well as opportunities for volunteer work and gaining Canadian work experience, among others. Newcomers' capacity to mobilize these forms of capital, however, is contingent on their active participation within religious organizations. My research findings indicate that participation within religious organizations differs among participants; in particular, women participate more actively in church life than their male counterparts, which in turn allows them to more effectively mobilize settlement resources such as human and social capital. This uneven religious participation and mobilization of resources thus leads to different settlement outcomes for newcomer men and women in the context of religious organizations.

In this chapter, I propose to examine how gender influences participation levels of newcomer men and women in religious organizations. I will argue that a re-negotiation of gender roles in the context of international migration among my research participants has led to increased opportunities for women to participate within the social space of religious organizations. Furthermore, both men and women participants reported prevalent attitudes surrounding gender roles based on conceptions of femininities and masculinities that contributed to limiting male participation within religious organizations. Therefore, by examining gender in the context of religious participation, I shed light on structural factors that may

enable and/or constrain newcomers' religious engagement, and the subsequent implications for men and women participants' settlement.

There is substantial feminist research on the re-negotiation of gender roles through international migration and its impacts on settlement. Much of this work focuses on the links between migration, private labor market inclusion and changing gender roles within the family and household (Pessar 1999, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992). My research will add to this work by examining how re-negotiated gender roles in the context of international migration can influence newcomer men and women's participation within the social space of religious organizations. My findings suggest that equipped with re-negotiated gender roles and new opportunities for engagement within religious organizations, newcomer women effectively foster and mobilize human and social capital in these organizations with positive outcomes for their settlement process. On the other hand, newcomer men may turn to spaces other than religious organizations to mobilize their own human and social capital. Nonetheless, it remains important to nuance these findings with the fact that international migration is not necessarily emancipatory for all newcomers (Pessar, 1999). While international migration has allowed men and women to re-negotiate some gender roles, others have remained unchanged.

This chapter will first contextualize the re-negotiation of gender roles among men and women participants in the context of migration to Ottawa, Canada. I will compare their accounts of gender roles in the countries of origin and in Canada. My analysis will be informed by existing feminist literature to demonstrate that many gender roles are in fact actively challenged and transformed through migration, thus illustrating how international migration is both a gendered and gendering process for newcomers (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). I will then analyze the impact of these re-negotiated gender roles and attitudes on participation within religious organizations. Finally, I will examine the outcomes of this gendered participation in religious organizations on newcomer men and women's settlement processes. My

examination of the different ways in which men and women mobilize resources through their active engagement within religious organizations aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of newcomer access to and use of human and social capital in these spaces.

#### **4.1 International Migration and the Re-negotiation of Gender roles**

In this section, I will compare the dominant gender roles that my research participants assumed in their countries of origin and upon arriving and settling in Ottawa. The aim is to highlight the process of re-negotiation of gender roles that takes place in the context of international migration. This comparison will be supported with the findings of other feminist researchers (Foner, 1997, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Hagan, 1998; Pessar, 1999), as well as more contemporary work on gender and migration (Farahani, 2012; Dhar, 2012; Maternowska, Withers and Brindis, 2014; Datta, 2008). While these findings will not necessarily generate new knowledge, they will help to contextualize how these Francophone newcomers understand their experience of changing gender roles from their country of origin to Ottawa. In turn, this contextualization will allow us to better understand the implications of re-negotiated gender roles on participation within religious organizations, and the subsequent settlement outcomes.

Most feminist scholars have illustrated the outcomes of changing gender roles on the integration and settlement of newcomer women through an analysis of the labor market and family households. Building on this work, I propose to better understand the influence of re-negotiated gender roles on settlement processes in the specific context of religious organizations, which has not been addressed in the literature. It is important to note, however, that the findings presented here are based on the accounts given by newcomers from different countries and continents – in this case Haiti, Colombia, Cameroon, DRC and Burundi. Clearly the specific contexts of departure and arrival of these newcomers differ on many levels and I do not pretend to generalize their experiences within one migratory reality. Nevertheless, I discuss their experiences alongside one another in order to illustrate how gender roles are re-negotiated, albeit in

countless different ways, in the context of international migration. To quote Nancy Foner (1998) who explained the same methodological reality in her own research on migrant women working in New York City, “while the analysis presented here is sensitive to different (...) cultural background among the various (participants), the emphasis is on common themes, experiences and processes that emerge” (p.6).

#### *4.1.1 Domestic Responsibilities*

One of the most common themes when discussing gender roles and how they change through migration is that of domestic responsibilities. Many participants witnessed or experienced a re-negotiation of domestic roles after having settled in Ottawa. This issue has been addressed in the work of feminist scholars. Foner (1997, 1998) examines how the incorporation of women within the labor market, a new reality for many newcomers, often translates into increased autonomy and leverage within the household.

Pessar (2005: p.7) echoes this idea when stating that:

Immigrant women have often been able to use their wages and increased access to state services as leverage to attain more control over household decision-making, over personal and household expenditures, and over spatial mobility. Many studies also document greater male participation in household and childcare responsibilities, albeit not approaching real parity.

The literature thus highlights a potential decrease in domestic responsibilities for migrant women and a potential increase in these responsibilities for newcomer men. Ève, a 24-year-old Masters student who arrived from Burundi in 2007 as an international student, explained:

Au Burundi, les femmes ont plus une présence, un rôle de service, et les hommes ont plus un rôle de leader. Je pense qu’ici (Canada) on voit moins de femmes de service qu’on en voit au Burundi. Au Burundi la culture est aussi faite ainsi, les femmes se retrouvent souvent avec des boulots, même pendant les fêtes ce sont elles qui servent pendant que les hommes font des discours. Ici (Ottawa) je pense qu’il y a une certaine vague de féminisme, d’émancipation et je pense qu’on finit par avoir une certaine représentation des femmes autrement.

Ève's perception of changing gender roles through international migration aligns with the findings of Foner (1997), Pessar (2005) and Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992). Ève perceives a certain wave of female emancipation in Canada which has changed women's domestic roles and how they are performed. Ève went on to illustrate how the men of her community have also realized this re-negotiation of gender roles concerning domestic responsibilities.

Il y a toujours des *jokes* autour de ça chez les hommes de ma communauté. Ils disent toujours « tu sais le Canada c'est un pays de femmes *eh* », et ils se taquent. Ils disent à leurs amis qui débarquent au Canada, « tu sais si tu fais le moindre geste, tu risques toujours de te faire mettre en prison. Tu vas devoir apprendre à balayer, cuisiner ». (...) C'est clair, c'est frappant, car au Burundi ce n'est vraiment pas la même chose alors qu'on arrive ici et on se dit il ne faut pas m'emmerder.

Through this quote, Ève stresses that men in her community are acutely aware of the re-negotiation of gender roles taking place in their new context of settlement. The men were said to constantly joke about their new country being a “country for women” where men must now learn to clean and cook. This is in stark contrast to what she says is the norm in Burundi, where women are responsible for domestic responsibilities. It is clear in this case that the men of Ève's community have realized a transition in terms of gender roles, and they are actively learning to cope with and negotiate these new roles by learning new skills (e.g cooking, cleaning) within the context of family relations. This quote is also interesting because it illustrates that there is an acknowledgment of the re-negotiation of gender roles at the community scale, made obvious by the joking between the men of Ève's community. They are not only dealing with these challenges individually, but clearly discuss the changing gender roles and how it affects them openly. This example also illustrates the fact that international migration is a gendering process, as Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992) explains. By migrating to Canada, newcomer men and women in Ève's community are confronted with new attitudes relating to gender, and have changed the way they understand their own roles concerning domestic responsibilities. But, as I will show later, international migration can also be a

gendered process (as opposed to gendering), whereby certain gender roles can be maintained and even exacerbated through migration.

It is important to note that while access to wage labor, decreased domestic responsibilities and a generally less conservative and patriarchal society, as reported by participants, can afford women increased autonomy and leverage in the household, these changing gender roles should not be understood as always and necessarily emancipatory. Besides the fact that women are often forced into the wage labor market because of dire economic situations, work in menial jobs and are paid less than their male counterparts (Foner, 1998), gender roles in some contexts are not as quick to change as others. In fact, there are many different factors that intersect to influence how gender roles are re-negotiated, as well as the outcomes of these re-negotiations. Among these factors are migratory context, age, social class, and education levels. I will illustrate with one example from my research.

Ève pointed out that in her uncle's case, re-negotiated gender roles did not lead to a re-distribution of domestic responsibilities.

C'est très générationnel (changing gender roles). Moi j'ai un oncle qui est arrivé en 1989, il est plus âgé, et sa femme fait encore la cuisine à la maison, et c'est un très bon homme. Comme il est Burundais c'est un homme très inspirant mais tu vois je l'ai déjà vu essayer d'apprendre à cuisiner et il a complètement raté son coup. Mais tu vois dans la constitution de leur famille c'est toujours la femme qui prend l'initiative, tandis que dans ma génération, il y a genre une lutte de pouvoir entre les gars et les filles et c'est intéressant. On est un peu entre deux chaises. Je pense que ça prendra la génération prochaine pour vraiment adopter ces rôles plus partagés.

Ève underlines that gender roles are affected by different factors, in this case age and generation. While she does think that within her own generation of newcomers to Canada there seems to be a re-negotiation of gender roles, there still is work to be done. She explains that in her uncle's household domestic chores such as cooking are taken up by his wife. Her uncle has made efforts to take up cooking, but as Ève explains his abilities to do so were quite limited. While this fact illustrates that age may be a factor that impacts the

renegotiation of gender roles and the allocation of domestic responsibilities in the household, it must be mentioned that Ève's uncle has migrated to Ottawa over 20 years ago. This different migratory context could potentially also impact how the domestic responsibilities were renegotiated in his migration to Canada, as Canadian gender roles in 1989 were obviously understood differently than they are today. Moreover, as Maternowska, Withers and Brindis (2014) explain in their study on the changing masculinities and gender roles of working class Mexican men migrating to California, "older men were generally less flexible and desired to maintain traditional gender roles" (p.997). These findings could support why Ève's older uncle might have been less flexible in changing his domestic responsibilities. But as previously mentioned, many factors may contribute to influence the re-negotiation of gender roles. In the case of these Mexican migrants, their working class status may well impact how they re-negotiate their gender roles after migrating to California. Education and social class also play a role as Dhar (2012) shows with her study on South-Asian women who migrate to Britain. Women who migrate with higher levels of education tend to be on a more equal footing with their partners after migration when it comes to domestic responsibilities. Some women in her study explained how they were increasingly consulted by their husbands concerning domestic decisions, even sometimes taking decisions without consulting their partners. On the other hand, women with lower levels of education found that their relationship with their partner had not changed through migration when compared to their countries of origin (Dhar, 2012). The women of my research were all either current or former university or college students. This high level of education may also help to explain why so many of my participants reported changing gender roles through migration. These results may have been different if my participants were less educated. These examples serve to nuance our understanding of the re-negotiation of gender roles. Many factors intersect to influence how gender is re-negotiated, and the actual outcomes these changing gender roles have on relationships.



With these nuances in mind, it is necessary to remind that while migration can afford newcomer women new opportunities, it is not necessarily emancipatory for women (Pessar, 1999), because gender roles are re-negotiated in multiple ways. Nonetheless, international migration remains an invariably transformative process, whether it be positive or negative.

#### *4.1.2 Inclusion within wage labor and public sphere activities*

Earlier, I mentioned that international migration often enables migrant women to access the wage labor market (Foner, 1997, 1998), while migrant men can experience a decrease in relative privilege in certain spaces such as households and workplaces (Pessar, 2005). Similar findings were echoed in my study. Eric, an accountant in his forties who migrated to Ottawa from Haiti in 2007, discussed the inclusion of women in the wage labor market compared to the economic struggles that some newcomer men face:

(D)e façon générale, il y a, étant donné que je viens d'un pays patriarcal, où les hommes sont valorisés par rapport aux femmes, et ont plus de pouvoir dans les foyers et en société, ça paraît plus facile pour un homme dans un pays comme Haïti de se développer économiquement, car les femmes sont maintenues dans une position d'infériorité et les parents vont moins encourager les femmes de faire des études plus avancées. En arrivant ici dans une société égalitaire, c'est plus difficile pour les hommes car ils ne ressentent plus le traitement privilégié, même s'ils ne s'en rendent pas compte, donc c'est plus difficile de s'adapter. Et si les gens arrivent avec des diplômes, et avaient une carrière professionnelle, en arrivant ici s'ils ne trouvent pas cet emploi, ils se sentent dévalorisés, et beaucoup ne réagissent pas de façon positive pour trouver les moyens de surmonter ces défis. Plusieurs vont réagir avec de la jalousie, se sentant humiliés face à leurs épouses, sœurs etc., ce qui ne facilite pas les choses. Et les femmes en général, en Haïti, et Afrique, souvent elles font plus de tâches ménagères que les hommes, alors ce qui veut dire qu'ici elles ont plus d'ouverture d'esprit (par rapport à trouver un emploi). Alors pour les hommes ils doivent se reprogrammer, ce qui n'est pas facile.

Eric's assessment of the challenges of re-negotiating gender roles (e.g., women engaged in wage labor vs. domestic labor) in the context of migration is significant and resonates with Pessar's (2005) findings. There is a clear re-negotiation of gender roles as migrating to Canada constitutes moving to a more equitable society with regard to gender relations for African and Haitian men. Eric states that newcomer men no longer enjoy a preferential treatment over women when it comes to economic

opportunities within the work force. He also explains that many men come to Canada as qualified workers with the hopes of continuing in their fields of expertise. For newcomers, however, finding qualified employment is extremely difficult. On the other hand, he explains that women in Haiti and African countries are accustomed to taking care of domestic work, and this gives them a more open minded approach to finding employment in Canada. While men are often too proud to accept less qualified work, this is often the way through which newcomer women access the labor market, as Pessar (1999) and Hagan (1998) demonstrate. Eric explained that struggling men often start to feel jealous and humiliated by their wives and sisters who access the labor market, often for the first time. These struggles on the part of newcomer men resonate with Farahani's (2012) findings on diasporic masculinities. She discusses how many newcomer men's masculinity is directly linked to their role as household breadwinners. For many men the experience of seeing this role taken away or even shared with a partner can impact how they view themselves as "(un)desirable" men. This link between gender roles and conceptions of masculinities/femininities will be discussed in more depth below.

Another participant, Déborah, a 20-year-old student from Haiti who arrived in Ottawa in 2009, also noticed changes in terms of the roles assumed by women in Canada when compared to Haiti: "Au Canada, les femmes sont impliquées dans la vie publique, mais en Haïti les gens sont plus conservateurs qu'ici, les règles ça compte beaucoup pour eux." When discussing the inclusion of women in public life, Déborah explains that in Ottawa women seem to be more active in public activities such as paid work and religious gatherings than they typically are in Haiti. This aligns with Eric's account of Haiti as a more patriarchal society compared to Canada. Both Haitian participants noticed that in Canada, gender roles are "less conservative," and women can more easily participate in the labor force and in the public sphere. In this context, the male privilege within the reportedly more patriarchal society of Haiti is, according to Eric and Déborah, at least somewhat less prevalent in Canada.

While the changing household dynamics that Eric and Déborah describe are very informative, they have already been discussed at length by Foner (1997, 1998) and other feminist researchers. For the purposes of my study, however, it remains important to note that research participants have also experienced a re-negotiation of gender roles and changing family dynamics in their migration to Canada, as made evident by newcomer women's greater inclusion in the wage labor market as well as public life. These realities once again effectively illustrate the gendering nature of international migration.

#### *4.1.3 "Hybrid" Gender Roles*

It is also necessary to highlight how the re-negotiations of gender roles produce unique understandings and manifestations of these roles. It would be false to assume that newcomers re-negotiate their own gender roles by simply adopting gender roles as understood by their society of settlement. When discussing how she has seen changes in gender roles after having migrated to Ottawa, Corine, a post-doctoral neuroscience researcher from Cameroon who arrived in Canada in 2011 explained that: "Oui (les rôles de genre) sont un reflet de la société (canadienne), c'est sûr. Mais il y a beaucoup de mutations, de mixage qui se passe." Corine's quote illustrates well what Nancy Foner (1997) explains in her article on cultural legacies and cultural change. Foner describes that pre-migration practices and beliefs regarding gender roles and how they are remembered and understood by first generation newcomers, coupled with these individuals' new understandings of gender in a post-migratory context will produce a unique vision of what it means to be feminine or masculine, and which roles are then attributed to these genders. Foner explains that the new family relations and gender roles that arise in a migratory context are, to use Corine's context, neither "Canadian" nor "Cameroonian," but rather a unique understanding born from a specific migratory experience. When looking at the re-negotiation of gender roles through the lens proposed by Foner (1997), it is clear that Corine has noticed an interplay between notions regarding gender roles in the countries of origin and those of settlement. She explains that how newcomers understand changing gender

roles is of course a reflection of Canadian society, but that this is coupled with other cultural understandings. When combined, these different conceptions of gender roles create a “mutation,” “mixing” or “hybrid” of different understandings that in turn will create a unique perspective on gender roles.

Nicole, a 35-year-old professional from Haiti who originally came to Canada as an international student, also noticed a certain “mutation” of cultural understandings throughout her integration process in Ottawa. When describing how she has dealt with adapting to her new Canadian context, she explained that: “Il ne fallait pas que j’intègre, il fallait que je m’adapte, car s’intégrer c’est oublier ses valeurs, s’adapter c’est porter tout ce que tu as en acceptant ce que l’autre a à offrir”. Nicole explains that to adapt to her new country, she had to be able to retain part of her own values, her own cultural background while remaining open to and accepting what her new society had to offer. Likewise, Claudine shared that it was important when settling in a new country to be able to adapt, and mix elements of the settlement society with one’s own identity in the context of domestic relationships.

Au Canada, ça peut être difficile les nouveaux rôles, c’est un choc culturel. Mais plusieurs couples restent comme ça, même s’ils changent de pays, le mari continue avec ses rôles et la femme c’est comme ça. Je pense que oui c’est un gros défi, un choc culturel dans tous les sens. (...) Le couple va se rendre compte que les rôles des hommes et femmes ne fonctionnent plus comme dans leur pays, et certains ne vont pas changer, mais d’autres vont changer et adopter des nouveaux comportements. C’est toujours plus facile pour ceux qui sont prêts à s’adapter, à changer avec la nouvelle société.

As Claudine explains, it is always easier to adapt for the couples who are willing to include cultural understandings of gender roles prevalent in their settlement society within their own domestic relationships. This element of cultural adaptation through a “hybridization” of gender roles is important to point out, because it would be insufficient to simply qualify newcomers’ re-negotiation of gender roles as an adoption of Canadian values and practices. This process of re-negotiation needs to be understood within the dynamic context of migration from one country to another.

To summarize this section, it is clear that my research participants have noticed a re-negotiation of gender roles in the context of migration to Ottawa, Canada. Several examples illustrate this recurrent theme, notably a decrease in domestic responsibilities for women, the greater inclusion of women in the labor force and the public sphere, and more broadly a less patriarchal society with regard to gender roles. But, this section also attempted to nuance these re-negotiations by highlighting the fact that changes in gender roles do not apply to all contexts, and are not necessarily emancipatory. While this goes beyond the scope of my research, gender roles are also informed by other intersecting identities, notably class, education and age, as was briefly demonstrated. In the case of my participants, immigration category and social class most likely influenced how they were able to re-negotiate gender roles. Most of my participants were relatively well off and the majority came to Ottawa as international students. This represents a much less precarious situation than Mathieu, for example, who came to Ottawa as a refugee. A higher social class and less precarious situation for the women participants probably made it easier for them to re-negotiate their gender roles compared to newcomers facing more challenging conditions.

Moreover, no experience of re-negotiation of gender roles will be the same for all newcomers. Rather it is the result of a “hybridization” of cultural understandings that spans the whole migratory experience. While these complex experiences must be acknowledged and taken into account, it remains clear that gender roles are in fact dynamic and re-negotiated through a “gendered” migration to Canada. The following section will examine the implications of these re-negotiated gender roles on the participation levels of newcomers within religious organizations. To do so I examine the new opportunities for engagement within these organizations and the prevalent attitudes concerning masculinities and femininities as discussed by my research participants.

## **4.2 Gender(ed) Roles and Attitudes: Religious Organizations as Spaces of Public Participation and Engagement**

In this section, my aim is to shed light on how my participants' re-negotiated notions of gender can influence their participation within the social spaces of religious organizations, as well as how this religious participation itself contributes to the re-negotiation of gender. First, I will demonstrate that re-negotiated gender roles have fostered increased participation within religious organizations on the part of migrant women, while their male counterparts are markedly less engaged. I also examine these differences in religious participation between men and women through an analysis of prevalent attitudes regarding masculinities and femininities among the research participants. By illuminating how men and women participate differently within the space of religious organizations, this research will contribute to existing literature on gender and newcomer settlement. Many studies examine settlement processes by focusing on the re-negotiation of gender roles through increased access to wage-labor and changing domestic roles. My research, however, will focus on newcomer women's re-negotiation of gender through international migration and through their performance of religious identity and increased participation within the social space of religious organizations. As I will demonstrate, newcomer women tend to participate in religious organizations more actively than their male counterparts. I will suggest that the re-negotiated gender roles in the context of international migration as discussed above enables this increased participation. On the other hand, by becoming more engaged in religious organizations, women participants were better able to redefine their roles within the church. Thus, the migratory context of participants and their engagement within religious organizations can both be seen to influence newcomer women's re-negotiation of gender roles and the subsequent settlement outcomes.

### ***4.2.1 Fostering participation and leadership through new understandings of gender roles in religious organizations***

Many women participants in this research described how they gained increased opportunities to become engaged and participate within the context of religious organizations in Canada when compared

to their countries of origin. These new opportunities were often made possible through these women's re-negotiation of gender roles that has led to a new understanding of the potential roles women can occupy in religious organizations. Nicole, a 35-year-old professional originally from Haiti, illustrates this new understanding:

(C'est au Canada que j'ai appris comment la femme peut devenir beaucoup plus impliquée par ce que j'ai eu la chance de rencontrer une femme pasteure. Je ne savais pas qu'une femme pouvait cheminer pour être pasteure, donc pour moi c'était comme *wow*, donc ma foi a vraiment prise, comme s'est vraiment ancrée, s'est développée au Canada.

Le fait que les femmes ont un plus grand rôle aide à me rendre plus à l'aise (à participer dans l'église), cela me donne plus d'aisance. Oui, le Canada (contexte canadien) me le permet (d'être plus active dans l'église).

In these quotes, Nicole highlights the fact that she realized she could take on roles of greater importance in the context of Canadian religious organizations. Before coming to Ottawa, Nicole was not even aware that women could be pastors, effectively assuming the leadership of a congregation. This was a significant realization for her, and as she states, actually helped strengthen her faith. Moreover, Nicole also explained that women's ability to take on greater roles of leadership within the church actually makes her feel more comfortable in the context of religious organizations. This increased faith and level of comfort to participate in religious organizations has translated into increased participation for Nicole, as well as more important roles of leadership which she did not have in Haiti. In Ottawa, Nicole now helps organize and lead a prayer group at the *Église Sacré-Coeur*. She also participates in another religious community, at the Notre-Dame Cathedral. As it will be demonstrated below, for many women, the new found capacity to actively participate in religious communities and to assume different roles has been beneficial to their settlement experience.

Similar realizations were shared by other women participants in my research. Anne, a professional who arrived to Ottawa from Burundi as an international student in 2009, explained that:

Au Burundi, le chef de la chorale était un homme. Ici c'est autant femmes qu'hommes (qui chantent dans la chorale), avec une directrice de chorale. Dans mes 5 ans ici je n'ai jamais vu de directeur de chorale. Je ne sais pas si c'est lié, mais c'est vrai que les rôles clés au Burundi sont joués par les hommes.

(C'est vrai qu'au Canada, les gens les plus actifs dans l'église sont les femmes, on a les sœurs, on a aussi des jeunes filles qui s'impliquent (...). Les femmes jouent beaucoup de rôles clés à l'église au Canada.

In the first quote, Anne explains that in Burundi the choir directors were always men. In her church in Ottawa, on the other hand, the choir director is a woman, and the choir itself is made up of a mix of men and women. She goes on to say that the key roles in religious organizations in Burundi are held by men. However, it is clear that in her new Canadian context, women are just as likely to hold important roles of leadership within her religious organization's choir. Like in the previous example of Nicole, a woman who leads a prayer group, the choir at *Sacré-Coeur* is led by a woman. This reality extends beyond these two examples. As Anne went on to explain, women are truly active in many different aspects of church life in Ottawa, playing many important roles within religious organizations, in contrast to her country of origin. The fact that migrant women seem to become more involved in public and social life than their male counterparts was also found in Hondagneu-Sotelo's book *Gendered Transitions* (1994). She explains that as traditional and patriarchal family relations deteriorate through migration, women tend to become more publicly active. These women's capacity to become more publicly and socially active through their migration affords them many benefits, notably improved status in the household as well as advanced integration of their families in the country of settlement (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Hondagneu-Sotelo thus sees women's increased public participation as a strategy that favors the consolidation of their family's settlement process. The impacts on settlement of this increased public and religious participation among women participants in my study will be discussed below.

It is also interesting to note that women's importance within their respective religious organizations extends beyond their active participation and roles of leadership. As a matter of fact, a number of participants explained that women in a certain way act as the glue that holds together the



religious community. Beyond all the important tasks and roles of leadership, for there to be a religious organization there must be a community of individuals that frequent the organization. A number of participants stressed women's importance in making sure their religious organizations were well attended. Corine indicated that it is women who encourage others to go to church through a story once shared with her by a priest.

Un prêtre a raconté une histoire intéressante. Il a dit que les hommes suivent leurs femmes à l'église, et c'est statistiquement prouvé. Parfois les hommes ne savent plus pourquoi ils la suivent, et il raconte que plusieurs couples arrivent au ciel et Saint Pierre dit « tous les hommes dans cette foule, qui ont toujours écouté et suivi leurs femmes à l'église, vous vous rangez ici ». Et là 99% des hommes se rangent là, et là un gars reste de l'autre côté et Saint Pierre dit « quoi tu ne suivais jamais ta femme? » Et là il dit « mais oui mais c'est elle qui m'a dit de rester là ». Alors c'est pour dire que c'est normal, les hommes et les femmes vivent les choses de façon très différente.

Lia also explained that “Les femmes semblent prendre ça plus au sérieux, les hommes ont toujours autre chose à faire. (...) Les femmes prennent beaucoup plus de temps à pratiquer leur religion.” And Charlotte echoed this by saying that “Mais la majorité du monde que je vois (à l'église), c'est vraiment les femmes qui restent à la maison prendre soin des enfants.” The story told by Corine is illustrative of the experience of a number of women in my research. As this passage explains, typically women are the ones who make sure that mass is well attended by insisting their husbands join them at church. They are the ones who ensure that people come out to celebrate mass on Sundays, even if at many times men do not necessarily feel like attending the service. Corine even explained that often times men do not even know why they are attending mass, but they still do because their wives make sure they accompany them.

Lia, on the other hand, explained that women practice religion more regularly, and men often have other things to do than to go to church. Charlotte echoed this thought by mentioning how the majority of people who attend her church are stay-at-home mothers, rather than the men of her community. According to these women, religious organizations are thus frequented by women much more than their male counterparts, highlighting their important role in unifying their religious community.

These findings paint a picture of women in religious organizations as important pillars of community life. They are responsible for ensuring that the religious community remains connected through weekly gatherings. Beyond being increasingly active within church life itself as choir leaders, prayer group organizers, or simply by participating more actively in church life women also act as the foundation of religious organizations. Other participants, as Ève, illustrated this:

J'ai l'impression qu'il y a une représentativité d'hommes dans les milieux religieux, mais je pense que les femmes ont plus une présence, un rôle de service, et les hommes ont plus un rôle de leader. Mais vraiment le vrai leader d'un groupe Catholique c'est le prêtre, et ensuite tu as toutes les autres personnes qui gravitent autour, mais je remarque toujours que les femmes agissent comme piliers pour soutenir tous trucs. C'est souvent les personnes sur lesquelles on s'appuie, et non des personnes sur lesquelles on tire une certaine inspiration. Ce sont un peu des charpentes.

This quote is interesting on different levels. Ève explains that women act as the support structures of religious organizations. As she said, they are the pillars that support a variety of activities and gatherings, and they are the ones on whom people depend within religious organizations. It is also important to note, however, that she does not think women are viewed as inspirational within the church. She stated that when it comes to inspiring people, men still hold the more important roles of leadership. She explained that the majority of priests are still men, and when it comes to giving speeches and public presentations, men still seem to provide more inspiration for congregants. Furthermore, Corine notices a gendered discrepancy when it comes to leadership roles in spite of seeing women as vital members of religious organizations, with increased importance and responsibilities when compared to her country of origin (Cameroon). As she explained:

Oui, les hommes et les femmes ont quand même des rôles très différents. Marie et Joseph avaient des rôles différents. Moi je vois qu'au niveau de l'église, c'est les femmes qui font tous les services (lectures, collecte de dons etc.), et la communion. Les hommes sont plutôt sur les comités, régler le parking etc.

Corine explains that women seem to hold more responsibilities that revolve around service. On the other hand, men in her church are typically more involved in administrative work such as various committees like

the one dealing with parking at the church. This quote reveals that women indeed do have many responsibilities, which might not have always been the case in these participants' countries of origin. However, oftentimes the responsibilities they do hold are still informed by dynamics of gender that relegate women to roles of service and favor the access to roles of leadership for men. While beyond the scope of this research, this reality may also be the product of the Christian religion itself, which is constructed by patriarchal values and principles, at least in some people's interpretation. As Corine explained, Mary and Joseph themselves had different roles, and still to this day it appears that roles in religious organizations are at least in some ways divided according to gender. While women are successfully challenging the roles they can assume within religious organizations, some would suggest much of their religious lives are still governed by patriarchal gender norms established within the religion itself. In this sense, the space of religious organizations exhibits many similarities with domestic spaces in terms of how they are experienced by men and women. These similarities between domestic and religious spaces will be touched upon below.

Therefore, it is helpful to adopt a nuanced approach when examining newcomers' gender roles within religious organizations. Through discussions with my research participants, it became clear that international migration and the transition to a new Canadian social context regarding gender roles has afforded women new opportunities to participate in religious organizations. In turn, these increased opportunities have helped women re-define the roles they can play within religious organizations, thus leading to new found roles of leadership. But as Pessar (1999) explains, while a re-negotiation of gender roles can lead to positive changes for women, this re-negotiation is not necessarily emancipatory for all women. My findings highlight that while some roles within religious organizations are being redefined for these women (e.g., leading a choir group), others are still very much defined on the basis of patriarchal gender roles. This reality is illustrative of Hondagneu-Sotelo's (1992) work on the fluidity of conjugal relationships between Mexican men and women migrants to the United States, for whom migration has at

times been a gendering and gendered experience. To extend Hondagneu-Sotelo's analysis to the context of my study, religious organizations themselves can also be understood as gendered and gendering institutions. Canadian religious organizations have allowed women participants in my study to re-negotiate the roles they can hold within the church and have also fostered increased religious engagement on their part. International migration and religion have thus been gendering as they have re-structured the relationships women hold with their male counterparts in the context of religious organizations. Yet migration and religious organizations are also gendered, and often reproduce gender roles or reinforce pre-existing ones<sup>4</sup>. In this case, some roles within religious organizations were still predominantly held by men, notably administrative duties such as presiding over the parking committee and managing the church's finances. Many aspects of religious life are still regulated by a prevalent gender binary. Therefore, while it would be unwise to dismiss the increased opportunities for participation and leadership for women within religious organizations in Canada, it must still be stressed that in other ways a gendered division of responsibilities still regulates the roles of men and women in religious organizations in the country of settlement.

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<sup>4</sup> When considering Christian religious organizations as both gendered and gendering institutions, it is also interesting to note the dichotomous experience of these institutions as both patriarchal and matriarchal. While outside the scope of this research, it is nonetheless worthwhile to shed light on this dichotomous social experience within religious organizations. On the one hand, the Roman Catholic Church is very much patriarchal (only men can be priests; participants explained how women typically undertake roles of service and men roles of leadership). However, as the following section will illustrate, participants identified religious organizations as more feminine spaces. These spaces were associated with characteristics that participants deemed to be essentially feminine. Religious organizations were described as places to tap into emotions, spaces where women acted as care givers and pillars of emotional support. Men and women participants described their church as an inherently feminine space. In this sense, religious organizations were described by participants in much the same way that domestic spaces are sometimes described. While religious organizations influence gender formation in conflicting ways (e.g. by allowing women to redefine certain roles, but also reinforcing others), these spaces are also experienced in different ways, as both a patriarchal and matriarchal space.

#### *4.2.2 Prevalent attitudes surrounding masculinities and femininities and their impact on religious participation*

The previous section illustrated how a re-negotiation of gender roles among newcomers to Ottawa has led to increased opportunities for leadership and participation within religious organizations for women in this study. In turn, this increased participation helped women re-negotiate the roles they could assume within the church. The gendered and gendering process of migration has led to a new understanding, most notably among the women participants, of the different roles and responsibilities men and women can assume within religious organizations. Beyond this re-negotiation of gender roles in a settlement context, however, prevalent attitudes concerning masculinities and femininities among my research participants have also led to new forms of participation within the space of religious organizations. These attitudes were an important factor in the participants' understanding of why men and women choose to perform religious identity differently through their engagement within religious organizations. Therefore, while the women participants were witnessing a new religious landscape in terms of their re-negotiated gender roles and their increased capacity to participate in church, some attitudes regarding gender roles were used to explain why men tend to participate less actively than women. The attributes most commonly associated with femininity were linked to an inherent "social and emotional nature" as well as "caring" and "nurturing," whereas masculinity was often linked with "strength" and a certain "emotional detachment." In this section, I will highlight the recurrent attitudes that were used to explain, in part, how men and women understand their respective roles within religious organizations. It will be shown that the attributes associated with femininity are more easily displayed in a religious setting than those linked with masculinity. In light of this, religious organizations were seen as a more "feminine" space by participants, helping to explain a greater presence of women in these spaces.

#### 4.2.2.1 Attitudes surrounding femininities in religious organizations

One of the most recurrent comments made by the participants when discussing the differences between men and women and their religious engagement was the fact that women are “more social” than men. As many participants stated, women tend to be more “open minded,” more “socially engaged” and more “apt to try to create social networks” than men. This was made obvious through Mathieu’s understanding of women as being “naturally more social” than men.

Est-ce que les femmes ont un rôle différent, plus social ? Oui par ce que c’est rare qu’un homme va te demander comment tu vas et le demander vraiment, mais la femme aura la tendance à demander comment tu vas, as-tu mangé aujourd’hui ? Et j’imagine que c’est pour ça qu’elles sont plus présentes dans les institutions religieuses, c’est pour ça qu’elles prennent un rôle plus devant les hommes.

According to Mathieu, women tend to be more concerned with the well-being of others. The fact that women are more socially conscious and aware of others’ needs explains, according to him, why women adopt a more social role compared to men within religious organizations. Men are less likely to ask “how you are doing,” and in light of this take on a less important role of caring in the context of religious organizations. This attitude concerning the nature of women as “caring” was prevalent throughout most interviews in this research. Others, such as Ève, also commented on the fact that women seem to be inherently more “sensitive” than men:

Je pense que les femmes sont faites de façon qu’elles ont plus tendance à avoir plus de sensibilité à certaines choses, et peut-être aussi à le montrer différemment. Peut-être que moi si j’ai de la peine, parfois je me dis je ne me sens pas bien et j’ai peut-être besoin de me ressourcer. Je vais peut-être aller me ressourcer à la messe mais peut-être que ça c’est mon côté plus sensible, plus féminin, alors que peut-être qu’un homme va le faire différemment. C’est peut-être une question de sensibilité et de réceptivité, peut-être que les femmes quand elles entendent de la bonne nouvelle de Jésus Christ, si à la base elles croient en Jésus Christ, ça les touche un peu plus. Les femmes, *they care about a lot of people, and maybe this side of caring is going to be more related* (to their greater religious participation).

In this quote, Ève reveals a great deal about her own attitudes surrounding femininity and how these influence the gendered participation in religious organizations. According to her, women are more

sensitive, more receptive to others and they tend to care more about other individuals. She explains that when she is not feeling well, turning to her faith and going to church helps her deal with the challenges she is facing. She attributes this to her more “feminine” nature. She believes that when men are not feeling well, they tend to turn to other places or activities rather than church. While she does not actually provide any specific reason why women may be more apt to turn to religious organizations for comfort and support, other than saying it is in their feminine “nature,” this understanding of femininity was also noted by Mathieu:

En tout cas, c’est un lieu (église) où elles vont exprimer leurs émotions, où elles vont se sentir réconfortées. Est-ce que l’homme va forcément se sentir réconforté dans l’Église ? Je ne pense pas. Je ne sais pas vraiment comment aborder l’homme sur le plan religieux.

According to Mathieu, church is a place to which women turn to express their feelings and to find comfort. On the other hand, he does not believe men are likely to find this same sense of comfort within the church. As he says, he is not quite sure how to address the issue of men and their emotions within a religious context. Once again, as with Ève, Mathieu does not truly explain *why* he believes women feel greater comfort within religious organizations. Among the participants who discussed women’s greater sociability, sensitivity and receptivity, there seemed to be a common attitude that these traits were linked to an essential feminine “nature.” Women were said to simply be more in tune with their emotions, and the religious context allows them to tap into these feelings and create a welcoming environment that is more accessible for women than men.

Corine also noted the issue of emotions and sensitivity, and she displayed a gendered understanding of the different lived experiences of religion.

Entre hommes et femmes aussi, nous sommes des êtres sexués alors nous avons des façons différentes de vivre les choses. Les femmes c’est surtout dans le ressenti. La religion c’est une question de foi, pas de sentiments, mais quand même. Alors c’est pour dire que c’est normal, on vit les choses de façon très différente. Je pense que ça va avec le fait qu’on est des êtres sexués.

For Corine, men and women experience religion differently on the basis of their sexual differences. She explains, as other participants did, that women are more apt to respond to feelings and emotions. While she states that religion is a question of faith rather than feelings, she thinks that women are more in tune with the lived experience of religion. According to her, this could be what draws women to participate more actively within religious organizations compared to men. In a context of migration where many individuals struggle with new challenges, the capacity for women to tap into their feelings and emotions in the context of a religious service can be an important resource for these newcomers. On the other hand, as the section on masculinities will highlight below, the participants felt men had greater difficulty tapping into these emotions and feelings of sensitivity, essentially alienating them from the lived experience of religion.

This capacity for women to be more open with their feelings, as reported by participants, made it easier for women to find their place in religious organizations. Nicole explained:

Je pense que les femmes se retrouvent plus facilement (dans l'église). La femme, différemment de l'homme qui doit mettre son orgueil de côté, de gérer son chaos, la femme peut facilement pleurer et quelqu'un lui vient en aide. Mais c'est la nature de la femme de créer un foyer où elle est.

In this account, Nicole says that women can “find themselves” more easily in the context of religious organizations. Men, according to her, have trouble dealing with their emotions and putting away their pride. On the other hand, women find it easier to let go and cry, for example, and this honesty concerning their emotions makes it easier for women to access help. She also notes that it is in women’s “nature” to create a home where they are. In this context, she’s referring to women’s capacity to create a welcoming environment within religious organizations. If someone needs help, they are encouraged to show it, and in turn there are women there to help and support others when needed. Nicole’s characterization of women as “home builders” reinforces the similarities between domestic and religious spaces mentioned



previously. As my findings demonstrate, in both domestic and religious spaces, women are seen as the “home makers.” They assume the roles of service, of caring and nurturing. In much the same way as domestic spaces are understood by many as “feminine” in their nature, my research participants seem to experience religious organizations as “feminine” spaces. While some people would claim that religious spaces are still in many ways experienced within a patriarchal framework, women’s newfound roles and responsibilities in the context of religious organizations have allowed them to become integral members of these organizations, effectively transforming how these spaces are lived and experienced. The transformed experience of religious spaces through migration has allowed women to take on greater roles and responsibilities. This is similar to the process of women’s re-negotiated roles within the family household through inclusion in the wage labor market. In this case, women’s greater inclusion and responsibilities in the spaces of religious organizations has allowed them to gain greater leverage and authority, effectively changing how these spaces are understood by all participants. Moreover, as I will show, the lived experience of religious organizations as increasingly “feminine” has also served to alienate some men from these spaces.

According to participants, the capacity for women to be forthright with their emotions and the importance of the lived experience of religion make religious organizations a more attractive space for newcomer women when they are looking for help, networks of support and a place to find comfort. The aim of my research is evidently not to argue the existence of an “essential feminine nature.” Nonetheless, it is important to highlight my participants’ notions and attitudes toward femininities. While no participant actually delved into why they believe “essential” differences exist between men and women, they were unanimous in explaining that women are more in tune with their emotions, and that this reality made them more likely to turn to religious organizations for help, support and comfort. I now turn to a discussion of the participants’ attitudes concerning masculinities. I will demonstrate that the participants’ notions surrounding the “masculine nature” alienates some men from religious organizations.

#### *4.2.2.2 Attitudes surrounding masculinities in religious organizations*

Attitudes concerning masculinities, as explained by my research participants, portray men as having difficulty tapping into their emotions and expressing them in a positive manner. Mathieu highlighted this common attitude among participants when he stated that:

Les femmes s'intègrent beaucoup plus vite, car venant du Burundi, les hommes ont une tendance de ne pas aller de l'avant, de ne pas démontrer leurs émotions, ils sont très fermés. Il faut aller les chercher de loin, pousser fort pour qu'ils puissent enfin dire quelque chose.

According to Mathieu, men have more difficulty with the settlement process in their new environment as they tend to not come forth and be open about their emotions. They remain emotionally closed off, and it is hard to get them to open up. As he went on to explain, the attitudes that men have concerning what it means to be masculine can eventually create challenges for these men.

Un homme ne pleure pas. Par exemple, dans mon pays (Burundi) un homme ne pleure pas, et quand tu apprends depuis le jeune âge qu'un homme ça ne pleure pas, ça va te faire des ennuis ici (Canada) car tu vas t'enfermer tout seul, et tu vas juste pleurer au moment où c'est devenu trop fort, trop lourd, alors que tu aurais pu pleurer bien avant et ça aurait été moins dur. Il faut que l'homme Africain apprenne à mettre des mots sur ses émotions et à dire j'ai mal, car ils ne font pas ça du tout.

According to Mathieu, it is difficult for newcomers from Burundi to deal with their emotions. He explains that in his country of origin men are taught not to cry and to be "strong" from a young age. Mathieu's remarks tie into Farahani's (2012) work on diasporic masculinities. Farahani argues that newcomer men must deal with what they perceive as being the "desirable" masculine subject. Alongside social norms that regulate behavior, individuals also exert individual agency towards embodying this ideal masculinity. As Mathieu explains, men are taught to act in a "masculine" way from a young age. These teachings manifest themselves even after migration to Canada, where newcomer men still try to display a "desirable masculinity" by remaining unemotional. However, this is problematic in the context of settling in a new country. Mathieu suggested that men have to deal with challenges in Canada, and by remaining closed off

to their emotions these challenges are exacerbated and create an even more difficult situation (than if men were more open to begin with). As Farahani (2012) explains, newcomer men must learn “what constitutes the desirable, heterosexual masculine subject in different locations and contexts” (p.161) and find ways to cope with these expectations. The fact that men have trouble being open with their emotions can explain in part why they tend to become less involved in religious organizations in the country of settlement. All my participants discussed how women’s capacity to be emotionally open made religious organizations a valuable place to find comfort. If men have more trouble being open with their feelings, religious spaces may be less appealing to men (who tend to shut out these challenging feelings).

Eric provided another insight into the attitudes surrounding masculinities which ties into the notion of men as being “strong” through their emotional detachment. He talked about husband/wife relationships and why he thinks men tend to become less involved in religious organizations in the context of settlement in a new country:

Je dirais juste que dans les relations de couples les hommes pratiquent moins leur religion que les femmes. Dans le public il y a une grande majorité de femmes qui pratiquent et je pense que la religion joue moins cet effet accompagnateur chez les hommes que les femmes. Chez les hommes, à mon avis, il y a deux raisons. Premièrement, les hommes sont moins contraints, les femmes sont plus contraintes. C’est comme si on n’a pas le choix. Les hommes ont plus de liberté, et les hommes ont tendance à avoir un égo plus prononcé, donc si on va à l’église c’est comme si on a besoin du soutien du Seigneur, de son appui. Donc si on passe beaucoup de temps à l’église, on peut paraître faible, avec besoin d’aide, et ça m’est arrivé souvent d’entendre des blagues. « Ah lui il est toujours à l’église » avec une certaine moquerie. Mais quand même cette tendance se retrouve ici au Canada.

Eric’s quote highlights how many men perceive “ideal masculinity.” According to Eric, men have a much larger ego, reflecting what Nicole alluded to when she spoke about men having trouble “swallowing their pride.” Eric went on to explain how some men who attend religious organizations on a regular basis are often made fun of. He explained that these men are seen as needing more help or support, thus as being weak, and that this is not the ideal image of a masculine man. As Mathieu explained, men are taught not to cry, to be less emotional. If men turn to religious organizations for emotional support and comfort,

they are mocked and often ridiculed, which could help explain why men are less likely to become as engaged as women in religious organizations. These “masculinist” jokes contribute to reinforcing the ideal conception of masculinity (“strong,” unemotional), which limits the participation and engagement of men within religious organizations. In turn, this limited religious participation may contribute to also upholding the stereotype of masculinity as emotionally detached. If religious organizations are understood as spaces that value the importance of emotion, honesty, and being truly open with individual lived experiences, as the women of this research explained, it becomes obvious that men, as described and understood by my participants, could feel in some ways alienated from these religious spaces. This idea aligns with the argument made previously that religious spaces are increasingly experienced as spaces linked with “femininity.” The re-negotiation of newcomer women’s gender roles in the context of religious organizations has led to more opportunities for participation and increased authority and leverage in these organizations. This new lived experience of religion and transformed power relations (between newcomer men and women) has created a new religious landscape that can be alienating for some men.

Moreover, there is a direct link between how gender and gender roles are understood and the specific spaces in which they are performed. As Datta (2008) explains in her work on the fragmentation of the research field into many different places experienced differently at various times by researcher and participants, “places shape the performance of masculinity and femininity” (p.202). What Datta conveys is that the spatial context of interactions will bring forth different performances of feminine and masculine identity. In the context of this study on religious organizations, Eric and Mathieu showed that men seem to perform a strict masculine identity based on emotional detachment, which is considered to be a sign of “strength.” This may be because of constraining factors such as the masculinist jokes shared by Eric that regulate gender roles. In order to preserve an appearance of strength, many men thus distance themselves from religious organizations, as the spatial contexts of these organizations encourage a more “feminine” performance of identity.

Finally, another reason was given to explain why men tend to participate less actively within religious organizations. Lia, a 20-year-old student who arrived from Burundi in 2012, said that men tend to have different priorities than women. When discussing why men and women practice religion differently she explained that:

Oui il y a des différences, les femmes semblent prendre ça (going to church) plus au sérieux. Les hommes ont toujours autre chose à faire, comme aller au gymnase. « La vie au Canada, ce n'est pas facile eh ? (implied sarcasm) On (les hommes) doit toujours faire de l'argent ». Les femmes prennent beaucoup plus de temps à pratiquer leur religion.

La réponse la plus commune que je reçois (de la part des hommes qui ne vont pas à l'église) c'est que la vie au Canada ce n'est pas facile. Il faut faire de l'argent, trouver une job ici et là. Et quand ils quittent la job ils vont au gym donc l'église ce n'est pas primordial. Comme mon chum il me dépose à l'église, va au gym et me ramasse après. Je dis qu'il peut rentrer, ce n'est même pas une heure mais il dit «non toi vas-y.»

According to Lia, men have different priorities than going to church. She remarked, albeit sarcastically, that men often talk about how difficult life in Canada is and that they need to work in order to make money. They also often spend time at the gym rather than at church. On the other hand, women spend more time practicing their religion.

Charlotte, a 35-year-old physician from the DRC who arrived in Ottawa in 2010, explained that men do tend to create different networks outside of religious organizations.

Les hommes souvent ils s'adaptent différemment. Ils sont d'habitude ceux qui ont étudié, donc ils vont se trouver dans le marché de l'emploi, ils vont dans les cours d'anglais. Mais la majorité du monde que je vois (à l'église), c'est vraiment les femmes qui restent à la maison prendre soin des enfants.

According to Charlotte, men tend to settle and participate in their new society through different avenues, such as the wage labor market, whereas women make up most of the participants at her church.

To sum up, after having shown how participants' gender roles were re-negotiated through international migration, I then demonstrated how this re-negotiation leads to different levels of religious participation between men and women. This gendered participation in turn allowed the women participants in this research to develop new understandings of the different roles they can assume in the context of religious organizations. These new understandings of gender roles have allowed them to participate more actively within religious organizations and take on greater roles of leadership within the church when compared to the context of their countries of origin. Moreover, prevalent attitudes and notions of masculinity and femininity among most, if not all participants, can also help explain a stronger female engagement in religious organizations. This stronger female engagement suggests that these spaces are more beneficial to women in terms of developing social networks than can help them mobilize human and social capital towards settlement goals. Much in the same way that international migration has allowed newcomer women to tap into networks of wage labor to settle within their new country, the social spaces of religious organizations have been beneficial to the women participating in my research. Building on these findings, the next section will elaborate on the concrete benefits of being more actively engaged in religious organizations for newcomer women compared to men.

#### **4.3 Gendered Benefits of Religious Participation and Engagement in Newcomer Settlement**

For the newcomer women in my research, many benefits were derived from being actively involved in their religious community. These benefits came in many different forms, but they all contributed to the settlement processes of these women. Because men participate less actively within religious organizations, it was women participants who mostly discussed the positive outcomes of religious engagement and participation. This section will highlight a number of different ways in which women effectively developed and mobilized human and social capital in the context of religious organizations, drawing attention to the benefits this represents for their settlement process. But first, it should be noted that newcomer men and women do not always share the same social networks and resources (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992) and that

these networks are highly contested resources (Pessar, 1999). As others have shown, individuals tend to act in their own best interest in developing networks to facilitate settlement processes (Foner, 1997). In light of these debates, I seek to not only highlight the fact that women obtain substantial benefits from participating in religious organizations when compared to men, but also that men may in fact turn to spaces other than religious organizations that can be more beneficial to their own settlement process.

When discussing the benefits of participating in religious organizations, one common theme was the capacity for women to develop social networks in these spaces. This was particularly important for Charlotte who immigrated from the DRC on her own. As she explained:

C'est très difficile d'arriver au Canada. Souvent tu te trouves avec un travail que tu ne pensais pas faire, ou pour lequel tu n'as aucune expérience. Moi je me retrouve dans une garderie, tandis qu'avant je travaillais comme médecin. Alors c'est difficile. Avec l'église, et les groupes sociaux, on peut se reconforter, créer des liens et amitiés, et ça aide lorsque l'on se sent mal, ceux qui ont de la dépression, il y a vraiment beaucoup de bénéfices. Ça te permet de créer un sentiment de communauté, et surtout si tu viens seul. Sans famille, seule, l'église et le partage quotidien, tu te retrouves, tu ris, ça m'a beaucoup aidé.

Charlotte explains that it was difficult for her to come to Canada on her own. Religious organizations were a beneficial space by allowing her to develop social networks where she created friendships, found comfort and fostered a sense of community. She said that especially for those who immigrate on their own, church is a useful place to share with others and to “find oneself,” which helped her a lot in her settlement process in Ottawa. In the case of Charlotte religious organizations clearly serve as a useful space to develop human and social capital. But as Chapter 3 illustrated, the development of this capital is contingent on participating within religious organizations, something women appear to be doing more actively than men. Charlotte went on to provide an interesting example of a community initiative within her church that truly demonstrates women's capacity to foster and mobilize valuable forms of capital in religious organizations.

À mon église, il y a le groupe des mamans, et là toutes les femmes s'y retrouvent, même ceux qui ne sont pas mamans. On a une caisse de contribution, et nous mettons toujours de l'argent. À chaque semaine on amène 5 dollars, donc 20 dollars chacun par mois pour la cotisation. Et si quelqu'un est

éprouvé, s'il perd un proche par exemple, on lui apporte notre soutien. On va le voir pendant le deuil et on va dans la caisse, on sort 100\$ pour aider la personne éprouvée. Il y a toujours dans les églises ces groupes sociaux, c'est le groupe des mamans. Il y a toujours cette rubrique sociale, oui. Donc chaque fois si on remarque qu'une femme ne vient plus à l'église, ou si une famille ne vient plus à l'église, on va vouloir savoir pourquoi elle ne vient plus à l'église donc on va lui rendre visite à la maison. On va lui demander si elle a des soucis, si elle fait de la dépression, si elle ne trouve pas de travail. On essaye de reconforter la personne pour qu'elle puisse savoir qu'elle est supportée.

This quote provides evidence for the social and communal nature of religious participation and engagement. The women of this religious community come together every week as the “Mothers Group” to plan ways of supporting their own community. This is done both by raising money for members of the community who need financial support, and by creating networks of emotional support, for example for those who might suffer from depression. As the case of the “Mothers Group” highlights, women within religious organizations are effective at creating social networks that become community linchpins. By meeting every week and finding ways to give back to the community, this initiative is an important pillar of support for the people of this religious organization, and represents an integral part of the settlement process of many newcomers. However, when I asked Charlotte if the men of her organization were involved in such initiatives, she explained that the men are involved in administering the religious service, but not in terms of community initiatives beyond the religious service itself: “À date, dans ma communauté (religieuse), il n’y a encore pas eu de groupe social formé par les hommes.” Charlotte’s account of her experience in religious organizations underlines the fact that women seem to be more effective at fostering and mobilizing human, social and even in some cases economic capital within religious organizations to support the settlement of their community members. In her work, Pessar (1999) illustrates effectively how newcomer women are more actively involved in public life than their male counterparts. My research findings also demonstrate how this increased engagement and participation in the social space of religious organizations can be extremely beneficial to these newcomer women’s settlement experiences.



Other participants also commented on the various ways that participation in religious organizations can be beneficial. When discussing how she had to completely start over after migrating from Colombia, Claudine explained that:

Le premier mois que j'étais ici, je me suis dit « oh j'aimerais me rapprocher à ma culture », et l'église m'a donné l'opportunité pour trouver un réseau social. Mon réseau social s'était effacé, et j'ai commencé à zéro, et je me suis dit « oh c'est une opportunité pour connaître des personnes, faire des amis, de trouver un emploi, et beaucoup d'information sur la communauté Latina ». Donc oui j'ai eu de l'information dans les églises, et c'est par des personnes qui faisaient de la nourriture Colombienne, et des petites réunions des Colombiens et de toutes sortes de pays que j'ai rencontré. J'ai aussi pris un cours d'anglais à l'église. D'après moi je pense que la première chose que fait un immigrant, c'est trouver un centre de religion, principalement pour trouver un réseau social.

As Claudine suggests, the first thing many newcomers do when arriving to a new country is to seek out a religious organization where they can participate (which is a gendered process). According to Claudine, the benefits of becoming involved in a religious organization include creating friendships, finding employment information, and first and foremost creating new social networks. After leaving Colombia alone, she had no friends or family in Ottawa. By going to a Latino church, she was able to reconnect with her Colombian culture, take language classes and develop networks which were beneficial for her to adapt to a new country.

The capacity for newcomers to become actively engaged in social networks is extremely important as it allows them to develop valuable “weak ties.” But, the creation of these social networks and “weak ties” is influenced by individuals’ social and spatial contexts. For example, in her work on the settlement and integration of Mexican migrants through wage labor in the city of Houston in the United States, Hagan (1998) demonstrated that newcomer men had a greater capacity to create weak ties amongst themselves through their paid work. The conditions of their work at a supermarket allowed them to develop important social networks that facilitated their integration. In contrast, the women were employed as domestic workers and as such were more socially isolated from one another. This context made it difficult for the

Mexican women in Hagan's study to create social relationships, which was detrimental to their settlement. In my research, the re-negotiation of gender roles and common attitudes surrounding masculinity and femininity created a context where women have a greater capacity to become involved in religious organizations than men. This reality has allowed women to develop important "weak ties" or social relationships amongst each other in the context of religious spaces. As Claudine and Charlotte have shown through their testimonies, by becoming involved in religious organizations they were able to remain connected to a community that offered support, services and friendship. By being engaged in these networks, these women were able to tap into valuable forms of capital instrumental to their settlement experience.

These examples help us understand that social and spatial contexts can influence the creation of social networks and thus newcomers' integration and settlement. It must be noted, however, that the context of Hagan's (1998) research differs from mine in significant ways. My participants are relatively well-off and in less precarious situations than the participants in Hagan's study. Moreover, the language barrier, which still affected my Francophone participants in an Anglophone context, was less substantial than the challenge facing non-English speaking Mexican migrants. Nonetheless, while the contexts are vastly different, both examples illustrate the influence of social and spatial contexts on the mobilization of social networks. Spaces and social contexts are gendered, and thus result in gendered opportunities to develop and mobilize social relationships which are integral to newcomer men and women's settlement.

Furthermore, as another participant indicated, newcomer men seem to be less willing to reach out for help than women. Although religious organizations are useful public spaces to tap into social networks, men seem more reluctant than women to turn to these networks. Nicole shared an anecdote that highlights this reality.

Je connais un couple nouvel arrivant, et je suis amie avec la grande sœur de l'homme dans ce couple. Ce qui s'est passé c'est que vu que la grande sœur a vu mon cheminement de recommencer à 0, elle a

dit à son frère de me contacter pour de l'aide. Ça a pris un an, et même si je connaissais plus l'homme dans le couple, c'est la femme qui m'a contacté, avec une grande ouverture, tandis que l'homme était réticent de recevoir de l'aide et des conseils. On a donc prié ensemble et là ça a commencé à débloquer après 4 ou 5 mois, et il a commencé à accepter sa situation et était plus ouvert à recevoir de l'aide.

Nicole knew of a newcomer couple in her community who were in need of help. She knew the man in this couple better than the woman; the man, however, never reached out for help from Nicole who is a community leader in her religious organization. After a year went by, the woman in this couple reached out to Nicole for help, despite only knowing of her through her husband. Her husband remained reluctant to receiving help from Nicole, who had gone through a similar process already and is well connected in many immigrant communities. But after beginning to attend church and praying together for four or five months, the husband began to open up and accept his situation. Once he did this, it was easier for him to accept help from Nicole. This anecdote illustrates the fact that it was the woman in this couple who had the initiative to reach out for help, despite being less connected to Nicole than her husband. This resonates with the findings of the previous section, where many participants explained that newcomer men often have trouble being honest with their feelings and frustrations, and in turn have trouble reaching out for help. Religious organizations offer an effective platform to tap into networks of support, but women seem to more effectively reach out and create the necessary connections to develop and mobilize the capital found in these spaces.

While religious organizations clearly offer the potential to access valuable resources to facilitate settlement, it is important to stress that these spaces are not the only avenues through which newcomers may foster and mobilize social capital. Foner (1997) explains that women tend to be more open to changing gender roles through migration because each individual tends to act in their own best interest when it comes to settlement processes. When looking at the participants' transition from religious organizations in the countries of origin to the Canadian context, we can conclude that in general, women gain increased opportunities for engagement, while to some extent men must relinquish some of their authority. If we

examine this reality through Foner's (1997) argument that everyone acts in their own best interest, we can understand why men may be less active in social networks developed in the context of religious organizations. Since resources are not equally shared among all members of a household (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992) or even of a community, and social networks are a highly contested resource (Pessar, 1999), newcomer men may turn away from religious organizations and develop social networks in different spaces to maximize their own personal benefits. For example, newcomer men may be more active in social networks developed in the context of wage labor or even through friendships developed during sporting activities such as going to the gym, as suggested by Lia and Charlotte. My research focused on the spaces of religious organizations in processes of newcomer settlement, and this issue therefore lies outside the scope of my research. Nonetheless, it does provide interesting elements to analyze in the future and raises new potential research directions.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter builds on existing research regarding how international migration leads to a re-negotiation of gender roles among newcomer men and women, in this case in a Canadian context. The roles that men and women assumed in their countries of origin and in Ottawa differed in many ways, in society as a whole but also within religious organizations. This migration and re-negotiation of gender roles offers new opportunities for women to become engaged and participate in religious organizations (compared to men who were shown to participate less actively in these spaces). Moreover, common attitudes surrounding masculinities and femininities among men and women in my study were used to explain why participants believed women were more actively engaged in their religious communities. These findings lead us to conclude that there are important differences in the levels of religious participation and engagement between newcomer men and women.

The objective of this gendered comparison was to add nuance to the potential outcomes of religious participation on newcomers' settlement experience. Chapter 3 has shown that participating in religious organizations can be beneficial in many different ways. However, I argued these benefits are contingent on newcomers' active participation within religious organizations. Because men participate less actively, it can be argued that women use the social space of religious organizations more effectively towards fostering and mobilizing social and human capital. Indeed, in this chapter I demonstrate that women develop effective strategies to achieve this, for example the "Mother's Group" as described by Charlotte, or by reaching out for help to other newcomers who have valuable experience as explained by Nicole. While I did not delve into the various spaces and settlement strategies that men used specifically, it could be useful to examine how newcomer women's effective use of religious spaces towards settlement and integration goals may influence the way men choose to mobilize human and social capital towards their own processes of settlement. As mentioned, a greater authority and presence of women within religious organizations may lead to greater competition for resources in the social space of religious organizations. This competition may be a contributing factor to pushing men away from religious organizations.

In the next chapter, I will examine the performance of newcomers' religious/secular identities to examine another strategy that my research participants used in their settlement. The focus of my research will thus move beyond the scale of religious organizations to examine how newcomers as individuals perform specific religious and/or secular identities in a variety of spaces to favor their own settlement process.

## Chapter 5

### Performing Fluid Religious/Secular Identities as Settlement Strategy

In the previous chapters, I described how newcomers perform religious identities and engage within religious organizations. Generally speaking, participating within religious organizations was shown to be beneficial to participants' settlement process. These organizations act as useful social spaces where newcomers can mobilize human and social capital in order to address various structural challenges to their settlement. But re-negotiated gender roles in the context of international migration and conceptions of femininity and masculinity lead to uneven participation within religious organizations between men and women participants. In light of these gendered participation, women newcomers were shown to more effectively mobilize useful networks and resources within religious organizations. Newcomer women are thus better able to draw beneficial settlement outcomes in the context of religious organizations when compared to their male counterparts. In this chapter, I turn to the issue of newcomers' negotiations of religious/secular identities and spaces, both within and outside of religious organizations. I will examine how newcomers perform fluid, context dependent identities as a settlement strategy. Informed by their individual agency, participants performed socio-spatially contingent religious/secular identities in the face of specific settlement challenges and structural constraints. By shedding light on these strategic performances of identity, I will also contribute to scholarship on the structure/agency tension in the study of settlement process.

In what follows, I will first compare the religious landscapes<sup>5</sup> of my participants' countries of origin with those of their country of settlement. This comparison will underscore the differences in terms of daily religious and secular performativity between countries. Whereas all participants were used to religion being part of everyday interactions and discussions in their countries of origin, they all agreed that religion

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<sup>5</sup> In this project, religious landscapes refer to the social and spatial contexts in which religion and religious identities are practiced and performed on a daily basis.

is much less prevalent in everyday life in Canada. In light of this context, my participants explained how they had to undertake a “learning process” to understand when and how to perform appropriate identities in specific spaces. I then examine how participants performed fluid religious/secular identities in different socio-spatial contexts. I argue that participants performed religious and secular identities in a fluid manner as a settlement strategy which addresses various structural constraints and challenges to settlement. Their strategic performances of religious/secular identity were thus influenced by the social factors (e.g., other individuals policing their behavior) and spatial contexts (understanding of some spaces as religious and/or secular) which they faced. In light of this understanding of performances of religious/secular identities as settlement strategy, I then elaborate on the different ways in which these fluid performances influence newcomers’ settlement. Finally, given the relationship between space and identity, I highlight the fact that spaces, much like identities, are experienced fluidly depending on the context of the social interactions in this space. These findings contribute to furthering the understanding of the tension between structure and agency in newcomers’ settlement processes.

### **5.1 International Migration and a New Religious Landscape**

In this section, I will compare my participants’ experiences of the religious landscapes in their countries of origin and in Ottawa, Canada. All participants mentioned that in their countries of origin religion was much more prevalent in everyday life and conversation, and as such permeates all aspects of society. On the other hand, all participants explained that religion, while still present in Canada, is not as visible in day to day interactions. This section will serve to set the context of the changing religious landscapes that my participants experienced through migration. Examination of these changes will serve to demonstrate how participants were faced with structural changes to their daily religious lives. Faced with this change, participants underwent an adaptation and learning process in terms of how, where and when to display and perform religious/secular identities in their new Canadian context.

According to participants, religion in Canada is not as prevalent in daily activities when compared to African countries. When discussing the differences between Burundi and Canada, Anne and Ève, respectively, highlighted that the religious landscapes differ.

Je crois qu'au Canada, parler de la religion ça peut être tabou, dépendamment de l'endroit où tu en parles. Car on ne sait pas ceux autour (de nous) s'ils sont de notre avis ou pas. Cependant, au Burundi tu peux vraiment parler de ta foi, que tes opinions soient radicales ou non, sur un aspect de la religion et les gens ne seront pas choqués. Au Burundi on est moitié Chrétiens, moitié Musulmans, mais on est de façon générale tous croyants. On ne conçoit pas la vie sans religion, tandis qu'au Canada, il y a beaucoup de gens qui ne croient pas.

En fait, au Burundi disons que la religion est plus communautaire, et les gens sont Catholiques. Du moins Chrétiens, soit Catholiques ou Protestants, la plupart des gens s'identifient comme étant Catholiques, la plupart des gens vont à la messe le dimanche, participent à des groupes de prière ici et là, la religion fait partie du langage courant. « Dieu merci » etc. Alors les fêtes religieuses ne passent pas inaperçues, ce qui arrive ici au Canada j'ai remarqué. Alors disons qu'être Catholique au Burundi, c'était comme être Burundaise, ce n'est rien d'extraordinaire en fait, c'est plus simple être Catholique pratiquant, alors qu'au Canada on dirait que la religion est plus réservée à un groupe de gens spécifique, et on s'identifie comme étant Catholiques dans des endroits précis, et non dans la rue à tous les gens qui passent. Donc c'est ça la différence, je suis Catholique mais je l'exprime plus spécifiquement dans certains contextes et moins dans d'autres (au Canada).

The two participants suggest that religion in Burundi is visible in public spaces and in many aspects of daily life. As a matter of fact, Ève explains that being Catholic in Burundi is simply like being Burundian. These two women note that religion cannot be separated from individuals' everyday activities; they are part of the same experience of everyday life. On the other hand, Anne explains that often times it seems taboo to speak about religion in Canada, while Ève states that religion in Canada is reserved for certain spaces and groups of people. As she went on to say, she expresses her Catholic identity more specifically in certain contexts in Canada, highlighting a clear difference with the religious landscape of Burundi. These two examples serve to illustrate a changing religious landscape for participants. From the onset, participants noticed that displaying a religious identity in Canada can be more problematic than in Burundi. The fact that it is at times taboo to talk about religion represents a structural change from Burundi, which participants had to learn to negotiate. Similarly, Nicole spoke about the differences between the Canadian and Haitian religious landscapes.



Je dirais qu'en Haïti les pratiques sont beaucoup plus communautaires, donc tu trouves que les gens sont beaucoup plus portés à prier ensemble, et le contexte est très différent. L'Haïti est un pays pauvre, et on dit où on trouve de la pauvreté, les gens s'approchent plus de Dieu. Donc ils comptent plus sur l'aide de Dieu. (...) Mais en arrivant ici, c'était une combinaison des deux (styles de pratiques religieuses). Je trouvais qu'en Haïti c'était vraiment comme extrême là la pratique religieuse, mais au Canada je pouvais combiner les deux. Même en ce moment je peux prier avec la communauté Haïtienne. Là où nous prions en ce moment il y a de toutes les nations, surtout des Africains et je ne les avais jamais côtoyés avant. Mais je prie aussi à la cathédrale et là ce n'est que des Canadiens, donc c'est une messe bilingue donc j'ai la chance d'apprendre tous les styles pour pouvoir prier dans différents contextes.

She explains that religion in Haiti is much more communal, and members of a community are much more likely to pray together. Nonetheless, she explains that she was happy to find that in Canada she could blend the more communal experience of religion found in Haiti with a less all-encompassing religious experience more typical to Canadian society. She explains that she found religious life in Haiti to be somewhat "extreme," but still relishes the opportunity to pray communally with her Haitian and African communities, while also attending a more "Canadian" religious service. Within her newcomer community in Ottawa, Nicole has been able to find a happy medium in terms of religious participation, but still notices the differences between the Haitian and Canadian religious landscapes.

Claudine also spoke about the differences in terms of religious practice between her country of origin, Colombia, and Canada. Moreover, she noticed a difference in terms of demographics in religious organizations.

Ici je trouve que les personnes pratiquent moins la religion. Les Catholiques que je connais croient en Dieu mais ne sont pas pratiquants. Ils ne vont pas à l'église ou ne se marient jamais. Donc oui il y a des différences, et la messe je pense que le but c'est le même, le message, mais la durée c'est plus long pour les Latinas. Comme les Latinas c'est une heure (la messe). Ici (Ottawa) c'est juste trente minutes et c'est tout. Aussi les personnes dans l'église Latino tu vois beaucoup de gens, mais je suis allé à l'église francophone et il y a juste des personnes âgées, et juste comme 50 personnes.

According to Claudine, Catholic Canadians believe in God but do not actively practice their religious faith as people do in Colombia. Moreover, she observed that the majority of people who practice in Canada are older individuals. This helps explain how religion is much less prevalent in day to day activities in Canada, as most individuals who still actively practice Catholicism are found among older generations. While religion

is undoubtedly still important in Canadian society, according to all participants, religious practice is less entrenched into everyday activities. Thus, as this chapter will illustrate, participants had to negotiate a new religious reality in their day to day activities.

A number of participants offered insight into why the Canadian context might be less favorable to a more omni-present form of religiosity. Corine explained why mass in African countries such as Cameroon lasts much longer than it does in Canada.

Pour les différences, du point de vue de la durée, en Afrique c'est toujours beaucoup de *blah blah* (long mass). On chante toutes les étapes, et ça dure 2 heures. Là-bas (Cameroun) c'est l'activité du dimanche. Ici on a autres choses à faire après la messe.

According to Corine, Sundays in Cameroon are reserved for going to mass, whereas in Canada people have other things to do after mass. She paints a picture of life in Canada as busier, with less time to devote to religious activities. Lia echoed this sentiment, referring to the Burundian context when she explained that:

La messe au Burundi c'est comme 3 heures. C'est aussi la mentalité des gens qui ne primordialisent pas l'église. Au Burundi on est plus pratiquant car tout est fermé le dimanche, mais ici les magasins sont ouverts le dimanche, donc ça ne favorise vraiment pas.

While newcomer participants in this research described religion as being more prevalent in daily activities in their countries of origin, it is nonetheless important to nuance this comparison. Religion is less visible in day to day life in Canada, but it remains important to many people. As a matter of fact, Anne and Lia, respectively, explained how they became more religious in Canada.

L'une des choses qui a changé pour moi c'est que je suis devenue plus active à la religion au Canada. Je suis membre d'une chorale, donc ça m'a forcé à contribuer à l'église. Par exemple quand il n'y a personne pour aider avec les services de la quête, on se prête volontaire. Donc je suis devenue plus active au Canada que je ne l'étais au Burundi.

Beaucoup de gens disent que quand tu vas au Canada tu ne pries plus. Donc moi j'étais prête à arrêter d'aller à la messe, de prier, mais quand je suis arrivée j'ai trouvé Sacré-Cœur et j'allais à la messe chaque dimanche. Et après la messe on a un groupe de jeunes Burundais qui se rencontrent pour prier, le groupe Fraternité lumière. Donc je dirais que je pratique plus la religion ici qu'au Burundi car avant j'allais juste à la messe, maintenant je prie plus.

Religion may be more entrenched within community life in Burundi, but both Anne and Lia became more religious after migrating to Canada. This is not uncommon, as Hirschmann (2004) explains in his research on the role of religious organizations in the adaptation of various immigrant groups to life in the United States. According to him, some immigrant groups actually develop stronger religious roots after migration. While this was not the case for all participants in my research, these two experiences serve to nuance my findings. Religion is less visible in public spaces in Canada when compared to countries such as Burundi and Haiti, but as my findings show, religion is still important in Canada, especially for newcomers.

Newcomers in this research were thus faced with a distinct religious landscape in Canada. Unlike in their countries of origin, in Canada religion is often considered taboo when discussed in public spaces; religious customs are primarily reserved for spaces such as churches and religious practice in general seems to be less common. In light of this new context, many participants described an important learning process that had to be undertaken. Transitioning from Haiti where public life in many ways is synonymous with religious life, Eric explained that newcomers must undergo a learning process and adapt to a different religious landscape in Canada.

Comme avec d'autres sujets délicats, parler de sa foi c'est un sujet qui prend un apprentissage. Certains le font bien, pour d'autres c'est plus difficile. Savoir ne pas déranger certaines personnes qu'on côtoie, il y a aussi beaucoup de gens qui se considèrent athées, et aborder sa foi de manière trop cavalière peut être mal reçu. Donc vivre sa foi au Canada ça requiert un apprentissage.

Similarly, when describing a meeting with an employment counsellor, Nicole explained that:

Le monsieur (employment counsellor) a dit « lorsque vous rencontrez votre employeur, ne parlez pas de religion ». Donc là déjà, pour quelqu'un qui était à l'aise de parler de religion dans son pays, et là on te dit « ne parle pas de ça », ça choque l'individu qui vient d'arriver. C'est vraiment un choc culturel et tu te dis, comment est-ce que je vais me porter autour de ces gens ? Ce sont des préoccupations réelles pour des nouveaux arrivants.

These quotes underscore two important elements. First, it shines light on the fact that religion is experienced and religious identities are displayed differently in Canada than in participants' countries of

origin. Structurally, religion in Canada occupies a different function in daily activities than in participants' countries of origin. In the country of settlement, religion is not as important to social conventions and is in fact often times discouraged in certain settings. In turn, this requires a learning process from newcomers when migrating to Canada. Religion is a "delicate subject" and for many newcomers it is imperative to learn how and where to perform religious identities in a public setting. As Eric said, if newcomers are too forthright with their religious beliefs, it can be off-putting and poorly received by others. Nicole explained how an employment counsellor instructed her not to discuss religion with her employer, which was a cultural shock for her and a real preoccupation. It was hard for her to imagine adapting from Haiti where she could discuss her religion openly, to refraining from doing so at work in Canada. Therefore, for many newcomers, international migration brought forth structural change to their religious lives which necessitated an adaptation and learning process to effectively perform religious and secular identities in different public contexts.

Having illustrated the changing religious landscapes for my participants, the following section will examine specifically how newcomers negotiate their performances of religious/secular identities to effectively navigate through their new environment. In particular, I will show that newcomers' performances of fluid religious/secular identities served as a response to different structural settlement challenges and allowed participants to more effectively settle in their new society. Moreover, these fluid performances of identities were shown to be socio-spatially contingent, which serves to illustrate newcomers' individual agency in navigating space and negotiating identity.

## **5.2 Negotiating religious/secular identities and spaces**

In light of the changing religious landscape newcomers experienced through international migration, my research participants had to learn to adapt to effectively navigate a variety of spaces. I begin by examining different socio-spatial contexts to discuss how my participants performed appropriate

religious/secular identities in specific spaces. By examining these varied performances on the part of my participants, I will show how their adaptation to a new religious landscape represents an important aspect of their settlement experience.

### *5.2.1 Religion in the workspace*

The need to effectively negotiate performances of religious and secular identities was made most obvious in the context of the workspace. This is not surprising since many Canadian workspaces are typically seen as secular spaces. As most of my participants are currently working in the labor force, many chose this example to illustrate the need to perform spatially and socially appropriate identities. Participants were faced with the need to perform appropriate identities in this setting because of structural constraints such as, for example, the *policing* of their religious identities.

As Doan (2010) explains, the presence of certain individuals in a given space will influence how individuals choose to perform their identities. This social constraint was brought forth by Nicole, whose employment counsellor recommended she not discuss her religion with potential employers. Similarly, other participants noticed that it was not beneficial to talk about their religious beliefs in their work place environments. For example, Ève states that often times at work it is better to simply seem as neutral as possible.

Oui, je vis ma religion différemment au travail. Je me sens plus religieuse quand je suis à la messe, d'habitude je porte une croix, mais je l'ai enlevé car je suis en stage. Je ne sais pas, la mentalité canadienne doit m'avoir entrée dans la tête mais j'aimerais paraître neutre, ce qui ne serait pas le cas au Burundi car porter sa croix sur la tête, ou même tu pourrais porter un vêtement en croix si tu en trouves un (sarcasm). Mais par exemple quand j'ai commencé mon stage je ne voulais pas que les gens me regardent et voient ma croix et m'associent directement à ma religion Catholique même si ça ne me dérange pas de l'être. Je ne veux simplement pas créer une certaine confusion, le plus neutre que tu passes le mieux. C'est pour les gens qui ont d'autres visions ou d'autres trucs à partager.

Ève says that she performs her religion differently at work than she does in other spaces. In the context of her work internship, she wanted to seem as neutral as possible, adding that the more neutral one seems,

the better it is. She is not ashamed of her religious identity, but she does not want to create any confusion at work and therefore she chooses to remove her crucifix in this specific space. She also added that it is good to perform a neutral identity because there are other individuals who may hold different views or may have different ideas to contribute, so she does not want to impede on their own beliefs. In this situation, Ève realized that people in professional work environments tend to perform a more secular identity. This is unlike the social context in Burundi, but by removing her crucifix at work in Canada, Ève performs a more secular identity to adapt to her workspace more effectively. Therefore, Ève's individual agency, which is reflected through her socio-spatial awareness of her workplace as a secular environment, informs her decision to perform a more secular identity.

While Ève performs a secular identity in part to not offend other co-workers, Lia learned through confrontation that she needed to perform a more secular identity in the workspace. Lia began by describing a situation that occurred at work:

Au travail pour moi c'est séculier car depuis que j'ai eu un problème avec une arabe avec qui je travaillais, je ne parle plus de religion. Il y avait une personne lors d'un atelier qui nous demandait au sujet de nos religions respectives, et j'ai parlé du Catholicisme. Et là elle a parlé de l'Islam, mais là elle était comme « non tu vois nous on fait ça », pour me contrarier. Et là on s'était chicanée pour ça, et c'était juste pour donner mon avis, mais là je ne parle plus de ça (religion).

Lia then went on to give an example of how she now acts at work. She performs a secular identity, in part because of her previous confrontation with a co-worker in the workplace.

Moi je m'identifie comme Chrétienne partout où je vais. Mais je vais donner un exemple concret, les écoles élémentaires il y en a qui sont Catholiques et d'autres publiques. Maintenant je travaille à une école publique et c'est là que tu vois la différence (dans la façon que tu performs ton identité religieuse). À l'école Catholique ils prient le matin, ils prient au diner, et ils chantent des chants religieux. Mais pas dans une école publique. Hier il y avait une chanson que je voulais enseigner aux enfants mais je ne pouvais pas car ça rapportais à la religion, ce qui est compréhensible car il y a des enfants musulmans dans la classe.

Lia's confrontation with a co-worker, as described in the first quote, has led to her perform a secular identity at work. She does not want her religious identity to create any more "trouble" at work, so she decides to no longer talk about religion. But another structural barrier also led her to perform a secular identity at work. She works in a public school, where there are students of multiple faith backgrounds. This is different than in Burundi, where religion would have been an integral part of daily school life. In her Canadian workspace, however, she performs a secular identity to not impede on anyone else's religious convictions. Therefore, her performance of secular identity at work stems from her understanding of religious identity as potentially problematic at work, in light of her previous confrontation with a co-worker and the multiple faith backgrounds of students at the school where she works. Lia's socio-spatial awareness which allows her to perform the most appropriate identity illustrates well her individual agency in deciding which identities to perform.

Corine also described how she has to perform a specific identity depending on circumstances at work. As her example will demonstrate, it is also through differences of opinion with other co-workers and an understanding of social conventions in the workspace that she has learned to perform contextually appropriate religious/secular identities.

Moi je pense que le challenge arrive plus quand j'ai une discussion qui va mal, et là je ne sais pas trop comment mais je suis mal à l'aise à cause de ma foi. Ou des fois je vois quelque chose qui n'est pas éthique et je n'ai pas la capacité d'intervenir sans mettre en évidence mon identité religieuse. Il existe beaucoup de cela en science, et ça peut te mettre mal à l'aise, et tu ne sais pas si tu peux intervenir ou non. Par exemple, on a eu une discussion sur l'avortement et je ne disais rien, et ça allait et allait et je me demandais si je devais donner mon point de vue ou non. Et là quand je donne mon point de vue tout le monde est comme « oh t'es scientifique et t'es contre l'avortement? ». Et puis cette fois-là j'ai dit ce que je pensais, et que je respecte leur point de vue. Mais là ça m'a donné une étiquette, et les gens sont comme « don't talk about those things in front of Corine, she's gonna get sensitive ». Et c'est comme non, je ne suis pas devenue émotionnelle, c'est juste que je devais dire quelque chose. Donc là, souvent je ne veux plus vraiment parler de sujets qui ont rapport à mes croyances religieuses pour ne pas créer de conflits.

This example reveals how Corine became aware of the structural factors which influence how others perceived her performance of religious identity at work. Co-workers were *policing* her religious identity, judging her and making her feel uncomfortable because of the opinions she expressed regarding abortion. This *policing* of her religious identity by other co-workers is the product of her employment as a researcher in a scientific workspace environment. The tension that exists between scientific research and religious practice/belief has rendered religion a taboo subject in her workspace. Faced with this new religious landscape, Corine was able to understand these constraining structures, and decided to adapt her behavior to address these. She decided to perform a secular identity in order to fit in with her colleagues at work. In this case, we can characterize Corine's behavior as a reaction to the structures that constrained her performance of religion at work. Yet it would be uncritical not to acknowledge Corine's individual agency in deciding to perform this contextually appropriate identity. She has understood the social and spatial context of her workspace, and has thus decided to perform a secular identity to avoid conflict. By doing so, she is better able to adapt to her work environment which represents an important settlement strategy on her part. This example highlights how Corine's experience of her workspace is both constrained and flexible. Structural factors made her performance of religious identity a point of contention among co-workers, but her agency in addressing this challenge allowed her the flexibility to effectively navigate her workspace.

#### *5.2.2 Religion in a diverse religious landscape*

Another significant theme was the need to perform a more secular identity in some spaces because of the context of Canadian diversity. In most, if not all of the participants' countries of origin, the population is relatively homogeneous in terms of religious identity. As various participants noticed, the religious diversity of the Canadian population means that they often had to perform a less overtly religious (Christian) identity. Therefore, in many cases, this diversity was constraining as it required participants to



downplay their religious identity. This structural factor, however, was also enabling as it led participants to perform a more secular identity, which many saw as an important adaptive and inclusionary strategy. When talking about the context of her workspace and her university studies, Anne explained that:

Personnellement je n'ai jamais eu honte de parler de ma religion au travail. Si on me demande ce que j'ai fait en fin de semaine, je dis que dimanche j'ai été à la messe, mais c'est vrai qu'au boulot on est très religieuse. C'est une coïncidence, mais où on voit moins mon identité religieuse, je dirais que c'est à l'école. Dans ce contexte, il y a beaucoup d'identités, beaucoup d'opinions différentes alors dans ce contexte, c'est beaucoup moins évident de parler de ça et de s'affirmer comme étant religieuse.

In contrast to Corine and Ève, Anne explains that she is comfortable talking about her religious identity at work, in part because she is surrounded by individuals who are also religious. In Corine's context, she was clearly *policed* for being religious in a scientific environment. Anne is not *policed* in the same way in her workspace, and therefore feels comfortable enough to perform a religious identity. The structural makeup of Anne and Corine's workspaces are thus clearly different. Therefore, the different social context of Anne's work place enables her to perform a secular identity. While Anne and Corine's negotiations of structural barriers are different because of their different social and spatial contexts, their performances are both informed by a desire to adapt and fit in with colleagues. The difference remains that Corine must perform a secular identity to "pass" with her colleagues, while Anne's catholic identity allows her to create rapport with her co-workers. But at school Anne does not feel equally comfortable discussing her religious beliefs, effectively choosing to perform a more secular identity. She explains that in a university setting there exist many different identities and opinions which makes it harder for her to identify as Christian because she does not want to clash with other individuals. While other students and staff on campus do not actively *police* her religious identity, the diverse context of university campuses informs her performance of secular identity. The religious diversity which is part of her new religious landscape in Canada creates a social context in which she is more comfortable performing a less religious identity.

Mathieu also realized that the plurality of beliefs in Canada made it more difficult for him to identify overtly as Christian, as he did in Burundi.

Il y a des Musulmans et des Bouddhistes à Ottawa. Si tu dis « que Jésus te bénisses » à un Musulman, ça n'a pas rapport. Et ce n'est pas écrit sur son front qu'il est Musulman, et donc pour moi c'est un peu comme l'insulter si je lui dis « que Jésus te bénisses », parce que tu n'as pas tenu en considération sa religion, lui aussi a une religion.

Mathieu observed that it is often impossible to tell if someone is Muslim, Christian or Buddhist. Therefore, he does not greet people with overtly Christian phrases such as “may Jesus bless you.” In Burundi, as many participants explained, this is the norm in public spaces. In order to avoid insulting someone and their religion, Mathieu has decided to perform a more secular identity in his day to day activities in public spaces. In this case, there are no actors policing or constraining Mathieu’s behavior. Mathieu would likely face little consequences for performing an overtly religious identity in a public setting, unlike Corine at work who would likely feel alienated from her co-workers. Yet Mathieu does concede that a religious performance could insult others. Perhaps Mathieu feels he will better “fit in” in his country of settlement if he does not insult anyone’s personal beliefs. Therefore, by performing a secular identity, he is improving his settlement outcomes by better “fitting in” in his new society. Mathieu’s performance can be understood as a response to a structural factor (new diverse religious landscape) which was made possible through his individual agency (understanding of his new context, and his ability to perform an identity which addresses this context).

### *5.2.3 Religion and friendships*

Other participants explained that they often need to perform specific religious/secular identities depending on the group of friends with which they are. When discussing her interactions with her Canadian friends versus her Burundian friends, Ève explained that:

Ici c'est certain que je ne vais jamais parler de religion à mes amis Canadiens, ça ne sort pas. À moins qu'ils ne me le demandent, et c'est rare qu'ils me demandent quelle est ta foi? En quoi est-ce que tu crois? Je pense que ça peut être gênant pour certaines personnes et je ne veux pas gêner qui que ce soit. Je ne veux pas faire de *l'évangélisation* pour la bible. À la limite je vais essayer d'inspirer par des actes quand j'en trouve d'assez beaux, mais je trouve souvent dans mes conversations que je ne vais jamais sortir rien de très concrètement religieux. Mais quand je parle à des Burundais, je vais dire « ah Dieu fait bien les choses etc. ».

Ève stated that she rarely speaks about her religious beliefs with her Canadian friends, unless she is asked about them, which is quite rare. The main reason is because she does not want to make anyone feel uncomfortable by behaving overly religious in a Canadian context, given that the latter is “less” religious than Burundian society. This is similar to Mathieu’s example, where he said he did not address people in public with religious phrases so as to not insult anyone. In both cases, Ève and Mathieu do not want to embarrass or insult others. This conscious effort to respect others’ behaviors and attitudes requires participants to perform a more secular identity. Nevertheless, it is probably quite beneficial for them to do so. In Chapter 4, I drew on Foner’s (1997) work to explain that each individual acts in their own best self-interest in establishing social relationships. Mathieu and Ève do not want to alienate themselves from anyone by insulting or embarrassing them. Therefore, by performing a more secular identity they are probably more approachable by a greater number of individuals in their country of settlement. This may help them to establish and maintain relationships which are beneficial to them. I will elaborate on these benefits related to specific performances of identity below.

Moreover, Ève’s example also highlights how she has learned to manage different identities and to perform them in different contexts. When she is with her Burundian friends, she still performs her religious identity, which was more prevalent in her country of origin, by saying things such as “God is great.” However, with Canadian friends, she employs a more secular language.

Lia also explained that it can be difficult to truly perform a certain identity within a group of friends when this identity is clearly a marginal one.

Moi je l'accepte que je suis Chrétienne, mais mes amis non. Ils me donnent des exemples concrets de pourquoi la religion n'est pas bonne, et je dois toujours me défendre. Donc à un point j'ai dit «*You know what?* Ça ne vaut pas la peine se casser la tête». Alors je n'aborde plus la religion avec eux.

C'est rendu qu'avec mes amies on évite tout sujet de religion, car il y a beaucoup de disputes. On comprend tous la religion de différentes façons. Et là ça fini toujours mal donc si on va se rencontrer, en sortie ou au diner, on va parler d'autres choses que religion.

As Lia makes clear, she simply finds it less difficult to perform a more secular identity when spending time with her friends. She receives a lot of negative backlash from them for her religious convictions, so in turn she decided to no longer share her religious side when spending time with them. Again, this is an example of how others *police* participants' behavior, which in turn influences the performance of their religious/secular identities to better fit the specific context. While Lia accepts her religious identity as Christian, she realizes that it is detrimental to her social relationships to perform this identity in the company of friends. She thus opts to perform a more secular identity in this context.

These examples show specific cases where participants understood that the space they were in, and the individuals who occupy this space, influence them to perform religious/secular identities in specific ways. Often times, my participants performed a secular identity to avoid conflict and tension. But in the case of Anne for example, her workspace, a space most participants identified as secular, was somewhere she could comfortably discuss her religious activities and beliefs, effectively performing her Christian identity. In this section, I thus demonstrated how my participants were able to perform fluid, context dependent religious/secular identities. These performances were strategic insofar as they allowed participants to more effectively navigate different spaces and create and maintain relationships with others. The following section will focus on other performances of religious and secular identities which my participants identified as being particularly strategic. These performances allowed them to subvert certain structural barriers and helped them to effectively navigate certain spaces.

#### *5.2.4 Strategic performances of religious identity*

The concept of performativity as employed in my research serves to demonstrate how individuals understand the structural context within which they exist, and knowingly act within this context towards their greatest benefit. The fact that my participants understand and act upon their social and spatial context was made all the more evident by two participants who shared specific strategies that help them perform effective identities in multiple spaces, depending on the space itself and the individuals who occupy it.

In her interview, when I asked Ève whether the way she behaves around others was in anyway strategic to make her adaptation and settlement process easier, she responded:

Absolument je pense que oui, parce que dans la mesure où je vais parler avec quelqu'un, passer un message, je me dis que l'essentiel est de trouver des mots qui vont éveiller chez la personne ce que je veux dire. Donc je ne vais pas commencer à mettre des termes qui ne vont rien signifier ou bloquer la conversation. Je me dis si le but du jeu est de passer un message, on a intérêt à être compris. Et donc si on veut être compris on doit parler sa langue, et par langue je veux dire les termes qui vont signifier ce que je veux dire. Donc oui agir d'une certaine façon et parler d'une certaine façon, c'est une façon de m'adapter.

According to Ève, when talking with someone else, the most important thing is to be understood. She highlights the fact that some terms which she may use in certain contexts may be meaningless, but in a different setting they may hinder the conversation or even cause conflict. Therefore, she states that acting and speaking in a certain way is a strategy for her to adapt to her country of settlement. As explained, certain common everyday terms and expressions in Burundi evoke feelings of religion. Ève also stated that with her Burundian friends she still uses such expressions. However, she had to learn to act and speak in different ways with different groups of individuals in Canada. Her experience illustrates the necessary "learning process" participants undergo, as discussed earlier. The capacity for Ève to understand her new environment and that the use of some language in given contexts may be detrimental allowed her to act accordingly and helped her throughout her settlement process.

Corine also described a strategy she uses when deciding whether she should perform a more secular or religious identity.

C'est certain que j'ai déjà vu des situations où j'étais inconfortable. Mais chaque situation, ça dépend comment on va agir. Pour moi, c'est l'histoire du feu rouge, jaune ou vert. Rouge ça veut dire stop, ça ne vaut pas le peine de parler de religion à cette personne. Elle va se braquer et s'énerver et apporter du désordre. Feu vert, la personne est permissive et va peut-être écouter. Il faut avoir du tact. Les humains sont des êtres de relation, il faut le comprendre car au travail tu ne veux pas toujours brouiller les choses avec ton chapelet.

What stands out in this quote is Corine's realization that humans are relational beings and that it is important to have tact when dealing with other individuals. For Corine, it is useful to understand if another individual will be receptive or not to a certain performance of religious and/or secular identity. After her conflict with coworkers, Corine wishes to avoid more "trouble." Therefore, she only performs a religious identity when she is confident it will be well received. Her capacity to understand her workspace and the individuals within it has allowed Corine to "fit in" at work more seamlessly.

The findings of this section demonstrate that newcomers to Ottawa are confronted with a new religious landscape. While there are spaces where they feel comfortable performing a religious identity, often times it is important and strategic for them to perform a more secular identity in order to "pass" in certain spaces and with certain individuals. Specifically, this capacity for newcomers to perform fluid identities based on their socio-spatial contexts is beneficial to their settlement process. In the next section, I discuss in more detail the benefits of performing fluid identities for my participants, such as the creation of lasting social relationships.

### **5.3 Benefits of fluid performances of religious/secular identity**

As argued, the participants in my research were able to benefit from participation in religious organizations in a variety of ways. Many of the benefits, however, are not a direct outcome of their religious

engagement; rather, they stemmed from the ability of newcomers to perform fluid identities in the context of religious organizations. Their ability to do so has allowed my participants to create social relationships and networks in the context of religious organizations which have then prevailed outside of the physical space of church. I will now examine how a number of participants are able to perform fluid religious/secular identities in multiple spaces, effectively helping them develop beneficial social networks and relationships.

Lia stressed how performing a religious identity by engaging in religious activities allowed her to develop friendships in a religious context. Nonetheless, her ability to also perform a secular identity with these friends has allowed her to extend these friendships beyond the space of religious organizations.

Pour moi, certaines choses, ça reste religieux. Au mariage, le deuil, c'est toujours la religion. Mais si la chorale on se retrouve avec la chorale au bar, c'est comme amis, pas comme la chorale, donc ça dépend. Les gens qui nous voient disent « Ah la chorale se rassemble », mais nous on n'est pas la chorale, on est des amis. Même chose que la Fraternité jeunesse. Les gens nous voient et disent « C'est la Fraternité », mais ce n'est pas un dimanche donc on se rencontre comme amis aussi. On ne s'identifie pas comme la fraternité à ce moment. On va au gym, à la piscine, on sort diner, des séminaires, n'importe quoi, et ce n'est pas nécessairement religieux.

When Lia meets with her friends from the choir or the group *Fraternité jeunesse*, friends she made in the context of religious organizations, they do not necessarily identify as religious, or even as “the choir” in various settings. When they meet in spaces such as the gym or at the bar, they identify simply as a group of friends, even if they are often perceived as a religious group. This example suggests that Lia and her friends found religious organizations to be useful in creating friendships, but their capacity to extend these friendships beyond typically religious spaces such as *La Fraternité* and to perform identities other than religious ones allows them to maintain and strengthen their bonds of friendship.

Corine's comments echoed the importance of extending friendships beyond a single spatial or social context.

Les amitiés, c'est vraiment un réseau oui. C'est ce qui m'est arrivé. Mes amis avec qui je me tiens maintenant étaient avant tout des amis de la paroisse ou de la chorale. Maintenant le réseau d'amis

s'étend au niveau social.(...) J'ai commencé à participer à des groupes à l'église. Je n'étais plus juste fidèle qui suit la messe, mais je voulais servir l'église, et c'est là que j'ai commencé à rencontrer du monde. J'étais à la chorale, maintenant on fait des sorties, on va se balader, on va au *sugar festival*, je ne sais pas, des activités canadiennes avec la chorale. (...) C'est ça et ça m'a aidé à faire des amis comme ça, et ensuite c'est « Oh tu ne veux pas aller prendre un verre après la chorale? » Ou « Passe-moi ton numéro de téléphone, tu veux aller voir le hockey? Tu comprends le hockey? » Non je ne comprends rien au hockey mais on va te montrer! Donc c'est tout, on va aller patiner, du coup intégration, et je récupère là-bas, et là au travail c'est mes collègues, donc ce n'est pas la même relation mais je me sens comme si je peux participer. Ils parlent de choses que mes autres potes m'ont montré donc j'appartiens plus, ça m'aide à me sentir plus acceptée aussi.

Corine created friendships in the context of religious organizations, specifically by participating in the choir. Her social networks now extend beyond the space of religious organizations and into a wide range of activities. The capacity for Corine to create deeper friendships out of relationships that were established at church has allowed her to experience more secular social spaces that have also served as a great learning opportunity. By developing friendships and pushing these into new secular spaces, she is now better able to relate and participate with her co-workers for example. Therefore, her performance of religious identity has allowed her to make initial contact with like-minded individuals; but Corine's ability to also perform a secular identity in other contexts has allowed her to develop lasting friendships out of these initial relationships. By doing so, she has mobilized important social capital in terms of the social relationships she has developed, but also important human capital by learning about Canadian society which has been beneficial for her settlement process.

These two examples demonstrate newcomers' agency in performing various contextually appropriate identities. The ability for newcomers to perform both religious and secular identities is beneficial to creating relationships, which in turn are significant to their settlement process. For example, Anne illustrated how religious organizations can in fact be very fluid spaces in terms of the identities members perform in them. Therefore, the capacity to perform a range of identities along a religious/secular continuum is important when meeting other individuals at her church.



L'église, c'est ouvert car les gens qui viennent à l'église sont d'abord monsieur et madame tout le monde. Ce sont des professionnels qui viennent à l'église et ça te donne une certaine ouverture. Par exemple dans ma chorale à l'église, j'avais beaucoup de gens qui travaillent au gouvernement ou dans le secteur privé. Si jamais tu as besoin d'un service, d'une opportunité d'emploi, ils peuvent t'aider à t'insérer au marché du travail. Donc la chorale, ça te permet d'avoir un réseau social mais ce n'est pas fermé.

As Anne explains, individuals perform both religious and secular identities in the context of religious organizations. While she performed a religious identity alongside other congregants through her participation in the church choir, these choir members are also “first and foremost Mr. and Mrs. Everybody.” Anne explained that it was possible to ask members of the choir who were either public servants or who worked in the private sector for help with finding employment. Therefore, in the context of the church choir, a religious identity is performed (choir practice, singing during mass); but secular identities as professionals and young graduates looking for employment are also performed in order to mobilize potentially beneficial settlement resources such as employment information. By not performing singular identities in a specific context, Anne and her choir colleagues are able to develop relationships that go beyond strictly religious purposes. These relationships in turn can be beneficial, in Anne’s case to find employment.

These examples demonstrate that performing fluid identities can be instrumental in developing beneficial relationships. The fluid performances of identity my participants displayed were useful as they allowed them to develop friendships. They served as learning experiences and also helped in creating professional contacts. Moreover, I advance that it is not only identities that are fluid and context dependent. As a matter of fact, the physical spaces in which participants performed these identities were often experienced in different ways depending on the social context. The next section will show how the spaces in which my participants performed fluid identities were also understood as having a dynamic nature.

## 5.4 Fluidity of religious/secular spaces: dynamic spatial experiences

In much the same way as the performance of identities is dependent on the social and spatial context within which individuals “perform,” the way physical spaces are perceived and experienced by individuals depends on the social context of these spatial locations. My findings will show how participants perceived and experienced the same physical space in different ways, depending on the context. The fact that a single space could be seen as secular and/or religious depending on the social context will help to inform an understanding of space as fluid along a religious/secular spectrum.

### 5.4.1 *Places of social gathering*

When discussing if certain spaces could be perceived or experienced as either religious or secular at different times, Eric explained that:

Ça dépend. Il y a des endroits qui peuvent être désignés religieux à part les églises et les écoles Catholiques. Et ça peut être un endroit loué pour un culte, mais pas nécessairement une église. Et par exemple une conférence religieuse, alors les gens qui y vont sont religieux, mais sur le plan général quand on parle de places publiques, je ne peux pas dire que les lieux-là ont une connotation religieuse. Mais dans ce contexte, ces espaces temporaires, pour un moment quelconque (peuvent être perçus comme religieux), mais cet endroit ne garde pas toujours cette connotation religieuse.

Eric believes that beyond what are typically considered to be religious spaces, (e.g., churches and Catholic schools), public places which are typically perceived as secular can take on a religious nature. In the case of a religious conference, a public space which does not have a religious connotation can temporarily become religious in nature. This same space would then lose its religious identity after the conference is over. His example underlines the fluid nature of spaces, and how the social context of a physical space will impact how this space is perceived. A conference hall is not in and of itself religious in nature, but the individuals and the activities taking place in this location influence the lived experience within this space. Eric’s comments show that the religious and secular spheres are in fact not relegated to different physical spaces, but actually intersect in various spaces of everyday life. It thus becomes more difficult to talk of “religious”

and “secular” spaces since it is the social context of these locations that imparts them with a religious or secular identity.

Mathieu’s comments also refer to the dynamic way in which individuals understand and experience the physical spaces they occupy.

Par exemple, j’invite un groupe d’amis chez moi et on prie. On éteint la télé et nos téléphones. Mais après avoir fini on allume les téléphones et on ne parle plus de Dieu, donc le lieu devient religieux selon le contexte. On se rencontre dans un parc, et on va remercier Dieu pour le manger et pour la vie. Mais on amène aussi nos balles de tennis, de soccer, on va à la plage. Donc ça peut varier selon le contexte, selon la façon dont on présente les choses.

As Mathieu explains, how a particular space is experienced depends on the social context. When he invites a group of friends over, his home becomes a social gathering place that will allow for different experiences, both religious and secular depending on the activity taking place. Before beginning the evening, they will turn off their electronics and pray together, which gives Mathieu’s home a religious identity as a place of prayer. But once they are done, his home becomes a secular space where they watch television. As Mathieu said, the space becomes religious depending on the context, in this case the activities taking place. In these two examples, spaces that are typically thought of as secular (conference hall, home or park) are perceived and experienced as religious depending on the social relations and activities within the context. In the next section, I will discuss how some participants experience religious organizations, spaces usually understood as being strictly religious, as potentially secular physical spaces.

#### *5.4.2 Religious organizations*

My participants described how religious organizations themselves as physical spaces were dynamic and fluid in terms of their religious/secular nature. In other words, according to them, their religious organizations can at times be experienced as secular spaces of gathering. Therefore, not only do typically

secular public spaces have the capacity to become religious in nature, but also what are considered to be religious spaces can be experienced as secular spaces. Anne commented on such an experience:

Il y a des soupers de Noël et Pâques. Il y a aussi les diners en famille le dimanche avant la messe. De façon générale on a une communauté dynamique, on a toujours des rencontres pour se tenir au courant de l'état financier de l'église. On a des groupes de prières où on peut s'exprimer, dire ce qui va, ce qui ne va pas. Donc il y a beaucoup d'activités à l'église qui ne sont pas nécessairement liées à la religion, mais qui touchent des fois de près ou de loin. Et puis on a aussi les deux sœurs qui organisent souvent des conférences qui réunissent des chercheurs qui ont écrits des livres au sujet des croyances et de la religion ainsi que d'autres sujets, et ceci permet le partage avec les autres jeunes car le conférencier parle de son livre, de sa vision et ensuite on discute, et c'est très interactif.

She added that:

Ce n'est vraiment pas fermé l'église. Sans forcément toucher à la religion, tu peux vraiment t'appliquer et ce n'est vraiment pas un endroit fermé, surtout maintenant que l'on a une salle qui est ouverte pour les classes universitaires, c'est vraiment une forme d'ouverture (au monde séculier).

As these quotes indicate, religious organizations have purposes beyond strictly religious, and therefore participants often experienced these spaces as secular, depending on the context. Anne's examples of secular activities that take place within her church's walls include community dinners, support groups as well as literary conferences to discuss religious and secular works. Moreover, she explained that her church is open to society at large, for example as a classroom for many University of Ottawa courses. While the *Église Sacré Coeur* is of course primarily a place of worship, giving it a distinct religious character, many other important activities take place within its walls. Therefore, depending on the context, individuals can experience this same space in different ways – both religious and/or secular depending on the social dynamics. The capacity for religious organizations to be more than simply places of worship, by offering conferences, community events and other more “secular” activities, can make these spaces attractive and beneficial to newcomers who are settling in Ottawa.

It is important to note, however, that it is not only the social context (e.g., the specific activity taking place in a religious organization) that will influence how individuals experience this space. Ève commented on how individuals can perceive the same physical space in different ways at any given time.

Je pense que tout est affaire de perceptions. Je pense que quelqu'un peut entrer dans une église comme Sacré Cœur, ou une cathédrale, qui sont devenues plutôt des musées. Ces derniers ne sont plus des endroits religieux pour certains. Mais je suis certaine que si j'amène mon grand-père qui vit sur une colline au Burundi, c'est certain qu'il n'aurait aucune idée que c'est un patrimoine national, quasiment un musée et que les gens viennent prendre des photos. Lui, il va s'agenouiller et faire sa petite prière. Alors je pense que oui, un endroit peut être religieux ou non selon la perception que l'on en a.

Ève's example illustrates that how individuals perceive different physical spaces influences how this space is experienced. According to her, large cathedrals are not necessarily seen as religious spaces, but as national monuments or museums; however, if her grandfather who lives in Burundi came to the same cathedral he would experience the space as religious. Therefore, how an individual perceives and acts in a given space influences how this location is experienced. Religious organizations or public spaces are not inherently religious or secular, but rather experienced in a way that is the product of both the social context and the individual perception of this specific physical space. A quote from Nicole further describes the dynamic, fluid nature of physical spaces. When asked if either public spaces or religious organizations can be perceived as both religious and/or secular, she responded using the examples of nightclubs and her church.

La vraie question c'est qu'elle est la foi des gens qui sont dans les clubs? Car si tu me vois *clubber*, comment vas-tu savoir que je suis une femme de foi? Tu ne le sauras pas, donc on peut rentrer à un club et beaucoup de gens prient mais tu ne le sais pas, donc ça, ça serait de juger les gens. Et dans ce contexte je dirais que tu ne peux pas associer un groupe de personnes juste en les regardant en disant que la foi n'est pas là car on ne sait pas qui est là. (...) Et c'est ça, car si on réunit toutes les personnes qui sont là, et ce sont des gens qui sont sous l'effet de l'esprit, la façon dont les gens vont se comporter et danser à ce club va être totalement différent que s'ils n'avaient pas Dieu en eux. Et tu peux prendre des gens qui n'ont pas Dieu en eux, et tu les mets à l'église et ce qui se passe c'est grave. Tu peux avoir des gens dans un club et c'est bien plus religieux que les gens à l'église, donc cela change le contexte. Ce n'est pas l'espace, c'est la personne.

Nicole explains that the space itself does not necessarily create its own identity or experience. Rather, it is the social context and the individuals who occupy certain spaces that give these locations either a religious or secular nature. As she explained, some individuals may perceive religion to be present in a nightclub, whereas others may not experience a church as religious at all. These examples highlight the fact that the identity of a given space cannot be understood as static. The way individuals experience specific spaces depends on how they perceive this physical space and the social context surrounding the location.

Earlier, I argued that places of gathering as well as religious organizations do not have an essential religious or secular nature. In this section, I demonstrate the important interaction between physical spaces, social contexts and individual beliefs and perceptions. The participants of my research show through their accounts that the way a specific space is experienced is dependent on the individuals within this space, the context of their gathering and the perceptions of each individual. Earlier, I also discussed how individual identities and the ways they are performed are the product of social and spatial contexts. The physical location one finds him/herself in alongside structural factors and social context will impact which identity someone chooses to perform. Taken together, these findings reveal that identities as well as physical spaces are fluid in terms of their religious/secular nature and interact with one another to produce the social and spatial experience lived by each individual. In many ways, physical space impacts the religious/secular identities performed, and these performances also inform individuals about the religious/secular nature of this space. There is thus a complex, dynamic interplay between the religious/secular nature of physical space and individual identity.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

In this section, I shed light on the influence of fluid performances of religious/secular identities and dynamic spatial experiences on the settlement process of newcomer participants. First, I demonstrated how participants' international migration has led them to experience a new religious landscape in Canada.

In light of this, participants explained they had to undergo a learning process to learn how to effectively perform religious/secular identity in specific spaces. Several examples were provided to illustrate how participants learned to perform fluid, socio-spatially contingent religious/secular identities in various spaces. The most common example given was that of the workspace, where many participants had to perform a more secular identity in order to better fit in. These performances were thus shown to represent important settlement strategies on the part of participants, as they allowed them to negotiate different structural factors which could have made their settlement more difficult. Once again, the example of the workspace was particularly informative. This example illustrates well several factors that constrained participants' religious identities, such as the understanding of workspaces as secular as well as the *policing* of religious identities undertaken by work colleagues. Next, the nature of space was also shown to be experienced fluidly, as both religious and/or secular, by participants. This fluid experience of the nature of space depended on the social context and individual perceptions regarding specific spaces. Participants' ability to understand and experience space as being fluid in nature also contributed to their settlement process. For example, participants realized that church, beyond its religious role, was also a place where newcomers could mobilize valuable resources. The understanding of church as a potentially secular meeting space led some participants to perform a secular identity in this context to tap into employment information, for example.

Therefore, this examination of dynamic spatial experiences and fluid performances of religious/secular identity as strategic responses to settlement challenges contributes to a better understanding of the tension between agency and structure in settlement experiences. Participants were shown to effectively respond to different structural constraints (e.g. the policing of religious identity in the work space; lack of access to settlement information; the need to respect other faiths in a diverse religious landscape, etc.) by performing fluid, contextually dependent identities. Through their individual agency, participants developed an acute awareness of the religious/secular nature and dynamics of their social and

spatial contexts. They could then decide how to best perform religious/secular identities in order to, for example, fit in with co-workers in a secular setting at work, to access employment information through social networks at church, and to navigate public spaces with respect by performing a secular identity in order to not infringe on others' beliefs or faith. The fluid performances of identity thus allowed newcomers to more effectively navigate a variety of spaces, which was shown to be beneficial to their settlement. Although many studies have looked at the tension between structure and agency in migrants' decisions and migratory movements themselves, less is known about how this tension plays out in processes of settlement. Therefore, by framing fluid performances of identity as settlement strategy which allowed newcomers to more effectively mobilize human and social capital, navigate spaces which were understood as religious and/or secular, and develop and maintain beneficial relationships, I contribute to the structure/agency scholarship by illuminating the importance of my participants' agency in performing fluid identities which addressed concrete settlement challenges.



## Conclusion

This thesis takes a qualitative approach to examining the role of religious/secular identities and spaces in the settlement processes of newcomers to Ottawa. Using a mixed-methods approach including participant observation, individual semi-structured interviews and mental maps, I provide a nuanced understanding of the role of religious organizations in newcomer settlement, while also shedding light on the importance of fluid performances of religious/secular identities and spatial experiences as beneficial strategies in newcomers' settlement experiences and processes. These strategies, which were in part informed by my research participants' individual agency, served to subvert a range of structural constraints and settlement challenges – such as access to settlement information and resources, the policing of religious identities in certain spaces (e.g., the workplace), understanding of some spaces as strictly religious or secular and a diverse religious landscape. By examining how these performances and spatial experiences represent important strategies in the settlement process in the face of the challenges mentioned above, I also contribute to advancing scholarship on the tension between structure and agency in the settlement process.

In this conclusion, I will provide a review of the key findings outlined in the thesis. In particular, I will explain the principal contributions of my thesis to the existing body of literature on the nexus between religion, newcomer settlement, space and identity performativity with an attention to the tension between structure/agency. Finally, I shed light on some of the study's limitations as well as potential areas for future research.

### *Key Findings*

The first key finding of this thesis relates to the role of religious organizations in newcomer settlement processes. While much of the literature emphasizes the role of religious organizations in the provision of settlement services, my findings illustrate that these organizations do not act as direct social

service providers. Rather, they were shown to represent important spaces of social gathering where newcomers can develop and mobilize useful forms of human and social capital towards their settlement processes. Participants' ability to effectively navigate these religious organizations in order to mobilize settlement resources, however, was made possible through their performances of contextually appropriate religious/secular identities. These performances of religious/secular identity allowed participants to use the space of religious organizations fluidly in order to foster beneficial forms of human and social capital. This capital was then mobilized towards creating useful networks of mutual aid, accessing valuable settlement information, to foster a sense of belonging and to develop beneficial friendships. Therefore, I show that through their individual agency and socio-spatial awareness, newcomers performed appropriate religious/secular identities that allowed them to strategically navigate religious organizations to enhance their settlement outcomes. Religious organizations did not act as providers of direct settlement services, but newcomers' performances of fluid religious/secular identities in this space allowed them to access settlement information, create beneficial social relationships, participate in cultural sharing and learning opportunities (e.g., through volunteering) and gain valuable Canadian work experience. These secular beneficial outcomes of religious engagement and performance helped newcomers overcome settlement challenges such as lack of access to pertinent information, social isolation and feelings of loneliness, and lack of Canadian work experience, among others.

Second, this thesis reveals that markers of identity play a role in how newcomers develop and mobilize human and social capital within religious organizations. Specifically, gender was shown to influence how newcomer men and women chose to participate and engage within these organizations. By examining the re-negotiation of gender roles through international migration, it was shown that women participants were more actively engaged within religious organizations. Their migration process allowed them to re-negotiate their roles within the church and society in general, which in turn led to greater opportunities for participation within religious organizations. Moreover, I examined prevalent attitudes

surrounding masculinities and femininities among participants, and showed that these also informed newcomers' participation within religious organizations. Understandings of ideal men as "unemotional" and "strong," and the conception of religious organizations as spaces more in line with feminine traits such as "care-giving" and "emotional support," leads to a greater participation of women in church when compared to their male counterparts. In turn, greater religious engagement on the part of women allowed them to more effectively develop and mobilize settlement resources within religious organizations. These women were better able to create useful social networks, support systems within the church and access useful settlement information. In contrast, men's lower level of participation meant that they were less effective at creating social relationships and other useful networks in this context. This section also shed light on how international migration as well as religious participation and processes of newcomer settlement should be understood as both gendered and gendering processes.

Finally, I also reveal the importance of fluid performances of religious/secular identity and fluid experiences of the religious/secular nature of space as beneficial settlement strategies. After migrating to Canada, participants were faced with a new religious landscape when compared to their countries of origin. In light of this, newcomers had to learn to perform religious/secular identities differently than in their countries of origin in order to effectively navigate their new context of settlement. Participants were shown to perform religious/secular identities that were socio-spatially contingent, and which addressed different structural constraints and settlement challenges, including the *policing* of religious identities in the workplace, the need for newcomers to negotiate a new, more secular religious landscape, as well as the understanding of some friendships as being strictly secular. Thus, informed by their individual agency, participants performed contextually appropriate religious/secular identities and experienced the nature of different spaces as either religious and/or secular. For example, church was experienced as both religious and secular by newcomers. By performing a secular identity in the typically religious space of church, participants could access employment information by creating useful relationships with other congregants.

In this case, church was experienced as a more secular space, which proved beneficial for many participants. Thus, performing fluid identities and experiencing the nature of space as fluid allowed participants to more effectively navigate spaces such as religious organizations, workplaces, school and home, which proved beneficial to their adaptation and settlement experiences.

### *Principal Contributions*

The principal contribution of this thesis is to illuminate the importance of religious/secular identities and spaces in newcomer settlement strategies. Through this examination, I also contribute to the scholarship on the tension between structure and agency in the geographic study of migration and settlement. Most migration studies which address the tension between structure/agency focus on migrants' motivations and decisions to move, as well as their actual migratory movements. Less attention has been paid to the tension between structure/agency in the process of newcomer settlement. Therefore, my examination of the performances of religious/secular identities and fluid experiences of the religious/secular nature of spaces adds to the literature on structure/agency by underlining the importance of individual agency in addressing structural settlement challenges.

### *Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research*

I was faced with a number of limitations while completing this thesis. As discussed in my methodology chapter (Chapter 2), the sample population was smaller than I would have liked. Ideally, a larger sample population would have added more depth to the analysis. Nonetheless, this thesis does not presume to produce generalizable findings that can be broadly applied to other contexts. Rather, I have provided an account of eleven minority Francophone newcomers to Ottawa, most of whom frequented the same religious organization. In this sense, my thesis does not provide sweeping conclusions, but an interesting examination of my participants' agency in their settlement strategies. Future studies can build on my work by examining the experiences of other groups (e.g. focusing specifically on newcomer men's

settlement strategies; examining different communities such as Muslim newcomers) and the navigation of other spaces (e.g. community centres and recreational activities). In doing so, further studies could help determine if performances of identity and fluid experiences of the nature of space represent strategies that are used by different newcomer communities and in other contexts of settlement.

Furthermore, the gender balance of my sample population was not even, and I would have liked to nuance my findings with more lived experiences from men. Such experiences would have added more depth to the male participants' narratives to gain more insights into their perceptions of masculinities as newcomer men. In turn, such findings would have enabled better understanding of why (at least some) newcomer men feel alienated from religious organizations. Because women outnumbered men in my study by a considerable margin (eight to three), most of the life stories shared in this thesis were from a woman newcomer's perspective. A greater number of male participants may have provided more detail in terms of men's lived experiences in religious organizations and their perceptions of the intersections between gender and religion. But as my research reveals, participants' experience of religious organizations as feminine spaces undoubtedly contributed to this uneven gender representation, as my recruitment was conducted primarily in the context of religious organizations.

Moreover, because this thesis examined the role of religious organizations as spaces of social gathering in settlement processes, and women were more active in these spaces, I was unable to examine the specific settlement strategies of men as extensively. Future research could examine the social spaces in which newcomer men gather to develop and mobilize social capital to better understand their own settlement strategies. Focusing on newcomer men's strategies will help provide a more detailed picture of the re-negotiation of gender as well as the gendered and gendering aspects of settlement processes.

Also, I focused almost exclusively on the influence of gender on religious engagement and settlement outcomes. My findings clearly suggest that gender has an impact on newcomer participation

within religious organizations, and subsequently on their settlement process. Nevertheless, other identity markers have also influenced my participants' settlement experience, notably their status as minority Francophone newcomers, their racialized identities as well as their social class. While I briefly touched upon these markers of identity, explaining how they probably impact newcomer settlement, I did not actually examine the specific ways in which these markers combine and interact to influence my participants' experiences. While this issue remains outside the scope of my research, it must be mentioned as my newcomers' experience of settlement was the product of countless factors, including their specific contexts of departure and arrival, their immigration category and social class, their gender, as well as racial, linguistic and religious identities, to name a few. While my research does not paint the complete picture of my participants' settlement experience, my contributions do open up new research questions that require further inquiry. Notably, in light of the fact that newcomer women engaged within religious organizations more effectively than their male counterparts, it would be interesting to examine how newcomer men negotiate different identities and navigate other spaces to address settlement challenges.

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## Appendix A

### Profile of Research Participants

| Participant name <sup>6</sup> | Age | Gender | Occupation                             | Immigration category  | Country of origin | Date of arrival to Canada |
|-------------------------------|-----|--------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Anne                          | 24  | F      | Professional                           | International student | Burundi           | 2009                      |
| Lia                           | 20  | F      | Student                                | International student | Burundi           | 2012                      |
| Corine                        | 28  | F      | Professional (neuroscience researcher) | International student | Cameroon          | 2011                      |
| Nicole                        | 35  | F      | Professional                           | International student | Haiti             | 2009                      |
| Ève                           | 24  | F      | Student                                | International student | Burundi           | 2007                      |
| Mathieu                       | 26  | M      | Professional (pharmacy technician)     | Refugee               | Burundi           | 2009                      |
| Déborah                       | 20  | F      | Student                                | International student | Haiti             | 2009                      |
| Eric                          | 45  | M      | Professional (accounting)              | Economic              | Haiti             | 2007                      |
| Claudine                      | 30  | F      | Professional (clerical work)           | Family                | Colombia          | 2010                      |
| Charlotte                     | 39  | F      | Professional (medicine)                | Economic              | Haiti             | 2013                      |
| George                        | 43  | M      | Professional                           | Economic              | Haiti             | 2014                      |

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<sup>6</sup> All names are pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

## Appendix B) Individual Interview Guide

(Translated from French)

| <b>Theme: Introduction to the research project</b>                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Religious identities and social integration among newcomers to Ottawa</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ottawa, Canada, attracts considerable amount of migrants</li> <li>• State provides few services for migrants to help with settlement and integration, creating a gap in settlement services</li> <li>• Studies suggest religious organizations are filling this service provision void, which can help new migrants integrate society through various means (services, opportunities etc.)</li> <li>• Interested in how religious identities help newcomers access these services and develop a sense of belonging which can facilitate the integration process.</li> <li>• Thus, want to know how religious identities help in migrant social integration processes</li> <li>• With the goal of theorizing the fluidity with which religion operates (challenge religious/secular binary)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Theme: Religion in country of origin</b>                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                              | <p>We wish to understand more in-depth your religious practices in your country of origin and find out how they might compare to how you practice religion in Ottawa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which religion did you practice in your country of origin?</li> <li>• Is this the same as the one you practice in Ottawa? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If not, how come?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How are religious practices different between your country of origin and in Ottawa? How are religious organizations different/same</li> <li>• Is it common for people to change religions or practice various religions after migrating</li> <li>• Why might someone change religions or practice various ones?</li> </ul>                                                                                       |
| <b>Theme: Barriers to integration and belonging</b>                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Lack of service provision and barriers to integration</b>                 | <p>We would like to go over what some of the barriers to integrating a new society, in Ottawa, have been for you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the most difficult aspects of arriving in Ottawa and trying to integrate society? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding employment?</li> <li>• Education not recognized?</li> <li>• Language, culture?</li> <li>• Mobility?</li> <li>• Discrimination? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If so, based on what?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Does the government provide any assistance to deal with these obstacles? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlement/integration services?</li> <li>• Education/equivalency opportunities?</li> <li>• Career counselling?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                           |



|                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is most needed by newcomers to Ottawa to facilitate integration?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Theme: Religious identities, organizations and service provision</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Settlement and integration services</b>                              | <p>We would now like to better understand where/who offers services that can help newcomers integrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which organizations offer services to new migrants?</li> <li>• Does your religious organization offer valuable services? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If so, what kinds of services do these include?</li> <li>• Employment information?</li> <li>• Financial help?</li> <li>• Education/volunteering opportunities?</li> <li>• Social networks?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are these services specific to a certain group, or available for all? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age? Gender? Etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How do these services contribute to your integration process?</li> <li>• Have you learned any skills that have helped you in other aspects of life (work, family etc?)</li> <li>• Are there any gatherings/activities organized within the Church?</li> <li>• Are these always revolved around religious themes, celebrations, or other reasons?</li> <li>• How do gatherings or activities within your religious organization help with adapting to a new country?</li> <li>• Does your organization have partnerships with other ones? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If so, with whom?</li> <li>• Are these helpful/useful?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Are there any disadvantages to belonging to a religious organization?</p> |
| <b>Theme: Religious identity and sense of belonging</b>                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Religious identity, organizations and belonging</b>                  | <p>We would like to discuss how religion might help you feel as if you belong in your new environment (or not).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does belonging to a religious organization help with feeling included in society? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety, comfort, security, trust?</li> <li>• Building community, part of larger group?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do you feel as if belonging to this Church makes you more connected with the rest of Ottawa, or more connected simply with members of the Church?</li> <li>• Does it make you feel part of the general society?</li> <li>• Does it make you feel different, (isolated) than others?</li> <li>• How does identifying as a member of your religious organization help you in adapting/integrating? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does it foster civil/political engagement?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are there any activities that take place outside the Church? Parades, festivals, demonstrations?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

|                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does this make you feel part of Ottawa, outside of your community?</li> <li>• Do you feel as if you belong to this space in Ottawa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do others make you feel as if you might not belong?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Does participating in this church create links with your country of origin? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does this help with the transition to a new environment?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is maintaining ties with your homeland important in integrating, or does it make it more difficult?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Theme: intersectionality and fluidity of identities</b>    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Fluid identities, secular vs. religious</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you believe, based on your own experience, that men and women experience the services and gatherings at your religious organization the same way?</li> <li>• If not how might this be different?</li> <li>• How about people of different ages? How do younger participants experience the religious community differently than perhaps older participants might?</li> <li>• Does everything happening within your religious organization revolve around religion, or are there perhaps secular activities for example that take place within the church?</li> <li>• On a similar note, does your religious organization or yourself as an individual take part in religious activities in public spaces, that might be seen as secular?</li> <li>• How do you understand the difference between religious and secular? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they completely different, or do they perhaps complement each other?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do you believe religious identities or organizations can serve more secular purposes or goals, and vice versa? Or are they mutually exclusive?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Theme: performativity of religious identity</b>            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Performance of identity, consciously vs. unconsciously</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can religious identity, or the fact that you belong to a religious organization, help with the integration process?</li> <li>• Are there times when you use this religious identity for specific purposes?</li> <li>• Are there times when it becomes less appropriate to demonstrate this religious identity?</li> <li>• Are there specific contexts that you can think of where you might “perform” this religious identity more than others, and vice versa?</li> <li>• Do you consciously use religious identity towards specific purposes (e.g., obtaining certain services etc.) or are the benefits of belonging to your religious organization simply an outcome of your religious goals or purposes?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## Appendix C) Interview Coding Themes

Interview

Date – Participant name – Date of arrival – Country of origin – Profession – Immigration category/status

Initial themes to code for

**Jaune : différence entre pays d'origine/Canada** (differences between country of origin and Canada)

**Rouge : fluidité des identités/lieux** (fluidity of identities/spaces)

**Bleu : performativité des identités** (performativity of identities)

**Vert : sentiment d'appartenance** (sense of belonging)

**Rose : intégration/établissement/défis** (integration/settlement/challenges)

**Mauve : Genre** (gender)

(Interview transcript to be coded follows)

### Appendix D) Coded Themes Table

Coded themes table (translated from french; originally in landscape orientation)

| Themes                             | Examples/Quotes – Transcripts | Theoretical implication/conclusions | Related literature/findings |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Access to services/benefits        |                               |                                     |                             |
| Sense of Belonging/community       |                               |                                     |                             |
| Preservation of customs/traditions |                               |                                     |                             |
| Integration/settlement             |                               |                                     |                             |
| Gender/age/social class            |                               |                                     |                             |
| Performativity of identities       |                               |                                     |                             |
| Perception of identities           |                               |                                     |                             |
| Fluidity of spaces                 |                               |                                     |                             |
| Fluidity of identities             |                               |                                     |                             |
| Newcomer challenges                |                               |                                     |                             |
| Integration Strategies             |                               |                                     |                             |
| Social/human capital               |                               |                                     |                             |

## Appendix E) Translated Quotes

### Chapter 3

---

#### **Anne**

Page # 49

Moi je pense qu'on a surtout besoin d'information, ce qu'on nous dit dans notre pays et ce qu'on retrouve ici c'est différent, ça n'a rien à voir. Je pense qu'on a vraiment besoin de personnes qui nous donnent les vraies informations.

*I believe what we need the most is information. What we are told in our country and what we find upon arriving here, it's different, it has nothing to do with what we've been told, so I think we need people who can give us reliable information.*

---

#### **Corine**

Page # 49

Certains des obstacles concernent les procédures, des étapes administratives, on ne sait pas quoi faire, quels papiers il faut donner etc. C'est très compliqué, et je ne sais pas comment dire mais l'accès à (...) l'apprentissage de la langue anglaise n'est pas toujours évident.

*Some obstacles relate to the different procedures, administrative steps, we don't know what to do, which papers we need to give, it's very complicated, and I don't know how to say this, but access to (...) libraries that offer language courses, it isn't very evident where to find this information.*

---

#### **Claudine**

Page # 50

Je pense que la première chose (...) que je trouvais, c'est la langue. J'ai dit wow pouvoir écouter quelque chose en Espagnol c'est bon, et avoir des gens qui étaient comme moi, et entendre les histoires (c'est) comme, *ah* moi je suis un immigrant, pouvoir écouter les histoires de vie, et de succès, ça t'encourage.

*I think the first thing I found was the language. I said wow to be able to listen to something in Spanish is great, and to have people who were like me, and to hear stories from other newcomers, their life stories, and successes, it was very encouraging.*

---

#### **Anne**

Page #51

(O)n a un prêtre très dynamique et tu lui poses des questions sur la religion, ou sur la vie en général et il va te répondre, et les gens sont très ouverts, notre prêtre est très dynamique. (...) (M)ais comme j'ai dit on a des gens super dynamiques, et si tu les approche et dit que tu n'as rien (information) trouvé, ils vont te

donner des ressources. On a deux sœurs en particulier qui sont vraiment géniales, c'est des personnes qui cherchent toujours à améliorer la vie de communauté.

*We have a very dynamic priest and if you ask him questions about religion or just life in general, he will answer you. People are very open, and our priest is very dynamic (...) And we have a many dynamic individuals and if you approach them and tell them that you have found nothing (information) they will give you some resources. We have two nuns in particular who are great, they always look to improve community life.*

---

## **Nicole**

Page # 51

(J)'ai trouvé le portique (guidance group at Church), et ça je trouve ça extraordinaire. L'accueil, les gens peuvent se rencontrer là, c'est beau. Et oui, tu peux saluer quelqu'un, je rencontre des gens à travers le portique, même des gens avec qui je parle (encore) aujourd'hui.

*I found the portique (guidance group at church), and I find it extraordinary. It's welcoming, people can meet there, and it's beautiful. And yes, you can say hi to someone, I meet people through the portique, people with whom I still speak today.*

---

## **Eric**

Page # 54

(I)l n'y a pas de lien direct avec le marché de l'emploi (à l'église), ce n'est pas un endroit où on va trouver des opportunités précises d'emploi, ce n'est pas une agence d'emploi. Par contre, en développant des relations de proximité avec des gens qui vivent ici depuis longtemps, qui ont des emplois, ça permet d'avoir de l'information générale mais utile, sur des événements, occasions qui peuvent démarrer un processus. Mais l'attitude de l'immigrant est aussi importante, il faut avoir l'esprit ouvert, être curieux, d'aller vers les gens, les événements, qui ne sont pas disponibles à première vue. Mais en fréquentant cet environnement on peut se stabiliser, et ensuite être plus ouvert à de l'information qui peut déboucher sur de l'info plus spécifique.

*There is no direct link with the job market (at church), it's not a place where you will find specific employment opportunities, it's not a placement agency. However, by developing relations of proximity with others who have lived here for a long time, people who have jobs, it allows you to access general information concerning events, opportunities which can begin a process. But the attitude of the newcomer is also important, he must have an open mind, be curious, go towards people and events who might not be visible at first glance. But by frequenting this environment you can become stablized, and then become more open to information which can lead to more specific information.*

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## **Claudine**

Page # 55

Bien sur c'est un défi, car même si tu parles la langue, c'est difficile. Dans mon cas je ne parlais pas anglais ou français, et quand j'ai pris la décision de trouver un emploi (...) le seul endroit où on m'acceptait c'était un restaurant où les patrons reçoivent beaucoup d'immigrants et il sait qu'il peut profiter de ça. Les immigrants ont toujours le pire travail, ils vont profiter de toi et oui, c'est difficile si tu n'as pas d'expérience canadienne.

*Of course it is a challenge, even if you speak the language, because when I decided to find a job, the only places that would hire me were restaurants where owners hired many newcomers, and these owners would take advantage of that. Newcomers always had the lowest paying jobs in the restaurant, and yes they will take advantage of you. It's difficult if you do not have any Canadian experience.*

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## **Anne**

Page # 56

(face au) manque d'expérience professionnelle (Canadienne), on peut démontrer qu'on a fait du bénévolat, qu'on a été au service de la communauté, et c'est drôle car ceci sont des choses que l'on a fait au sein de nos communautés ou pays, mais qu'on ne compte pas comme expérience de travail, car c'est normal. Ici chaque chose que tu fais tu peux le transformer en expérience et le vanter (pour trouver un emploi). (...) Mes premiers emplois l'église m'a fourni des lettres de référence pour mon travail de bénévolat avec la chorale et cela m'a beaucoup aidé.

*Faced with a lack of professional (Canadian) experience, we can demonstrate how we've been involved in volunteering, being at the service of our community. These were all things we did in our country of origin, it's normal for us, but once in Canada you have to show off this experience (to find a job), and my first job I got because of reference letters from the church for my work with the choir and other initiatives, so it helps a lot.*

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## **Lia**

Page # 57

(I)ls (Église) ont besoin de gens qui servent l'eucharistie, les lectures, il y a du bénévolat lors de la rentrée scolaire. On demande des gens pour le barbeque, pour accueillir les gens. Ça permet l'intégration à travers la rencontre de gens mais aussi en apprenant les coutumes du Canada.

*The church needs people to serve the Eucharist, to do lectures, there's volunteer work during the return to classes on campus. People are asked to help at the barbeque to welcome people. It helps with integration by meeting people and also by learning certain Canadian customs.*

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## Corine

Page # 58

J'ai commencé à interagir avec les gens lorsque j'ai commencé à participer à des groupes. Je n'étais plus juste fidèle qui suit la messe, mais je voulais servir l'église, et c'est là que j'ai commencé à rencontrer du monde. J'étais à la chorale, on fait des sorties, on va se balader, on va au *sugar festival*, je ne sais pas, des activités canadiennes avec la chorale.

*I began interacting with people after beginning to participate in different groups. I was no longer simply a follower, but I also served the church, and it is in this way that I met people. I am in the choir, we have outings, we go for walks, to sugar festivals, and other Canadian activities with the choir.*

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## Eric

Page # 60

(...) des relations humaines plus intenses, chaleureuses, car quand il s'agit juste d'aller à la messe, les interactions sont limitées. Mais avec le bénévolat il y a des occasions de rencontres, des célébrations et il y a un sentiment de construire quelque chose, d'être utile et c'est gratifiant de se sentir comme si on amène quelque chose pour améliorer la vie de certaines personnes. C'est valorisant.

*(...) warmer, more intense human relationships, because when it's simply about going to mass, interactions are limited. But with volunteer work there are opportunities to meet people, celebrations and a feeling of being part of something, to be useful and it is gratifying to feel as if you're improving the lives of others.*

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## Eric

Page # 61

Au début c'était un terrain inconnu, j'ai osé le faire (bénévolat) en voyant où ça allait me mener, mais avec l'expérience j'ai constaté que c'était important au point de vue de ma socialisation, (...) pour développer des relations humaines plus intenses, chaleureuses, (...) et il y a un sentiment de construire quelque chose, d'être utile et c'est gratifiant de se sentir comme si on amène quelque chose pour améliorer la vie de certaines personnes. C'est valorisant. Et aussi au point de vue de la connaissance des mentalités, des façons de faire, des autres qui viennent d'autres communautés dont la culture m'est étrangère. Le bénévolat m'a permis de mieux les connaître et eux-mêmes de mieux me connaître donc on peut plus travailler ensemble aux mêmes objectifs.

*At first, it was unknown territory for me, but I wanted to see where it would take me, and through time I realized how volunteer work was important for my socialisation process, (...) to develop warm social relations, and through volunteering I was able to feel as if I was contributing to something, it is very gratifying. You are helping others, but on the other hand it's important in terms of learning about different mentalities, different ways of doing certain things, learning about individuals who's culture is foreign to me, volunteer work has allowed me to better understand others, and for others to understand me so we can work together towards the same objectives*

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## Nicole

Page # 62

Il ne fallait pas que je m'intègre, il fallait que je m'adapte, car s'intégrer c'est oublier ses valeurs, s'adapter c'est porter tout ce que tu as en acceptant ce que l'autre a à offrir.

*I didn't need to integrate, I had to adapt, because integrating is forgot one's values. Adapting is taking into account everything you have while accepting what others have to offer.*

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## Mathieu

Page # 63

Ça (volunteer work) m'a aidé à aborder des gens, tu peux rencontrer des gens (aux organismes religieux) qui vont dire «Ah je n'ai jamais patiné » « Prend mon numéro de téléphone et je t'apprends ». Car habituellement les nouveaux arrivants se retrouvent ensemble, et donc qui va t'apprendre à patiner?

*It (volunteer work) helped me to meet people. You can meet people (in religious organizations) who might say "Ah I've never skated before" "Here take my number and I'll teach you". Usually, newcomers find themselves in the same social circles, so who will teach you to skate?*

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## Mathieu

Page # 64

Il faut aussi que le nouvel arrivant ait envie de connaître ce Canadien, et vice versa et ce n'est pas facile d'aborder cela. On parle anglais ou français? Poignée de main ou *hug*? Tu sais, et tout ça entre en jeu, ces petits détails (...).

*It's also important for the newcomer to want to learn about Canadians, and vice versa and it is not easy to bring this up. Should we speak English or French? Handshake or hug? You know, all of this comes into play, these small details (...).*

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## Anne

Page # 65

Bien oui, ça (appartenir à une organisation religieuse) peut servir à des fins autres que spirituelles, (...), et quand on partage les croyances c'est plus facile de tisser des liens, donc la religion a des bénéfices autres que théologiques. Mais je ne crois pas m'être servie de ma religion à des fins spécifiques. (...) (C)omme je l'avais dit, avant (au pays d'origine) j'étais plus passive. Ici j'ai une façon de m'intégrer au sein de la société à travers l'église, mais je ne pratique pas différemment. J'ai peut-être trouvé une nouvelle conscience que je peux contribuer à ma communauté religieuse mais ça n'a pas vraiment changé mes pratiques religieuses.

*Of course belonging to a religious organization can serve other non-religious purposes, (...) and when you share certain beliefs it is easier to create social ties, so religion has benefits beyond spiritual ones. But I don't*

*think I've ever used my religion towards specific ends. (...) (A)s I said earlier, in my country of origin, I was more passive. Here, I integrate society through my church, but I do not practice differently. I may have found a new conscience that I can contribute to my religious community but it hasn't really changed my religious practices.*

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**Ève**

Page # 66

(L)'église est un lieu où on peut rencontrer des gens, si on a un peu de chance, qui pourront nous aiguiller un peu vers certains services. Mais je pense qu'en tout cas à Sacré Cœur par exemple, il n'y a pas vraiment de structures qui sont conçues pour ça. On y va souvent pour prier, et pour les Burundais c'est normal. Chez nous on va à la messe pour faire sa prière et on rentre chez soi. Et c'est dans la communauté, l'église fait partie de la communauté mais au Burundi la communauté est partout, chez nous on aura plus d'info dans les familles qui sont très grosses et là pour nous aider, mais dans notre tête on va à l'église pour prier.

*Church is a place where we can meet people, if we're lucky, who can guide us towards certain services. But I think that at Sacré Coeur for example, there are no formal structures designed for this. We often go to pray, and for Burundian people this is normal. In Burundi we go to church to pray and we come back home. And this is in the community, church is part of the community but in Burundi the community is everywhere. Back home you could find more information in the large families which offer a lot of support, but in our minds we go to church to pray.*

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**Corine**

Page # 66

(I)l y a une richesse (d'information et de ressources) dans la communauté qui fait en sorte qu'il y a quelqu'un qui connaît quelqu'un, qui connaît quelqu'un, tu comprends? (...) (C)'est possible de pouvoir exploiter la richesse de la communauté.

*There is a wealth (of information and resources) in the community so that there is always someone who knows someone who knows someone, you understand? (...) It's possible to exploit this wealth within the community.*

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**Corine**

Page # 67

Je déménageais d'appartement et je ne connaissais personne et c'est que des gens de la paroisse qui sont venus m'aider à déménager, et c'est des gens que je ne connaissais pas depuis longtemps.

*I was moving from my apartment and I did not know anyone and that's when people from the parish came to help me move, and these were people I only knew from a short while ago.*

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## Mathieu

Page # 68

Une fois qu'il (nouvel arrivant) est dans un réseau social et qu'il arrive à réussir dans ce réseau, il va être fier de lui, et il va savoir qu'il ne l'a pas fait seul, et ça c'est gratifiant pour lui et pour les gens qui l'ont aidé, et donc quand il aura un ami qui vient aussi, il dira est-ce qu'on peut faire de même pour mon ami?

*Once a newcomer is in a social network and that he is capable of succeeding in this network, he will be proud of himself, and he will know that he did not accomplish this alone, and it will be gratifying for him and those who have helped him. Therefore when he has a friend who also comes, he will say can we do the same for my friend?*

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## Ève

Page # 69

Je pense qu'à travers les activités que j'ai pu faire (à l'église) j'ai retrouvé ce sens de communauté qui me manquait quand je suis arrivée. Donc on s'intègre en disant qu'il y a moyen de vivre quelque chose qui a du sens en gardant nos valeurs qui sont inspirées par la religion à la base, mais qui sont aussi culturelles et que l'on peut pratiquer, les matérialiser, en faisant des trucs, et ça fait des liens, ça fait des gens qu'on voit, ça fait des vies qu'on observe, des trucs à faire et des histoires à construire.

*I think that through the activities I was able to do (at church) I regained this sense of community that I missed when I first came to Canada. So we integrate thinking that there is a way to live here while also keeping our values which are inspired by religion, but which are also cultural. And we can practice these values by doing different activities, creating relationships. That way we stay connected with people, we're part of other people's lives, it gives you things to do, stories to build.*

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## Claudine

Page # 69

Oui, ça te donne un sentiment d'appartenance à ton pays (d'établissement). Il y a un petit rituel qui se passe de la même façon que dans ton pays (d'origine), alors c'est comme si tu es dans ton pays pour une heure.

*Yes, it gives you a feeling of belonging to your country of settlement. There is a simple ritual that is done the same way that it was in your country of origin, and in this sense it's as if you are in your country for an hour.*

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## Anne

Page # 70

Je suis ici depuis 5 ans, et à l'église je connais le quart des gens, et ça fait du bien de les saluer, de chanter, donc ça fait comme si on fait partie d'une famille, et par rapport aux sentiments d'anxiété, moi je me suis joint à la chorale dès ma première année, et trouver des gens avec qui je pouvais chanter mon amour pour

Dieu ça m'a vraiment permis de maintenir le cap, car ce n'est pas évident quitter sa famille du jour au lendemain, de venir à un pays où on ne connaît personne. Donc vraiment la religion m'a vraiment aidé à rester qui je suis aujourd'hui.

*I have lived here for five years, and at church I know a quarter of the people, and it feels good to say hi, to sing, it's like being part of a family. And concerning feelings of anxiety, I joined the choir in my first year here, and finding other people with whom to sing my love for God really helped me cope, because it's not easy leaving your family from one day to another, to come to a country where you don't know anyone. Really, religion has helped me remain who I am today.*

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**Lia**

Page # 71

(J)e fais partie d'une chorale où nous chantons à des différentes nationalités (groupes d'individus). Peu importe qui cherche une chorale, ils peuvent nous avoir (engager) alors ça nous ouvre à la société (...) donc il y a beaucoup de gens que je connais car j'ai chanté à leur messe, ou je les ai vu à la chorale.

*I am part of a choir where we sing to different nationalities (groups of individuals). Regardless of who is looking for a choir, they can hire us so it opens us up to society (...) and there are many people that I know because I have sung at their mass, or I have seen them through the choir.*

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**Corine**

Page # 72

(La chorale) m'a aidé à faire des amis comme ça, et ensuite c'est « oh tu ne veux pas aller prendre un verre après la chorale? » Ou « passe-moi ton numéro de téléphone, tu veux aller voir le hockey? Tu comprends le hockey? » Non je ne comprends rien au hockey mais on va te montrer! Donc c'est tout, on va aller patiner, du coup intégration, et je récupère là-bas, et là au travail c'est mes collègues, donc ce n'est pas la même relation mais je me sens comme si je peux participer, ils parlent de choses que mes autres potes m'ont montré donc j'appartiens plus, ça m'aide à me sentir plus acceptée aussi.

*The choir helped me make friends, and then it's "oh do you want to go for a drink after choir?" or "Give me your phone number. Do you want to go watch hockey? Do you understand hockey?" I don't understand hockey, but someone will show you. You can go skating, so from an integration standpoint, I gain a lot, and at work with my colleagues, it's not the same relationship but I feel as though I can participate. They speak of things that my Canadian friends have shown me so I belong more, it makes me feel more accepted.*

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## Chapter 4

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Ève

Page #78

Au Burundi, les femmes ont plus une présence, un rôle de service, et les hommes ont plus un rôle de leader. Je pense qu'ici (Canada) on voit moins de femmes de service qu'on en voit au Burundi. Au Burundi la culture est aussi fait ainsi, les femmes se retrouvent souvent avec des boulots, même pendant les fêtes ce sont elles qui servent pendant que les hommes font des discours. Ici (Ottawa) je pense qu'il y a une certaine vague de féminisme, d'émancipation et je pense qu'on finit par avoir une certaine représentation des femmes autrement (...).

*In Burundi, women have a greater presence, a role of service, and men a role of leadership. I think here (in Canada) we see less women of service than in Burundi. In Burundi, culture is made that way, women often find themselves with chores, even during parties they are the ones who serve while men give speeches. Here I think there is a certain wave of feminism, of emancipation and I think that we end up with a different representation of women.*

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Ève

Page #79

Il y a toujours des *jokes* autour de ça chez les hommes de ma communauté. Ils disent toujours « tu sais le Canada c'est un pays de femmes *eh* », et ils se taquinent. Ils disent à leurs amis qui débarquent au Canada, « tu sais si tu fais le moindre geste, tu risques toujours de te faire mettre en prison. Tu vas devoir apprendre à balayer, cuisiner ». (...) C'est clair, c'est frappant, car au Burundi ce n'est vraiment pas la même chose alors qu'on arrive ici et on se dit il ne faut pas m'emmerder.

*There are always jokes about that with the men of my community. They always say "you know Canada is a women's country eh" and they kid each other. They tell their friends who come to Canada "you know if you try the least gesture, you risk going to prison. You will have to learn to sweep, to cook". (...) It's obvious, it's remarkable, because in Burundi it's not the same thing whereas when you come here you tell yourself I don't want to be annoyed.*

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Ève

Page #80

C'est très générationnel (changing gender roles). Moi j'ai un oncle qui est arrivé en 1989, il est plus âgé, et sa femme fait encore la cuisine à la maison, et c'est un très bon homme. Comme il est Burundais c'est un homme très inspirant mais tu vois je l'ai déjà vu essayer d'apprendre à cuisiner et il a complètement raté son coup. Mais tu vois dans la constitution de leur famille c'est toujours la femme qui prend l'initiative, tandis que dans ma génération, il y a genre une lutte de pouvoir entre les gars et les filles et c'est intéressant. On est un peu entre deux chaises. Je pense que ça prendra la génération prochaine pour vraiment adopter ces rôles plus partagés.

*It is very generational (changing gender roles). I have an uncle who came over in 1989, and he is older, and his wife still cooks, and he is a great man. As he is Burundian, he's an inspiring man but I've seen him try to*

*learn to cook and he completely messed up. But you see, in his household it's always the woman who takes that initiative, whereas in my generation, there is a certain power struggle between boys and girls and it's interesting. I think it will take until the next generation to truly adopt more even gender roles.*

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**Eric**

Page #82

(D)e façon générale, il y a, étant donné que je viens d'un pays patriarcal, où les hommes sont valorisés par rapport aux femmes, et ont plus de pouvoir dans les foyers et en société, ça paraît plus facile pour un homme dans un pays comme Haïti de se développer économiquement, car les femmes sont maintenues dans une position d'infériorité et les parents vont moins encourager les femmes de faire des études plus avancées. En arrivant ici dans une société égalitaire, c'est plus difficile pour les hommes car ils ne ressentent plus le traitement privilégié, même s'ils ne s'en rendent pas compte, donc c'est plus difficile de s'adapter. Et si les gens arrivent avec des diplômes, et avaient une carrière professionnelle, en arrivant ici s'ils ne trouvent pas cet emploi, ils se sentent dévalorisés, et beaucoup ne réagissent pas de façon positive pour trouver les moyens de surmonter ces défis. Plusieurs vont réagir avec de la jalousie, se sentant humiliés face à leurs épouses, sœurs etc., ce qui ne facilite pas les choses. Et les femmes en général, en Haïti, et Afrique, souvent elles font plus de tâches ménagères que les hommes, alors ce qui veut dire qu'ici elles ont plus d'ouverture d'esprit (par rapport à trouver un emploi). Alors pour les hommes ils doivent se reprogrammer, ce qui n'est pas facile.

*Generally, speaking, coming from a patriarchal country where men are more highly valued than women, and have greater power in the home and in society, it is easier for a man in Haiti to prosper economically, because women are held in a position of inferiority and parents will tend to encourage women less to pursue higher education. Coming to Canada, in an egalitarian society, it is more difficult for men because they no longer benefit from this privilege, even if they hadn't noticed it before, so it's harder to adapt. And if men come over with a diploma, if they had a professional career before migrating, coming to Canada they won't find this same job, and they feel devalued, and many men don't react well to overcome these challenges. Many will be jealous, feeling humiliated by their wives, sisters etc. which is problematic. And in general, women in Haiti or Africa are more used to doing domestic chores than men, which means that here they are more open (to find a job). So for men, they need to reprogram themselves, which is not easy.*

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**Déborah**

Page #83

Au Canada, les femmes sont impliquées dans la vie publique (wage labour, civic activities), mais en Haïti les gens sont plus conservateurs qu'ici, les règles ça compte beaucoup pour eux.

*In Canada, women are more involved in public life (wage labour, civic activities), but in Haiti, people are more conservative than here, and rules count a lot for them.*

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## **Corine**

Page #84

Oui (les rôles de genre) sont un reflet de la société (canadienne), c'est sûr. Mais il y a beaucoup de mutations, de mixage qui se passe.

*Yes (gender roles) are a reflection of society (Canadian), definitely. But there are a lot of mutations, hybridization taking place.*

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## **Nicole**

Page #85

Il ne fallait pas que j'intègre, il fallait que je m'adapte, car s'intégrer c'est oublier ses valeurs, s'adapter c'est porter tout ce que tu as en acceptant ce que l'autre a à offrir.

*I didn't need to integrate, I had to adapt, because integrating is forgot one's values. Adapting is taking into account everything you have while accepting what others have to offer.*

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## **Claudine**

Page #85

Au Canada, ça peut être difficile les nouveaux rôles, c'est un choc culturel. Mais plusieurs couples restent comme ça, même s'ils changent de pays, le mari continue avec ses rôles et la femme c'est comme ça. Je pense que oui c'est un gros défi, un choc culturel dans tous les sens. (...) Le couple va se rendre compte que les rôles des hommes et femmes ne fonctionnent plus comme dans leur pays, et certains ne vont pas changer, mais d'autres vont changer et adopter des nouveaux comportements. C'est toujours plus facile pour ceux qui sont prêts à s'adapter, à changer avec la nouvelle société.

*In Canada, new roles can be difficult, it's a culture shock. But many couples stay the same way, even after changing countries, the husband will keep his roles and the wife will do the same. I think it's a big challenge, a culture shock in every sense. (...) The couple will realize that gender roles do not function the same way as in their country of origin, and some will not change, but others will and adopt new behaviors. It's always easier for those who are willing to adapt, to change with the new society.*

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## **Nicole**

Page #88

(C)'est au Canada que j'ai appris comment la femme peut devenir beaucoup plus impliquée par ce que j'ai eu la chance de rencontrer une femme pasteure. Je ne savais pas qu'une femme pouvait cheminer pour être pasteure, donc pour moi c'était comme wow, donc ma foi a vraiment prise, comme s'est vraiment ancrée, s'est développée au Canada.

*It's in Canada that I learned that a woman can become more involved because I had the opportunity to meet a woman pastor. I didn't know women could become pastors, so for me it was like wow, so my faith really took hold, really became anchored, and developed in Canada.*

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**Nicole**

Page #88

Le fait que les femmes ont un plus grand rôle aide à me rendre plus à l'aise (à participer dans l'église), cela me donne plus d'aisance. Oui, le Canada (contexte canadien) me le permet (d'être plus active dans l'église).

*The fact that women have a greater role helped me feel more at ease (to participate in church), it makes me feel more comfortable. Yes, Canada (Canadian context) allows me to be more active in the church.*

---

**Anne**

Page #89

Au Burundi, le chef de la chorale était un homme. Ici c'est autant femmes qu'hommes (qui chantent dans la chorale), avec une directrice de chorale. Dans mes 5 ans ici je n'ai jamais vu de directeur de chorale. Je ne sais pas si c'est lié, mais c'est vrai que les rôles clés au Burundi sont joués par les hommes.

*In Burundi, the choir director was a man. Here we have as many women as men (singing in the choir) with a female choir director. In my five years here I have never seen a male choir director. I don't know if it's related, but it's true that key roles in Burundi are played by men.*

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**Anne**

Page #89

(C'est vrai qu'au Canada, les gens les plus actifs dans l'église sont les femmes, on a les sœurs, on a aussi des jeunes filles qui s'impliquent (...). Les femmes jouent beaucoup de rôles clés à l'église au Canada.

*It's true that in Canada, women are the most active at church. There are nuns, and young girls who are involved (...). Women play many key roles in church in Canada.*

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**Corine**

Page #90

Un prêtre a raconté une histoire intéressante. Il a dit que les hommes suivent leurs femmes à l'église, et c'est statistiquement prouvé. Parfois les hommes ne savent plus pourquoi ils la suivent, et il raconte que plusieurs couples arrivent au ciel et Saint Pierre dit « tous les hommes dans cette foule, qui ont toujours écouté et suivi leurs femmes à l'église, vous vous rangez ici ». Et là 99% des hommes se rangent là, et là un gars reste de l'autre côté et Saint Pierre dit « quoi tu ne suivais jamais ta femme? » Et là il dit « mais oui mais c'est elle qui m'a dit de rester là ». Alors c'est pour dire que c'est normal, les hommes et les femmes vivent les choses de façon très différente.



*A priest was telling an interesting story. He said that men follow their wives to church, and it's statistically proven. Sometimes men don't even know why they follow them, and he explained that many couples arrive to heaven and Saint Peter says "all men in this crowd, who have always listened to and followed their wives, stand on this side". And 99% of men stand to that side, but one man doesn't and Saint Peter says "Do you not follow your wife?" And the man replies "Yes, but she told me to stand to the other side". All this is to say that it is normal, men and women experience things differently.*

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**Lia**

Page #90

Les femmes semblent prendre ça plus au sérieux, les hommes ont toujours autre chose à faire. (...) Les femmes prennent beaucoup plus de temps à pratiquer leur religion.

*Women seem to take it more seriously, men always have other things to do. (...) Women take much more time to practice their religion.*

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**Charlotte**

Page #90

Mais la majorité du monde que je vois (à l'église), c'est vraiment les femmes qui restent à la maison prendre soin des enfants.

*But the majority of people I see at church are really stay at home mothers.*

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**Ève**

Page #91

J'ai l'impression qu'il y a une représentativité d'hommes dans les milieux religieux, mais je pense que les femmes ont plus une présence, un rôle de service, et les hommes ont plus un rôle de leader. Mais vraiment le vrai leader d'un groupe Catholique c'est le prêtre, et ensuite tu as toutes les autres personnes qui gravitent autour, mais je remarque toujours que les femmes agissent comme piliers pour soutenir tous trucs. C'est souvent les personnes sur lesquelles on s'appuie, et non des personnes sur lesquelles on tire une certaine inspiration. Ce sont un peu des charpentes.

*I think there is a representation of men in religious settings, but women have a greater presence, more of a role of service, and men act more as leaders. But really the leader of a Catholic group is the priest, and then you have all the others who gravitate around, but I always notice that women act as pillars to supports all sorts of activities. They're often the people on whom you lean, and not really people from which you find inspiration. They're the pillars.*

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**Corine**

Page #91

Oui, les hommes et les femmes ont quand même des rôles très différents. Marie et Joseph avaient des rôles différents. Moi je vois qu'au niveau de l'église, c'est les femmes qui font tous les services (lectures, collecte de dons etc.), et la communion. Les hommes sont plutôt sur les comités, régler le parking etc.

*Yes, men and women have very different roles. Mary and Joseph had different roles. I notice that in church, it is the women who do all the services (readings, collecting donations etc.) and the communion. Men tend to be on committees, to take care of the parking etc.*

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**Mathieu**

Page #95

Est-ce que les femmes ont un rôle différent, plus social? Oui par ce que c'est rare qu'un homme va te demander comment tu vas et le demander vraiment, mais la femme aura la tendance à demander comment tu vas, as-tu mangé aujourd'hui? Et j'imagine que c'est pour ça qu'elles sont plus présentes dans les institutions religieuses, c'est pour ça qu'elles prennent un rôle plus devant les hommes.

*Do women have a different, more social role? Yes because it is rare that a men will ask you how you are doing, and really mean it, but a woman will ask how you are doing, if you have eaten today. And I guess that's why they are more present in religious institutions, and that's why they hold a more important role than men.*

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**Ève**

Page #95

Je pense que les femmes sont faites de façon qu'elles ont plus tendance à avoir plus de sensibilité à certaines choses, et peut-être aussi à le montrer différemment. Peut-être que moi si j'ai de la peine, parfois je me dis je ne me sens pas bien et j'ai peut-être besoin de me ressourcer. Je vais peut-être aller me ressourcer à la messe mais peut-être que ça c'est mon côté plus sensible, plus féminin, alors que peut-être qu'un homme va le faire différemment. C'est peut-être une question de sensibilité et de réceptivité, peut-être que les femmes quand elles entendent de la bonne nouvelle de Jésus Christ, si à la base elles croient en Jésus Christ, ça les touche un peu plus. Les femmes, *they care about a lot of people, and maybe this side of caring is going to be more related* (to their greater religious participation).

*I think women are made in a way that they are more likely to have a greater sensibility towards certain things, and to show it differently. Maybe if I'm sad, sometimes I tell myself that I'm not feeling well and maybe I need to unwind. I might go to church to unwind, but that might be my more feminine side, whereas a man might do it differently. It might be a question of sensitivity and receptivity maybe women when they hear the word of Jesus Christ, if deep down they believe in Jesus Christ, it might touch them more deeply. Women, they care about a lot of people, and maybe this side of caring is going to be more related* (to their greater religious participation).

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**Mathieu**

Page #96

En tout cas, c'est un lieu (église) où elles vont exprimer leurs émotions, où elles vont se sentir réconfortées. Est-ce que l'homme va forcément se sentir réconforté dans l'Église? Je ne pense pas. Je ne sais pas vraiment comment aborder l'homme sur le plan religieux.

*Anyways, church is a place where they will show their emotions, where women will feel comforted. Will a man feel comforted at church? I don't think so. I don't really know how to address man from a religious perspective.*

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**Corine**

Page #96

Entre hommes et femmes aussi, nous sommes des êtres sexués alors nous avons des façons différentes de vivre les choses. Les femmes c'est surtout dans le ressenti. La religion c'est une question de foi, pas de sentiments, mais quand même. Alors c'est pour dire que c'est normal, on vit les choses de façon très différente. Je pense que ça va avec le fait qu'on est des êtres sexués.

*Between men and women, we are sexualized beings and we experience things differently. Women are more on the emotional side. Religion is a question of faith, not feelings, but still. This is to say that it is normal, we experience things very differently. I think it has to do with the fact that we are sexualized beings.*

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**Nicole**

Page #97

Je pense que les femmes se retrouvent plus facilement (dans l'église). La femme, différemment de l'homme qui doit mettre son orgueil de côté, de gérer son chaos, la femme peut facilement pleurer et quelqu'un lui vient en aide. Mais c'est la nature de la femme de créer un foyer où elle est.

*I think women can find themselves more easily (in the church). Women, unlike men who must put aside their egos, manage their chaos, women can easily cry and someone will come to help. But it's in women's nature to create a home where she is.*

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**Mathieu**

Page #99

Les femmes s'intègrent beaucoup plus vite, car venant du Burundi, les hommes ont une tendance de ne pas aller de l'avant, de ne pas démontrer leurs émotions, ils sont très fermés. Il faut aller les chercher de loin, pousser fort pour qu'ils puissent enfin dire quelque chose.

*Women integrate much more quickly, because coming from Burundi, men have a tendency to not go forward, to not show their feelings, they are very closed off. You have to dig deep, to really push men to get them to say something.*

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## Mathieu

Page #99

Un homme ne pleure pas. Par exemple, dans mon pays (Burundi) un homme ne pleure pas, et quand tu apprends depuis le jeune âge qu'un homme ça ne pleure pas, ça va te faire des ennuis ici (Canada) car tu vas t'enfermer tout seul, et tu vas juste pleurer au moment où c'est devenu trop fort, trop lourd, alors que tu aurais pu pleurer bien avant et ça aurait été moins dur. Il faut que l'homme Africain apprenne à mettre des mots sur ses émotions et à dire j'ai mal, car ils ne font pas ça du tout.

*A man doesn't cry. For example, in my country (Burundi) a man doesn't cry, and when you learn from an early age that men don't cry, it will be difficult here (Canada) because you will shut yourself out and you will only cry when it's become too much, too heavy, while you could have cried earlier and it would have been easier. The African man must learn to put words to his feelings and to say "I'm hurt", because they really don't do that.*

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## Eric

Page #100

Je dirais juste que dans les relations de couples les hommes pratiquent moins leur religion que les femmes. Dans le public il y a une grande majorité de femmes qui pratiquent et je pense que la religion joue moins cet effet accompagnateur chez les hommes que les femmes. Chez les hommes, à mon avis, il y a deux raisons. Premièrement, les hommes sont moins contraints, les femmes sont plus contraintes. C'est comme si on n'a pas le choix. Les hommes ont plus de liberté, et les hommes ont tendance à avoir un égo plus prononcé, donc si on va à l'église c'est comme si on a besoin du soutien du Seigneur, de son appui. Donc si on passe beaucoup de temps à l'église, on peut paraître faible, avec besoin d'aide, et ça m'est arrivé souvent d'entendre des blagues. « Ah lui il est toujours à l'église » avec une certaine moquerie. Mais quand même cette tendance se retrouve ici au Canada.

*I would say that in couples men practice religion less than women. In the public, there is a great majority of women who practice religion and I think religion plays a greater accompanying factor with women than with men. With men, in my opinion, there are two reasons. First, men are less constraint, women are more constraint. It's as if there is no choice. Men have greater liberty, men have a greater ego, and if we go to church it's as if we need support from the Lord. So if we spend a lot of time in church, we look weak, as if we need help, and it has happened to me that I heard jokes such as "Ah he's always at church" with a certain mockery. But still, this tendency is found in Canada.*

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**Lia**

Page #102

Oui il y a des différences, les femmes semblent prendre ça (going to church) plus au sérieux. Les hommes ont toujours autre chose à faire, comme aller au gymnase. « La vie au Canada, ce n'est pas facile eh? (implied sarcasm) On (les hommes) doit toujours faire de l'argent ». Les femmes prennent beaucoup plus de temps à pratiquer leur religion.

*Yes there are differences, women take going to church more seriously. Men always have other things to do, like going to the gym. "Life in Canada isn't easy, eh? (implied sarcasm). We (men) have to make money." Women take much more time to practice their religion.*

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**Lia**

Page #102

La réponse la plus commune que je reçois (de la part des hommes qui ne vont pas à l'église) c'est que la vie au Canada ce n'est pas facile. Il faut faire de l'argent, trouver une job ici et là. Et quand ils quittent la job ils vont au gym donc l'église ce n'est pas primordial. Comme mon chum il me dépose à l'église, va au gym et me ramasse après. Je dis qu'il peut rentrer, ce n'est même pas une heure mais il dit «non toi vas-y.»

*The most common answer I get (from men who don't go to church) is that life in Canada is not easy. They have to make money, find a job. And when they leave work they go to the gym, so church is not important. Like my boyfriend, he drops me off at church, goes to the gym and picks me up after. I tell him he can come in, it's not even an hour but he says "no you go ahead".*

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**Charlotte**

Page #102

Les hommes souvent ils s'adaptent différemment. Ils sont d'habitude ceux qui ont étudié, donc ils vont se trouver dans le marché de l'emploi, ils vont dans les cours d'anglais. Mais la majorité du monde que je vois (à l'église), c'est vraiment les femmes qui restent à la maison prendre soin des enfants.

*Men tend to adapt differently. They are usually the ones who have studied, so they find themselves on the job market, they go to English classes. But the majority of people I see at church are really stay at home mothers.*

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**Charlotte**

Page #104

C'est très difficile d'arriver au Canada. Souvent tu te trouves avec un travail que tu ne pensais pas faire, ou pour lequel tu n'as aucune expérience. Moi je me retrouve dans une garderie, tandis qu'avant je travaillais comme médecin. Alors c'est difficile. Avec l'église, et les groupes sociaux, on peut se reconforter, créer des liens et amitiés, et ça aide lorsque l'on se sent mal, ceux qui ont de la dépression, il y a vraiment beaucoup de bénéfices. Ça te permet de créer un sentiment de communauté, et surtout si tu viens seul. Sans famille, seule, l'église et le partage quotidien, tu te retrouves, tu ris, ça m'a beaucoup aidé.

*It's very hard coming to Canada. Often you end up with a job you weren't expecting to do, of for which you have no experience. I was working at a daycare, whereas I used to be a physician. It's hard. At church, and in social groups, you can find comfort, create friendships, and it helps when you're feeling sad, for those who might be depressed, there are a lot of benefits. It allows you to develop a sense of community, especially if you live alone. With no family, alone, church and the daily interactions, you can find yourself, you can laugh, it really helped me.*

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**Charlotte**

Page #104

À mon église, il y a le groupe des mamans, et là toutes les femmes s'y retrouvent, même ceux qui ne sont pas mamans. On a une caisse de contribution, et nous mettons toujours de l'argent. À chaque semaine on amène 5 dollars, donc 20 dollars chacun par mois pour la cotisation. Et si quelqu'un est éprouvé, s'il perd un proche par exemple, on lui apporte notre soutien. On va le voir pendant le deuil et on va dans la caisse, on sort 100\$ pour aider la personne éprouvée. Il y a toujours dans les églises ces groupes sociaux, c'est le groupe des mamans. Il y a toujours cette rubrique sociale, oui. Donc chaque fois si on remarque qu'une femme ne vient plus à l'église, ou si une famille ne vient plus à l'église, on va vouloir savoir pourquoi elle ne vient plus à l'église donc on va lui rendre visite à la maison. On va lui demander si elle a des soucis, si elle fait de la dépression, si elle ne trouve pas de travail. On essaye de réconforter la personne pour qu'elle puisse savoir qu'elle est supportée.

*At my church, there is the group of mothers, and you can find all kinds of women there, even ones who aren't mothers. We have a collection box, and we always add money. Every week we bring five dollars, so twenty dollars per week. And if someone is struggling, has lost a loved one for example, we can support them. We can visit during their mourning and we take out 100\$ to help out. There are always these types of groups in churches, it's the mother's group. There is always this social dynamic. And if we notice that a woman has stopped coming to church, or if a family no longer comes, we will want to know why and we will visit. We will ask if something is going wrong, if she feels depressed, if she can't find work. We try to comfort the person so she knows she is supported.*

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**Charlotte**

Page #105

À date, dans ma communauté (religieuse), il n'y a encore pas eu de groupe social formé par les hommes.

*So far, in my community, there are no social groups created by men.*

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## **Claudine**

Page #106

Le premier mois que j'étais ici, je me suis dit « oh j'aimerais me rapprocher à ma culture », et l'église m'a donné l'opportunité pour trouver un réseau social. Mon réseau social s'était effacé, et j'ai commencé à zéro, et je me suis dit « oh c'est une opportunité pour connaître des personnes, faire des amis, de trouver un emploi, et beaucoup d'information sur la communauté Latina ». Donc oui j'ai eu de l'information dans les églises, et c'est par des personnes qui faisaient de la nourriture Colombienne, et des petites réunions des Colombiens et de toutes sortes de pays que j'ai rencontré. J'ai aussi pris un cours d'anglais à l'église. D'après moi je pense que la première chose que fait un immigrant, c'est trouver un centre de religion, principalement pour trouver un réseau social.

*The first month I was here, I told myself « I would live to be closer to my culture, » and my church gave me an opportunity to find a social network. My social network was gone, I had to start at zero, and I told myself "it's an opportunity to meet people, make friends, find a job, and information on the Latino community." So I found a lot of information in the churches, and it was through people who were making Colombian food, meetings with other Colombians and people from all sorts of countries that I met. I also took an English course at church. If you ask me I think the first thing an immigrant does is to find a religious organization, mainly to find a social network.*

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## **Nicole**

Page #107

Je connais un couple nouvel arrivant, et je suis amie avec la grande sœur de l'homme dans ce couple. Ce qui s'est passé c'est que vu que la grande sœur a vu mon cheminement de recommencer à 0, elle a dit à son frère de me contacter pour de l'aide. Ça a pris un an, et même si je connaissais plus l'homme dans le couple, c'est la femme qui m'a contacté, avec une grande ouverture, tandis que l'homme était réticent de recevoir de l'aide et des conseils. On a donc prié ensemble et là ça a commencé à débloquer après 4 ou 5 mois, et il a commencé à accepter sa situation et était plus ouvert à recevoir de l'aide.

*I know a newcomer couple, and I am friends with the older sister of the man in this couple. Since I know the older sister and she has seen me start over from zero, she told her brother to contact me for help. It took a year, and even if I knew the man in this couple better than the woman, it was her who contacted me with a great deal of openness, whereas the man was reluctant to ask for help or advice. We prayed together and after 4 or 5 months we started to see progress, he accepted his situation and became more open to accepting help.*

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## Chapter 5

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**Anne**

Page #113

Je crois qu'au Canada, parler de la religion ça peut être tabou, dépendamment de l'endroit où tu en parles. Car on ne sait pas ceux autour (de nous) s'ils sont de notre avis ou pas. Cependant, au Burundi tu peux vraiment parler de ta foi, que tes opinions soient radicales ou non, sur un aspect de la religion et les gens ne seront pas choqués. Au Burundi on est moitié chrétiens, moitié musulmans, mais on est de façon générale tous croyants. On ne conçoit pas la vie sans religion, tandis qu'au Canada, il y a beaucoup de gens qui ne croient pas.

*I think that in Canada, talking about religion can be taboo, depending on where you talk about it. It's because you never know if the people around you share your opinion or not. However, in Burundi you talk about your faith, even if your opinions are radical, about a certain aspect of religion and people won't be shocked. In Burundi, we're half Christian, half Muslim, but we're all believers. We don't conceive of life without religion, whereas in Canada many people do not believe.*

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**Ève**

Page #113

En fait, au Burundi disons que la religion est plus communautaire, et les gens sont Catholiques. Du moins Chrétiens, soit Catholiques ou Protestants, la plupart des gens s'identifient comme étant Catholiques, la plupart des gens vont à la messe le dimanche, participent à des groupes de prière ici et là, la religion fait partie du langage courant. « Dieu merci » etc. Alors les fêtes religieuses ne passent pas inaperçues, ce qui arrive ici au Canada j'ai remarqué. Alors disons qu'être Catholique au Burundi c'était comme être Burundaise, ce n'est rien d'extraordinaire en fait, c'est plus simple être Catholique pratiquant, alors qu'au Canada on dirait que la religion est plus réservée à un groupe de gens spécifique, et on s'identifie comme étant Catholiques dans des endroits précis, et non dans la rue à tous les gens qui passent. Donc c'est ça la différence, je suis Catholique mais je l'exprime plus spécifiquement dans certains contextes et moins dans d'autres (au Canada).

*In fact, in Burundi let's just say that religion is more communal, and people are Catholic. Anyways, they're Christian, either Catholic or Protestant, most people identify as Catholic, most people go to mass on Sunday, participate in prayer groups here and there, religion is part of everyday language. "Thank God" etc. Some religious celebrations go unnoticed in Canada. Being Catholic in Burundi is like being Burundian, it is nothing extraordinary, in fact it is more simple to be a practicing Catholic whereas in Canada religion is exclusive to a certain group of people and we only identify as Catholic in certain spaces, not in the street to any passerby. So that's the difference, I am Catholic but I express it more specifically in certain contexts and less in others (in Canada).*

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## Nicole

Page #114

Je dirais qu'en Haïti les pratiques sont beaucoup plus communautaires, donc tu trouves que les gens sont beaucoup plus portés à prier ensemble, et le contexte est très différent. L'Haïti est un pays pauvre, et on dit où on trouve de la pauvreté, les gens s'approchent plus de Dieu. Donc ils comptent plus sur l'aide de Dieu. (...) Mais en arrivant ici, c'était une combinaison des deux (styles de pratiques religieuses). Je trouvais qu'en Haïti c'était vraiment comme extrême là la pratique religieuse, mais au Canada je pouvais combiner les deux. Même en ce moment je peux prier avec la communauté Haïtienne. Là où nous prions en ce moment il y a de toutes les nations, surtout des Africains et je ne les avais jamais côtoyés avant. Mais je prie aussi à la cathédrale et là ce n'est que des Canadiens, donc c'est dans une messe bilingue donc j'ai la chance d'apprendre tous les styles pour pouvoir prier dans différents contextes.

*I would say that in Haiti, customs are much more communal, so you find that people tend to pray together much more, it's a different context. Haiti is a poor country, and they say that where you find poverty, people are closer to God. They rely more on the support of God. (...) But on arriving here, it was a combination of both (styles of religious practice). I found in Haiti religious practice was very extreme, but in Canada I could combine both styles. Even today, I can pray with the Haitian community. Where we pray now there are people of all nations, especially Africans and I had never met these people before. But I also pray at the cathedral and there it is only Canadians, and it is a bilingual mass so I get to learn different religious practices to be able to pray in different contexts.*

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## Claudine

Page #114

Ici je trouve que les personnes pratiquent moins la religion. Les Catholiques que je connais croient en Dieu mais ne sont pas pratiquants. Ils ne vont pas à l'église ou ne se marient jamais. Donc oui il y a des différences, et la messe je pense que le but c'est le même, le message, mais la durée c'est plus long pour les Latinas. Comme les Latinas c'est une heure (la messe). Ici (Ottawa) c'est juste trente minutes et c'est tout. Aussi les personnes dans l'église Latino tu vois beaucoup de gens, mais je suis allé à l'église francophone et il y a juste des personnes âgées, et juste comme 50 personnes.

*Here I find that people practice religion less. Catholics that I know believe in God, but they don't really practice. They don't go to church, or don't get married. So yes there are differences, and I think that the goal of mass is the same, the message, but Latino masses are longer. For example, Latino mass is an hour, and in Ottawa it's only 30 minutes. Also, in Latino churches there are a lot of people, but I went to a francophone church and it was all old people, and only about 50 people.*

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## Corine

Page #115

Pour les différences, du point de vue de la durée, en Afrique c'est toujours beaucoup de *blah blah* (long mass). On chante toutes les étapes, et ça dure 2 heures. Là-bas (Cameroun) c'est l'activité du dimanche. Ici on a autres choses à faire après la messe.

*In terms of differences, mass in Africa is always longer, with more talking. We sing all the steps of mass, and it takes two hours. In Cameroon, it's the thing to do on Sunday. Here, we have other things to do after mass.*

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**Lia**

Page #115

La messe au Burundi c'est comme 3 heures. C'est aussi la mentalité des gens qui ne *primordialisent* pas l'église. Au Burundi on est plus pratiquant car tout est fermé le dimanche, mais ici les magasins sont ouverts le dimanche, donc ça ne favorise vraiment pas.

*Mass in Burundi is like 3 hours. It is also the mentality of people that don't prioritize going to mass. In Burundi we practice religion more because everything is closed on Sundays, but here stores are open so it does not encourage religion participation.*

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**Anne**

Page #115

L'une des choses qui a changé pour moi c'est que je suis devenue plus active à la religion au Canada. Je suis membre d'une chorale, donc ça m'a forcé à contribuer à l'église. Par exemple quand il n'y a personne pour aider avec les services de la quête, on se prête volontaire. Donc je suis devenue plus active au Canada que je ne l'étais au Burundi.

*One of the things that changed for me was that I became more religiously active in Canada. I'm a member of the choir, so it forced me to contribute to the church. For example when there is no one to help with collection, we offer to help. So I've become more active in Canada than I was in Burundi*

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**Lia**

Page #115

Beaucoup de gens disent que quand tu vas au Canada tu ne pries plus. Donc moi j'étais prête à arrêter d'aller à la messe, de prier, mais quand je suis arrivée j'ai trouvé Sacré-Cœur et j'allais à la messe chaque dimanche. Et après la messe on a un groupe de jeunes Burundais qui se rencontrent pour prier, le groupe Fraternité lumière. Donc je dirais que je pratique plus la religion ici qu'au Burundi car avant j'allais juste à la messe, maintenant je prie plus.

*Many people say that when you go to Canada, you no longer pray. Therefore I was ready to stop going to mass, to pray, but when I came here I found Sacré-Cœur and I would go to mass every Sunday. And after mass we have a group of young Burundians that meet to pray, the Fraternité lumière group. So I would say that I practice religion in Canada more than I did in Burundi because before I only went to mass, now I pray more.*

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## Eric

Page #116

Comme avec d'autres sujets délicats, parler de sa foi c'est un sujet qui prend un apprentissage. Certains le font bien, pour d'autres c'est plus difficile. Savoir ne pas déranger certaines personnes qu'on côtoie, il y a aussi beaucoup de gens qui se considèrent Athées, et aborder sa foi de manière trop cavalière peut être mal reçu. Donc vivre sa foi au Canada ça requiert un apprentissage.

*As with other delicate subjects, talking about your faith is a topic than takes some learning. Some people do it well, for others it is more difficult. Knowing not to bother certain people close to us, and there are many peopole who consider themselves Atheists, and to bring up one's faith in a cavalier manner can be poorly received. So to live one's faith in Canada requires a learning process.*

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## Nicole

Page #116

Le monsieur (employment counsellor) a dit « lorsque vous rencontrez votre employeur, ne parlez pas de religion ». Donc là déjà, pour quelqu'un qui était à l'aise de parler de religion dans son pays, et là on te dit « ne parle pas de ça », ça choque l'individu qui vient d'arriver. C'est vraiment un choc culturel et tu te dis, comment est-ce que je vais me porter autour de ces gens? Ce sont des préoccupations réelles pour des nouveaux arrivants.

*The man (employment counsellor) said "when you meet your employer, don't talk about religion." So already, for someone who was at ease talking about religion in my country, and now you're told not to talk about it, it is a shock for a newcomer. It's a culture shock and you tell yourself, how will I act around these people? These are real preoccupations for newcomers.*

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## Ève

Page #118

Oui, je vis ma religion différemment au travail. Je me sens plus religieuse quand je suis à la messe, d'habitude je porte une croix, mais je l'ai enlevé car je suis en stage. Je ne sais pas, la mentalité canadienne doit m'avoir entrée dans la tête mais j'aimerais paraître neutre, ce qui ne serait pas le cas au Burundi car porter sa croix sur la tête, ou même tu pourrais porter un vêtement en croix si tu en trouves un (sarcasm). Mais par exemple quand j'ai commencé mon stage je ne voulais pas que les gens me regardent et voient ma croix et m'associent directement à ma religion Catholique même si ça ne me dérange pas de l'être. Je ne veux simplement pas créer une certaine confusion, le plus neutre que tu passes le mieux. C'est pour les gens qui ont d'autres visions ou d'autres trucs à partager.

*Yes, I live my religion differently at work. I feel more religious at mass, usually I wear a cross but I took it off for my internship. I don't know, the Canadian mentality must have entered my mind but I prefer seeming neutral, which wouldn't be the case in Burundi because wearing a cross on your head, or even you could wear a whole outfit in the shape of a cross if you found one (sarcasm). But for example when I started my internship I didn't want people to see my cross and associate me directly to my Catholic religion, even if it*

*doesn't bother me to be Catholic. I simply don't want to create confusion, the more neutral you are the better. It's for people who have different opinions or things to share.*

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**Lia**

Page #119

Au travail pour moi c'est séculier car depuis que j'ai eu un problème avec une arabe avec qui je travaillais, je ne parle plus de religion. Il y avait une personne lors d'un atelier qui nous demandait au sujet de nos religions respectives, et j'ai parlé du Catholicisme. Et là elle a parlé de l'Islam, mais là elle était comme non tu vois nous on fait ça, pour me contrarier. Et là on s'était chicanée pour ça, et c'était juste pour donner mon avis, mais là je ne parle plus de ça (religion).

*At work for me it's secular because ever since I had a problem with an arab woman with whom I worked, I no longer talk about religion. There was a person conducting a workshop who was asking us about our religious perspectives and I spoke of Catholicism. Then she started speaking about Islam, but she was like "no, you see we do it this way" to contradict me. And then we argued about that, and I simply wanted to give my opinion, but now I no longer speak about it (religion).*

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**Lia**

Page #119

Moi je m'identifie comme chrétienne partout où je vais. Mais je vais donner un exemple concret, les écoles élémentaires il y en a qui sont Catholiques et d'autres publiques. Maintenant je travaille à une école publique et c'est là que tu vois la différence (dans la façon que tu performs ton identité religieuse). À l'école Catholique ils prient le matin, ils prient au diner, et ils chantent des chants religieux. Mais pas dans une école publique. Hier il y avait une chanson que je voulais enseigner aux enfants mais je ne pouvais pas car ça rapportais à la religion, ce qui est compréhensible car il y a des enfants musulmans dans la classe.

*I identify as Christian wherever I go. But I will give you a concrete example, elementary schools, some are Catholic, some are public. Now I work at a public school and that's where I notice the difference (in the ways people perform their identities). At Catholic schools they pray in the morning, at lunch, and they sing religious songs. Not at public schools. Yesterday there was a song that I wanted to teach to the kids, but I couldn't because it had to do with religion, which is understandable because there are Muslim kids in the class.*

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**Corine**

Page #120

Moi je pense que le challenge arrive plus quand j'ai une discussion qui va mal, et là je ne sais pas trop comment mais je suis mal à l'aise à cause de ma foi. Ou des fois je vois quelque chose qui n'est pas éthique et je n'ai pas la capacité d'intervenir sans mettre en évidence mon identité religieuse. Il existe beaucoup de cela en science, et ça peut te mettre mal à l'aise, et tu ne sais pas si tu peux intervenir ou non. Par exemple, on a eu une discussion sur l'avortement et je ne disais rien, et ça allait et allait et je me demandais si je devais donner mon point de vue ou non. Et là quand je donne mon point de vue tout le monde est comme « oh t'es scientifique et t'es contre l'avortement? ». Et puis cette fois-là j'ai dit ce que je pensais,

et que je respecte leur point de vue. Mais là ça m'a donné une étiquette, et les gens sont comme « don't talk about those things in front of Corine, she's gonna get sensitive ». Et c'est comme non, je ne suis pas devenue émotionnelle, c'est juste que je devais dire quelque chose. Donc là, souvent je ne veux plus vraiment parler de sujets qui ont rapport à mes croyances religieuses pour ne pas créer de conflits.

*I think that the challenge arises when I have a conversation that goes poorly, and I don't know how but I become uncomfortable because of my faith. Or sometimes I see something that is unethical and I can't intervene without explicitly showing my religious identity. There is a lot of that in science, and it can make me feel uncomfortable, and you never know if you should intervene or not. For example, we were having a discussion on abortion and I was not saying anything, and it kept going on and I was wondering if I should share my opinion or not. And eventually when I did share my opinion, everyone was like "oh you're a scientist and against abortion?". And that time I said what I thought, and that I respect their opinions. But then it gave me a label, and people are like "don't talk about those things in front of Corine, she's gonna get sensitive ». But I wasn't getting sensitive, I just felt I had to share my opinion. So since this situation I don't really want to talk about things that relate to my faith no avoid conflict.*

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**Anne**

Page #122

Personnellement je n'ai jamais eu honte de parler de ma religion au travail. Si on me demande ce que j'ai fait en fin de semaine, je dis que dimanche j'ai été à la messe, mais c'est vrai qu'au boulot on est très religieuse. C'est une coïncidence, mais où on voit moins mon identité religieuse, je dirais que c'est à l'école. Dans ce contexte, il y a beaucoup d'identités, beaucoup d'opinions différentes alors dans ce contexte, c'est beaucoup moins évident de parler de ça et de s'affirmer comme étant religieuse.

*Personally, I've never been ashamed to speak about my religion at work. If someone asks what I did on the weekend, I say that I went to church, but it's true that at work we are very religious. It's a coincidence, but where people see my religious identity less is at school. In this context, there are many different identities and opinions so in this context it is less easy to speak about religion and to identify as religious.*

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**Mathieu**

Page #123

Il y a des Musulmans et des Bouddhistes à Ottawa. Si tu dis « que Jésus te bénisses » à un Musulman, ça n'a pas rapport. Et ce n'est pas écrit sur son front qu'il est Musulman, et donc pour moi c'est un peu comme l'insulter si je lui dis « que Jésus te bénisses », parce que tu n'as pas tenu en considération sa religion, lui aussi a une religion.

*There are Muslims and Buddhists in Ottawa. If you say "may Jesus bless you" to a Muslim, it might mean nothing to him. And it's not written on his forehead that he is Muslim, so for me it's a bit like insulting him if I tell him "may Jesus bless you" because you didn't consider his religion, he also has a religion.*

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Ève

Page #124

Ici c'est certain que je ne vais jamais parler de religion à mes amis Canadiens, ça ne sort pas. À moins qu'ils ne me le demandent, et c'est rare qu'ils me demandent quelle est ta foi? En quoi est-ce que tu crois? Je pense que ça peut être gênant pour certaines personnes et je ne veux pas gêner qui que ce soit. Je ne veux pas faire de *l'évangélisation* pour la bible. À la limite je vais essayer d'inspirer par des actes quand j'en trouve d'assez beaux, mais je trouve souvent dans mes conversations que je ne vais jamais sortir rien de très concrètement religieux. Mais quand je parle à des Burundais, je vais dire « ah Dieu fait bien les choses etc. ».

*Here it's certain that I'll never speak about religion with my Canadian friends, it doesn't come up. Unless they ask me about it, and it is rare that they ask me what is your faith? What do you believe in? I think it can be embarrassing for some people and I don't want to embarrass anyone. I don't want to evangelize about the bible to others. At the limit I might try to inspire others through actions when I can think of kind ones, but often I find that in my conversations I never speak of anything concretely religious. But if I'm speaking with Burundians, I will say "ah God is great etc".*

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Lia

Page #125

Moi je l'accepte que je suis Chrétienne, mais mes amis non. Ils me donnent des exemples concrets de pourquoi la religion n'est pas bonne, et je dois toujours me défendre. Donc à un point j'ai dit «*You know what?* Ça ne vaut pas la peine se casser la tête». Alors je n'aborde plus la religion avec eux.

*I accept the fact that I am Christian, but my friends don't. They give me concrete examples of why religion is bad, and I always have to defend myself. At a certain point I said "You know what? It's not worth it to get all worked up about it". Now I simply don't bring up religion around them.*

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Lia

Page #125

C'est rendu qu'avec mes amies on évite tout sujet de religion, car il y a beaucoup de disputes. On comprend tous la religion de différentes façons. Et là ça fini toujours mal donc si on va se rencontrer, en sortie ou au diner, on va parler d'autres choses que religion.

*It's gotten to a point where we just avoid all religious topics around friends because there are many arguments. We all understand religion in a different way. And it always ends badly so if we're meeting up, for an outing or for dinner, we will talk about other things than religion.*

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Ève

Page #126

Absolument je pense que oui, parce que dans la mesure où je vais parler avec quelqu'un, passer un message, je me dis que l'essentiel est de trouver des mots qui vont éveiller chez la personne ce que je veux dire. Donc je ne vais pas commencer à mettre des termes qui ne vont rien signifier ou bloquer la conversation. Je me dis si le but du jeu est de passer un message, on a intérêt à être compris. Et donc si on

veut être compris on doit parler sa langue, et par langue je veux dire les termes qui vont signifier ce que je veux dire. Donc oui agir d'une certaine façon et parler d'une certaine façon, c'est une façon de m'adapter.

*Absolutely I think so, because if I'm talking to someone, trying to get a message across, I think the essential thing is to find words that the other person can relate to. So I won't start using terms that won't mean anything to others, or that might create an impasse in the conversation. I tell myself that if the object of the game is to convey a message, it's in my best interest to be understood. And if I want to be understood I must speak the language, and by language I mean terms that will convey my message. So yes acting in a certain way and speaking a certain way, it's a way to adapt.*

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## Corine

Page #127

C'est certain que j'ai déjà vu des situations où j'étais inconfortable. Mais chaque situation, ça dépend comment on va agir. Pour moi, c'est l'histoire du feu rouge, jaune ou vert. Rouge ça veut dire stop, ça ne vaut pas le peine de parler de religion à cette personne. Elle va se braquer et s'énerver et apporter du désordre. Feu vert, la personne est permissive et va peut-être écouter. Il faut avoir du tact. Les humains sont des êtres de relation, il faut le comprendre car au travail tu ne veux pas toujours brouiller les choses avec ton chapelet.

*I've certainly been in situations where I felt uncomfortable. But each situation depends on how you react. For me, it's the story of the red, yellow or green light. Red means stop, it's not worth it to talk about religion to this person. Green means the person is more permissive and might listen. You must have tact. Humans are relational beings, and you must understand this because at work you don't want to stir up trouble with your rosary.*

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## Lia

Page #128

Pour moi, certaines choses, ça reste religieux. Au mariage, le deuil, c'est toujours la religion. Mais si la chorale on se retrouve avec la chorale au bar, c'est comme amis, pas comme la chorale, donc ça dépend. Les gens qui nous voient disent « Ah la chorale se rassemble », mais nous on n'est pas la chorale, on est des amis. Même chose que la Fraternité jeunesse. Les gens nous voient et disent « C'est la Fraternité », mais ce n'est pas un dimanche donc on se rencontre comme amis aussi. On ne s'identifie pas comme la fraternité à ce moment. On va au gym, à la piscine, on sort dîner, des séminaires, n'importe quoi, et ce n'est pas nécessairement religieux.

*For me, certain things remain religious. Marriage, grieving, it's always religious. But if we're meeting up at a bar with the choir, we're meeting as friends, not as the choir, so it depends. People who see us will say "Oh the choir is meeting up", but we aren't there as the choir, we're there as friends. Same thing goes with the Fraternité jeunesse. People see us and say "it's the Fraternité," but it's not Sunday so we're meeting as friends. We don't identify as the Fraternité at that moment. We go to the gym, the pool, we go out for lunch, seminars, anything, but it isn't necessarily religious.*

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## Corine

Page #128

Les amitiés, c'est vraiment un réseau oui. C'est ce qui m'est arrivé. Mes amis avec qui je me tiens maintenant étaient avant tout des amis de la paroisse ou de la chorale. Maintenant le réseau d'amis s'étend au niveau social.(...) J'ai commencé à participer à des groupes à l'église. Je n'étais plus juste fidèle qui suit la messe, mais je voulais servir l'église, et c'est là que j'ai commencé à rencontrer du monde. J'étais à la chorale, maintenant on fait des sorties, on va se balader, on va au *sugar festival*, je ne sais pas, des activités canadiennes avec la chorale. (...) C'est ça et ça m'a aidé à faire des amis comme ça, et ensuite c'est « Oh tu ne veux pas aller prendre un verre après la chorale? » Ou « Passe-moi ton numéro de téléphone, tu veux aller voir le hockey? Tu comprends le hockey? » Non je ne comprends rien au hockey mais on va te montrer! Donc c'est tout, on va aller patiner, du coup intégration, et je récupère là-bas, et là au travail c'est mes collègues, donc ce n'est pas la même relation mais je me sens comme si je peux participer. Ils parlent de choses que mes autres potes m'ont montré donc j'appartiens plus, ça m'aide à me sentir plus acceptée aussi.

*Friendships are truly a network, yes. It's what happened to me. My current friends were initially all friends from church or choir. Now this network of friends extends to a social level. (...)I began participating in groups at church. I was no longer only a follower, but I wanted to serve my church, and that's how I started meeting people. I was at choir, and then we would go on outings, go for a walk, go to the sugar festival, I don't know, Canadian activities with the choir. (...) This helped me make friends, and then it's oh do you want to go for a drink after choir?" or "Give me your phone number. Do you want to go watch hockey? Do you understand hockey?" I don't understand hockey, but someone will show you. You can go skating, so from an integration standpoint, I gain a lot, and at work with my colleagues, it's not the same relationship but I feel as though I can participate. They speak of things that my Canadian friends have shown me so I belong more, it makes me feel more accepted.*

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## Anne

Page #130

L'église, c'est ouvert car les gens qui viennent à l'église sont d'abord monsieur et madame tout le monde. Ce sont des professionnels qui viennent à l'église et ça te donne une certaine ouverture. Par exemple dans ma chorale à l'église, j'avais beaucoup de gens qui travaillent au gouvernement ou dans le secteur privé. Si jamais tu as besoin d'un service, d'une opportunité d'emploi, ils peuvent t'aider à t'insérer au marché du travail. Donc la chorale, ça te permet d'avoir un réseau social mais ce n'est pas fermé.

*Church is open to everyone because the people who come to church are first and foremost Mr. and Mrs. everyone. They are professionals who come to church and it creates a certain openness. For example, in my choir, I had many colleagues who work at the government or in the private sector. If ever you need a service, a job opportunity, they can help you to access the job market. In the choir, it allows you to develop a social network but it is not exclusive.*

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## Eric

Page #131

Ça dépend. Il y a des endroits qui peuvent être désignés religieux à part les églises et les écoles Catholiques. Et ça peut être un endroit loué pour un culte, mais pas nécessairement une église. Et par exemple une



conférence religieuse, alors les gens qui y vont sont religieux, mais sur le plan général quand on parle de places publiques, je ne peux pas dire que les lieux-là ont une connotation religieuse. Mais dans ce contexte, ces espaces temporaires, pour un moment quelconque (peuvent être perçus comme religieux), mais cet endroit ne garde pas toujours cette connotation religieuse.

*It depends. There are designated religious spaces other than churches and Catholic schools. It could be a rented space for worshipping, but not necessarily a church. For example a religious conference, so people who go are religious, but generally speaking public places do not have a religious connotation. But in this context, this temporary spaces, for a certain time period (can be perceived as religious), but this space doesn't maintain this religious connotation forever.*

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## **Mathieu**

Page #132

Par exemple, j'invite un groupe d'amis chez moi et on prie. On éteint la télé et nos téléphones. Mais après avoir fini on allume les téléphones et on ne parle plus de Dieu, donc le lieu devient religieux selon le contexte. On se rencontre dans un parc, et on va remercier Dieu pour le manger et pour la vie. Mais on amène aussi nos balles de tennis, de soccer, on va à la plage. Donc ça peut varier selon le contexte, selon la façon dont on présente les choses.

*For example, I invite a group of friends over and we pray. We turn off the TV and our telephones. But after we're done we turn on the phones and we longer talk about God, so the space becomes religious according to the context. We meet up in a park, and we will thank God for the food and for life. But we also bring our tennis balls, soccer, we go to the beach. So it can vary depending on the context, depending on the way things are presented.*

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## **Anne**

Page #133

Il y a des soupers de Noël et Pâques. Il y a aussi les diners en famille le dimanche avant la messe. De façon générale on a une communauté dynamique, on a toujours des rencontres pour se tenir au courant de l'état financier de l'église. On a des groupes de prières où on peut s'exprimer, dire ce qui va, ce qui ne va pas. Donc il y a beaucoup d'activités à l'église qui ne sont pas nécessairement liées à la religion, mais qui touchent des fois de près ou de loin. Et puis on a aussi les deux sœurs qui organisent souvent des conférences qui réunissent des chercheurs qui ont écrits des livres au sujet des croyances et de la religion ainsi que d'autres sujets, et ceci permet le partage avec les autres jeunes car le conférencier parle de son livre, de sa vision et ensuite on discute, et c'est très interactif.

*There are dinners for Christmas and Easter. There are also family lunches Sunday before mass. Generally speaking, we have a dynamic community, we always have meetings to keep track of the church's finances. We have prayer groups where you can express yourself, tell others what's going well and what's going wrong. So there are many activities at church that are not necessarily related to religion, but that are related in some way. And we have two nuns who organize conferences that gather researchers who have written*

*books on religion and other topics, and it allows sharing with other youth because the speaker talks about his book, his opinions and then we discuss, so it's very interactive.*

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**Anne**

Page #133

Ce n'est vraiment pas fermé l'église. Sans forcément toucher à la religion, tu peux vraiment t'appliquer et ce n'est vraiment pas un endroit fermé, surtout maintenant que l'on a une salle qui est ouverte pour les classes universitaires, c'est vraiment une forme d'ouverture (au monde séculier).

*Church is not exclusive at all. Without necessarily touching upon religion, you can rely apply yourself, and it's not an exclusive space, especially now that there is a room open to university classes, it really shows a form of openness (to the secular world).*

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**Ève**

Page #134

Je pense que tout est affaire de perceptions. Je pense que quelqu'un peut entrer dans une église comme Sacré Cœur, ou une cathédrale, qui sont devenues plutôt des musées. Ces derniers ne sont plus des endroits religieux pour certains. Mais je suis certaine que si j'amène mon grand-père qui vit sur une colline au Burundi, c'est certain qu'il n'aurait aucune idée que c'est un patrimoine national, quasiment un musée et que les gens viennent prendre des photos. Lui, il va s'agenouiller et faire sa petite prière. Alors je pense que oui, un endroit peut être religieux ou non selon la perception que l'on en a.

*I think it's all a matter of perceptions. I think someone could enter a church like Sacré Coeur or a cathedral that has become more of a museum. These spaces are no longer religious for some people. But I'm sure if I brought my grandfather who lives on a hill in Burundi, it's certain he would have no idea that this is a heritage site, a museum that people go to take pictures. He will kneel and pray. So I think that yes, a space can be religious or not according to the perception someone has of this space.*

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**Nicole**

Page #134

La vraie question c'est qu'elle est la foi des gens qui sont dans les clubs? Car si tu me vois *clubber*, comment vas-tu savoir que je suis une femme de foi? Tu ne le sauras pas, donc on peut rentrer à un club et beaucoup de gens prient mais tu ne le sais pas, donc ça, ça serait de juger les gens. Et dans ce contexte je dirais que tu ne peux pas associer un groupe de personnes juste en les regardant en disant que la foi n'est pas là car on ne sait pas qui est là. (...) Et c'est ça, car si on réunit toutes les personnes qui sont là, et ce sont des gens qui sont sous l'effet de l'esprit, la façon dont les gens vont se comporter et danser à ce club va être totalement différent que s'ils n'avaient pas Dieu en eux. Et tu peux prendre des gens qui n'ont pas Dieu en eux, et tu les mets à l'église et ce qui se passe c'est grave. Tu peux avoir des gens dans un club et c'est bien plus religieux que les gens à l'église, donc cela change le contexte. Ce n'est pas l'espace, c'est la personne.

*The real question is what is the faith of people in these clubs? Because if you see me in a club, how will you know that I am a woman of faith? You wouldn't know, so you can enter a club and many people do pray but*

*you don't know, so that would be judging people. And in this context I would say that you can't associate a group of people just by looking at them and saying that they don't have faith. (...) And that's it, because if you assemble all the people who are there, and these people are influenced by the spirit, the way these people will act and dance will be totally different than if they didn't have God in them. And you can take people who don't have God in them, and you place them in a church and what takes place is grave. You can have people in a club and it is much more religious than people in a church, so the context can change. It's not the space, it's the person.*

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