



Laïcité en mouvement

Rapport Annuel

Avril 2024 – Mars 2025

NOTRE PROJET

The Secularism on the Move (SOM) project examines the growing presence of secular and nonreligious peoples, politics and ideas, and how they circulate transnationally and inform the growing legislation on secularism in the Francophone world. We hypothesize that the French language, with attending histories of Christianity and colonialism, as well as social media, facilitate this transnational circulation. Our aim is to better theorize the diverse migratory, socio-political, ritualistic and everyday lives of secular migrants and their engagement (if any) with secularism.

The SOM has four branches:

- Qualitative
- Quantitative
- Media
- Law

Nos objectifs de recherche:

1. To document how secularism and *laïcité* are constructed in the Francophone world (2007-28) through discourse analysis of social and traditional media, parliamentary debates, legislation & court cases;
2. To chart the movement of secular-focused media discourses and people from eight countries [France, French Switzerland, French Belgium, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal and Lebanon] to QC with the help of interactive maps;
3. To connect the ideas and the increasing secular migration of the lives of Francophone newcomers, expanding knowledge on secular migrants' everyday lives and rituals, and their impact on diversity debates and secular legislation;
4. To develop new theorization to critique typologies of secularism and *laïcité* with less attention to nationstate or religion-focused models (Catholicism, Islam or Judaism), and with greater consideration, drawing on our data, to shared transnational politics of colonialism, language politics, race, and gender equality.

Nous remercions ces agences de financement pour leur soutien :

- SSHRC Insight (2023-2028), \$370,016
- CRIDAQ (Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire sur la diversité et la démocratie, FRQ-funded) workshop fund (2023), \$5,000
- Memorial University Seed and Bridge Funding (2021-23), \$19,794
- Programme d'Appui à la Recherche, Secrétariat aux relations canadiennes, Province de Québec, \$33,724 (2022-23)
- ACFAS (2022-2023) - Programme de coopération en recherche dans la francophonie canadienne de l'Acfas, \$2,956
- DARE positions - 3 summer students, York University, 2022-2025, \$15,000
- York University SSHRC Explore Grant - 2022-2023: \$3,500
- GradSWEP and the MUCEP positions, Memorial University, 2022-2025

L'ÉQUIPE

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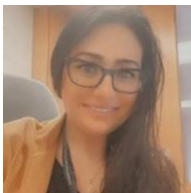


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NOTRE RECHERCHE 2025

Équipe qualitative

- Barras and Selby compiled, wrote, and helped produce four podcast episodes with our podcast team; they were released in September 2024 (see links, below).
- Barras and Selby completed 12 preliminary interviews in with directors of international Lycée français;
- Selby and Barras co-authored several papers drawing on qualitative data to date;
- Mossière, Selby and Barras authored papers for the 2024 AAR meetings that will be presented with a larger group for a workshop at York University (co-organized by Barras and Selby) in October 2025.
- Simota and Knight compiled background data on how these schools engage secularism.
- Benzouine and Bouajila completed coding of 38 interviews with Francophone immigrants in Toronto and Montréal;

Équipe des medias

- With Shah, Selby and Barras continued compiling a bilingual "[Secularism in the News](#)" database that is searchable by month/year, country, and theme. The page was recently improved to improve filters and searchability thanks to our work with website designers at the College of the North Atlantic.
- We also launched a case-study database available [here](#).
 - Related to this work, Taher, Barras, Selby, Paillé and Crouton undertook a similar exercise in Switzerland with two French and one German newspaper. A case-study on a 2016 hand-shaking controversy will be available on the website soon.
 - Barras and Selby are working with Boudamit and Al Attar on a media database on transnational burkini and niqab debates. They have compiled data in Lebanon, Switzerland, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and are beginning work on Senegal.

Équipe quantitative

- Wilkins-Laflamme and Legault-Leclair gathered longitudinal data (1981-2021) on French immigration to Québec and Ontario, as well as race and religion data.
- Wilkins-Laflamme worked with Maia Hutton on an annotated bibliography of 2000-2024 public opinion data and reports on Canadian attitudes towards immigration, religion, religious diversity and Islamophobia.

Équipe Juridique

- Barras, Taher and Selby completed their research on parliamentary submissions on Law 21 and co-authored a forthcoming paper in the *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*.
- Cumming is assisting in compiling an overview of secular-related law in our 8 countries, which will be available on our website in Fall of 2024.
- With Proulx and Thauvette, Dabby has been analysing the expert reports submitted in the context of the Law 21 legal challenge, as well as newer pieces about *laïcité* and emergency powers in a comparative context, and on the normalization of exceptional powers, such as the use of the notwithstanding clause.
- Dabby is examining soft law uses of *laïcité* in a comparative context in 2024-2025 in a sabbatical year as visiting professor at the Faculty of Law at McGill University and at the CIRC at the Université de Saint-Louis in Brussels (*Centre interdisciplinaire de recherches en droit constitutionnel*).
- Dabby, Selby and Barras, along with Boudomit and Paillé, are analyzing Quebec media (2023-2025) in reaction to the Bedford scandal.

ÉVÉNEMENTS

Our book series - New Books - Live - on Secularism, Gender, Law and Politics - hosted by Selby and Barras – continued with several events this past year. These one-hour online sessions engage authors on their new books.

Événements à venir:

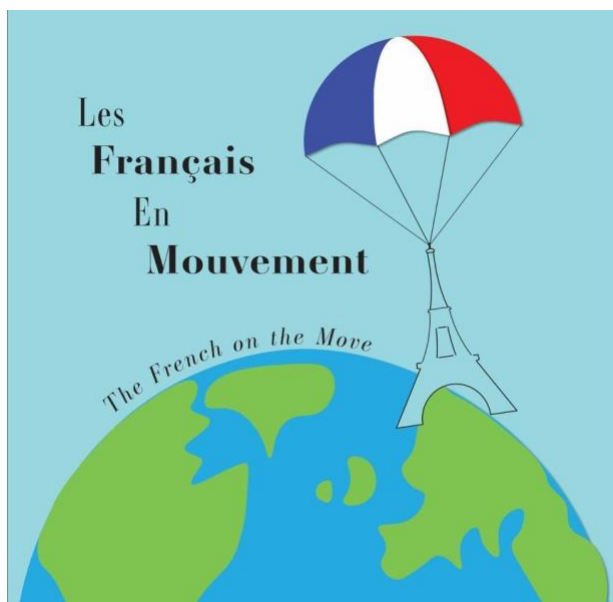
- Friday, May 23rd at 11am ET with Géraldine Mossière on [*Portraits de la modernité \(non\) religieuse : quelques confidences de baby-boomers au Québec*](#) (in French).
- Friday, September 19th at 11am ET with Elizabeth Shakman Hurd for [*Heaven Has a Wall: Religion, Borders, and the Global United States*](#) (in English, sign up [here](#)).
- Friday, October 10th at 11am ET with Jennifer Selby for [*Secular Sensibilities: Romance, Marriage, and Contemporary Algerian Immigration to France and Québec*](#) (in English; sign up [here](#)).
- Friday, December 5th at 12pm ET with Carol Ferrera for [*Muslim and Catholic Experiences of National Belonging in France: Rethinking Boundaries Inequities, and Faith in the Republic*](#) (in English; sign up [here](#)).

Les évènements de l'année dernière

1. May 3, 2024: *In / Visible Bodies: Gender, Religion and Politics / Corps In/visible: Genre, Religion et Politique* (Laval University Press, 2023) with Florence Pasche-Guignard, Amélie Barras, Géraldine Mossière, Catherine Larouche, and Audrey Rousseau.
2. May 31, 2024: *Courts, Pluralism and Law in the Everyday: Food, Clothing and Days of Rest* (Routledge, 2024) with Cinzia Piciocchi.
3. September 20, 2024: *La France, Tu l'aimes Mais Tu La Quittes: Enquête sur la diaspora française musulmane* (Seuil, 2024) with Olivier Esteves, Alice Picard, and Julien Talpin.
4. October 18, 2024: *Secularism as Misdirection: Critical Thought from the Global South* (Duke UP, 2024) with Nivedita Menon.
5. November 15, 2024: *Faith in Rights: Christian-Inspired NGOs at Work in the United Nations* (Stanford UP, 2024) with Amélie Barras.
6. February 7, 2025: *Entangled Domains: Empire, Law and Religion in Northern Nigeria* (Cambridge UP, 2023) with Rabiat Akande.
7. March 21, 2025: *Devotion to the Administrative State: Religion and Social Order in Egypt* (Princeton UP, 2024) with Mona Araby.
8. April 4, 2025: on [Sideways Migration: Being French in London](#) Friday, April 4th at 11am ET with Deborah Reed-Danahay (in English).

MOBILIZATION DE CONNAISSANCES (2024-2025)

Balado



The French on the Move Podcast *Le balado Les français en mouvement*

Released Sept 2024; co-written, produced and narrated by Jennifer Selby and Amélie Barras

Apple podcasts ([here](#))
Spotify ([here](#))

Two episodes, translated:

1a. Les citoyens français et la laïcité au-delà de l'Hexagone

- 1b. French Citizens and Secularism beyond the Republic
- 2a. Les français et la religiosité de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique
- 2b. French Citizens and religiosity on the Other Side of the Atlantic

Thanks to our RAs Antle, Crébassa, Lechat and Meyer, and to co-investigators Dabby, Mossière and Wilkins-Laflamme who participated as experts.

Publications

In Press. Selby, Jennifer A. and Amélie Barras. « Appels alternés entre la liberté d'expression et la liberté de la religion : Mise en relation de moments politiques au Canada contemporain.” *Studies in Religion/ Sciences religieuses*.

2025. Barras, Amélie. *Faith in Rights*. Stanford University Press.

2025. Mossière, Géraldine. *Portraits de la modernité (non)religieuse: Quelques confidences de baby-boomers au Québec*. Presses de l'Université Laval.

2025. Selby, Jennifer A. [*Secular Sensibilities: Romance, Marriage and Contemporary Algerian Immigration to France and Québec*](#). University of North Carolina Press.

2024. Taher, Saaz, Amélie Barras and Jennifer A. Selby. “Quebecois *Laïcité* and its Canadian Multicultural Other in the Debates Surrounding Law 21.” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society / Revue Canadienne Droit et Société*, 39:2, 204-224. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cls.2024.11>.

2024. Selby, Jennifer A., Review of *Islam and the Governing of Muslims in France* (Bloomsbury, 2021;304 pgs) for *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 13(3): 403-405.

2024. “Confusion méthodologique,” (with Natasha Bakht, Amélie Barras, and Jennifer Selby), *Le Devoir*, 21 juin, <https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/lettres/815267/confusion-methodologique>

In Press. Selby, Jennifer A. and Kawtare Bihya. “La religiosité polarisée au Québec : Le cas des femmes d’origine Algérienne à Montréal” in *L’islam vécu au Québec*. Eds. Géraldine Mossière and Roxanne Marcotte. Presses de l’Université du Québec (33 pgs).

Forthcoming. Selby, Jennifer A. Comment on *Integrating Muslims: The Liberal-Secular Matrix of Integration* (by Schirin Amir-Moazami) (Bloomsbury, 2022) for *ReOrient* (2,000 words).

Under Review. Selby, Jennifer A. and Amélie Barras. « Défis méthodologiques de la cartographie des laïcités transnationales dans le monde francophone » with Amélie Barras for *Laïcités confisquées* (Presse de l’Université Laval), edited by Frédéric Strack, Dia Dabby & David Koussens, 18 pages.



Under Review. Barras, Amélie and Jennifer A. Selby. « Migration des débats français sur la régulation du religieux en Suisse : le cas des affaires du niqab et du burkini dans les médias »

with Amélie Barras for *Laïcités confisquées* (Presse de l'Université Laval), edited by Frédéric Strack, Dia Dabby & David Koussens, 24 pages (submitted Feb 2025).

Under Review. Dabby, Dia. “Vestiges ou héritages? La Loi de 2004 mise à l’épreuve au Québec” for *Laïcités confisquées* (Presses de l'Université Laval), edited by Frédéric Strack, Dia Dabby & David Koussens, 14 pages (submitted February 2025).

Under Review. Barras, Amélie and Jennifer A. Selby. « La loi 21 et la « Nation du Québec » : Constructions d’imaginaires dans le *Journal de Montréal* et le *Montreal Gazette* » for volume, *Regards critiques à propos de la Loi sur la laïcité de l'État* (Les presses de l'Université du Québec). Eds. Mounia Ait Kebboura and Raphaël Mathieu Legault-Laberge.

D’autres activités

2025. June-July. Barras and Selby will co-run a Québec Religion, Law and Culture summer school for York and Memorial undergraduate students (see more [here](#)).

Conférences et discussions

Présentations à venir:

“Three books on Translocal Secularisms”, Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, George Brown University, featuring Amélie Barras, Géraldine Mossière, and Jennifer Selby, with respondents: Andie Pras, David Seljak, and Sanobar Umar, June 2, 2025.

« Laïcité, symboles religieux et fabrication de la différence sexuelle : une ethnographie franco-québécoise » with Jennifer Selby for the CIRRES, Institut d’études religieuses, University of Montreal, October 15, 2025.

Workshop at York University on Secular Sensibilities in Ethnography, October 17, 2025, with Eléonore Lépinard (Université de Lausanne), Schirin Amir-Moazami (Freie Universität Berlin), Elayne Oliphant (New York University), Sanobar Umar (York University), Frédéric Strack (Sherbrooke University), Frédéric DeJean (UQAM), Nadia Hasan (York University), Géraldine Mossière (Université de Montréal).

“Theorizing Invisible Migrants: The case of Nonreligious White French Immigrants in Montréal and Toronto, Canada,” with Jennifer Selby and Amélie Barras, for the American Academy of Religion meetings, Boston, November 2025,



“Les vies de la loi: la *soft law*, la laïcité et les sensibilités transnationales”, with Dia Dabby, for the Centre interdisciplinaire de recherches constitutionnelles (UCLouvain-Saint-Louis), May 19, 2025.

“Hard/soft law in the production of nationalist secularism: the view from Quebec”, with Dia Dabby, University of Sussex School of Law, Politics and Sociology, May 27 2025.

2024-25

Amélie Barras and Jennifer Selby. “Subtle Islamophobia?: Freedom of Expression vs. Freedom of Religion Frameworks in the Canadian Anglophone Press” for the Canadian Association for the Study of Islam and Muslims meeting, St. Mary’s University, May 2024.

Amélie Barras, Saaz Taher and Jennifer Selby, “Migration des débats français sur la laïcité en Suisse: le cas des affaires burkinis dans les médias,” for a “Des laïcités confisquées? Ce que la loi française de 2004 sur le port des signes religieux à l’école publique a fait aux laïcités dans les espaces francophones,” University of Sherbrooke, May 2024.

Dabby, Dia, organizer. “Sustainable laïcité? A Roundtable Discussion on Law 21 and its Aftermaths.” Panelists: Lori Beaman, Vrinda Narain, David Koussens, Natasha Bakht and Dia Dabby, Canadian Law and Society Association, June 2024.

Selby, Jennifer. “The *Lycée français* (French school) system as Vector of Nonreligion: The case of the French “National Secularism Day” in Montréal, Canada,” for panel, “Organized Forms of Nonreligion,” International Sociological Association, Sociology of Religion Conference, Montevideo, Uruguay, July 2024.

Selby, Jennifer, Amélie Barras and Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme. “Qualitative Research on Contemporary Francophone Migration to/in/from Canada: A roundtable on methodology, social class, religion and race,” Zoom roundtable, September 2024 (Rescheduled from the CPSA meeting).

AAR Panel Session, “Theorizing Secular Sensibilities Through Ethnography.” Papers by Géraldine Mossière, Schirin Amir-Moazami, Elayne Oliphant, and Jennifer Selby and Amélie Barras; Paul Bramadat as respondent; San Diego, CA, November 2024

Un grand merci à tous pour cette excellente deuxième année de notre projet, en particulier à notre équipe d'assistant.es de recherche !