Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants

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RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESS
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY AND LONDON

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Religion and social justice for immigrants / edited by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-0-8135-3908-9 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN-13: 978-0-8135-3909-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Church work with immigrants—United States. 2. Immigrants—Religious life—United States. 3. Social justice—Religious aspects—Christianity. 4. Social justice—Religious aspects. 5. Christianity and justice. 6. Religion and justice. 7. United States—Emigration and immigration—Religious aspects. I. Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette.
BV639.I4R45 2006
200.86'9120973—dc22 2006005582
CIP

A British Cataloging-in-Publication record for this book is available from the British Library.

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Manufactured in the United States of America

In memory of Brother Ed Dunn (1949–2006),
Franciscan friar and dedicated advocate
for immigrant social justice

rhetoric across different religious traditions make an interfaith ethic of refuge appealing to people from diverse religious backgrounds, and many faith-based resettlement NGOs in my study used an interfaith ethic of refuge in their advocacy efforts. Unfortunately, I do not have data on how effective those advocacy efforts were. I expect, however, that such language could be an effective tool in a political climate in which politicians frequently interweave vaguely Judeo-Christian language with patriotic imagery.[5] One could speculate that in a time of increased religious language and references to the divine, using an interfaith ethic of refuge to advocate for refugees would be a more effective strategy than trying to appeal to the public in secular terms alone.

NOTES

1. One support agency, the U.S. Bahá'í Refugee Office, was affiliated with the Bahá'í religion. This was the only non-Jewish or Christian faith-based NGO in my study.
2. Religious or secular affiliation is not the only factor in volunteer recruitment. NGOs' use of volunteers is also affected by the need for volunteers. NGOs with very small numbers of new refugee arrivals, particularly those resettling predominantly family reunification cases, have less need for volunteers.
3. The Web address for this page as of this writing is http://www.wr.org/gettinginvolved/volunteer/usministries/godlovesrefugees.asp.
4. Resettlement NGOs with access to a long-settled refugee community or relatively affluent refugees (generally Eastern European) were able to raise significant funds from this community. The Bosnian and Herzegovinian American Community Center and Catholic Charities in Los Angeles (with strong ties to the Vietnamese community in Los Angeles and Orange counties) held fund-raising events within their respective refugee communities. However, local NGOs rarely organized fund-raising events among refugees.
5. For a timely example of this language, read President George W. Bush's March 1, 2005, address to the Compassion in Action Leadership Conference (available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/03/20050301-4.html).

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The Catholic Church's Institutional Responses to Immigration

From Supranational to Local Engagement

MARGARITA MOONEY

In the last twenty years the United States has had its highest levels of immigration since the early twentieth century, with about one million new immigrants entering annually (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1999). Given these trends, immigration policy and immigrant adaptation have risen to the forefront of public debate in recent years, but little is known about how different religious organizations, many of whom do substantial grassroots work with immigrants, have attempted to influence public debates. This chapter addresses one particular religious tradition in the United States—Catholicism—whose public role in American civil society has been profoundly shaped by immigration. I emphasize two new ways of understanding the Catholic church and immigration: (1) its attempts to influence the public sphere and (2) how the church's vertical and horizontal networks allow for the transfer of financial and political resources to disadvantaged immigrants. Specifically, I explore how the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops engages immigration in the public sphere. I then use this theoretical lens to explore how national-level Catholic institutions have an impact on the adaptation of one particular immigrant group—Haitians in Miami.

To capture this role of the church in the adaptation of Haitians in Miami, I develop the concept of the church as a *mediating structure* between individuals and the state. Although previous theorists have argued that religious groups generate a parallel set of institutions that allow immigrants to achieve upward mobility (Gordon 1964; Herberg 1983; Hirschman 2004), I argue that the *interaction* between religious institutions, civil society, and the state facilitates successful immigrant adaptation by helping newcomers to overcome unfair government policies and hostile societal attitudes toward them.

The question of social justice for immigrants takes on particular relevance for the case of Haitians in Miami, as Haitians arguably have been one of the

most discriminated immigrant groups to the United States of the last three decades. Although much has been written about the Catholic church's social doctrine (Novak 1989; Weigel and Royal 1991), I use a sociological lens to explore how particular institutions and actors apply Catholic teachings on social justice. I identify two ways the Catholic church has promoted social justice for Haitians: (1) by advocating for more fair immigration policies and (2) by providing social services to help adaptation.

Research Design

The data for this chapter form part of a larger project I carried out for my doctoral dissertation in sociology from 2001 to 2003 (Mooney 2005). In my thesis, I compare the role of the Catholic church in the adaptation of Haitian immigrants in Miami, Montreal, and Paris. This present work addresses only the Catholic church in the United States, but the comparative angle of my larger project alerted me to the importance of not only studying the Catholic church's social teachings—which are the same for all countries—but also examining how particular institutions and actors implement these teachings, which varies across time and space.

In order to examine how national Catholic structures may influence the adaptation of a particular immigrant group, I conducted interviews with Catholic leaders at three levels: national, diocesan (city), and local (parish). Because I wanted to see the church as part of civil society, I also interviewed leaders of secular Haitian associations in Miami about their interactions with religious organizations. In total, I conducted thirty-five interviews with Catholic and secular leaders in the United States. In addition to these formal interviews, I carried out seven months of participant observation in Notre Dame d'Haiti Catholic Church in Miami's Little Haiti.

Immigration and the Public Sphere

Most historical and contemporary scholars who have studied the Catholic church and immigrants have written about how the church contributes cultural and economic resources for immigrants in their local communities (Herberg 1983; Hirschman 2004; Menjívar 2003; Thomas and Znaniecki 1927; Zhou and Bankston 1998). However, many of today's immigrant groups such as Haitians may see their adaptation hampered by unfavorable immigration policies and racial discrimination. We know little about how disadvantaged immigrant groups confront challenges to their adaptation that are ultimately questions of social justice—such as protecting basic legal rights, even for noncitizens or undocumented immigrants—and accessing basic health care and education.

Studying how religious institutions contribute to social justice for immigrants broadens our understanding of civil society, as scholars often overlook the important role of religious ideas and institutions in shaping public opinion and policy (Berger and Neuhaus 2000). Rather than just focusing on how internal solidarity with a church community may support immigrants' adaptation, I view the church as an actor in the public sphere, understood as that space in civil society where various actors—governmental and nongovernmental—exchange information and ideas that shape public policy (Cohen 1999). Rather than just noting that the church helps immigrants form many voluntary organizations, we should ask whether the church's public role in supporting immigrants has an impact on our concept of civil society.

Studying the Catholic church's vertical and horizontal networks can also shed light on current debates about civil society and democracy. As Skocpol and Fiorina (1999) argue, much of the scholarship on voluntary associations emphasizes the importance of local-level connections and overlooks that majority of local associations, such as the Rotary Club, belong to federal structures. Given the hierarchical structure of the Catholic church, we can explore whether the church's national and even supranational institutions influence the actions of local-level Catholic leaders.

The Catholic Church and Immigrants: Local, Federal, Binational, and Supranational Structures

At the time of the first U.S. census in 1790, Catholics comprised only 1 percent of the U.S. population (Gordon 1964). Although all Protestant groups together had more members than the Catholic church, by 2000 Catholics had grown to 22 percent of the U.S. population, making Catholicism the single largest religious denomination in the United States (Jones 2002). The massive immigration of Irish, Polish, German, and other European Catholics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries shaped the church in the United States as largely an immigrant church. What does this mean? First, it means that many of today's members of the Catholic church and its hierarchy are comprised of immigrants and their descendants. A second, and perhaps less commonly understood, meaning of "immigrant church" is that the church's social institutions, including its schools, orphanages, and hospitals have been formed in order to support immigrant adaptation (Oates 1995). In other words, studying the network of Catholic institutions that support immigrant adaptation is a strategic research site to explore how social justice is promoted in specific circumstances.

Although I focus here mostly on the network links between national Catholic institutions and the Haitian community of Miami, it is important to recall that the Catholic church is a supranational institution. Only the pope can define Catholic teachings, but each bishop bears the responsibility of applying church teachings within his jurisdiction. In other words, the central authority of the church in Rome defines *what* the church teaches, and bishops decide *how* to implement those teachings.

The Vatican, and in particular the pope, also may choose to emphasize particular aspects of Catholic teachings at a given point in time. Because of the global importance of migration, and because migration touches the Catholic church in both sending and receiving countries, Pope John Paul II (1978–2005) highlighted migration as one central social question where all members of the church are called to contribute to social justice. For example, during each of the last ten years of his papacy, Pope John Paul II organized a World Migration Day. Each year on this day, he issued a statement reminding Catholics of a particular aspect of the church's teachings that bear on immigrants. These letters, and the other papal documents to which they refer, serve as guides for national and local Catholic leaders about where to focus their efforts to promote social justice.

Because many aspects of national politics influence how the church carries out its mission, for centuries Catholic bishops in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere have been meeting to discuss common challenges, with regards both to public policy and to internal church affairs. In particular, since World War II the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has assumed a greater public role, both calling on the government to serve the needs of the poor and expanding its own outreach to the most vulnerable members of society, including immigrants (Dolan 2005). Despite the fact that in the last fifty years social justice for immigrants has been a central focus of the Bishops Conference, little is known about how this national institution has influenced immigrant adaptation. In this chapter I argue that (1) local Catholic institutions should also be analyzed as being *embedded within a set of horizontal and vertical networks* and (2) Catholic social institutions should be understood *in their relationship to the state rather than as replacing the state.*

One piece of evidence to support this perspective comes from the fact that the structure of the Bishops Conference has evolved along with changes in the U.S. government. The federated organizational structure of the Bishops Conference and its emphasis on social justice began to take shape after World War II when the Catholic church began to partner with the government in resettling the large flows of refugees from Europe. Although many local Catholic institutions had been working on immigrant adaptation and refugee resettlement for years, the bishops decided that their efforts could be better served by creating a central structure to support these local organizations.

Although some might argue that a strong civil society reduces the need for a strong state, other scholars have argued that voluntary organizations may actually grow in tandem with state expansion (Kaufman 1999). A view of civil society that emphasizes the complementarity of rather than competition between civil society and the state more accurately describes the growth of the Bishops Conference. In the 1960s, when the U.S. federal government greatly expanded its role in providing social services, the Bishops Conference also expanded its social outreach programs, in part by bringing what previously had been a separate

organization run by Catholic laypeople—the U.S. Catholic Welfare Conference—under its wing.

The choice of Washington, D.C., as the home of the permanent offices of the Bishops Conference further demonstrates this organization's political role. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, cities such as Baltimore in the East, Saint Louis in the Midwest, and Portland, Oregon, in the West had some of the largest Catholic populations and often hosted the meetings of Catholic bishops in the United States. However, the choice of Washington, D.C., as the home to the permanent offices of the Bishops Conference in the twentieth century resulted in the church's desire to strengthen its public role vis-à-vis the expanding federal government (Dolan 2005). The Bishops Conference has not given up its ties to cities that are the heartbeat of Catholicism in the United States today, but it seeks to balance its presence in cities with large numbers of faithful Catholics and with physical proximity to powerbrokers in the District of Columbia. For example, the Bishops Conference holds two annual meetings: the first is generally held in a large archdiocese such as Denver or Saint Paul/Minneapolis and the second is always held in Washington, D.C. Whereas cities such as Philadelphia or New Orleans may claim to have a much stronger Catholic history and culture, there is no doubt that the center of gravity of the Catholic church's political work is located in Washington, D.C. The physical presence of the Bishops Conference in Washington gives the church a voice in federal politics, where lawmakers decide much of immigration policy.

Let us now consider one more evolving aspect of the structure of the Bishops Conference that influences its work on immigration. In 2003, the Bishops Conferences of the United States and Mexico issued a joint pastoral letter about migration between the two nations entitled "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope." Although the content of this binational bishops statement largely reiterates earlier church statements calling for greater social justice for immigrants, the decision to publish a joint statement further demonstrates how the church's structures evolve to mirror the government. As the United States and Mexico move forward in trade and migration agreements, the bishops follow suit by joining their voices to speak to both national governments. Just as the national offices of the Bishops Conference fortify rather than replace local church organizations, binational public statements do not substitute for the church's public work in each nation-state, but this greater cross-border collaboration reinforces the church's mission as a mediator for the poor and disadvantaged.

The U.S. Conference of Bishops and Immigration

Now that we have seen how the Catholic church's structures have evolved as national and international politics have changed, let us turn to the specific

content of the church's statements on immigration. The conference's work on migration is coordinated through the office of Migration and Refugee Services, which in turn has three divisions: (1) migration policy, (2) refugee resettlement, and (3) pastoral (spiritual) care. Ten lay Catholics staff these three offices and advise the bishops on their public advocacy. According to its mission statement, Migration and Refugee Services is a central coordinating body for "a network of national pastoral centers, pastoral consultants and diocesan personnel who minister with various ethnic groups" (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops 1997). Information flows from different points in the church's local-level agencies up to national-level offices where the lay staff of Migration and Refugee Services work with the bishops who attempt to influence policy through statements and lobbying. In other words, the Catholic church's local-level engagement with immigrants guides the work of the bishops and laypeople at the Bishops Conference.

The specific content of the bishops' statements are shaped as responses to issues that emerge from the many Catholic parishes, refugee resettlement programs, and social service centers such as Catholic Charities. For example, Migration and Refugee Services has offices in dioceses throughout the country carry out the daily work of advising new immigrants, such as helping them apply for legal status or social benefits. In the case of refugees, local offices of Migration and Refugee Services administer government funds to find housing and support the refugees for the first few months. Thus, the church is both a partner of the government and a lobbyist; in fact, the church's history of promoting social justice for the poor and immigrants strengthens its lobbying voice in Washington.

The Bishops Conference is not the only organization in Washington that makes policy suggestions on immigration. What is unique is that the Bishops Conference's statements combine ideas of human rights and religious ideas to justify its call for social justice for immigrants. For example, one Bishops Conference statement that addresses undocumented migration states that "without condoning undocumented migration, the church supports the human rights of all people and offers them pastoral care, education, and social services, no matter what their circumstances of entry into this country, and it works for the respect of the human dignity of all—especially those who find themselves in desperate circumstances" (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops 1988). The language in this statement, such as "human rights" and "human dignity," does not refer to any particular biblical passage. However, as the statement continues, it makes more explicit reference to ideas that are rooted in Christian tradition, such as that "all human persons, created as they are in the image of God, possess a fundamental dignity that gives rise to a more compelling claim to the conditions worthy of human life" (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops 1988). Whereas the first formulation of human rights does not necessarily require one to ascribe to any particular religious beliefs, the second formulation links concepts of fundamental human dignity to the idea of a single creator. This is significant because, in the

public sphere of discourse on immigration, the church frequently refers to ideas that *do not emanate from the political state* (such legal status or citizenship) but from one's human condition, a topic in which the church claims an authority higher than the state.

Other Bishops Conference statements on immigration are intended for internal use in dioceses and parishes. These internal documents more frequently use religious language, such as specific passages from the Old and New Testament, the church's social teachings, and writings of Pope John Paul II. One of the most common biblical passages quoted is Matthew 25:35 "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me." This passage is used to legitimize Migration and Refugee Services' work on behalf of immigrants and refugees as being rooted in "the Gospel mandate that every person is to be welcomed by the disciple as if he or she were Christ himself" (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops 1997). These documents serve to remind Catholic faithful that they are responsible to a higher authority than the political authority: their duties as Christians may often go beyond their duties as citizens. Even if a person is undocumented, and thus does not have some political rights, Christians are supposed to welcome that person as if he or she were Christ.

This example further illustrates how the church influences public discourse—by framing public behavior as answering to God's authority, not only the state's authority. When the church makes statements about migration, it calls on sources outside of the political system itself—religious revelation, the gospel, and concepts of human rights. Although the church does not directly determine policy, it reserves the right to critique state action based on principles outside of the state. The church's statements can influence public discourse and public policy either directly by influencing government officials and policies or indirectly by influencing the actions of Catholic faithful. Thus, whereas most lobbyists may be perceived as promoting their self-interest, the church argues for particular policy recommendations based on what it perceives to be universal rights.

Now that it has been shown how the church's national, binational and supranational structures attempt to influence public discourse on immigration, one should ask whether these teachings on social justice have had an impact on the experience of specific immigrant groups. In order to explore this question, I examine the case of Haitians in Miami. Haitians in Miami are a good case to study the Catholic church and immigration because Haiti is a majority Catholic country (Alemán and Ortega 2001) and because many Haitian immigrants in Miami begin their adaptation with little education and urban work skills.

Although the Catholic church is an important cultural force in Haiti and different Haitian communities of the diaspora, I focus on how the structure of the Catholic church influences its public role in the Haitian community, in particular

in shaping public opinion and policy regarding immigration. I develop the concept of the church as a mediating structure in the Haitian community that promoted social justice through providing political advocacy and social services to this needy population. The macrosociological lens I developed in the previous section shows how the Catholic church forged its central role as an advocate and social service provider to Haitians in Miami.

The Local Setting and Contexts of Reception of Haitians in Miami

Since the 1960s, when migration to the United States began to include large numbers of Latin Americans, Miami has become one of the top gateway cities for immigrants to the United States. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, by 2000 more than half of Miami's population was foreign born, and of the foreign born nearly all were from Latin America (including the Caribbean).

Miami is distinct from other major U.S. immigrant gateway cities, such as New York or Los Angeles, because it was a relatively small city before the 1960s. The arrival of millions of Latin Americans to Miami in the last few decades has created what scholars have called "the most dramatic ethnic transformation of any major American city this century" (Grenier and Stepick 1992). The influx of immigrants to Miami, which started with the Cuban refugees in the early 1960s, transformed Miami from a sleepy resort town to a booming regional economic hub for Latin America and an international tourist destination (Portes and Stepick 1993). Although white (also called Anglo) Americans maintain an important business presence in Miami, one can safely say that Miami's cultural and political environment is a melting pot of American and Latino cultures. One result of this Latino-Anglo melting pot is that Catholicism, the largest religion in Latin America, has a strong institutional presence and cultural influence among immigrants to Miami. As with previous waves of Italian and Polish immigrants to cities of the Northeast in the early twentieth century, in Miami the Catholic church has flourished as an immigrant church, supporting immigrant adaptation in the cultural, economic, and political realms.

Despite the fact that one might expect Haitians to be welcomed in a majority immigrant city, Haitians who migrate to Miami found a more negative context of reception than in other cities of the Haitian diaspora in North America such as New York, Montreal, or Boston. As Haitians began to arrive in Miami in the 1970s, many of them by boat, the U.S. government created specific policies to prevent Haitian boat people from entering the United States and to make it difficult for them to obtain asylum if they managed to enter undetected (Stotzky 2004). In Miami, Haitians were quickly placed at the bottom of the so-called ethnic queue. In addition, specific stereotypes were formed that harmed the image of Haitians. For example, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) classified Haitians as one of the main carriers of a new disease in the early 1980s—AIDS.

There was a hysterical scare that tuberculosis was endemic among Haitians and could spread to the entire population of south Florida. Although these fears were later disproved and the CDC eventually removed the classifications, many Haitians reported losing their jobs due to fear of their infection (Stepick 1992).

Despite this negative host society and government reception, the Haitian community of Miami grew to become one of the city's most visible immigrant groups, centered in a residential and business area known as Little Haiti. But how did an immigrant group with low levels of human capital and many undocumented members establish institutions and spokespersons to promote social justice in their community? In the following sections, I describe how the vertical and horizontal networks of the Catholic church and its position as a public advocate generated mediating structures that addressed Haitians' social justice needs.

Mediating Structures

Given the negative publicity surrounding Haitians' arrival in Miami, the lobbying efforts of church leaders in Miami and in Washington were crucial to opening up paths for the legalization of Haitians and to attaining greater government funding to support their settlement and initial insertion into American society. Because the Catholic church has an important political and cultural role in Haiti (Nérestant 1994), Catholic parishes in Miami became a central place to organize volunteer work and leadership among this highly discriminated immigrant group. Different Catholic parishes, in particular an all-Haitian ethnic parish that was founded in Little Haiti, Notre Dame d'Haiti, are embedded within church organizations that have both national and local offices, such as Catholic Charities and Migration and Refugee Services, that provide services for immigrants and the poor. By combining the leadership and experience of Haitian social service workers with money and buildings donated by the Catholic church in Miami, the leader of Notre Dame, Father Thomas G. Wenski, founded a social service center—the Pierre Toussaint Center—on the same property as Notre Dame. This service center, which is faith-based but open to all regardless of religious observance, was started with Haitian volunteers and church funds and since 1981 has grown to be the largest social service center for Haitians in Miami.

Political Advocacy

To understand how the Toussaint Center and Notre Dame came to be central institutions in the Little Haiti, one must also understand the church's public advocacy work on behalf of Haitians. Church leaders drew on the ideas contained in the bishops' statements on immigration, and individual bishops and priests, such as Archbishop McCarthy or Father Wenski (who was later named a bishop) publicly critiqued government treatment of Haitians. Whereas the

church was certainly not the only group protesting the treatment of Haitians, the church was unique as a public advocate because it had a grassroots presence in the community and because its leaders had also established themselves as political advocates in Miami and Washington.

The church's national structures supported the social justice work of local church leaders in Miami. For example, Edward J. McCarthy, the archbishop of Miami from 1977 to 1994, relied on the church's national structures to lobby President Jimmy Carter on behalf of Haitians. The director of Catholic Charities in Miami in the 1980s, Monsignor Brian Walsh, influenced one of the judges in Miami who made several favorable decisions for Haitians that opened the door to greater consideration of Haitians' asylum claims (Miller 1984). Statements published by individual bishops or the Bishops Conference made the political climate more welcoming toward Haitians (Laguerre 1984, 1999). Catholic priests in Miami attempted to sway public opinion by visiting the Haitians being held in Immigration and Naturalization Service detention and informing journalists about their conditions. Another way the church helped sway public opinion in favor of Haitians was by informing the press about the political causes of Haitian migration, strengthening sympathy for Haitians' claims to asylum (Miller 1984).

The church's ability to influence the public sphere with regard to policy and attitudes towards Haitians was fortified by its national structures. When Haitian immigrants and refugees began arriving in Miami en masse in the early 1970s, the church already had national structures in place that helped local Catholic leaders—such as Archbishop McCarthy, Monsignor Walsh, and Father Wenski—gain an audience among government officials in Washington. The relationships between the bishops and lay staff members of the Bishops Conference provided local Catholic leaders in Miami with a way to lobby the federal government on behalf of Haitians. In addition, several preexisting church-run programs were expanded to include Haitians, such as the local Migration and Refugee Services office that organized the resettlement of Haitian refugees.

Notre Dame and the Toussaint Center

Although I have thus far emphasized the political advocacy aspect of the church's social justice work on behalf of Haitians, the Catholic church in Miami became an important political actor in the Haitian community in part because of its successful efforts to incorporate Haitians in local church structures. Despite the fact that the Catholic church in Haiti has a large public and social role, this should not obscure the fact that Haitians in Miami had to be "churched"—or incorporated into local church structures in the United States (Finke and Stark 1992). As has historically been the case with the Catholic church and immigrants (Finke and Stark 1992; Hirschman 2004), local church leaders in Miami created new parishes, ministries, and programs to keep Haitians in the church in Miami.

Although many Catholic schools and social programs have helped Haitians' adaptation, the church's efforts to support the Haitian community have centered around a pair of institutions located on the same property: Notre Dame d'Haiti Catholic Mission and the Toussaint Center. These institutions' success in supporting Haitians' adaptation resulted from their connections to vertical and horizontal networks that provided access to resources outside the ethnic community itself.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Catholic church often created national parishes, organized on linguistic lines, to incorporate new immigrants. Although today the Catholic church in the United States prefers to create ethnic ministries for immigrants within an existing parish rather than creating a national parish, church leaders in Miami decided to replicate the national parish model precisely to counteract the strong discrimination against Haitians. The creation of Notre Dame d'Haiti Catholic Mission for Haitians provided Haitian leaders a central organizing place for the Haitian community. At the request of Father Wenski, who led Notre Dame for fifteen years before being nominated as a bishop in 1996, Archbishop McCarthy donated ten acres of property in the center of Little Haiti to build Notre Dame and the Toussaint Center. This support from the archdiocese gave leaders in the Haitian Catholic community a valuable and centrally located piece of property upon which to build an ethnic parish and a social service center for Haitians.

In a context where Haitians were ostracized because of their race, language, and legal status, the church provided them a bridge to participate in civil society by creating an environment that was culturally familiar. In the early 1980s, when virtually no government programs were serving Haitians, the Toussaint Center brought together Haitian volunteers experienced in teaching and social services to launch social programs for the steady flow of Haitian immigrants. This skilled volunteer work—teaching English, teaching Creole literacy, administering emergency financial provisions from church funds—was strengthened by the availability of physical space and startup funds donated by church organizations. In some cases, volunteers from Catholic agencies outside the Haitian community also helped start social programs. Bringing these resources together—Haitians' volunteer work, a physical space (buildings), and the financial resources of the Catholic church—allowed this poor immigrant group to provide a welcoming structure to support Haitians' initial settlement and adaptation. Many of the Haitian volunteers already had experience working in social justice programs in Haiti. By linking up with local offices of Catholic Charities and the leadership of Father Wenski, Haitians were able to transfer those civic skills into a new environment.

Although the church was crucial to attracting volunteer workers and providing startup resources, the programs at the Toussaint Center grew because they attracted outside funding from other Catholic organizations, private foundations,

and the government. For example, as Randy McGrorty, the director of the Legal Services Project at the Toussaint Center recounted, he began the Legal Services Project in 1993 with three volunteers, funds from the Jesuit Refugee Service, a shared desk, and a single telephone. By 2002, Legal Services had grown to have thirty-five staff members and had expanded its offices to two other locations in Miami-Dade County. Although Catholic Charities provides some funds for buildings and maintenance for this program, more than half of Legal Services' funding comes from federal funds for refugees, and the rest comes from fund-raising with foundations. The Job Placement Service was a second high-growth program started at the Toussaint Center. What began as a volunteer project in one room of the Toussaint Center has expanded to its own building, a staff of fifteen, and funding from the state government.

Another example is the day care center, which benefited directly from horizontal network ties to other church programs and links to the government. For example, the Archdiocese of Miami transferred an already-existing day care center into the first floor of the Toussaint Center. As enrollment at the day care increased, and as the center received positive evaluations, the director of the day care center, Marie-Laure Fils-Aimé, described how the center began to receive funds from Head Start and United Way; meanwhile, the archdiocese has invested more than half a million dollars to renovate the building. By 2002, the day care center had expanded to have ten classrooms with twenty children in each classroom. Similarly, English and Creole literacy programs were begun with volunteer work and church funding for the building and materials, but now these two programs are funded by Miami-Dade Public Schools. According to the director of the Toussaint Center, by 2002 around 80 percent of the programs offered at the Toussaint Center received government funds administered by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami. At its height, around 1996–97, more than one thousand people came to the Toussaint Center daily. By 2002, the flow had decreased to six hundred people a day because legal services and job training now have their own buildings a few blocks away.

The church's mediation for Haitians in Miami is observable not only at the level of public discourse, but also in the daily lives of thousands of Haitians in Miami. With 600–1,000 people coming daily to the Toussaint Center for social services and another 2,500 coming to Notre Dame every week for religious services, the corner of 69th Street and 2nd Avenue is one of the busiest intersections in Miami's Little Haiti. The central location of Notre Dame and the Toussaint make it easy for people to take public transportation, either a bus or a van. The property's familiar cultural symbols make it a welcoming place for Haitians in an unwelcoming environment. As Emile Viard, the director of the Toussaint Center, recounted, at one point there was a proposal to close Toussaint Center's English school and merge it with the one in the neighboring African American area, but leaders of the Toussaint Center protested and claimed people would

not go there because *"nou pa gen moun"* (we do not have people there); in other words, Haitians do not feel at home there. The church's cultural and geographical proximity to Haitians, combined with its vertical and horizontal networks that provide access to social programs Haitians need for their settlement and adaptation, has made the church a central institution in Little Haiti.

One should not overlook, however, that Miami may be unique even among other cities where Haitians have settled. In Miami, a city whose population is mostly foreign born, government officials recognize that community organizations, such as churches and religious nonprofits, can help them reach new immigrant groups, whose members are often among the most vulnerable residents. Although many government programs in Miami at first excluded Haitians, with time, local and state government accepted that many Haitians would remain no matter how negative immigration policy was, and some officials began to reach out to the Haitian population. Because the relationship between Haitians and the state was very tenuous, the church's social service agencies, such as the Toussaint Center, provided a needed link between Haitians and the state. When state agencies began to look for an organization to carry out programs in the Haitian community, the Toussaint Center was already in place and had a recognized service record. Thus, the Toussaint Center has grown to be a partner with the state even while maintaining its autonomy and ability to critique government policies.

The church's ability to provide this mediation also rests on the fact that many government officials in Miami themselves are first-generation immigrants accustomed to collaboration with religious organizations in social affairs. For example, Dr. Lumane Claude, a Haitian immigrant who directs a city government office that aims to increase contact between residents and the government, exemplifies the extensive cooperation between church leaders and government officials in Miami. Because the Haitian state is very weak and often oppressive, Dr. Claude recognizes that few Haitians will go directly to the government when they have a problem. Haitians are more likely to trust the church than the government, both because of political repression in Haiti and their negative reception in Miami. Dr. Claude explained that "the church is the only place people can really trust. . . . You see the priest if you don't have food. Hey, you're not going to the government, you're not going to the social services. It's a shame to go to those places, but it's okay to tell the church that you have a problem. They're [Haitians] not thinking of social services, they're thinking of the church." The trust Haitians have in the church leads them to perceive the church as a mediating structure that helps them access resources for their adaptation. State resources are more efficiently distributed because they are channeled through an organization that has a broad grassroots network.

In addition to a favorable local context for church-state partnerships in social programs, the national context also facilitates the church's mediating role in civil society. For example, the Toussaint Center has expanded its programs

because it has attained government funding. Although organizations such as Catholic Charities already received government funding before the 1996 Charitable Choice Act (Campbell 2002), the passage of this act and George W. Bush's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives have created certain conditions that strengthened the church's mediating role with the state.

Although local and national politics may create conditions that enable churches to engage public discourse and social services, not all religious organizations take advantage of these opportunities. In fact, many studies have found that some religious groups have a stronger orientation than others toward direct engagement with civil society by founding nonprofit organizations or directly engaging community politics (Ebaugh and Chaftez 2000; Guest 2003; McRoberts 2003; Wuthnow 2004). In Little Haiti, despite the existence of perhaps one hundred Christian churches in Little Haiti, Notre Dame is the only one whose leadership founded a successful community-oriented social service center, the Toussaint Center. A combination of factors—Haitians' trust in the church, skilled volunteers and leaders from Haiti, the archdiocese's donations of land and money, and Catholic church leader's national and local political advocacy that created a more favorable climate and greater funding for social programs for Haitians—coalesced to alter Haitians' context of reception in Miami and create more favorable conditions for their adaptation to American society. Although other religious groups or family networks are also important to Haitians' adaptation, only the Catholic church is positioned as a mediator between Haitians and the state. As a group of immigrants with many undocumented and low levels of human capital, this mediating role between Haitians and the host society is crucial to creating more favorable conditions for Haitians' settlement and adaptation.

Conclusions

Whereas concerns about religion and immigration have often focused on the local level, understanding the national and even international structures of religious institutions furthers an understanding of how local-level religious institutions may promote social justice for immigrants. For the case of Haitian immigrants in Miami, national-level Catholic institutions provide a set of resources—both material resources and political advocacy—that facilitate their adaptation. The church was an effective mediator for Haitians in Miami because it organizes volunteer resources, provides information to the state about the needs of the community, and provides a structure through which the state can channel its resources to Haitians. In some circumstances, religious institutions can become much more than just a place where immigrants re-create their culture or generate social ties that support their employment or education: for the case of Haitians in Miami, the church provides an institutional buffer against discrimination

and has become a mediating structure that promotes social justice for disadvantaged immigrants.

As a large institution with a history of philanthropy in the United States, the church can generate valuable resources to support immigrant adaptation through its network of nonprofit organizations and its leaders' mediation on behalf of particular immigrant groups. However, the church would not be an important mediator if Haitians themselves—even those who are not personally religious or are not Catholic—did not look to the church as a place of organizing collective action. Many Haitians who arrived in Miami had participated in the Catholic church's political and social activities in Haiti. They carry this cultural schema with them and seek to organize collective action around the church in Miami. Although the Catholic church in Miami provided important resources such as meeting space and initial seed money to start social programs, Haitians contributed their own resources: leadership experience and volunteer work. It was this combination of preexisting resources in the Catholic church of Miami and Haitians' own resources that allowed Haitians to build an institution—the Toussaint Center—that would serve tens of thousands of Haitian immigrants annually over the past two decades. The Catholic church in Miami provides important resources to help Haitians' adaptation not just because many Haitians have strong religious beliefs, but also because the church draws on its national structures such as the Bishops Conference, and horizontal networks such as Catholic Charities, in order to mediate with the state.

Despite increasingly restrictive policies on immigrant entry and regularization of undocumented immigrants, immigrant flows to the United States do not appear to be slowing down. In this scenario, important elements of immigrant incorporation that were untheorized—such as how immigrants become actors in civil society—take on increasing importance. Until recently, questions about religion and immigration have not been looked at from the angle of civil society and the public sphere. In the United States, although scholars may be aware of the Catholic church's long philanthropic tradition, they have paid relatively little attention to how the church's social justice work influences American politics and civil society. Religious organizations' political work on behalf of immigrants has also largely escaped theories of immigration adaptation, such as the melting pot or segmented assimilation. Although previous theories of religion and immigration often painted a picture where religious institutions provided parallel structures that afforded immigrants a chance for upward mobility, taking a historical and macrosociological approach has shown that religious institutions may be most effective at promoting immigrant adaptation when they serve as a bridge, or mediator, with the government and other civil society institutions.