

# Religion as A Context of Reception: The Case of Haitian Immigrants in Miami, Montreal and Paris

Margarita A. Mooney\*

## ABSTRACT

In this article, I use cross-national comparative and ethnographic methods to explore how religion influences the incorporation of Haitian immigrants into the US, Quebec and France. First, I explore the ideological, legal and institutional forces that shape religion-state differentiation in the US, Quebec and France. Using census and immigration data from each site as well as interviews with Haitian leaders and government officials in Miami, Montreal and Paris, I show that the general pattern of consensual differentiation between religion and state in the US favours the more successful symbolic and socio-economic incorporation of Haitians in Miami, whereas secular nationalism in Quebec and assertive secularism in France weaken the incorporation of Haitian immigrants in Montreal and Paris, respectively.

## INTRODUCTION

Scholars have focused on numerous factors that influence immigrant incorporation, such as migrants' background characteristics as well as government and societal contexts of reception (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). Elements of societal reception include labour markets, racial prejudice, and the structure of the co-ethnic community. In particular, cross-national research on a single immigrant group in multiple settings illustrates how immigrant incorporation reflects the varying institutional structures of immigrant-receiving societies (Reitz, 1998). In this article, I expand the concept of context of reception to include religion-state relations and ask: how has the context of reception regarding religion in Miami, Montreal and Paris influenced Haitians immigrants' symbolic and structural incorporation?

Foner and Alba (2008) point out that religion is often a bridge to migrant incorporation in the US whereas it is often a barrier to integration in Europe. I expand beyond this by focusing specifically how macro-level differences in religion-state relations influence the symbolic and structural incorporation of the same immigrant group in three contexts. The US population is 13.0 per cent foreign born, Quebec is 11.5 per cent and France is 10.6 per cent.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1960s, international migrants to each of these nations have mostly come from countries of the developing world, such as Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa. With regards to religion, the three nations I study have differing histories that resulted in diverse ideological systems of religion-state differentiation that can be called 1) consensual differentiation in the US; 2) secular nationalism in Quebec; and 3) assertive secularism in France. In part because the consensual differentiation between religion and the state in the US enhances the legitimacy of religious institutions and promotes

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\* University of North Carolina.

government cooperation with faith-based service institutions, Haitians in Miami have greater indicators of symbolic and structural incorporation than in Montreal or Paris.

### THREE MODELS OF RELIGION-STATE RELATIONS

For late nineteenth and early twentieth century immigrants to the US, whether they were Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish, religious institutions provided a central meeting place where they could gather to create identity and meaning (Herberg, 1955). Immigrant community institutions mediated between newcomers and the host society through their social service programmes, and, by generating community social bonds and mediating between newcomers and the state, became indispensable to the larger goal of successful immigrant incorporation (Gordon, 1964). Successive waves of immigrants to the US produced a melting pot where immigrants maintained their distinct ethnic identity and religious affiliation yet also enjoyed a socio-economic standing comparable to non-immigrants (Handlin, 1951).

Hence, in particular for minorities and immigrants, religious institutions in the US have proven legitimate and effective channels of political mobilization and empowerment. In the American context ethnic, racial, and class diversity is often expressed through religious organizations, and Steve Warner argues that “religion is widely available to new immigrants as a legitimate institutional form” (1993: 1063). With regards to immigrant incorporation, the US open market for religion and its system of consensual differentiation between religion and state has meant that 1) immigrants are free to found new religious institutions, and 2) these organizations work with state agencies to promote a strong community life and successful incorporation into American society.

In Quebec, the architects of the 1960s Quiet Revolution and a generation of Quebecois scholars constructed a narrative in which Catholicism kept people attached to traditional ways of life and thus contributed to their oppression under the powerful Anglophones in Quebec (Van Die, 2001). Hence, despite some acceptance of cultural and religious diversity, the Quebec government and public are concerned that immigrants’ religious practices, cultural identities, or linguistic preferences could erode Quebecois identity. Although many immigrants to Quebec express their ethnic or even racial identity, they also have internalized that they should keep their religious identity private and even fear negative repercussions if they discuss their religious convictions publicly (Beyer, 2013).

Because concerns about immigrant incorporation in Quebec are interpreted in relation to a historical narrative in which religion retards progress and in which the state needs to preserve Quebecois national identity, the context of reception for immigrants as regards to religion in Quebec can be called secular nationalism (Mooney, 2013). In this model, private religious belief and practice are tolerated, yet public religious expressions and faith-based service institutions are suspected of conflicting with Quebecois secular nationalism. Despite the historical influence of Catholicism in Quebecois identity and the active participation of some Catholic leaders and organizations in the political modernization and liberation achieved during the Quiet Revolution (Balthazar, 2009), Quebecois identity today is decidedly secular.

According to French republican ideology, the state alone is entrusted with forming citizens, providing social welfare, and ensuring social integration (Hargreaves, 1995; Noiriel, 1996; Feldblum, 1999). The modern French state, through the laws, practices, and ideologies associated with *laïcité* – the French version of secularism – has sought to limit the public influence of religion, primarily the majority religion, Catholicism (Liogier, 2006). These principles of republicanism and *laïcité* have been evoked in debates about how to deal with France’s growing religious diversity. As much international migration to France since the 1970s has come from predominantly Muslim nations in North Africa, those in favour of restricting people from wearing certain forms of religious dress or

symbols, such as the Muslim headscarf and the burqa, claim continuity with the principles of republicanism and *laïcité*, according to which the public realm should be secular (Liogier, 2006).

In contrast to the US system of an open market for religion and a generally favourable view of religion's public influence, in France "the state excludes religion from the public sphere and plays an 'assertive' role as the agent of a social engineering project that confines religion to the private domain" (Kuru, 2007: 572). The French sociologist Raphaël Liogier provides further evidence that the French *laïcité* is not a system of neutrality towards religion. Rather than neutrality, Liogier argues that the laws and administrative practices associated with French assertive secularism create an organized and hierarchical system of state intervention in religion (2006).<sup>2</sup> The 2004 ban on wearing conspicuous religious items (like the Muslim headscarf) in many public institutions and the similar 2010 ban on the burqa illustrate how the French logic of assertive secularism leads to intervention in religious matters in order to "confine religion to the home and to the individual's conscience" (Kuru, 2007: 581). Hence, immigrants to France, whether they are Christian, Muslim, or another religion, encounter a hostile context of reception regarding religion.

## HAITIANS IN MIAMI, MONTREAL AND PARIS

How do these three contexts of reception regarding religion – consensual differentiation in the US, secular nationalism in Quebec, and assertive secularism in France – influence Haitians' incorporation? To assess Haitians' incorporation in Miami, Montreal and Paris, I examined census and survey data to provide general indications about Haitians' socio-economic status around the time I conducted fieldwork (for more details on research methods and design, see Mooney, 2009). I also interviewed 140 government officials, Haitian community association leaders, and Catholic religious leaders in Miami, Montreal and Paris. This allowed me to probe both Haitians' symbolic and structural incorporation.<sup>3</sup> I followed a semi-structured questionnaire in which I asked key informants to describe the major challenges to Haitians' incorporation, how their institution addressed those challenges, and how they worked with other institutions regarding Haitians' incorporation. At the three sites, I participated in religious ceremonies, sang in the choir, assisted at language classes, and attended numerous social events. In order to compare Haitians' religious institutions with other kinds of ethnic institutions, I also conducted participant observation at numerous civic and political events in each of the Haitian communities and interviewed leaders of the most important ethnic institutions of each city. I wrote detailed fieldnotes and transcribed recorded interviews. My analysis thus triangulates macro- and meso-level data from government sources and interviews with government officials with an ethnographic view of Haitians' religious institutions and related social service institutions to examine how contexts of reception regarding religion influence Haitians' incorporation in Miami, Montreal and Paris.

### Miami and the Toussaint Center

Beginning in the 1970s, thousands of Haitians began to migrate to Miami annually, and by 2000, Miami had become the largest city of the Haitian diaspora (Jackson, 2011). In the late 1970s, the Archdiocese of Miami assigned a young priest, Father Thomas G. Wenski, to pastor the rapidly growing Haitian community.<sup>4</sup> Given the racial prejudice faced by many Haitians in Miami and their low socio-economic status, Wenski's goal was both to create a strong Haitian Catholic community to foster respect and legitimacy for Haitians and to build a social service center to promote their socio-economic incorporation.

Wenski convinced officials from the Archdiocese of Miami to grant 10 acres of land to build a Haitian Catholic parish, Notre Dame d'Haïti (Our Lady of Haiti), and a service center, the Pierre

Toussaint Center.<sup>5</sup> With the help of Haitian clergy and experienced Haitian lay leaders, Wenski built up the religious services at Notre Dame. To launch the Toussaint Center, Wenski employed many Catholic lay leaders who had worked in social programmes in Haiti and he launched a literacy programme and English language classes. Other local Catholic agencies, such as Catholic Charities and the Jesuit Refugee Corps, helped the Toussaint Center establish a day care centre, a job placement programme, and legal services. Over time, all of these programs successfully competed for government and private funding, such as from Head Start and the United Way, to expand their reach.

Although the Toussaint Center was his most visible work to outsiders, Wenski also worked vigorously to rebuild strong communities of worship, both at Notre Dame and at smaller Haitian Catholic missions in South Florida. Wenski saw Haitians' symbolic and socio-economic incorporation as closely inter-twined, and hence he insisted that religious services and rituals such as the Eucharist were indispensable to strengthening family ties and building community bonds. Because Haitians often express class divisions through language choice, Wenski used only Haitian Creole rather than French in the religious and social services he organized. In this way, he clearly identified Notre Dame with darker-skinned and generally lower-educated Creole-speaking Haitians. Not unlike other immigrants groups to the US, Haitians' vibrant Catholic community at Notre Dame generated a greater sense of respect and legitimacy for Haitians in Miami, as evidenced by the frequent visits from journalists and politicians, among others, to these institutions.

Although Wenski and his collaborators knew that Haitians' religious piety was fundamental to the strength needed to overcome the many hurdles to their socio-economic incorporation, they also worked tirelessly to attract government resources and private funding to help Haitians in Miami find opportunities for work, language training, and continuing education. Because many Haitians who had arrived in Miami were undocumented or awaiting decisions on asylum claims, and because of racial prejudice and language difficulties, many of the poorest Haitians were afraid of directly approaching government institutions that were frequently highly bureaucratic, unfriendly towards them, and unfamiliar with Haitian culture and language. To bridge this gap, the leaders of Notre Dame and the Toussaint Center mediated between Haitian immigrants and the government in three principal ways: a) political advocacy, b) social service provision, and c) community organizing. Activities in each of these realms illustrate the general pattern of consensual differentiation between religion and state in the US, and this consensual differentiation facilitated Haitians' successful immigrant incorporation in Miami.

First, to call attention to the humanitarian plight of Haitian refugees, especially during the crises of 1980 and 1994, Catholic leaders provided crucial political advocacy for Haitians. For example, in 1980, the then-Archbishop Eugene McCarthy, Wenski, and other Catholic clergy visited Haitian refugees being held in Krome Detention Centre to celebrate religious services and to assess Haitians' conditions there. Establishing Haitians' legitimacy in Miami was often central to getting the government to agree to provide socio-economic support for Haitians. For example, Catholic clergy explained to the press and government officials that, if forced to return to Haiti, many Haitians would face political repression and economic stagnation. Although much of this political advocacy was concentrated on government officials in South Florida, Catholic clergy from Miami also travelled to Washington, DC, to work with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration. Since the end of World War II, refugee and immigrant resettlement has been a top concern of the US Catholic Bishops, and their staff at the Bishops' Conference have developed ties to important law-makers in this area (Mooney, 2006). Although numerous other groups advocated for Haitian immigrants' rights, Catholic leaders undoubtedly contributed to swaying public opinion and the opinion of lawmakers, politicians and judges, thus facilitating both Haitians' symbolic and socio-economic incorporation (Stotzky, 2004).

At the same time that Catholic leaders lobbied the government to legalize Haitians' status in the US, they also mobilized church resources to offer social services to Haitian immigrants through the

Toussaint Center. Given the precarious legal status of many Haitian immigrants and the political unrest in Haiti that produced several large-scale migrations to Miami, very few social services were available to most Haitians when they first arrived in Miami. Although the Toussaint Center launched its programmes by building on the skilled experience of clergy and lay leaders and using funds and land donated from the Archdiocese of Miami, the programmes would not have been able to grow and expand without complementary funds from the local, state and federal government, which by 2002 constituted 80 per cent of the Toussaint Center's funding.

A third way that the Catholic Church mediated between Haitians and the government in Miami was through its participation in PACT (People Acting for Community Together). PACT is a community organizing group that draws its membership from religious congregations in Miami. Members of PACT's network of religious congregations, like Notre Dame, meet in small groups of 8–10 people to discuss what they deem the most pressing social or political issues they face – such as transportation, water quality, education or access to banking. Of all PACT's member congregations, Notre Dame had the greatest number of participants. Notre Dame formed the single most active congregation in PACT, a feat due to the active involvement of Notre Dame's clergy and lay leaders in PACT and to the many strong small prayer groups from Notre Dame. As the hardest part of community organizing is quite often simply getting people together to talk about their problems, Notre Dame's lay leaders encouraged the parish's many home-based prayer groups to reflect on their common concerns and participate in PACT. Faith-based community-based organizing groups such as PACT not only secure more government assistance for the disadvantaged but also legitimize the symbolic inclusion of poor communities in the democratic process (Wood, 2002).

Notre Dame and the Toussaint Center formed a crossroads among Haitians of various class backgrounds and between Haitians and the rest of Miami's residents and political representatives. This two-tiered institution, comprised of mostly lower-class, dark-skinned, Creole-speaking, and extremely pious Haitian Catholics who gather for seven weekend Masses, more than 15 prayer and service groups, weekly marathons of one thousand Hail Marys in one day and loud Charismatic Masses, became the identifiable centre of the Haitian community. The stability of Notre Dame's prayer groups and the strong bonds between their members provided a foundation for the in-depth and long-term engagement required for community-based organization. All middle- and upper-class Haitians claiming to represent Haitians in Miami, as well as Anglo and Hispanic politicians, showed their respect for these institutions by attending special services at Notre Dame and collaborating with the Toussaint Center to promote Haitians' socio-economic incorporation, lending further legitimacy to those institutions.

The impoverished conditions of Little Haiti have not improved much compared to previous decades. However, by 2000, Miami-Dade County had not only become the largest city of the Haitian diaspora, surpassing New York, it had also developed a sizeable middle class in areas like North Miami.<sup>6</sup> Haitians in Miami undoubtedly have the strongest institutional base of support for their incorporation. Despite their disadvantageous starting position, Haitians in Miami developed a considerable middle-class community with strong community institutions and local political representation. Even though Haitians had the lowest parental human capital and income of any national-origin group in the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, they also had the highest levels of religious participation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). Although numerous factors influence immigrant integration, Haitians' high levels of religious participation contributed to the greater educational attainment and labour market incorporation among second-generation Haitians (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006: 323)

Interviews with government officials and religious leaders in Miami further illustrate how the receiving context legitimizes Haitians' religious identity and transfers resources to Haitians' faith-based service institutions. One government official in Miami explained why cooperating with Haitians' faith-based service institutions was crucial for their incorporation: "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." Because many Haitians' experiences of political repression in Haiti and their precarious legal status in Miami, Haitians are more likely to trust the Church than the government: Leaders of the Toussaint Center and Notre Dame aimed to first mobilize resources from within the Haitian community and then seek additional support from the state. The history of the Toussaint Center – which started off as a volunteer effort in space borrowed from the church and grew to have a budget of millions of dollars in local, state and federal funding to support Haitians' incorporation – exemplifies the consensual nature of religion-state differentiation in the US. Government officials in Miami acknowledged the importance of religion to Haitians' symbolic identity and socio-economic mobility, and religious leaders successfully advocated on Haitians' behalf to get the government to work with them to promote common goals. Research on second-generation Haitians indicates that these efforts paid off in more upward assimilation than would have been likely without the strong mobilization centred on Notre Dame and the Toussaint Center.

### **Montreal and the Bureau of the Haitian Christian Community**

In the 1960s, thousands of Haitian professionals and intellectuals migrated annually to Montreal. Haitian professionals, such as doctors and teachers, were recruited to work in the new educational and health-care institutions created during the Quiet Revolution (Labelle and Midy, 1999). As Quebecois Catholic orders had long-standing ties with Haiti, Haitian clergy travelled to Montreal either for short visits or to escape François Duvalier's repression of Catholic pro-democracy social and political movements in Haiti. Haitian clergy who moved to Montreal worked closely with numerous Catholic social institutions that had decades of experience working in social services for the disadvantaged, including immigrants. The way in which Catholic institutions and leaders were central to the early stages of Haitian incorporation points to another, and often untold story, about the Quiet Revolution in which many Catholic leaders supported the creation of a modern welfare state.<sup>7</sup> For example, during one of the Bureau's legalization campaigns, Quebec's Minister of Immigration was a Jesuit priest who had many personal connections to Haitian clergy. Hence, Haitians' early experiences in Montreal indicate that even after the Quiet Revolution, Catholic leaders and organizations were often central in secular institutions serving the poor and immigrants, such as Haitians.

These Catholic agencies provided the fledgling Haitian community with skilled leadership, financial resources, and experience working with Quebecois politicians and social services agencies, all of which initially supported Haitians' symbolic inclusion and their socio-economic incorporation. As in Miami, the Catholic clergy advocated for Haitians' political rights and started social programmes to facilitate the incorporation of thousands of working-class Haitians who began to arrive in Montreal starting in the 1970s. Although Quebec continued to recruit highly-skilled Francophone immigrants, including some Haitians, many of the Haitians who migrated to Montreal in the 1970s were not recruited to work but rather took advantage of relatively easy entry to Quebec to travel there and then relied on their social ties with other Haitians already in Montreal to try to find work.

For these working-class Haitians, with limited education, limited French fluency, and limited urban labour experience, incorporation into Montreal did not prove easy. To support them, a group of Haitian Catholic clergy and lay leaders, led by Father Paul Dejean, founded the Bureau of Haitian Christians in Montreal.<sup>8</sup> The most urgent issue was the legal status of many of these Haitians, who entered on tourist visas and then stayed permanently. Similar to the Catholic Church's political advocacy for Haitians in Miami, Father Dejean wrote letters to the Quebec government on behalf of Haitians and even met personally with government officials, claiming that, because of the poor conditions in Haiti, Haitians should qualify for humanitarian visas. In a later legalization campaign,

personal connections between Haitian Catholic clergy and Quebec Catholic clergy proved crucial in supporting the claims of Haitian asylum-seekers who feared political repression if they returned to Haiti.

Haitians' religious leaders sought to improve Haitians' reception by the Quebecois government and to build a strong community to support Haitians' incorporation. Up through the mid-1980s, the Bureau fulfilled multiple functions: it served as a welcoming place for newly arriving Haitians, provided an umbrella support organization to coordinate the efforts of Haitian leaders who wanted to launch social programmes, and mediated between the Haitian community and the state in order to access government funds for its social programmes. The Bureau's initial success would not have been possible without both the volunteer work and skilled leadership from the Haitian community and institutional support from other Quebecois Catholic institutions. For example, Catholic religious orders donated funds to support the Bureau's social programmes. Catholic service agencies, like the Centre for Social Aid to Immigrants run by the Sisters of Bon Secours, helped the Bureau's leaders write their initial charter. Because of its ties to Notre Dame d'Haïti Catholic mission in Montreal, the Bureau enjoyed the trust of the working-class Haitians it served.

Despite continued Haitian migration to Montreal, over time the Bureau lost much of its ability to support Haitians' incorporation there. First, after Jean-Claude Duvalier fled Haiti in 1986, some of the Bureau's initial leaders returned to Haiti. Second, Haitians in Montreal – unlike Haitians in Miami – faced deep intra-community divisions. While nearly all Haitians in Miami faced some racial prejudice, a form of external opposition that forced cooperation across class lines, incorporation proved relatively easy for light-skinned and Francophone Haitians in Montreal. When thousands of poorer, Creole-speaking, and deeply pious Haitians arrived in Montreal, their better off compatriots had already moved into different neighbourhoods and were discouraging their children from speaking Creole. Furthermore, pious acts that are common among working-class Haitian Catholics in Montreal, such as attending a Charismatic prayer service and Mass to ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to intercede for one's family, or invoking the Holy Spirit's healing powers to save one's children from gangs or drugs, or going up the hundreds of stairs in front of St. Joseph's Oratory on one's knees as a sign of penance clashed with the de-mystified and largely cultural Catholicism adopted by middle- and upper-class Haitians in Montreal. Hence, whereas Haitians' deep religious piety generated respect for them in Miami, it provoked concerns or even disdain in Montreal.

Increasing concern about the religiosity of immigrants led to changes in government policies that affected the Bureau. Haitians were the largest immigrant group to Montreal through the 1980s and, despite some difficulties, built a strong ethnic community and forged ties with government institutions there, sometimes through the Catholic Church's mediation. By the 1990s, however, Haitians were no longer the largest immigrant-sending group to Quebec, and concern about the symbolic and socio-economic incorporation of these newer immigrants, including many non-Christians, began to generate greater public and governmental concern. By the early 2000s, public uneasiness about too much ethnic and religious diversity led the Quebec government to demand that all voluntary associations receiving state funding be multiethnic and secular, thereby excluding organizations like the Bureau from most forms of government cooperation.<sup>9</sup> As described in the Bouchard-Taylor report (2008), policy changes such as these resulted from a perceived crisis that accommodating immigrants' ethnic and religious identities had undermined the secular and cultural identity of Quebec. In part to reinforce Quebec's identity as a secular and inter-cultural society, government agencies asserted their preference to work with multi-ethnic and secular organizations in 2003. The Bureau's leaders, yielding to this perceived loss of legitimacy with the government due to their identity as a faith-based service organization, removed the word Christian from its name in 2002. In hopes of continuing to receive government funding, the religious sisters who run the Centre for Social Aid to Immigrants also removed any reference to Christianity from their charter.

Haitians in Montreal are most highly concentrated in the two inner-city neighbourhoods of North Montreal and Saint Michel where their unemployment rates are twice those of the rest of Montreal.

These neighbourhoods also have high poverty rates, a majority of single-parent households, and high rates of youth dropping out of school (Torczyner, 2001). Both government officials and Haitian leaders in Montreal expressed grave concerns about Haitians' poor socio-economic incorporation. Although middle class Haitians settled in suburban areas of Montreal such as Laval, many more working-class Haitians have had little mobility out of the impoverished conditions of North Montreal and Saint Michel. Relatively few institutional ties exist across class boundaries among Haitians, especially as religious practice has declined rapidly among the middle- and upper-class Haitians but not the working class.

Haitians' difficulties in Montreal derive partly from their low levels of human capital and the difficult economic environment, but in addition, many community and government leaders are concerned that the increasing prejudice against Haitians makes their structural incorporation even more difficult. For example, a report on Montreal's black communities noted that "a young black person [in Montreal] inspires fear in certain communities...The justice system is the only system in which blacks and other visible minorities are over-represented" (Torczyner, 2001: 78). Despite concerns regarding Haitians' socio-economic and symbolic incorporation, government agencies are more likely to see religion as part of the problem rather than part of the solution to social problems. Although Quebecois government officials are aware of difficulties in Haitians' incorporation, they do not look to Haitians' religious institutions or faith-based service institutions for solutions. When asked about government cooperation with Haitians' religious institutions, one government official directly contrasted the Quebecois model of religion-state differentiation with that of the US, stating, "Churches only work with the poor in the US because the state is absent. In Quebec, the state has replaced the church." Such comments reflect the dominant narrative about religion-state relations in Quebec, according to which a modern, secular state took over all social welfare functions from the Catholic Church.

### Paris and Haiti Development

In 1981, Catholic lay leaders and French clergy who had lived in Haiti founded the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris.<sup>10</sup> Twenty years later the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris had grown to a tightly knit community of a few hundred regular members who attended Sunday Mass together and formed many prayer groups which met during the week. Like Miami and Montreal, the most influential Haitian community association in Paris, Haiti Development, was founded by active leaders of Haitian Catholic Community of Paris.

René Benjamin, one of the lay members who helped begin the Haitian Catholic Mission of Paris, founded Haiti Development in the 1960s to encourage Haitian intellectuals and students living in France to return and support development in Haiti. Numerous Haitian associations in Paris exist on paper but have few members and focus mostly on politics and development in Haiti rather than Haitians' incorporation in Paris (Glaude, 2001). Benjamin was the only Haitian intellectual in Paris who eventually dedicated his efforts to supporting the incorporation of working-class Haitians in Paris. As with the Toussaint Centre in Miami and the Bureau in Montreal, Benjamin's position as a lay leader at the Haitian Catholic mission of Paris allowed him to build trust among the Haitians he served.

Benjamin used his perfect French language skills, French educational credentials, and experience working in a French bureaucracy to mediate between working-class Haitians and the French state. Given that there are so few legal ways for Haitians to migrate to France, the most common service Haiti Development provided was assistance in requesting political asylum. As in the US and Quebec, the French government relied on Haitian organizations, primarily Haiti Development, to inform them about the political conditions in Haiti that weigh heavily in deciding asylum claims. Like Quebec, Catholic organizations continue to provide some social services in France, although the



republican ideology and assertive secularism, which insist on a unified national and secular identity, often make this work invisible to many French. Benjamin used contacts with other Catholic organizations like Catholic Charities to acquire funding for programs to assist Haitians in Paris with French language training and job placement assistance. However, he only obtained government funds to help with asylum claims, leaving social services to be handled by Benjamin and a few volunteers with some funds from Catholic agencies.

The symbolic boundary between French republican identity, which is decidedly secular, and Haitians' strong religious identity, made it hard for institutions like Haiti Development to gain public legitimacy or acquire government funding for social programmes. This symbolic boundary also limits cross-class solidarity among Haitians in Paris. Like most highly educated Haitians in Montreal, most Haitian élites in Paris who are highly educated and fluent in French found it easy to adopt many tenets of republicanism. However, by identifying with French republicanism and accepting the privatization of religion demanded by assertive secularism, upper-class Haitians in Paris no longer identified linguistically, racially, or religiously with working-class, dark-skinned, Creole-speaking and pious Haitians. One highly educated Haitian in Paris self-critically remarked that although Catholicism was brought to Haiti by the French, inculcated in Haiti through Francophone Catholic schools, and supported in Haiti partly by French religious orders, Catholicism constituted a barrier to incorporation in France. Working-class Haitians in Paris, whose background characteristics and tenuous legal status created great disadvantages for their incorporation, hold on to their strong religious and ethnic identity to aid with their incorporation. However, Haitians' associations in Paris lack much legitimacy with the government and, despite efforts by Haitian leaders, government officials have not supported their efforts to facilitate incorporation through language classes, job training, and day care. As one Haitian leader in Paris summarized the state's lack of interaction with representatives of the Haitian community, "Because of the French logic of integration [which focuses just on the individual, not groups], the state doesn't pay any attention to our [ethnic or religious] associations. We are invisible."

Have republicanism and *laïcité* worked to incorporate Haitians in Paris? Census data illustrate that few Haitians in Paris, even those who have high school degrees and beyond, work in professional occupations. The unemployment rate of nearly 30 per cent among Haitians is double that of the native population. Although Haitians' own background characteristics, namely their low levels of human capital, limited work experience, and, for some, limited French proficiency, certainly contribute to this difficult socio-economic incorporation, racial prejudice, their geographic location in the *banlieues*, and the state's practical ignorance of Haitians' mediating institutions only exacerbate this difficult incorporation (for a detailed analysis of census data on Haitians in France, see Mooney, 2011).<sup>11</sup> Around 90 per cent of Haitians in Paris live in the immigrant-dominated *banlieues*, which because of their high levels of unemployment and violence have now come to symbolize for many the failure of immigrant incorporation (Body-Gendrot, 2000). Although French republicanism upholds equality for all, the mostly Creole-speaking, low-skilled and dark-skinned Haitians who settled in these *banlieues* starting in the 1970s moved into an already economically segregated and socially stigmatized place known to inhibit, rather than promote, successful immigrant incorporation.

The dominant trend among French intellectuals and government officials is to hold to an assertive secularism which essentially posits that state vigilance and control over religious institutions is necessary for social progress. Despite the promises of equality in French republicanism, many immigrants in France, including Haitians, face both symbolic and structural barriers to their incorporation, as highlighted by the 2005 riots in the largely immigrant-inhabited *banlieues*. During several weeks of rioting, first- and second-generation immigrant youth – most of them North African or Sub-Saharan African in origin – burned thousands of vehicles and defaced symbols of the French Republic such as schools and government buildings, a particularly poignant rejection of the French republican model of integration. Scholars, politicians, and the French public continue to

debate the causes and solutions of this failed immigrant incorporation. Some point to structural reasons, such as the lack of good education and jobs, whereas others point to cultural reasons, arguing that immigrants are just too culturally or religiously different to be integrated into the French nation. Although Haitian youth in the Parisian *banlieues* were not reported to be among the protagonists of the riots, nearly all Haitians in Paris live in *banlieues* where they lack social networks that would help them get jobs. The social stigma of living in these neighbourhoods *banlieues* exacerbates the already difficult structural barriers Haitians face to their incorporation.

Working-class Haitians in Paris are aware that their pious religious beliefs form a symbolic boundary separating them from secular French society and from most highly educated Haitians in Paris. Whereas Haitian parents believe that successful incorporation requires both hard work and a strong community of faith, they expressed concern that the general secular climate in French society militates against their children's faith. Without a protective barrier of faith, Haitian parents fear that their children will join the downwardly mobile sector of other immigrants in the *banlieues*. Haitians in France, who face structural constraints on their incorporation—unemployment, discrimination, etc. — as well as symbolic boundaries — racial prejudice, assertive secularism—are discouraged in discourse and practice from forming “durable” ethnic and religious communities. Hence, the practice of French republicanism and assertive secularism limited the impact of Haiti Development on Haitians' socio-economic and structural incorporation in Paris.

## CONCLUSIONS

Figure 1 summarizes how religion forms part of the context of reception that influenced Haitians' incorporation in Miami, Montreal and Paris. The US open market for religion encourages minorities to organize and mobilize around religious institutions, and the system of consensual differentiation between religious and state authorities facilitates the work of immigrants' religious mediating institutions. Haitians in Miami earned greater symbolic and institutional incorporation and hence will probably experience more socio-economic mobility in Miami than in Montreal or Paris. Haitian intellectuals and professionals first migrated to Montreal and initially helped more working-class Haitians incorporate, but over time and largely due to secular nationalism in Quebec, Haitians' mediating institutions lost their legitimacy with the government and much of their funding. In debates about social issues in Quebec, religion is more often seen as a problem than as part of the solution. Although Haitians in Montreal have high levels of unemployment and low education, they have weak mediating institutions that could advocate to the state on their behalf and help support their incorporation. Due to French republicanism and assertive secularism, Haitians in Paris are largely without institutional support in a difficult socio-economic context characterized by high levels of unemployment and spatial isolation in the impoverished and stigmatized *banlieues*. The French system of religion-state differentiation can be described as assertive secularism based on a cultural narrative that holds that “religion cannot contribute positively to the common public good” (Cesari, 2007: 37–38). In contrast to the cooperation between religion and state actors in the US, French “assertive secularism is a ‘comprehensive doctrine’ that aims to eliminate religion from the public sphere” (Kuru, 2007: 572).

Numerous factors influence immigrants' symbolic and socio-economic incorporation, such as background characteristics, the co-ethnic community, and societal and governmental reception of immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). Despite some differences across the three communities, many Haitians in Miami, Montreal and Paris share a low socio-economic status, difficulties in attaining legal status, and face some racial prejudice. Hence, Haitian leaders in all three cities founded religious communities and faith-based social service institutions to serve a similar population and promote the symbolic and structural incorporation of disadvantaged Haitians. Despite

FIGURE 1  
RELIGION AS A CONTEXT OF RECEPTION FOR HAITIANS

I. Macro-Level: Religion-State Relations	II. Meso-Level: Haitians' Mediating Institutions	III. Micro-Level: Haitians' Incorporation Paths and Outcomes
Open Market for Religion and Consensual Differentiation between Religion and State (Miami, Florida, United States) <sup>1</sup>	Haitians developed strong mediating institutions which developed a cooperative approach with state agencies	Increasing class diversity and strong religious identity among Haitians due, in part, to respect and cooperation between religious mediating institutions and the state
Secular Nationalism (Montreal, Quebec, Canada) <sup>2</sup>	Haitians' initially strong religious mediating institutions are gradually undermined by secular culture and nationalistic concerns for Quebecois cultural survival	Hindered socioeconomic mobility and increasing oppositional identity among Haitians
Assertive Secularism (Paris, France) <sup>3</sup>	Haitians' mediating institutions are largely ignored due to assertive secularism and a state-centered approach to immigrant incorporation	Blocked socioeconomic mobility among Haitians and strong religious identity clashes with secular culture

Notes:

1. U.S. government allows an open market for religion and cooperates with religious mediating institutions to incorporate cultural and ethnic minorities.
2. Concern for Quebecois cultural survival sets limits on immigrants' cultural and religious practices and growing secularism reduces government cooperation with religious mediating institutions.
3. Republicanism and *laïcité* are normative models for immigrant incorporation.

similar disadvantages across all three cities, the receiving context in Miami supports Haitians' religious institutions but weakens them in Montreal and Paris. Thus, the receiving context contributes in part to Haitians' stronger symbolic and socio-economic incorporation in Miami relative to Montreal or Paris.

In Paris, Catholic leaders attempt to mediate for Haitians, but feel largely invisible to the state. Haitians in Miami expressed more confidence in their children's future than did their counterparts in Montreal or Paris, in part because the Haitian community in Miami has a strong institutional mediator through the organizations and hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Despite similar efforts to support immigrant incorporation, Catholic institutions and leaders in Montreal and Paris do not enjoy much legitimacy with their respective governments.

What are the consequences for immigrant integration more generally that stem from these different contexts of reception regarding religion? Writing about immigrants in general in the US, noted immigration scholars Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut argue that although religion does not directly determine immigrants' political and social incorporation, "because religion has proved to be one of the most resilient elements of immigrants' culture across generations, the beliefs and organized activities carried out by different foreign groups in this realm can be expected to be a trademark of their long-term incorporation into American society and, simultaneously, a key force in the guiding character of this process" (2006: 341).

The greatest contrast between cases is that of the US and France. Whereas in the US, mediating institutions organized around ethnicity and religion facilitate the incorporation process, in France,

the republican model of immigrant integration expects individuals to interact directly with the state. Recent debates in France have shown that, despite some differences of opinion, great support exists for continuing the republican model of immigrant integration. However, ethnographic work among immigrants in France indicates a large gap between theory and reality. Greater recognition of immigrants' religious identities and organizations would probably improve the cultural and structural incorporation of immigrants in France. The current policies of *laïcité* are perceived by many immigrants as an assertive secularism that marginalizes their religion, often reinforcing religion as a hostile boundary between religious immigrants and the secular French.

In Quebec, the Bouchard-Taylor Commission and Report generated much controversial discussion about religion in the public sphere. Although government funds do not need to directly support religious houses of worship, government funds have in the past contributed to Catholic faith-based service institutions to support immigrant integration. Continuing or even extending that practice to other immigrant faiths would probably promote greater symbolic recognition of immigrants' religious faiths as well as improved economic conditions for immigrants in Quebec. More generally, Canadian multiculturalism policy and Quebec's inter-culturalism policy recognize that ethnic identities are important community bonds, but not religious identities. Immigrants like many Haitians question this assumption, and claims made by religious groups may lead to a new understanding of religion in the public sphere in Canada and Quebec. As it is practised, Quebec's secularism seeks to privatize religious identities and organizations while actively incorporating ethnic identities and organizations into public policies and discussions. Hence, while a less rigid form of secularism than that of France, Quebec's secularism is not neutral in practice.

Policy debates about religion-state relations and immigrant integration often lack cross-national comparative studies with data from various levels. Census data and longitudinal data provide insights on structural incorporation, but ethnographic fieldwork and interviews provide further insights on how norms regarding the public expression of religion impact immigrant integration. Although the symbolic and structural integration patterns of integration may look different for second-generation immigrants or for immigrants who are a religious minority (such as Muslims or Sikhs) the conceptual model for investigating religion-state relations and immigrant integrating outlined in this article provides a starting point from which to collect empirical data to assess how religion influences immigrants' symbolic and structural incorporation in different national and local contexts.

## NOTES

1. See: <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/p10-eng.cfm>, (accessed 1 April 2011); and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2009). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2008).
2. To back up his claims, Liogier uses evidence from laws, interviews with government officials and intellectuals, and his own work ethnographic and survey work studying new religious movements, such as Buddhism, in France.
3. In order to be able to compare a single religious institution in all three contexts, I focused only on the Haitian Catholic missions of each city.
4. Father Wenski was named Auxiliary Bishop of Miami in 1996. He was then named Bishop of Orlando, a position he held from 2002 to 2010, when he returned to Miami to serve as Archbishop. Even though he had already been ordained a bishop by the time I first interviewed him in 2001, I refer to him as Father Wenski because that was his title while he served the Haitian community.
5. For more on the history of Notre Dame and the Toussaint Center, see also Rey and Stepick (2009).
6. For greater detail on Haitians' socio-economic incorporation in Miami, see Mooney (2009) and Stepick, Stepick, et al. (2001).
7. Louis Balhazar (2009) argues that the development of a modern state in Quebec and the institutional differentiation between church and state is referred to as the "Quiet" Revolution precisely because not all church leaders fought this change. Indeed, he shows that Catholic clergy, intellectuals and lay leaders

- actively supported the creation of a modern Quebecois state by giving their political support and transferring large parts of their educational and health systems, among others things, to the state.
8. In French, *le Bureau de la communauté chrétienne des Haïtiens à Montréal*.
  9. As immigration to Quebec increased and diversified, there was a strong perception that religion (in particular non-Christian religion) was conflicting with largely secular (yet still culturally Catholic) Quebec. In 2007, the Quebec government formed a commission to review practices of accommodating immigrants' religious and ethnic practices. The report that resulted from the 2007-2008 Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences argued that the concerns about government accommodation of immigrants' religious and cultural practices were greatly exaggerated (Bouchard and Taylor 2008). Despite expressing concerns about immigrants' lack of socio-economic incorporation, the report makes no mention of any positive contributions of faith-based service institutions to Quebec's immigrant communities, hence rendering their work invisible.
  10. In French, *la Communauté catholique Haïtienne de Paris*.
  11. Because Haitians are a relatively small and relatively recent immigrant group in France, and because the French census does not identify all second-generation immigrants, my research did not uncover many statistics on second-generation Haitians in France. My assessment of the future of second-generation Haitians thus relies on data about the incorporation of first-generation Haitians as well as data on second-generation immigrants from other nationalities who live in similar conditions as Haitians.

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