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Neighborhood immigrant popular religion: A new interpretation

Trabold, Robert Albert, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1988

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NEIGHBORHOOD IMMIGRANT POPULAR RELIGION:
A NEW INTERPRETATION

by

ROBERT TRABOLD

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfill-
ment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy, The City Uni-
versity of New York.

1988

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Abstract

NEIGHBORHOOD IMMIGRANT POPULAR RELIGION:
A NEW INTERPRETATION

by

Robert Trabold

Advisor: Professor Paul Ritterband

The literature dealing with the Catholic immigration to the United States has generally studied the large European migration to these shores from 1820-1939. The dominant sociological theory to analyze the function of religion in this movement has been that of Durkheim and Malinowski stressing the community building function of religion.

The dissertation attempts to study the recent Caribbean immigrants who have come to this country since 1945 and to analyze the function of religion in this migration more in terms of social change and conflict. The study takes place in the Haitian, West Indian and Hispanic community in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, NY. It analyzes a large street manifestation, the Corpus Christi procession, which is a popular event in the neighborhood.

Taking the procession as a microcosm, this dissertation notes the factors and implications in this flamboyant manifestation of festive Caribbean popular

religion and culture. It studies how these are in conflict with the dominant Western rationalistic culture of industrial and technical North American Society. Such theorist as A. Gramsci, M. Weber and V. Turner are used to explicate this tension.

The dissertation also sees this festive manifestation of Caribbean popular religion in conflict with three modernizing tendencies of the Second Vatican Council. The Council which was to make the Catholic Church more pastorally effective is found to be insensitive to the preferences of the working class and certain Third World people in terms of worship and styles of Christian expression.

In line with the current debate in Latin America on the social protest dimension to popular religion, this study analyzes this theme in the procession. It focuses particularly on its implications to liberate the immigrants from their marginal social and economic condition in this country and its aid to liberation in the immigrants' Caribbean and Latin American homelands. The dissertation finds the immigrant popular religion as having a potential for and seeds of political and social liberation. With the proper process of critical awareness, it can be activated to help build strong movements for social change among marginal people.

For the above reasons, the dissertation opens a new horizon to understand Caribbean immigrant popular religion in

terms of social change and conflict within the Catholic Church and wider society.

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Introduction

The Statue of Liberty stands in the New York harbor welcoming the immigrants to these shores. The United States, although a young country, has a long immigrant history. These newcomers were indispensable in populating the continent and building the country into an industrial society. The Catholic population was and still is part of this immigrant movement. Before the War of Independence, there was a small number of Catholics. The major Catholic migration from Europe however occurred between 1820 - 1924. Catholics came in great numbers from Northern Europe and this movement reached a peak in 1848 with the Irish Potato Famine and the abortive German Revolution. After these two events, it continued strongly from Northern Europe, but from 1880 to 1914, the flow shifted more from Southern and Eastern Europe. After the First World War, the European migration continued in large numbers to 1924, the year of the national origins act.

There is a large amount of literature written on this Catholic European migration to this country. Social scientists and historians have documented the migration, analyzed the experience of individual ethnic immigrant groups and have written on the role of the Catholic immigrant parishes. The basic premise underlying the role of the local parishes comes from the Sociology of Religion of E. Durkheim and B. Malinowski. These men understood religion as building

and unifying a community. Through the common sharing and celebration of religious values, a group achieves a cohesion among its members.¹

This view of the functioning of religion can be noted in the work of Sylvano Tomasi on the Italian parishes of the New York metropolitan area. He states that the ethnic parish operated like a quasi-sect. "It became a place where the immigrant Italians who were on the religious and social periphery of society, could fulfill their religious needs, find opportunity for self expression, preserve their self-perception of being human in face of an unknown environment."²

Another author, Joseph J. Barton, analyzed the Czech immigrant community in Chicago and reached similar conclusions. He described the many communal feasts, parades, processions and anniversaries that filled the life of the Czech parishes and neighborhoods. There were many active voluntary associations. Through all these activities and groups, the religious world of the village back home and urban life of the new country became one. In this way, the immigrants "sustained continuity and identity in family and

¹ Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (New York: The Free Press, 1954), p. 47.

² Sylvano Tomasi, Piety and Power: the Role of the Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1880-1930 (New York: Center For Migration Studies, 1975), p. 105.

communal life."³

In his recent book, Puerto Rican Americans, Joseph Fitzpatrick reached three similar conclusions on the role of national immigrant parishes. First, the religious faith and practice continued strong in the new country due to the contact between the immigrants and the local church. Second, in this country, these parishes were the places where the customs, values and religious practices of the old country were celebrated and so provided security and satisfaction to the newcomers in a time of transition. Therefore, these churches were a basis to community life. Third, with all these activities in the parish, the immigrant received a sense of identity and a sense of belonging.⁴

This dissertation plans to depart from this tradi-

³ Joseph Barton, "Religion and Change in Czech Communities," in Immigrants and Religion in Urban America, eds. Randall M. Miller and Thomas D. Marzik (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977), pp. 16-17.

⁴ Joseph Fitzpatrick, Puerto Rican Americans: The Meaning of the Migration to the Mainland, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1987), p. 129. This community building function of immigrant religion is present in many other authors who deal with this migration, such as: Jay Dolan, The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865 (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), and American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1985); Andrew Greeley, The Catholic Experience: An Interpretation of the History of American Catholicism (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967, and The Denominational Society: A Sociological Approach to Religion (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1972), and Neighborhoods (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977); Daniel S. Buczek, Immigrant Pastor: The Life of the Right Rev. Msgr. Lucyan Bojnowski of New Britain, Conn. (Waterbury, Conn.: Hemingway Corporation, 1974).

tional sociological basis for the analysis of immigrant religion. It will not deny the validity of the traditional view, but will open up new ways of understanding immigrant popular religion. It will analyze this religious experience more in terms of social conflict and change. This study will examine this example of immigrant popular religion seen in conflict with dominant Western tendencies in larger American society and in tension with the modernizing, rationalizing and Europeanizing movements in the Catholic Church since the 1960's. It will also attempt to understand popular religion as a possible base for liberating praxis by the marginal immigrants.

Significant also is the fact that this dissertation will deal with immigrants who have come to this country since 1945. After World War II, Catholic migration continued again to come to this country but from new places. As Europe rebuilt and became prosperous, the migration from there declined in number except from certain Mediterranean countries like Italy, Portugal and Yugoslavia. At the same time, there was a startling flow of immigrants from the Caribbean, Central and Latin America which brought millions of newcomers to this country, people who were culturally and racially different from the former European immigrants. There are also Catholics coming from various Asian countries, especially the Phillipines. These newcomers from the Caribbean and Latin America raise new questions and offer

opportunities for new ways of understanding immigrant culture and religion. Without denying the community building function of religion, we will analyze the Corpus Christi procession and popular religion in the context of the theories of M. Weber, A. Gramsci, V. Turner and others who note how these religious expressions are in conflict with dominant Western culture and certain rationalizing and modernizing tendencies in the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council. We will cite critical commentators on the Council to elucidate this latter point. This dissertation will raise the whole issue of popular religion as a source for social change. We will use the thought of A. Gramsci and many Latin American writers who debate the role of popular religion as revolutionary and also capable of supporting the status quo.

Chapter I: Theoretical Considerations

Introduction

To begin the discussion of the theoretical basis of this dissertation, it would be helpful to present the thought of A. Gramsci on popular religion and hegemony. We will be analyzing the Corpus Christi procession an expression of immigrant popular religion. These ideas of Gramsci will also be important in the development of this study.

Popular Religion

The Latin American Bishops in the document that they issued after their conference in Puebla, Mexico in 1978 gave a good working description of the popular religion of the marginal and poor Latin American.

A capacity to express one's faith in a language which is beyond rationality, in using song, images, gestures, color and dance. A faith that is localized in particular times and feasts and specific places like pilgrimages and special churches. A sense of pilgrimage as a symbol of our human and Christian existence..... The ability to celebrate the faith in a very expressive and communitarian way. Deep integration of the sacraments and sacramentals in the fiber of personal and social life.¹

The bishops continue by noting that this popular religion manifests a devotion to the Blessed Trinity and has

¹Documentos de Puebla (Madrid: Editorial PPC, 1979), para. 454.

a sense of the providence of God the Father. There is a devotion to Christ in all the aspects of his life, a love of Mary as God's mother and our mother also, as queen of the various Latin American countries, and a veneration of the saints and the dead. Finally, the people have a capacity to suffer, and have a heroism to overcome the trials of life and to profess their faith. They value prayer and accept others as their brothers and sisters.²

To develop more what the bishops briefly described above, Virgilio Elizondo and Frank Ponce have written extensively about the popular religion and spirituality of the Hispanic immigrants and their analysis will help us understand the rich and different faith life of the newcomers.³ The prayer forms, the liturgical feast and the devotions, the processions and decorations in the homes reveal a faith which comes down and lives in the people as a rich tradition and reality. The newcomers see God the Father, the saints and the dead as part of their extended family. Friendship and easy communication is desired with God as Father, Mary as our Mother, Jesus as our Lord and Brother, the saints, the souls in purgatory, and the dead of our family; all these are part of the extended family. In the home, pictures and statues of the saints, Jesus and Mary

²Ibid.

³Virgilio Elizondo, "A Way for the Church to Regard Its Hispanics," Origins 10 (1980):205-206; Frank Ponce, "The U.S. Church's Hispanic Catholics," Origins 10 (1980):194-200.

are next to pictures of friends and relatives; these pictures and images are expressions of friendship and a desire for open communication with the persons they represent. These friendships and prayers are a source of strength to the immigrant in a foreign culture which looks down on them because they are different and poor. These friendships give them hope in suffering and oppression similar to that hope expressed by the Chicano farm workers in carrying the banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe and reciting the rosary and singing religious songs.⁴

The immigrant sees the whole liturgical year with all of its celebrations and feasts as the enactment of the life of Christ today. The Advent season and the celebration of Christmas is a reliving of the journey to Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus, and the visits of the shepherds and three kings. The celebration of Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent, the procession of the palms on Palm Sunday, Holy Week with the ceremonies commemorating the last supper, the agony in the garden and the death of Christ; the devotion of the Way of the Cross, the celebration of the seven last words of Christ, and finally the feast of the Resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday make the paschal mysteries of Jesus present today in the lives of the immigrants. The month of May with its May devotions and the crowning of the statues of the Virgin, June with the feast of the Sacred Heart and the

⁴V. Elizondo, "A Way," pp. 205-206.

procession of Corpus Christi, October as the month of the rosary, and November as the time of our communion with the saints, the souls in purgatory and the dead of the family, continue the celebration of the Christian faith all during the year. These celebrations of the historical moments of Jesus' life and of the important events of the Christian faith enable the people to enter into and intuit the deepest realities of their belief.

Other privileged moments of the life of the immigrants are the sacraments. Baptisms celebrate the entrance of the child into the church as a new member, and the new spiritual friendship between the parents and godparents. Holy Communion is a sacred event, as the young people receive the body and blood of Christ for the first time. Funerals are an important liturgical moment: they are times of great sorrow at the loss of family or friends, but also times of hope where faith teaches that death is not the final gesture in life; they are also special times of preaching to the people because at that moment they are very open to the Christian message of eternal life. Masses celebrated in commemoration of the dead are times when family and friends gather to pray for the deceased of the family. The feast day of the parish is important as a time to bring all together to honor the patron saint of their church neighborhood. Pilgrimages are popular because people travel to a sacred place and receive the blessings of God, the Virgin and the saints; they go as a

group and community and it is a time of preaching and listening to the word of God:

These celebrations of the historical events of the life of Christ during the year, the celebrations of holy months like May, and of the sacraments of the church are learning experiences.⁵ Catechism classes people forget, but not the deep experiences of the Christian faith celebrated with the community. In these, they intuit the deep realities of faith; it is hard to separate catechesis and liturgy. This type of evangelization and catechesis is very valuable because these devotions and celebrations are accessible to the masses of the people; they are enjoyed by all and touch the various levels of the community--the young and the old, the believers and the alienated Christians, the educated and illiterate; since the community has lived with these celebrations from birth, they become very important symbols of the community's life.

Elizondo is stressing this manner of evangelization because in Catholic pastoral circles in this country, the Hispanic immigrants are often accused of being ignorant of their faith, that is, of the official teachings and abstract dogmas of the church. Elizondo counters this charge with an explanation of the more experiential absorption of and

⁵Elizondo, "A Way," p. 206; Virgilio Elizondo, Christianity and Culture: An Introduction to Pastoral Theology and Ministry for the Bicultural Community (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1975), pp. 174-177.

insertion into the faith by the newcomers.

This description of Hispanic popular religion that Ponce and Elizondo present so well is an important point of departure for our study of the Corpus Christi procession. This procession is part of the larger phenomenon of Caribbean cultural and religious life. To begin our analysis of these immigrant cultural and religious expressions, we will discuss the notion of hegemony and popular religion of A. Gramsci.

Gramsci stresses the seriousness of working class and every day culture. It should not be considered as "pop" culture with its hit-songs and other fads.

Folklore should instead be studied as a 'concept of the world and life' implicit to a large extent in determinate (in time and space) strata of society and in opposition (also for the most part implicit, mechanical and objective) to 'official conceptions' of the world (or in a broader sense, the conceptions of the cultured parts of historically determinate societies) that have succeeded one another in the historical process.⁶

For Gramsci, the term folklore is a conception of the world and life which the lower classes have. Intimately connected to this outlook is religion. It forms part of the folklore and vision of life of the subaltern classes and shares its characteristics.⁷ Because this popular culture is

⁶Antonio Gramsci, Antonio Gramsci: Selections From Cultural Writings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 189.

⁷The subaltern classes is a term that Gramsci uses to refer to the urban working classes and farmers.

something authentic and coming from the people themselves, he exhorts his readers to take the study of folklore seriously. It should not be considered as an "eccentricity, an oddity or a picturesque element, but something which is very serious and is to be taken seriously."⁸ Also these religious expressions of the lower classes can only be understood in terms of their dynamic conflict with the cultural hegemony of the dominant classes.⁹ This cultural and religious life is the existential stance and world-view of classes oppressed in capitalistic society. Gramsci calls these the subaltern classes because they stand in conflict with the worldview which solidifies the dominant classes' power and constrains the lower classes. Therefore the religious expressions and morality are an expression of the concept of life of these marginal groups who think and act in different categories than the ruling class.¹⁰ This frame of reference of Gramsci is based on the dynamic of class conflict and illuminates the interchange between different classes in society.

The thought of Gramsci discovers these classes and cultural tensions in church life as well.

⁸Ibid., p. 191.

⁹Arnaldo, Nesti, "Gramsci et la religion populaire," Social Compass XXII (1975/ 3-4): 351.

¹⁰Henri Mottu, "Theologische Kritik der Religion und Religion des Volkes," in Genf '76: Ein Bonhoeffer Symposium (Munich: 1976) p. 73.; E. Martinez, E. Luengo, L.G. Orso, "Una Aproximacion: Religiosidad Popular Urbana," Christus 44, #522 (May 1979):25-38.

Certainly, there is a 'religion of the people,' especially in Catholic and Orthodox countries, which is quite different from that of the intellectuals (the religious ones) and particularly from that organically set up by the ecclesiastical hierarchy.¹¹

Portelli comments that Gramsci understands religion and Italian Catholicism as fragmented and manifests contradictory currents due to the various classes within the church. Therefore there is a Catholicism for the farmer, the urban worker, women on the one hand, and the intellectuals and religious elites on the other.¹²

In reality then, there are two parts to the Catholic Church. On the one side, there is the existence of the dominating and ruling religion, logically structured, without contradictions, coherent in its theology and liturgical life. On the other hand, we have another religion, which is self-contradictory and unsystematic in its thought and practices, developing and formed out of different fragments and levels. This religion of the people is characterized by what Gramsci calls materialism which stands in sharp contrast to the abstract and unified religious speculation of the theologians and the official church. To exemplify this materialism, he notes the spirits and saints, statues, images and magical

¹¹Ibid., Gramsci, Cultural Writings, p. 190.

¹²Hughes Portelli, Gramsci et la question religieuse (Paris: Editions anthropos, 1974), p. 27; Max Weber also notes the different religious expressions of various classes and strata in society, see "The Sociology of Religion," in Economy and Society, eds. G. Roth and C. Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978,), pp. 468-515.

practices of Folk Catholicism. He also cites the icons, the kissing and bowing before them, incense, images, bells, etc. of the Orthodox church. He mentions that this materialism grows out of the people and expresses a healthy concept of life and community. Mottu calls this popular religion the unarticulated side of the official, learned and preached religion, the tradition bound minority inside of the pretending majority, and lived incoherent within the ideally pretended coherent.¹³ This current belongs to the subaltern classes. Gramsci notes a heterogeneity in Catholic life because the Catholic Church has so many different classes with their respective ideologies and outlooks.¹⁴ A multi-class society will have also a plurality of ideologies and worldviews which then also fragment religion and church life.

Gramsci notes that the Catholic Church is aware of this division and tries to heal it by various means and so insure its homogeneity. It will discipline the intellectuals to keep them in certain limits. Certain movements for the intellectuals will be legitimized but will not be allowed to influence the masses. Innovating groups will be marginalized or coopted to the point where the changes they introduce will be minimized. Homogeneity also is subordinated to the

¹³Henri Mottu, "Theologische Kritik des Religion und Religion des Volkes," pp. 73-74.

¹⁴Bernd Hein, "Antonio Gramsci und Volksreligion," in Volksreligion - Religion des Volkes, ed. Karl Rahner (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1979), p.161.

smooth running of the organization. All innovation which does not come from the center must be challenged or coopted to the objectives of the ruling group.¹⁵

In conclusion, Gramsci notes the fragmentary nature of popular culture.

This conception of the world is not elaborated and systematic because, by definition, the people (the sum total of the instrumental and subaltern classes of every form of society that has so far existed) cannot possess conceptions which are elaborated, systematic and politically organized and centralized in their albeit contradictory development. It is, rather, many-sided - not only because it includes different and juxtaposed elements, but also because it is stratified, from the more crude to the less crude-if, indeed, one should not speak of a confused agglomerate of fragments of all the conceptions of the world and of life that have succeeded one another in history. In fact, it is only in folklore that one finds surviving evidence, adulterated and mutilated, of the majority of these conceptions.¹⁶

Examining the popular culture and religion of the subaltern classes, Gramsci notes that these are quite unsystematic, incoherent and fragmented. This is due to the interchange between the lower and upper classes with their respective ideologies and cultural stances. Popular religion and culture is a mixture of many elements from the past. He notes that the lower classes cannot arrive at a unified conception of life because of their spontaneous way of thinking and acting which hinders critical self reflection.¹⁷

¹⁵Nesti, "Gramsci et la religion populaire," p. 349.

¹⁶Ibid., Gramsci: Cultural Writings, p. 189.

¹⁷Ibid., Hein, "Antonio Gramsci und Volksreligion," p. 161.

Gramsci points out that popular culture has a mixture of reactionary and progressive elements.

In this sphere, too, one must distinguish various strata: the fossilized ones which reflect conditions of past life and are therefore conservative and reactionary, and those which consist of a series of innovations, often creative and progressive, determined spontaneously by forms and conditions of life which are in the process of developing and which are in contradiction to or simply different from the morality of the governing strata.¹⁸

Popular culture and religion have a mixture of conservative and archaic elements, and those which are progressive and reflect an active stance toward life today and can be the base for resistance and protest. So it has an ambiguity which must be recognized.¹⁹ Because of this fact, the dominant classes can try to reinforce the conservative and alienating elements of popular culture so as to control the lower classes. Also they will try to impose on the lower classes their dominating worldview so that the former will accept this as its own and accept also the controlling position of these groups. Because popular culture and religion is also an authentic life stance of an oppressed and marginal people, it can be the basis from which to articulate

¹⁸Ibid., Gramsci: Cultural Writings, p. 190.

¹⁹Ibid., di Nola, "Volksreligion - Herausforderung," p. 31.

their resistance and struggle for freedom in the world.²⁰

To summarize Gramsci's thought on popular religion, he highlights the problem of the connection between popular religion and the official one in terms of a social, historical and religious dialectic.²¹ Therefore he talks of a popular Catholicism or religion folklore, and the official religion, the hegemonic one or the religion of the church in order to underline the conflict between the two. For Gramsci, this religious folklore represents a conception of the world and life which resides in the marginal and lower-income populations and it is opposed to the weltanschauung of the dominant and cultivated classes.

For Gramsci, this opposition between the two kinds of religions is implicit, mechanical and objective and not at all methodical and being conscious of itself. He was investigating the popular religion of the Southern Italian farmers with their saints and devotions, aspects of magic and remnants of the old pagan religions. These religious forms, although at times quite old, were seen by him as an

²⁰Fernando Castillo, "Christianity: 'Bourgeois' (Bourgesa) Religion or Religion of the People?," in Christianity and the Bourgeoisie, ed. Johann B. Metz (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979):54-56.

²¹Vittorio Lanternari, "La religion populaire: Prospective historique et anthropologique," Arch. Sc. soc. des Rel., 53/1 (Jan. - March 1982):125; an interesting history and background to Italian research can be found in Carlo Prandi, "Religion et classes subalternes en Italie: Trente années de recherches italiennes," Arch. Sc. soc. des Rel., 43/1 (Jan. - March 1979):93-139.

expression of resistance by the subaltern classes through the centuries to the cultural imposition of and absorption to cultural forms and ideologies of the dominant classes and of the Catholic Church.

To help us better understand the thinking of Gramsci, let us cite one author who describes popular religion within this framework. V. Lanternari states that in the interior of any religious civilization, there is a stratification of social classes or cultural ethnic groups which are in a dominant-dependent relationship.²² Included also is the production of a coherent religious ideology, mythical and ritual institutions and social-religious organisms which interpret and are guardians of this ideology. In such a religious civilization are born and grow certain religious or religious-magical currents which are against the dominant ideology, but also exist in a dialectic relationship with it. In such a situation, the religion of the elite priests or aristocrats, or a religion of the state, or a system of institutional churches bound implicitly or explicitly to the economic and political interests dominates. Here also arise by a spontaneous process or a response to the dominant religion, the religious forces which we can call popular. These are collective manifestations ordained to express in a specific and spontaneous way the needs, hopes, and expectations which do not find an adequate response in the

²²V. Lanternari, "La religion populaire," p. 136.

official religion imposed by the dominant elites.

In this definition by Lanternari, we note the Gramscian dialectic and the conflict between the two forms of religions: the official and dominant one bound to the economic and political interests of the elite versus the one of the subaltern classes and the marginal cultural groups. It is important that Lanternari posits not only the question of class, but also culture and ethnicity. In this dynamic, there are needs and aspirations of the marginal groups that are not met by the official religions.

To conclude our discussion of the theory of popular religion, Gramsci and Lanternari would agree that the manifestations of popular religion can be many and quite diverse. They are unified by the fact that in societies and civilization, there is a relationship between the religious moment and the marginal situation of certain ethnic, social and cultural groups and classes. There is an internal dynamic between the two poles which includes osmosis and the exchange of cultural elements.²³

²³Lanternari, "La religion populaire," p. 134.; two interesting Gramscian analysis of Latin American popular religion are found in Enrique Dussel, "Popular Religion as Oppression and Liberation: Hypothesis on its Past and its Present in Latin America," and Paulo Suess, "The Creative and Normative Role of Popular Religion in the Church," in Popular Religion, eds. N. Greinbacher and Norbert Mette (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark LTD, 1986), pp. 82-94 and 122-131.

Hegemony

In the discussion of popular religion, we noted how A. Gramsci argues that popular culture and religion are in conflict with official religion and dominant culture. For Gramsci, this raises the issue of social conflict which involves the tension between various cultural stances of diverse sectors of society. He analyzes this cultural conflict in industrial Western society under the rubric of hegemony. In this way, he challenged Marxist thought to consider new elements in social change, such as culture and religion, that have been neglected or denigrated.

To begin, Gramsci did not see Communist ideology as a closed, orthodox system which was already completely fixed and closed, and isolated from the analysis of history.²⁴ It is rather an open method which can adequately grasp and change social realities. He only considered valuable a Marxism which in theory and practice really examine the present social and political situation, and evolution, and does not rely on prefabricated answers.

For this reason, he confronted various Communist theoreticians and leaders of his time, and criticized a deterministic Marxism which set up a false dialectic.²⁵ The

²⁴Hein, "Gramsci und Volksreligion," p. 156.

²⁵Walter Adamson, Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 178.

latter presented a demonstratable and eternally true path for the development of society and for the absolutely certain triumph of the working class. In Gramsci, there is a unity between theory and praxis which he calls the philosophy of praxis. He opts for an analysis of historical processes. In this movement, there is a definite relationship between the base and the superstructure. To believe that every political and social change is an outcome of the base belong to a deterministic view of history. Gramsci rather understands the relationship between base and superstructure as involving interchange and reciprocity. This accounts for the enormous influence of human efforts in history. Against the politically paralyzing understanding of the absoluteness of the base, Gramsci opts for the interchange of the two moments in the social processes.

K. Marx did well in analyzing the base, and it was Gramsci who attempted a needed explanation of the superstructure. He called their dialectical unity "the historical block" in which the economic and social content, and ethical and political form fall together. Even if the economic conditions for revolution are present, the latter will not automatically occur. The revolution can be retarded or held back by conservative ideological elements. We need good political action so as to free the economic impulse from its traditional hindrances. Political analysis must not be left to itself, but must come from the concrete-historical

analysis which is derived from the real possibilities in the base of the present social structure. In this analysis, one must concern himself with also the elements of the superstructure as knowledge, religion and common sense.²⁶

From his reflections on the human events of his time, Gramsci also revised the traditional Marxist interpretation of the state which understood it as the coercive apparatus of the dominant classes.²⁷ He rather understood that the dominant position of a social group is not only grounded in power which is based on its economic position and the coercion of the ordinary citizen, but also in intellectual and moral leadership, a consensus on the part of all citizens concerning the correctness and dominance of the ruling ideology.²⁸ To what was new to his time, Gramsci saw that the bourgeoisie did not have control through naked coercion, but through the spread of its weltanschauung by its penetration and control of private institutions, like schools, mass media, associations, church, etc. In this historical block reigns a strong relationship between political and civil society, dictatorship and hegemony, coercion and consent. In this theory of hegemonic domination, intellectuals play an

²⁶Ibid., p. 175.

²⁷A. Gramsci, Selections From The Prison Notebooks, eds. Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1985), p. 55, n.5.

²⁸Ibid., p. 12.; Ibid., Castillo, "Christianity: Bourgeois Religion," p. 55.

important role in that they insure this hegemony by implanting the dominant ideology in the people through the institutions of civic society.

This new conception of the state had revolutionary consequences.²⁹ Gramsci understood the failure of socialist revolutions of his time not due to the lack of conviction on the part of the revolutionaries, but due to the lack of participation of the masses who were not sufficiently conscientized. This must be done from the outside through the intellectuals of the party. The worker has to be freed from the dominant cultural hegemony of present day society. The preparation for the revolution (taking of power) is a long process of enlightenment of the proletariat. Alliances have to be built between the workers, farmers and other lower-class citizens.³⁰ Before taking power, they must arrive at a political and ideological unity under the hegemony of the working class. The revolution then has a double character: the expression of the collective-will (the political moment) and the intellectual-moral reform (the ideological moment). These two groups grow into a new conception and view of life.

This short summary of the thought of Gramsci on hegemony will be helpful as we discuss the cultural conflicts

²⁹Ibid., Hein, "Gramsci und Volksreligion," p. 158.

³⁰Ibid., Mottu, "Theologische Kritik des Religions und Religion des Volkes," p. 70.

involved in Caribbean popular religion and culture. Since domination in modern Western society is exercised not just by coercion and ownership of the means of production, but by cultural outlooks emanating from the dominant classes and structures, we will study popular religion as part of the cultural outlook of the working class in conflict with dominant ones. It is one way that the subordinate classes are withholding consent to and opposing the dominant ethos in society at large and also in the church. Also in his theory of hegemony, Gramsci develops further the Marxist analysis and envision a flexible interchange between the base and superstructure which is a more fruitful way to explain and plan for social change. He does not understand social change only in terms of movements in the economic sphere, but brings into account culture, religion and politics as playing key roles. This will help us appreciate more the role of popular religion as one important factor that can be used by marginal people to effect change to their benefit.

Part I:

The procesion presents a worldview in hegemonic conflict with the dominant Western culture of this country.

Gramsci noted that in the capitalist dominated societies of Europe in the first part of the 20th century, hegemony was not held through the control of the means of production alone, nor by coercion of the police and army. Hegemony was also based on ideological domination where a worldview was imposed on all levels of society. The dominant classes secured their position through consent of the people. This process involved legitimacy, not just coercion.

The notion of hegemony of A. Gramsci will be the point of departure in our discussion of the conflict between the cultural stance of Caribbean immigrants and dominant Western culture. There are worldviews emanating from both these groups and cultures which are in conflict; one represents the marginal classes and their weltanschauung and the other emanates from the dominant classes. In the Corpus Christi procession, the new-comers are celebrating a concept of life and an event which clashes with the ideology that is represented symbolically by the Manhattan skyline.

To reflect for a moment on the worldview that emanates from the skyline, it projects an image of political and

economic power, wealth and the individual's striving for it, a comfortable position in consumer society, industrial and technical know how, the use of scientific and rational knowledge and communications for continued growth.

As was mentioned above, the skyline projects an image of political and economic power. It includes the big buildings and offices of Wall Street, a financial capital of the world and offices of large companies that control manufacturing and production this country and in many other places in the world. These offices have persons trained in management, production and financial skills to manage such large companies. The skyline also symbolizes wealth in terms of amassing it through these large enterprises and being able to acquire the vast array of consumer products that are available to us. Each day in the mass media, there are the reports on the financial markets, those who gain, those who lose and the new breakthroughs in this complicated financial system. The mass media entice society to buy the consumer products that are produced by this industrial society. People come to define themselves with the things they have, the neighborhoods they can afford to live in and the kinds of vacations they can take.

It is also a world of science and rationality. To build the skyscrapers, to develop industry and technology, to command the vast electronic and computer communication systems demands a base of scientific and rational knowledge which

grows larger each day.

Locked in here also is the connection to political power. City Hall is in the midst of these skyscrapers. These large firms have representatives who fly with the shuttle daily to Washington, D.C. There is a cooperation between the large government bureaucracies and these firms to insure continued economic growth and financial gain.

Involved in this whole way of life are the universities. There are large and prestigious ones in Manhattan. The professors hold important chairs and are in positions of respect in society. Books, publications, research projects, conferences and classes generate more knowledge and much of it feeds into the technical and industrial world.

The ethos that the skyline projects is also agnostic. Not much is said about the existence of a divine being who is the origin of life on earth and who plays a key role in the history of humans and society. There does not seem to be much room for the rich mythical and spiritual world of the immigrant.

This then is the weltanschauung that emanates from the Manhattan skyline. It is a center of great power and influence in so many areas. People call New York the capital of the world. There are the very powerful interlocking political, economic and social structures that make it one of the centers of the world.

Around the Manhattan skyline are the neighborhoods of New York City, where there is a large Caribbean population-- Black or Brown, low income, struggling to find a secure foothold in their new land, with their distinctive cultural and religious life. It is the place of the extended family, helping one another find work or an apartment in a big city. They have their distinctive language and buy at bodegas where Caribbean food is sold. The radio and television have programs beamed to the communities. The distinctive Latin and West Indian music reigns supreme. The immigrant communities are marginal economically and politically. Many are undocumented aliens in this country and have employment that native born Americans find distasteful, such as, work in factories, restaurants, and house cleaning. This marginality finds expression in the drug trade in these communities. Immigrant groups, locked out of legitimate channels of advancement in the new country, often resort to deviant ways to get a foothold. It is also a world of children and youth. The Caribbean communities in this country are one of the fastest growing of all minorities.¹

It is also a world of the fiesta where there is a great tradition and celebration of birthdays, cultural, national and religious feasts in the home and the wider community. It is a spirit filled world with many African

¹"Hispanic Population Growing Five Times as Fast as Rest of U. S.," New York Times 11 September 1987, p. A1 and A28.

and/or Christian spirits. People participate in one or the other religions or mix the various strains.

These Caribbean neighborhoods lay on the periphery of the large Manhattan skyline. They represent a style of life which is quite different from that which emanates from the Manhattan skyline. The Corpus Christi procession is part of the Caribbean life in Flatbush Brooklyn. Against the very powerful economic, political and social structures with their underlying rational action and thought, and its materialism, consumerism and agnosticism, is the life stance of the immigrant which is people and family orientated, a culture that is warm and vibrant with music and celebrations, filled with many kinds of religious spirits, and racially and socially mestizo with African, Indian and European roots. This community is marginal in its political, economic and social standing. It is trying to get a foothold in this new land.

This conflict that we note between dominant rationalistic Western culture and that of the Caribbean immigrant can be analyzed according to the thought of Max Weber. In his Economy and Society, he discusses the three types of authority, traditional, legal and charismatic, their characteristics and the conflict between them.² In our study, we are particularly interested in the conflict between

²Max Weber, Economy and Society, ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 212-245.

legal and charismatic authority. Weber has a long discussion on legal and bureaucratic authority with its basis in rules and rationality. He notes how this clashes with charismatic authority which is grounded in a particular 'charismatic' person who is legitimized by a miracle, special revelation or hero concept. The community of this leader will be organized around an emotional form of relationships. Because charismatic authority is so extra-ordinary, it clashes with rational bureaucratic and traditional authority forms. Weber notes how bureaucratic authority is bound to intellectual analyzable rules while charismatic authority is essentially irrational, quite foreign to norms and regulations.

In this conflict between different forms of authority, Weber analyzes the pervasiveness of bureaucratic structures in all forms of modern life.³ The advanced capitalist and socialist societies with their large economic, social and military structures depend on bureaucracies. Their spirit touches all aspects of life. The only escape is to go back to small organizations which is difficult. He also mentions that bureaucracy has appeared late in history, and in its development, it destroys other forms of dominations which are not rational.⁴ For this reason, Weber is pessimistic about the emergence of and survival of charisma in modern society, and the future of democracy, freedom and individualism. In

³Ibid., pp. 223-224.

⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 1002.

the large capitalist and socialist systems and nations, bureaucratic domination prevails.⁵

This analysis of Weber on the conflict between legal and charismatic authority and the future of charisma in modern society is an important instrument for our study. The description of the conflict between dominant Western technical culture and that of the Caribbean immigrants is an interesting example of this tension between bureaucracy and the rationalization of modern life versus charisma, and the growing disenchantment of modern life including the loss of religion. The factors that Weber cited as being pressed out of life are celebrated in the Caribbean life stance. The role of festivity, feeling, music, family and companionship, religion, symbol and gesture and dance. The marginal elements in life, whose loss Weber laments, are very much in evidence. The enthusiasm of charisma is pronounced. Interesting is that the new immigrants who are marginal to dominant culture and economic and political power have brought a life style which highlights the conflict between this rationalized culture and charisma.

In line with the Weberian analysis of this cultural conflict, V. Turner advances this thought further. In his theory of *communitas*, he agrees with Weber on the tension between Western rationalistic society and charisma, but

⁵H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 71-72.

Turner in contrast to Weber does not necessarily see this charisma disappearing in modern life, but interestingly notes where these charismatic tendencies emerge in society to challenge rationalistic structures.

He defines *communitas* as the "relational quality of full unmediated communication, even communion, between definite and determinate identities, which arise spontaneously in all kinds of groups, situations and circumstance."⁶ It has the qualities of lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity and comradeship and so is a liminal reality. The bonds of *communitas* are undifferentiated, egalitarian and direct. *Communitas* tends to be spontaneous, concrete and immediate. It does not merge people, but liberates them from the conformity to general norms. He states that it is the origin of all structures, but also it can be their critique. It strains toward universalism and openness. Guardians of structure regard it as dangerous so they put taboos around it. It is richly charged with affection, mainly pleasurable. It has a sense of magic about it. A feeling of endless power is felt by those who experience *communitas*.

It is a fact of everyday life, but has not been studied by social scientists. It is however an integral part of religion, literature, drama and art. Glimpses of the

⁶Victor and Edith Turner, Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p. 250.

unused evolutionary potential of *communitas* can be found in the words of the prophets and artists.

Turner then distinguishes three kinds of *communitas*.⁷ First, the existential *communitas* which is the direct, immediate and total confrontation of human persons which has them think of mankind as homogeneous and a free community. Second, normative *communitas* is the organizing over time of the original existential *communitas* into a perdurable social system. The experience of brotherhood and unity is preserved through its religious and ethical codes, and legal and political statutes. Third, ideological *communitas* is the variety of utopian models for society.

Turner places pilgrimages in normative *communitas* because it characterizes best the relationship among the pilgrims, and the social bond between them and the people who help them and give them hospitality on the holy journey.

Important also is where Turner sees *communitas* breaking out in society.⁸ It emerges through the interstices of society, in liminality. He defines liminality as the state and process of mid-transition in a rite of passage. During this period, the ritual participants are ambiguous, because they pass through a cultural realm that has few of the characteristics of the past or the coming state.

⁷Victor Turner, Drama, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 169.

⁸Turner, Image and Pilgrimage, p. 251.

Communitas breaks out at the edges of structure, in marginality. Marginal groups look to their group for communitas. They take their structured position from the more prestigious group with whom they live with. They can become critics of the structure from their understanding of communitas. Such marginal people might be writers, artists and philosophers.

Third, communitas can arise from underneath structure, in inferiority which is a value-bearing quality that belongs to the weak. It confronts structured power. It encourages continuity, fosters a sentiment of wholeness of the community, places the model of an undifferentiated whole whose units are human persons. In hierarchial and stratified societies, the power of the weak are associated with females, the poor and outcasts.

Turner's analysis is most interesting because of where communitas and charisma emerge in contemporary society; they arise on the margins of and interstices between powerful structures and institutions. He like Weber describes the conflict between communitas and charisma, and the bureaucratic rational life style of modern life. Charisma and communitas emerge from the populations who are marginal to and locked out of the dominant bureaucratic structures.

This analysis of Turner is valuable because it relates to the marginality of the Caribbean immigrants vs. dominant American society. They are in transition, in liminality

between one culture to another in this country. They are also poor with few economic and social resources. These marginal newcomers have a life style which is in conflict with the dominant Western culture. Turner notes also that *communitas* and *charisma* are a danger and looked upon with suspicion by dominant structures, seen as a threat to their position in society. *Communitas* and *charisma* can be a source of criticism of structure because intellectuals and activists in such movements will use this vantage point to criticize dominant society. This will make *communitas* threatening to the authorities because it can challenge their control. Max Weber notes also a similar suspicion and dislike. We will discuss this threat and danger of *charisma* and *communitas* further in the next section of this chapter.

Another interesting example of where *communitas* emerges in society is a study by Pierre Arnold of two Peruvian manifestations of popular religion: the pilgrimage site at Muruhuay and the national feast and procession of El Senor de los Milagros.⁹

P. Arnold agrees with Gramsci that popular religion can be a form of resistance to dominant culture and official religion. He notes that people's religion has many elements in it, political, ideological, economic, psychological and religious. It can be a cry of the oppressed, but it is also

⁹Pierre Arnold, "Pelerinages et processions comme formes de pouvoir symbolique des classes subalternes: deux cas peruvians," Social Compass 32/1 (1985): 28-32.

a transaction of the marginal with the power structure. He mentions that this popular religion is a privileged model of the structured mentality of the people. It is part of the environment of survival for the oppressed. It is a camouflaged resistance in which they preserve their original culture under the guise of accepting certain forms of the dominating culture. The clergy's role is limited to the celebration of the mass and to specific ecclesiastical tasks. The clergy and the other authorities are on the periphery of the real significance of the religious event.

Pierre analyzes two examples of Peruvian popular religion to demonstrate his thesis. He first studies the large pilgrimage center in Muruhuay in the highlands of the Andes. This holy place is in the center of the Indian territory. This area also enjoys a certain amount of prosperity due to the mines. It has preserved its Indian culture and resisted European cultural penetration. Interestingly, the pilgrimage basilica was recently constructed by missionary German clergy. For the people, the highlight is not the visit to the shrine per se, but rather the procession that takes place there. The procession is the dominant religious expression in the Andian Indian religious culture and this practice dominates the religious life of the pilgrimage site. The clergy, knowing the Indian tradition, have organized the life of the center with this in mind. In this action, Pierre sees the popular religion of the

pilgrimage site as a transaction and trade off between the clergy and the Indian pilgrims.

A more dramatic and enlightening example of people's religion is the analysis of the large procession of Our Lord of the Miracles in Lima and the whole country. It is celebrated twice during the month of October. It is the only event during the year in Peru that one can call massive. He analyzes it as it is celebrated in Lima, because in the capital of the country with its various classes and cultural groups, the real meaning of the event emerges.

He begins by noting that it is completely controlled by the laity and by the Blacks in particular. There is a brotherhood exclusively Black that runs the procession. It is this group that marches at the head of the procession with the sacred image, next comes the thousands of Andian Indians who recently have migrated to Lima, and the middle class watch from the sidewalks. When the procession passes the presidential palace, city hall and the archbishop's residence, these dignitaries are in the balcony and do homage to the image.

He gives a brief history of the procession. He notes that the Black population is today still socially, politically and economically marginal in Peruvian society although they dominate the cultural life with their dances and poetry. They also hold a privileged place in religious life with their continued celebration of the African

Traditional religions, the leadership in this massive procession and the famous Black saint, St. Martin of Porres. In this situation, Pierre notes how people's religion can be a point of cohesion and mobilization of the masses who are oppressed.

Noteworthy is also the path of the procession. It first goes through the central business sector and La Plaza de Armas where the powerful, the president, the mayor and the archbishop have their residences and from their balconies, do homage as the procession passes. It then proceeds to the working class neighborhoods which are very decorated and visits the various churches. The celebration goes way into the night. Word is passed around on where the procession is now in the neighborhoods.

Arnold goes on to state that the participants of the procession are multi-class, ethnic and racial. All the groups manifest a fervor and enthusiasm for the procession. However, for each group, the procession has a different meaning. He concludes that it is in the city of Lima with all its different classes and stratifications that the class struggle as a social theater is clearly visible. The procession has then a heterogeneous character. The poor take possession of the city and the procession becomes sort of a social encounter.

This study by Arnold is valuable because it highlights how marginal people are the force and leaders behind

important manifestations of popular religion. It is the marginal Indian whose preference for processions dominate the life of the pilgrimage site. More dramatic is the leadership of the marginal Black population of Lima who produces a procession which is the largest holiday in Peru. In the procession, follow also the thousands of poor Indians who have come to the capital city from the mountains looking for a new way of life. This procession dominates national life for a few days, passes the residences of the power structure in the Plaza de la Armas and continues to the various working class neighborhoods of the city. This popular manifestation with its implications for a redressing of oppression, is an expression of the marginal people who exert their power through their popular culture and want all segments of society to take note of them and their needs. This study of these Peruvian processions is an interesting example of Turner's thesis of *communitas* breaking out on the margins of society.

Both Turner and Arnold cite the theme of resistance to and criticism of dominant culture in *communitas* and popular religion. This is very much in agreement with the thought of Gramsci on popular religion as a base of resistance to dominant culture. It is a weapon that the marginal and working class people can use to fend off the attitudes of dominant society. As a result, these groups can preserve what is valuable in their cultural life, refuse to be

manipulated by dominant values, and resist what is injurious to them in society.

We will now discuss three other studies of popular religion which highlight this resistance function. They are instances of the hegemonic conflict between dominant and marginal cultures in modern society.

The first case that we will consider is Harvey Cox's treatment of protest dimension of Nicaraguan popular religion with its celebrations and pilgrimages.¹⁰ This people's religion was a base for the poor to resist the impact of modernization and to gather strength to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship. In the colonial period, the celebration of the patron saint of the local parish was crucial in slowing down the modernization process that the dominant classes were forcing on the people. This latter movement had two elements: rationalization which was accompanied by atheism, agnosticism and anti-clericalism and the privatizing of life which leads to individualism. By celebrating the local patron saint who intercedes for the people before God, the people's faith was strengthened against agnosticism. Also the common festivity fostered group solidarity which slowed down individualism. So the fiesta resisted the elite ideology.

Cox adds that pilgrimages instill in people the belief

¹⁰Cox, Religion in the Secular City, pp. 240 - 254.

that they need not be caught in bad situations in life.¹¹ These are trips and the people are travelling with God. Ruling groups want people to remain quiet or go where they are sent. Movements are dangerous. Processions can turn into protest marches and pilgrimages can lead to revolts.

Reflecting on the Nicaraguan situation, Cox concludes that the important themes of liberation and resurrection, the freeing of captives and the restoring of life and flesh, are linked to the popular religious festivals and pilgrimages.¹²

This analysis by Cox is valuable because it highlights the tension between popular religion and modernity in a certain point in Nicaraguan history. Exemplified here is the conflict that Weber notes between modernity and charisma, the disenchantment of the modern world. However, it is charisma that is victorious. It is not squeezed out of life as Weber notes. Rather it is a weapon used by the marginal classes to preserve their culture and religion, their charisma and tradition of *communitas* and to resist the attitudes of the liberal elites of their country. As in the thought of Gramsci and Turner, it is *communitas* emerging at the margins of society that resists the culture of the dominant classes and structures.

The theme of resistance is also noted in a commentary on Mexican-American festivities in contemporary United

¹¹Ibid., p. 253.

¹²Ibid., p. 254.

States. In his work The Galilean Journey, Elizondo notes that the Mexican-Americans feel most alive and free when they are in a fiesta.¹³ In these with dance, food, games and jokes, they celebrate who they are and their freedom despite the conquest, oppression and domination of their history. They feel that they are a new emerging people marching into a new future. The fiestas are life because they celebrate the passage from death (the end of old groupings) to life (birth of new groupings). The fiesta is not an escape or repression, but a resurrection, sublimation. It is a rising above and beyond the rational limits of understanding. The Mexican-American is not afraid of suffering and death, but sees it as a passage to a new existence.

The fiesta is a mystical celebration of a complex identity, the mystical affirmation that life is a gift and is worth living. The fiesta blends the fatalistic/pessimistic realism and the adventuresome/optimistic idealism of the Mexican-American into one celebration of life. The apparent contradictions are not understood, but assumed, transcended and celebrated.

Elizondo notes the necessity of two elements, the prophetic and the festive.¹⁴ The latter without the

¹³Virgilio Elizondo, Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), pp. 30-31.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 120.

prophetic can turn into a brawl. The former with the festive can turn into cynicism and bitterness. That is why Moses commanded that the originating events of the Jewish people must be celebrated annually. It is the prophetic-festive that keeps the spirit alive and nourishes the life of the group.

The Mexican-Americans are joyful. They love their fiesta and welcome all. In the midst of suffering, there is joy. This is also manifest in their liturgical celebrations, spontaneous home life and planned into the commemoration of historical events. Even in their sorrow, they celebrate life.

Elizondo concludes that fiestas may be foolishness to those who seek rational discourse.¹⁵ They are stumbling blocks to those who seek timely, logical and efficient action. But to those who have the Christian faith, it is a celebration of God's power into a new creation.

This treatment of Mexican-American fiestas is important because it stresses the resistance function of popular religion in the lives of marginal and oppressed people. The Chicanos are predominantly marginal in their economic, social and legal status in this country. Their traditional festivities are a way of not being overcome by their difficult and oppressive situation. In them, they manifest their identity, human worth, cultural identity and a

¹⁵Ibid., p. 125.

desire to confront the injustices of their life situation. These fiestas are a resistance to the difficult condition into which dominant American society puts the immigrants. As a result, they have an important prophetic function for the Mexican-Americans. Interestingly, Elizondo notes how these festivities are in conflict with rational discourse, efficient action, the very modernizing and rationalizing tendencies that Weber notes. However, Elizondo mentions how this charisma resists the rationalizing tendencies of modern life. It will be overcome by modernity. In this way, Elizondo is in agreement with Turner and Gramsci who also see such a resistance on the part of *communitas* and popular religion. This treatment by Elizondo is also an example of the thesis of Turner that *communitas* breaks out on the margins of society.

A third study highlighting the resistance function of popular religion is that of Alfonso di Nola describing the protest dimension of the people's religion of the Southern Italian farmers.¹⁶ He sees it in conflict with modern capitalistic systems, specifically consumer society. He notes that the farmers and the shepherds of the South live on the rim of society and about 20% of them are tied to pre-capitalistic economic systems. Their popular religious

¹⁶Alfonso M. di Nola, "Volksreligion -- Herausforderung an Christen und Marxisten," Orientierung 3 (1977): 28-32; see also Paul Robbrecht, "Scherpenheuvel: The People's Pilgrimage," Lumen Vitae 52/1 (1987): 68.

expressions are a mixture of traditional elements with certain mandates of official Catholicism. He asks the question why is there such a return by the urban working class with rural backgrounds to a popular religion of the traditional type, with processions, pilgrimages and local patron feast days? This urban proletariat lives in industrial society but desires a folk religion of pre-industrial times. The author rejects the argument that the workers' participation is an attempt to fill up their leisure time. He notes that these pilgrimages and local feast days do not have the enticement of soccer games and local movie houses for amusement and the filling up of time. There must be another reason for such a participation in these religious celebrations.

These feasts have a deep meaning in the life of workers and farmers because they are high points in the exigencies of their lives. These festivities manifest power conflicts and all their problems. In previous times, people's religion was the weapon of farmers and shepherds. Now it is the weapon against consumer society. Di Nola notes a growing alienation and a new level of realization in post-industrial society with its devaluating, burdening and threatening attacks on people. The person has become an object and a thing in a mass of people who are the same and exchangeable. This depersonalization is due to the dynamics of profits. Therefore this return to festivities and

pilgrimages is a cry of resistance on the part of the oppressed whose value is demeaned and now they discover their true human dimension in their traditions.

The author also notes that in Western Europe the masses who were dragged into the cities and into the industrial production process in the last ten years, have no ideological orientation. In Socialist societies, there is at least projected an utopian vision which gives the person a security in terms of life's meaning and his fate in history. In Western capitalist societies, the mass of workers are human objects in a post-citizen, brutally anti-ideological society, which is full of potential ethical and social conflicts; it is definitely atheistic and inhuman in its desire for power, war and enslavement to the pursuit of money.

Di Nola also notes that the official church has been ambiguous in its solidarity with the workers and its determination to confront the injustices of their situation. In Italy, the church takes a confusing stand between its preaching of poverty and justice, and the reality of interlocking interests which express themselves in a unity of the hierarchy with the political and economic establishment. It also manifests itself in forms of pastoral life and in the choice of language which are tied to the dominant classes and are distant from the working class.

Di Nola's commentary on Southern Italian popular

religion is interesting because he specifically stresses its conflict in contemporary capitalistic and industrial society. Against the crass materialism of consumer society, it allows the working class to hold onto certain human, cultural and religious values denigrated by industrial society. It is a weapon that these classes can use in this alienating situation. Di Nola notes that in the past, people's religion was used by farmers to fight oppressive nobles, today it confronts consumer society and the pursuit of money, and the Italian Catholic Church which has an ambiguous stand on social justice. This work by Di Nola links up with the theory of Gramsci and Turner and the studies of Cox and Elizondo in which popular religion and *communitas* break out on the margins of society and confront dominant attitudes and structures.

In conclusion, in this section we have described the conflict between dominant rational Western society and the cultural stance of the Caribbean immigrants of which the Corpus Christi procession is a part. We have noted how Max Weber envisions this conflict in his discussion of the growth of rationalization and bureaucratization in the modern world with the subsequent decline of charisma and the disenchantment of modern life. We then cited Turner's theory of *communitas* where he discusses the same theme. He does not necessarily see the disappearance of *communitas* but notes its emergence on the margins of society and its conflict with

dominant culture and structures. The thought of Turner is in agreement with the theory of Gramsci on the resistance function of popular religion. We then cited three studies, those of Cox, Elizondo and Di Nola, which highlight this conflict between modernity and charisma, and how these three relate to the theories of Weber, Turner and Gramsci.

All of the above studies are interesting examples of the theory of hegemony of Gramsci. The clash between classes and groups in modern society is just not a question of economics as certain Marxists suggest, but also is a function of spheres of influence of various cultural and religious outlooks which impact on the outcome of social change.

Part II:

The Corpus Christi procession expresses a form of popular religion which is in conflict with the modernizing and rationalizing tendencies in the Catholic Church since the 1960's and the Second Vatican Council.

This section will be divided into three parts. First, we will cite three scholars who describe in more general terms the tension between popular and official forms of religion. Second, we will present the very specific conflict between certain currents in the Liturgical Reform of the Second Vatican Council and people's religion. These three are the liturgical reform which was to cleanse the liturgy of its excess, the renewal in church decoration so as to rid it of excess, such as, statues, images, candles, etc., and the movement since the Council to explain the faith rather than celebrate it. The third section of this chapter will deal with the danger that charisma poses for the institutional church. Religious elites fear enthusiastic religious movements because they might not be able to control them, and so these pose a threat to ecclesiastical authority and also to secular political structures.

We will begin by giving a summary of the argument presented by Harvey Cox in his recent book, Religion in the Secular City. He discusses the conflict and distance between popular religion and specifically the theology of the official

Christian Churches.¹ He is referring to the Latin American situation which has implications for all of Christianity.

Modern theology, Cox notes, grew up as a repudiation to popular religion. It saw itself as a purification of religious belief and practice from the elements that made it an anachronism in the modern world. Popular religion was the enemy and had to be destroyed. Another reason for the alienation of modern theology from popular religion is due to its excessive academic specialization. Like other academic fields, theology requires advanced training.

Ultraspecialization and information have overloaded the field so there is little time left for the world of everyday religion. Cox notes that even the theologians of liberation can have this condescending view of popular religion. Many were trained in Europe and came back to Latin America with all these academic prejudices. On returning home, they found that they had to "detoxify" and "de-Europeanize" themselves so as to be able to work with the marginal Latin American.²

Cox argues that it will be difficult for modern theology to recognize and draw upon people's religion as a key resource in the building of a post-modern theology. Cox' analysis is helpful because he notes how the enterprise of modern theology is locked into the cultural stance of the

¹Harvey Cox, Religion in the Secular City: Toward a Post-Modern Theology (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1984), p. 241.

²Ibid., p. 243.

dominant culture and academic life, and as such is cut off from people's religion.

A famous Latin American theologian echoes similar observations on the distance between the official theologians and the life of the marginal Latin American.³ Boff complains that the theologian can become inhuman because he lives too much in the abstract and has lost contact with the roots of life. His perspective is suspect because it is not based on the concrete life of the church and history, but on conceptions and theological dogmas. The theologian belongs to the privileged class, works in big universities, lives comfortably and travels by plane when the distances are too great. His vocabulary is sophisticated which working class people are unable to understand. His liturgical celebrations are dull and dry because he lacks the body language such as the lifting of hands, singing and gestures which turn rites into celebrations. To overcome his own handicaps as a theologian, Boff spent one summer visiting the base communities in rural Brazil in order to participate with the marginal classes in their daily life's struggle. He found these groups to be the new partners in theology making -- the poor with their existential living of the christian faith in suffering and struggle.

Another interesting instance of the tension between

³Leonardo Boff, Theologie Hoert aufs Volk (Dusseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1982), pp. 111-120.

official religion and the popular one is found in H.N. Niebuhr's, The Social Sources of Denominationalism. He is influenced by Troeltsch's theory on the origins of sects and gives an good history of the origins of Methodism. Niebuhr states that the 18th century's religion in England was sterile and cold interested more in mathematically oriented philosophy and lacking idealism.⁴ The sermons were generally written and cold. The clergy were mostly recruited from the lower classes, but they were not able to interpret Christianity for these classes. They were too closely attached to the gentry from whom they got their livelihood.

The social and economic situation also aggravated this situation.⁵ The first half of the 18th century was a prosperous time, and the industrial revolution aggravated class differences in society. The gap between the rich and poor became glaring. As a result the poor were more excluded and unwanted in the churches of the wealthy and middle class.

Out of this situation arose Methodism which offered the poor a religious life and faith to meet their needs.⁶

⁴H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: New American Library, 1975), p.56; another interesting study of official religion and its distance from and inability to meet the needs of the subaltern classes can be found in Fernando Pico, "Institutional Catholicism and the Alienation of the Working Class: the Religion of the 19th Century Daylaborers in Utuado, Puerto Rico," Thought 54 (June 1979): 186-202.

⁵Ibid., p. 59.

⁶Ibid.

Although the primary leadership came from the wealthy, the secondary leadership and the bulk of the members came from the lower classes. The enthusiasm and emotionalism of early Methodism made it the scorn of the wealthy and educated. There were impassioned prayers and exhortations that stirred the multitudes. The atmosphere of miracles, healings, prophecies and judgements charged life with the supernatural. The excitement of its doctrines aroused people to conversion and the leading of a good moral life.

The lay character of the movement made it also a religion of the poor. On the one hand, the salaried and educated clergy did not want to participate in this popular religious movement; on the other hand, the subaltern classes were antagonistic to the professional clergy whom they felt did not meet their needs. The lay preacher, however, coming from the working class was able to meet this group on its own terms; he had the fervor and faith of a missionary.

Niebuhr's history and analysis of the origins of Methodism highlight the tensions between the decadent and sterile mainline religious institutions of the time. The poor were excluded and their religious needs not met. So arose a religion of poor people with the characteristics of such and which was able to respond to their needs.⁷

⁷These various manifestations of popular religion can be a longing for a more spontaneous, emotional and experiential way of life and religion. This recalls Weber's distinction between the charismatic phase of religion over against the more bureaucratic institutional one. See Luis Maldonado,

These three authors have presented a description of general areas of conflict between the official and popular religions. These writers illustrate the thesis of Lanternari who we quoted in the introduction of this chapter. He states that religious elites who are bound to dominant cultural, political and economic structure cannot provide religious services to satisfy the needs of the working and marginal classes. Therefore these subordinate groups spawn religious movements which are more to their liking and fulfill their needs. Lanternari calls these popular. Cox and Boff speak of the official church and its academic theology as distant from the marginal classes; as such, the church cannot meet the needs of the lay people. This is the situation which allows for the growth of popular religious movements. In the study of Niebuhr, it produced a new religious movement which then grew into a separate Protestant denomination.

In conclusion, we have presented three studies illustrating in general the conflict between popular religion and official forms of religion and so have finished the first part of this section. We will now move to the second part and discuss the tension between three specific movements emerging from the Second Vatican Council and people's religion.

To enter into this problem let us cite an impressive

"Popular Religion: Its Dimensions, Levels and Types," in Popular Religion, eds. N. Greinbacher and N. Mette (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark LTD, 1986), p. 9.

critique of the Council given by Luis Maldonado, an Anthropologist and Pastoral Theologian from Spain.⁸ He notes the contrast between the official liturgies of the church and certain expressions of popular religion. For example, in Sevilla, Spain, during Holy Week, there are the great processions with much of the population assisting while the official liturgies during the same week are poorly attended. He notes that it is ironic that in this situation the official liturgies are marginal while the processions are central. There are definite reasons for this distance between the official and popular forms of religion in Western Catholicism. Interestingly, Eastern Orthodoxy does not have such a division. One reason is that the Eastern Churches always used the vernacular languages in the evangelization of these countries. In the West, however, the Latin language dominated because the vernacular languages were in the process of developing. It gave a sense of the sacred and mystery to worship, and was a vehicle of clerical domination. Also in the Oriental Churches, there was a stress on the local church with its own patriarch and liturgy. In the West, there were various rites in early medieval times, but with time there was a centralization and domination by Rome. The principle of adaptation was lost.

⁸Luis Maldonado, "Liturgia y Religiosidad Popular," a presentation given at an international conference on popular religion, Universidad Santa Maria La Antigua, Panama City, January 19, 1984.

Also in the Oriental traditions, the liturgy manifests the popular until today. The local orthodox church is a world of icons, song, incense, bells and procession, list of petitions, gestures of the body and the deacon is important. These liturgies are long like a fiesta. There is always movement for the people so they do not get tired. They constantly touch the icons, bow, genuflect, etc. The orthodox worship service is a world of symbols.

In Catholicism in the West and after the Liturgical Reform of the Second Vatican Council, we still have a rich liturgy, but much was lost. The gap between the official church and the people in liturgy became greater. Maldonado notes that the Liturgical Reform was promulgated by certain offices in Rome. These people had an academic background and the foundation for the reform was ideological. They had little contact with the working class and their preferences in worship.

Maldonado cites characteristics of this reform. The reformers first wanted to restore the celebration of the word as the center of liturgy. It was an important restoration because we need the abundance of the word in liturgy. The readings were well selected and the liturgy was put into the vernacular. This restoration of the word however has another side in that it can make the liturgy too verbal, with endless commentaries and introductions. Conflict ensues between verbal language and the symbolic gestures of the body.

Secondly, the reformers wanted to simplify the rituals. This was highly controversial and was done without any theory or theology of ritual, nor a sense of man's need for ritual. So many rituals were dropped from liturgical celebrations. In all these reforms, Maldonado notes a conflict of cultures. The culture of hearing belongs to the cult of the book. In Latin American, however, the culture of seeing predominates over that of hearing. Also there is a confusion on the role of symbols. Good symbols should be seen and grasped; they need not be explained as the reformers insist on doing. Seeing the symbols should release its many meanings. Another mistake was that the reformers threw out symbols and did not replace them with others.

Maldonado criticizes another current in the liturgical reforms. The liturgy has been converted into a catechesis (too many words) while it is meant to be a feast. For this reason, the present liturgy has lost the interest of the youth. He mentions also a loss of esthetics in the reform. The old liturgy had many popular elements and symbols and it was beautiful. Maldonado stresses that we have five senses: hear, see, touch, smell and taste. Not just the first two, but all five senses should be used to convert liturgy into a beautiful experience. Liturgy becomes then a theophany -- Jesus transfigured and glorified in the presence of the saints and angels.

He continues with the need to inculturate liturgical

worship in the various cultures of the world. More power to do this should be given to the respective national conferences of bishops. He does not see much hope for this with the present pope. Liturgy also should be creative in its use of tradition and in the development of new things.

The 1960's also had other currents that divorced the official from the popular. The Theology of Secularization was influential and stressed the history of salvation and the desacralization of time and place, and did not show much of an interest in liturgy and sacraments. This widened the gap between the elites and the people. Maldonado goes on to comment that Jesus relativized the sacred only when it was excessively absolutized. He knew that the sacred mediates the divine. He closed his talk discussing the need to evolve a theology of celebration and to rediscover the fiesta. The sense of the sacred has to be restored through the use of good symbols in worship.

This presentation by Maldonado is excellent in its historical perspective on liturgical development in the West in contrast to the East. He is also quite perceptive in his critique of the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council and does well in highlighting its failures. For our purposes, he articulates many elements which we will also see operative in the analysis of the conflict between the immigrants' Corpus Christi procession and the elan of the liturgical reformers of the Second Vatican Council.

Continuing in the same line of critique, the Canadian Conference of Liturgical Directors produced a document which highlights the built-in tensions between eucharistic liturgical worship and forms of popular religion. It places also this analysis in the context of the church since the Second Vatican Council.

The document states that since the Council there has been an inflation of the word in the liturgy at the expense of the body and the visual. There has developed a very specialized expression of the faith to the detriment of popular and spontaneous prayer.⁹

Important to realize also is that tensions exist in the two distinct natures of liturgy and popular religion.¹⁰ Theologically speaking, liturgy is the unique mediation between God and man; it is a special manifestation of the priestly function of Jesus. At the center are the sacraments of baptism and eucharist. More on the periphery of life are the religious expressions dealing with saints, music and liturgical art and the cult of holy things and places. So in liturgical theology, expressions of popular religion hold a second place. The Second Vatican Council tended to emphasize this also. It accented more the proclamation of the word in

⁹Louis-Andre Naud, "Integration des devotions populaires par la liturgie," Bulletin national de Liturgie 17 (Jan. - Feb. 1983), p. 32.

¹⁰Lucien Gagne, "Liens entre liturgie et devotions populaires," Bulletin national de Liturgie, p. 27.

cult.¹¹ Also the Council wanted to stress the key role of Christ in our faith and wanted to purify faith life from 'medieval traditions.'

In face of these theological principles, people's religion plays its own variation in faith life. The clergy like to preach on the great truths of the faith, such as the mystery of the Incarnation. The people however, in relation to the Incarnation, think of it more as the feast of Christmas which is the birthday of the infant Jesus and as such is the season of celebrations. Also to reduce the distance from the holy, the people want to touch, hear and see it. There is the need as a result for rites and celebrations. The saints are needed to be intermediaries because God is far away. Persons will have favorite saints; these are involved with litanies and refrains which are easy and repetitive.

Another polarity is that the clergy want to announce the word while the people want to see and touch the holy.¹² The language of the clergy can be abstract and intellectual which also clashes with this desire to touch and see. At times also, the elite of the church look down on the masses as practicing their religion with semi-magical rites of which they should be purged and so live a more authentic Christian

¹¹Benoit Lacroix, "Devotions:hier-aujourd'hui," Bulletin national de Liturgie, p. 16.

¹²Benoit Lacroix, "Une seconde parole," Bulletin national de Liturgie, p. 22.

life.

To overcome this tension between official and popular liturgical expressions, the Canadian document opts for an understanding of the positive strengths of both types, the healthy use of both in church life, so that the needs of most people can be met.¹³

From France also comes unhappiness with certain currents in pastoral life since the Second Vatican Council. Robert Pannet feels that preaching has now become too denuded, wordy and intellectual.¹⁴ The French workers complain about this. They live their faith and religious practices in touch with the deep feelings of their life, with their imagination, dreams, tears, passion, joys and fears. Rationality is not absent, but plays a secondary role. Belief is mixed with the need of the marvelous and some superstition. Pannet warns that if the pastoral life of the church is too attached to the literary culture with many words, it will not touch the popular culture which is sensuous with sounds, images and heartbeats.

He analyzes the pastoral situation in France where the clergy and hierarchy due to their education and class, are locked into la religion savante, that is, a scholarly and

¹³Ibid., Louis-Andre Naud, "Integration des devotions populaires," pp. 32-34.

¹⁴Robert Pannet, Le catholicisme populaire (Paris: Editions du Centurion, 1974), p. 110.

learned faith.¹⁵ As a result, they will not appreciate the popular religion of the workers. This learned faith is one of books and documents. It is a religion of rationality which keeps the person distant from the mystery spoken about. It is a religion of political power because the clergy have the position to be the spokesmen of the faith while the laity must sit in the pews and be quiet.

On the other hand, the religion of the French workers, la religion populaire, belongs to oral culture and is not transmitted by books.¹⁶ It gives a large place to the irrational. It is concerned with family and health, and the affective and material success of the former. It is not overly concerned in understanding all the dogmas of the church, but through statues and images, wants to touch the saints and the Virgin. It is a religion of the earth where one meets God in a pilgrimage to a holy place, statues, candles, images and rites. It can be traditional and hold on to customs and resist the innovations that the elites advance.

R. Pannet and also L. de Vaucelles who agrees with this critique,¹⁷ both warn that there is too much distance

¹⁵Robert Pannet, Marie au Buisson-Ardent (Paris: Editions S.O.S., 1982), pp. 46-47.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 46-47.

¹⁷Louis de Vaucelles, "Jalons pour une histoire des strategies pastorales," in Le christianisme populaire: les dossiers de l'histoire (Paris: Editions du Centurion, 1976), pp. 243-257; see also Bourgeois, Ph. Aries-H. ed. Religion

between la religion savante of the clergy and la religion populaire of the workers. Mediators are needed between the two if the church wants to be successful in evangelizing the workers.

Commenting also on the situation of the church after the Second Vatican Council, Segundo Galilea gives a critique from the perspective of Latin America.¹⁸ He mentions that popular religion is strong in that continent due to a lack of evangelization and few clergy. It grew without much control and is very much tied to the culture and poverty of the people. The insecurity of their poverty stimulates religiosity. They must go to God for what they cannot get from the state. That is why the prayer of petition dominates so in the people's religion.

Galilea notes the break between official church life and the life of the people.¹⁹ For example, the official church will stress the importance of Easter and Pentecost, while the masses will be more attracted to Good Friday and the suffering Jesus. He feels that the Second Vatican Council had little to say to the masses of the Third World. The gap between the official church and the poor is great. He

populaire et reforme liturgique (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1975).

¹⁸Segundo Galilea, Religiosidad Popular y Pastoral Hispano-Americana (New York: Centro Catolica de Pastoral para Hispanos del Nodeste, Inc., 1981), pp. 25-32.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 13-14.

states that Western Christianity tends to be too intellectual and rationalistic, while the culture of the Hispanics is more intuitive. In the Middle Ages, St. Francis of Assis tried to bridge the gap between the official church and the poor by putting more feeling into religion. Galilea mentions that the Hispanics might feel more at home in the Oriental liturgy which is popular and devotional. Even Hispanic prayer is like the Eastern one, the prayer of the heart.

There are other commentators that have a similar critique of the life of the church since the Second Vatican Council. Gilbert Romero in his two articles notes the tension between Hispanic popular religion and the North American church and larger American society.²⁰ A. di Nola finds a liturgical life and a theology in the post conciliar church that is for theorists and specialists only. Its level is rarified with a lofty vocabulary that escape the masses.²¹ In the Roman Synod of 1985, many bishops saw the need to inculturate the liturgy in the different cultures of the world, wanted popular religion "rehabilitated" and a return to the sacred through the use of symbols and gestures in

²⁰Gilbert Romero, "Self-Affirmation of the Hispanic Church," The Ecumenist 23 (March-April, 1985) and "Teologia de las Raices de un Pueblo: 'Los Penitentes de Nuevo Mexico,'" Servir 15, #83-84 (1979).

²¹Alfonso di Nola, "Volksreligion - Herausforderung an Christen und Marxisten," Orientierung 3 (1977).

worship.²² I also have written a few articles noting the function of popular religion in some immigrant parishes and the conflict it causes with more educated and elite Catholics.²³

In relation to the critique of the three movements emerging out of the Second Vatican Council, these writers object to the excessive rationalization of the Catholic faith with a resulting loss in the use of symbols and signs, ritual and gesture. The more mystical dimension to religious expressions have been lost with the result that Catholic religious life is not able to meet the religious needs and expectations of the working class and certain Third World people whose culture can be rich in symbols and rituals.

In part three of this chapter, we will now discuss the element of danger that charisma and popular religion pose for the church institution and for that matter, political authority.

We will analyze the theories of V. Turner and M. Weber and present three case studies in this regard.

As we mentioned in part one of this chapter, V. Turner notes that *communitas* with its spontaneity,

²²Paul Ladriere, "Le catholicisme entre deux interpretations du Concile Vatican II - Le Synode Extraordinaire de 1985," Arch. Sc. soc. Rel. 62/1 (July - Sept., 1986):20-21.

²³Robert Trabold, "Building Immigrant Community: Popular Religion," Clergy Report 4 (Jan., 1984) and "Pastoral Strategies in Immigrant Work" Migration Today 9 (1981) and "Popular Piety and Liturgical Reform," Liturgy 4 (1985).

enthusiasm, fraternity, desire for freedom from constraint is a threat to the guardians of structure who look at it as dangerous and try to put taboos around it. These guardians feel their lack of control over these movements and the latter are the spawning ground for the critique of and dissent to dominant structure.

The danger of *communitas* is further developed in the thought of Max Weber. His analysis is useful because he focuses on the conflict between charismatic religious leaders and the institutional church. Weber states that the church and the priests in particular attempt to rationalize religious life and institutionalize it in church structure.²⁴ This gives them control over these activities, and diminishes the threat of these enthusiastic religious movements and individuals to the institution's charism. For this reason in church history, the church has been suspicious of personal religious experience that promotes a direct relationship with God. Charismatic leaders who work miracles and wonders, and prophets with special messages are called heretics if they cannot be controlled. When these charismatic and prophetic movements decline, the church moves to institutionalize them and incorporate them into its life. Weber discusses an interesting example of this in history, the incorporation of monks into mendicant orders.²⁵ This removes the danger of

²⁴M. Weber, Economy and Society, vol. 2, pp. 1164-1166.

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 116-1168.

the monks with their celebrated direct relationship with God and their other worldly orientation, and incorporates their experience into a church structure. Also the monks are encouraged to participate in the church's pastoral work.

Another interesting dimension to this problem is the danger of these movements to the state.²⁶ The latter is also suspicious of these manifestations because they can spawn revolts. For this reason, Weber argues that in history, the state has often used the priests to suppress these religious movements and thus keep the population in check. The priests cooperate because they too are threatened.

This brief analysis of Weber's theory on the danger of enthusiastic religious movements which agrees with V. Turner highlights an important element in the understanding of popular religion. This element illuminates the implications of the Corpus Christi procession and the conflict that it can provoke with church and political structures.

To illustrate this thesis of V. Turner and M. Weber, we will discuss three studies which concretize this dimension of danger of popular religion. First, an interesting example of the thesis of Weber and Turner on the danger of charisma and *communitas* can be found in the study of Chartier on the history of festivity in France from the 15th to the 18th

²⁶Ibid., pp. 1161-1162, 1170-1176.

centuries.²⁷ He states that festivities express a social structure and cultural system. They depict also the tensions and conflicts in a society, such as the opposition between dominant and popular or marginal cultures.

A festival then can be the field where popular resistance acts against normative injunctions as well as the place where there is a restructuring of the behavior of the majority. He studies the festivity of carnival and finds it to be the focal point of the primordial motivations which also animate other festivities in other times of the year.

Chartier goes on to state that in his study, there was always an attempt by the church and state to regulate and prune them. They always were a major obstacle to the religious, political and ethical hegemony of the dominant classes. In order to christianize the people, the clergy saw the festivals as illicit, excessive, intemperate and morally given to license.

Chartier enumerates the various ways the church has tried to tame and control this revelry. He notes also that the state attempted to control them for its own social and political ideology. He gives interesting examples of this under the Ancien Regime and the French Revolution. Under such standardization and domestication by these governments, the festivals became weaker and many withered away. In the

²⁷Roger Chartier, "Discipline and Intervention: The Fete in France XV - XVlll," Diogenes 110 (Summer 1980):44-65.

time of the Revolution also, the new state started its own festivals to teach the people the rules of the new social apparatus, and to replace the festivals of the old regime. Therefore the festival can be a pedagogical tool to teach the people the new consecrated realities of the revolution, such as, family, motherland and the country. He concludes by stating that festivities can manifest and socialize a project in the religious and political sphere. Therefore they are a pastoral weapon and civic institution.

Chartier continues and states that the domestication of the festivities can never be completely controlled because there are spaces of criticism within them. This is due to the fact that the festivities remain in the hands of the youth and their institutions. For this reason, they always have the potential of reacting against the establishment. The leaders of the festivities are always those who are less integrated into society. For this reason, these feasts can display the tensions of the community and so threaten its unity. The festival then is always an arena for censorship.

In a similar vein, H. Cox in his study of Nicaraguan popular religion finds a similiar situation.²⁸ The patronal feast of the city of Managua is Santo Dominquito. He is the saint of the marginal and poor people who live in outlying areas around the city. For this feast, these farmers stream into the city to carry the saint's statue, dance and sing.

²⁸H. Cox, Religion in the Secular City, pp. 253-254.

In 1961, the archbishop of Managua felt that the fiesta was getting out of hand and wanted to regulate it. A few years later, the Somoza government did prohibit it. The reasons given were the excesses and drunkenness. Many believe that the real reason for the suppression was the fear on the part of the government of these farmers, mostly anti-Somoza, dancing and celebrating under the protection of their saint. The government remembers that in 1881, there was a serious uprising by farmers against many injustices. Now the regime has fears of the farmers dancing in the streets in great numbers. It could trigger another serious revolt.

Interestingly in this regard, P. Arnold in his study of Peruvian popular religion notes that the impulse for these religious expressions come from the people and the clergy has a limited role in celebrating the mass.²⁹ It is the laity who really are in control and are the inspiration in these religious movements.

To conclude this section, these writers cited illustrate well the danger of charisma, enthusiastic religious movements to established church and secular authorities and how these movements can spawn revolutionary currents and dissent. The church and the state in history have tried to control, and institutionalize or suppress them. This point has implications for our study of the Caribbean

²⁹P. Arnold, "Pelerinages et processions comme formes de pouvoir symbolique des classes subalternes," p. 46.

Corpus Christi procession in Brooklyn. This celebration is very much an enthusiastic religious event whose impulse and inspiration come from the immigrants. The clergy are quite peripheral to its dynamic, and really do not control it. One might venture to conjecture that if the clergy of the Brooklyn Diocese really understood the implications of this religious event, they would consider it dangerous and want to control it more.

Part III:

This Corpus Christi procession can be a base for creative social change and liberation for immigrants from the injustices of their marginal situation in this country.

Evolution of Thought on Popular Religion

The origins of this section lie in the debate and research in Latin America on popular religion. A revaluation started in the 1960's when the Catholic Church went through a conversion and radicalization process. From 1492 to the 1960's, the church as an institution had been primarily tied to the wealthy and the military. In the 1960's with all the social and economic changes in Latin America and with the ferment of the Second Vatican Council, the church turned to identify itself with the poor and the problem arose on how to interpret the distinctive religious expressions of the marginal Latin American.¹

Pablo Richard states that before the famous Latin American Episcopal Conference of Medellin in 1968, the study of people's religion was the field of scholars in the various

¹A very long discussion of the various social, political, economic and theological elements which lead to a revaluation of popular religion can be found in Maximino Arias, "Religiosidad Popular en America Latina" in Iglesia y Religiosidad Popular en American Latina: Ponencias y Documento final (Bogota: Secretariado General del CELAM, 1977), pp. 17-43.

Social Sciences and Theology. He cites five lines of thought.² First there was the descriptive analysis and categorizing of the different manifestations of this religiosity in various regions and among ethnic groups and classes. Second, there were the cultural studies positing people's religion as part of popular culture. The third tendency was more anthropological where these religious expressions were analyzed from the existential experience of insecurity, sickness and death. Fourth, there were studies on how popular religion had changed under the impact of modernization, industrialization, and urbanization, and specifically in the migration of the low-income people from the rural areas to the city. The last tendency was Marxist where this religiosity was a manifestation of alienation in which the oppressed looked to religion as a substitute for basic human needs.

In all the above, the actors were the academicians, and popular religion was just an object of study divorced from the life of the investigator. The scientific point of view was tied very much to North American and European Social Science thought. It was elitist thinking and took a condescending view of the religions of the subaltern classes. This elitist attitude also crept into church thinking in the early 1960's and in the reform of the Second Vatican Council.

²Pablo Richard and Diego Irarrazaval, Religion y Politica en America Central (San Jose, Costa Rica: Departamento Ecumenico de Investigaciones, 1981), pp. 9-13.

For example, in contrast to popular religion, was the educated and mature faith which expressed itself in the new liturgical reform and in biblical studies.

As a reaction to the above elitist attitudes in the church and academic world, arose a more populist movement. It looked at popular Catholicism as an authentic expression of the faith of the people despite its ambiguities and so an integral part of popular culture. There was a tendency to idealize "the people" but no attention was given to the people as exploited or to class struggle.

Pablo Richard considers this last populist tendency still academic and elitist, looking at popular religion as an object of study.³ However, he notes that the experience of committed Christians in popular movements of social change laid the basis for a new understanding of this religiosity. First, there was a recognition of manipulation by the dominant classes of popular religion. Secondly, the secularization process in Latin America had different characteristics than in developed countries. Secularization resulted in a group politicization of the social and human totality. Secularization did not destroy popular religion but transformed it into a liberating potential and a revolutionary ethic. People saw the necessity of reformulating the Marxist theory of religion in view of the reality of popular Catholicism in Latin America.

³Ibid., p. 12.

Second Step: Critical Acceptance of Popular Religion⁴

A new interpretation of popular religion arose with the Episcopal Conference of Medellin (1968) and the Roman Synod (1974) with the papal letter "Evangelii Nuntiandi" (1975). There was an attempt to overcome the rigid stance of elite versus popular with its academic and lack of contact with the lived experience of the people. Not really abandoning scientific analysis, the terrain of study of popular religion became the political and pastoral experience of the poor and exploited. Out of this focus arose certain tendencies and interpretations. The first was a critical ecclesiology. In order to have a co-existence of popular religion and the church, there was need of an internal crisis within people's religion and a conversion on the part of the church. Only in this renewal can one realize the liberating potency of the faith. This cannot take place among the mass of believers, but only in an elite minority. The second is called a popular critical stance where one rediscovers the positive values in the faith and life of the oppressed. The third tendency was a critical pastoral one. There was an emphasis on the liberating message of the bible, not only for personal conversion but also for a critique of society. The fourth was a critical historical stance. It studied the history of Christianity in Latin America from the Colonial Period to the

⁴Ibid., pp. 13-16.

present and analyzed the contradictions between the oppressed mestizo world view and that of the imported European culture and religion.

Third Step: the Exploited and Believing People as Subject of Liberation and Evangelization.⁵

In the preparation for the Second Episcopal Conference in Puebla (1978), the interpretation of popular religion reached a new level. The point of departure was the analysis of the total and conflicting reality of the poor and the exploited classes, and their complete and concrete praxis. The analysis does not focus on social consciousness, but on the social praxis and popular mobilization of the exploited classes in determined historical situations. Pablo Richard quotes Gustavo Gurtierrez in stating that the Latin American is both believing, and poor and exploited.⁶ The subject of popular religion is this oppressed people, but also having a revolutionary potential to take consciousness of themselves as such a class and to work to build a new society. Popular religion is the religious factor in this people and can be part of this mobilization for change.

In contrast to the above interpretation at the Puebla Conference was another current. The point of departure was

⁵Ibid., pp. 16-21; for a good discussion of this point, see also Christian Parker, "Popular Religion and Protest against Oppression: The Chilean Example," in Popular Religion, eds. Norbert Greinacher and Norbert Mette (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark LTD, 1986), pp. 28-35.

⁶Richard and Irarrazaval, Religion y Politica, p. 17.

the marginal and exploited classes. Their religious belief was understood to be not in conflict with the church, but strengthening Christianity. The focus is not the people's situation of exploitation, but they as the radical basis of Christianity in Latin America. This opinion was not accepted at the Puebla Conference, but is influential in ecclesiastical circles until today.⁷

The final position paper of the Puebla Conference emphasizes that the commitment to justice by the poor and the growth of the base communities has helped the church discover the evangelizing potency of the poor. The marginal is not only the subject of his own history, but also carries an evangelizing charisma. Therefore popular religion is not an object of analysis but, in so far as it contains the word of God, it is an active form through which the people can continually evangelize themselves. For the oppressed classes, there is a mutual interaction between their revolutionary potential and evangelizing capacity in their unjust life situation.⁸

This then is a brief summary of the evolution of the thought on popular religion that has developed in Latin

⁷Ibid., p. 19.

⁸Enrique Dussel, "Popular Religion as Oppression and Liberation: Hypothesis on its Past and its Present in Latin America," Popular Religion, eds. Greinacher and Mette, pp. 82-94.

America in recent years.⁹ The important thing to note is the shift from an academic objective analysis to a more active one of seeing the people's religion tied in with the praxis of liberation of the marginal Latin American. To continue our analysis, let us cite some of the research of H. Ribeiro who places the thought on popular religion into three helpful categories.¹⁰

The first is a cultural perspective which is based on the theory of C. Geertz and the notion of religion as a cultural system. Religion contains many values, has a unifying vision and is a base for human and social life. It is part of this total culture. In Latin America, popular religion is a manifestation of an inculturated Christian faith. Also Latin American culture can be defined in the context of Catholicism and as such the latter gives unity to the former. Therefore popular religion is the instrument to guarantee the unity of that continent, to continue to evangelize the poor and to create a new society of fraternity.

⁹See also Thomas A. Kselman, "Ambivalence and Assumption in the Concept of Popular Religion," in Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America, ed. Daniel Levine (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 24-41.

¹⁰Helicon Ribeiro, Religiosidade Popular na Teologia Latino-Americana (Sao Paulo: Edicoes Paulinas, 1985), pp. 224-226.

The second perspective is called liberationist.¹¹ The point of departure is class conflict and the oppressor-oppressed dialectic. Popular religion is tied to social classes. Because it is part of the oppressive situation, it can be an instrument of liberation or alienation of the poor. Since Colonial times, the marginal people of Latin America live in captivity, but in recent times, they have become conscious of their human dignity, of their divine sonship/daughtership and the need of human fraternity. The religious base of this oppressed class is the instrument of a new exodus for them leading to a liberation in this world and terminating in the parousia. These poor are the privileged ones to whom the gospel is directed, and are called to to implant the reign of justice. They are called to evangelize and through them, the church renews itself from the base so that it can be of service to the people of God in the world. From this militant praxis of the evangelizing poor is implanted the reign of justice and fraternity to the detriment of the reign of sin and oppression.¹²

The third perspective is a pastoral one. The point of

¹¹See also Paulo Suess, "The Creative and Normative Role of Popular Religion in the Church," in Popular Religion, eds. Greinbacher and Mette, pp. 122-131.

¹²A very good and complete description of the relation of popular religion and the Theology of Liberation can be found in two articles by Jose Luis Gonzales, "La Teologia de la Liberacion: un nuevo marco teorico para la comprension de la religiosidad popular," Selecciones de Telogia 22 (Oct. - Dec. 1983):255-265; "Teologia de la Liberacion y religiosidad popular," Paginas 7, #49-50 (1982):4-13.

departure is the people who possess the real Christian values of Latin America. This people has a history, a culture, a goal and becomes the people of God in salvation history. The popular religion of the poor and uneducated people of the continent has various manifestations, such as sacraments, processions, etc, but also has a distinctive wisdom and sense of life. The people of Latin America, especially the exploited, are open to God and have a fraternity to others through their ecclesial faith. This people also looks for a progressive human liberation. The people are the agents of evangelization and the church must be close to the people, especially the marginal and oppressed ones so as to help make their religiosity a sign and movement of hope and a means for liberation. Evangelization consists in touching the cultural ethos of the people, liberating it from its alienating elements, and have it become a personal and conscious Christian faith.

This classification of the three schools of thought on popular religion is helpful to us. It compliments the evolution of the thought since the 1960's that Pablo Richard so well documents. From these three categories, we will analyze the Corpus Christi procession under the rubric of the liberationist stance.

Popular Religion as Liberator and Oppressor

Before we go on to analyze the liberationist stance of popular religion, it would be valuable to analyze the literature discussing people's religion not only in its liberating function, but also when it can be used to support the status quo. Enrique Dussel has set up models which analyze these different factors.¹³ He argues that popular religion is at the core of the culture of the marginal and oppressed Latin American. It is a religious field with its own autonomy versus the official religion; in it, the people are the subject although priests, shamans and prophets can exercise influence. Dussel presents two models to distinguish popular religion as oppressive versus it as liberating. In the former function, the Christian people, marginal and exploited, cannot attain the necessary goods for daily living. The people look to God and the saints to bestow these necessities through miracles and special gifts. In this way, the people are active in worship, but the recipients of the donations. The daily environment of the poor is dominated by the spiritual and holy on which they depend for the essentials of life.

In the model of popular religion as liberator, the sacred provider is the oppressed people. Out of this group

¹³Enrique Dussel, "Popular Religion as Oppression and Liberation," pp. 82-94.

emerge leaders who lead the people to attain the necessities of life. The miracle or gift is the people themselves who have become the activist in history. Dussel gives as interesting example of this. The Mexican image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is associated with a pagan shrine of an Indian goddess to which the marginal and poor came in the time of the Aztecs. To these classes today, this image of the Virgin is an object of great devotion and in the 19th century, became a support in the consciousness of the masses and in the birth of the Mexican national and anti-Spanish sentiment and movement. In the armies of independence, the flag of the nationalist had the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. In the 20th century, the same image was used by Zapata in his reform struggle in Mexico, and by Caesar Chavez in the movement for social justice by the California Chicano farm workers.

Dussel argues that popular religion can be manipulated to preserve the status quo by three elements. First, the shamans can work in the religious field through soothsayings, healings through prayer, herbs and blessings. They are a decadent form of the tradition. Second, political society and the populist state, such as Peron in Argentina and Duvalier in Haiti, can use popular religion to control the people. Third, the Catholic Church manipulates popular religion for its own purposes. For example, today the Catholic Church controls the large pilgrimage centers and shrines in Latin America and uses them for its own ends.

Another way that popular religion or for that matter religion can support the status quo is through legitimation.¹⁴ Religious institutions and their leaders can frequently have vested interests which they protect through alliances with dominant classes and political structures. On the other hand, the political powers will also attempt to use religion to serve its own purposes. For example, political people support religion because it helps keep the people well conducted and so easier to control. "Through religious legitimation, wars have been justified as 'holy wars,' obligations have been justified as 'sacred duty,' and domination explained as 'divine kingship.'"¹⁵ This function need not be considered morally evil because religion can support good cultures and governments who have the interest of the people at heart.

Parallel with the role of legitimation is the function of religion in socialization.¹⁶ It can teach the people specific roles and personal qualities which are in harmony with existing structures. In addition to legitimation and socialization, religion has the role of social control.¹⁷ The forms of such control are persuasive because reference is

¹⁴Meredith McGuire, Religion: The Social Context (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1987), pp. 194.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 195.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 196.

made to the sacred and so sanctions against deviance are powerful. Social control can be exercised informally through ostracism, formally through excommunication, and through lengthy processes involving religious courts and laws. The factor of group loyalty can be used also to ensure conformity. Social control itself is ambiguous because it can also serve to bring about social change. It can be used as an instrument to exert pressure for change.

The whole question of legitimization, socialization and social control is found exemplified in Latin American history and has influenced the manifestations of popular religion there. Prién, commenting on the colonial period, states that the church came with the Spanish conquistadores.¹⁸ In the Iberian tradition, there is a strict alliance between church and state. Since the church used the power of the Spanish Crown to establish Christianity in the colonies, it established a religious faith which supported the colonial political structure by the development of what historians call a 'patriarchal Catholicism.' Prién cites interesting elements in this type of faith. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella were venerated as manifestations of Christ the King. Local landlords and officials were identified with Christ. Statues of Christ had the crown of Castille on their heads. Feast days celebrated a warlike

¹⁸H.-J. Prién, "Popular Religion in Latin America," Verbum SVD 27, #1 (1986): 37-39.

Catholicism of the Crusades. A church constructed in Salvador Bahia in 1555 was dedicated to 'Nossa Senhora de la Vitoria,' after the Portugese defeated the indians in battle.

Another manifestation of this patriarchal Catholicism was the kind of person canonized as saints, for example, Francisco Soltano and Rose of Lima. They were generally individuals who in their outlook were very other worldly and devotional. Those saintly and heroic personalities like Bartolome de las Casas who confronted the church and political structures for their oppression of the colonial natives, never received the blessing of canonization although a number of them were martyrs. Luis Beltran was canonized because he had a religiosity like Francisco Soltano, not because he was a friend of B. de las Casas. Beltran protested the abuses and went back to Spain rather than tolerate such an abuse of government. In this way, the saints' ethos emanated a sense of approval and obedience to the imperial Spanish domination and the church's implication in it. The religious symbols and behavior are so manipulated in this type of Catholicism so as to legitimize a social system with the corresponding process of socialization and social control helping along.

In a very real sense, the low-income and marginal Latin American never forgot this role of the church in their history. Comblin mentions that in certain sections of Brazil, there is a great apathy on the part of the Black

population to institutional Catholicism.¹⁹ They remember the role of the church when their forerunners were slaves on the big plantation in previous centuries. In one of the interviews I held in Brooklyn, one Hondurian immigrant mentioned that this history of the church's identification with the rich and the powerful contributes to the indifference on the part of many Latin Americans to the Catholic Church today.²⁰ He mentioned that in the past, the bishops exhorted the poor to accept their lot as the will of God. Today, things have changed and bishops encourage the people to struggle to create a new and human society.

Dussel argues that the various forces that have religion support the status quo or manipulate popular religion for the same end can be overcome.²¹ People's religion can be lifted to take a prophetic role in society. He states that the contemporary base ecclesial communities in which the marginal Latin American study the bible and acquire an awareness of their social and political marginality and exploitation is such an instance.²² In this process, these

¹⁹J. Comblin, "The Heritage of Popular Religion in Brazil," Lumen Vitae 46, #4 (1986): 397.

²⁰Interview with Edgardo Sampan, Brooklyn, NY, 10 June, 1987.

²¹E. Dussel, "Popular Religion as Oppression and Liberation," p. 92.

²²The base ecclesial communities is a strong grassroots movement in Latin America where the marginal and poor reflect on the bible in small groups. The emphasis is to understand the social implications of the Christian faith, so that they

groups do not abandon their traditional popular religion, but it acquires a prophetic, creative and political significance in the new consciousness of the people. This prophetic people's religion can be the base of specific acts of liberation and change. He cites the role of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the movement for Mexican independence and the role of the basic ecclesial communities in the overthrow of the Somoza government in Nicaragua a few years ago. Religious beliefs inspired the poor to revolutionary activity. Dussel notes this operative in the whole history of Latin America since the Spanish conquest. It helped slaves and the oppressed incite periodic revolts to combat the injustices in their situation. Dussel argues that it still exists in the marginal sectors of Latin American society. The poor "trusting in God, believing in his providence,..... waits like Christ in patience, seated for crucifixion but also for liberation."²³

In this same line of thought, Prien calls this function of popular religion a pre-disposition which can lead to all kinds of devotion, spiritual and political messianism.²⁴ Dumoulin, studying popular religion in

can grow in a critical awareness of their oppressed situation and take action to remedy it.

²³Ibid., p. 93.

²⁴H.-J. Prien, "Popular Religion in Latin America," p. 41.

Brazilian history, calls it an energy potential for protest.²⁵ She cites the movement of the ligas camponesas as grounds for the emergence of leaders around whom the people could rally and these movements offered to the poor a vision of a more equal society. Kselman finds in Latin American people's religion themes of social solidarity and human equality which are at odds with oppressive regimes.²⁶ Arias understands these religious expressions as having values which are important.²⁷ It celebrates symbolism, affectivity, mystical experience and sacrifice which are lost in technical and scientific civilization. The social celebrations of feasts, pilgrimages and processions gives glimpses of social participation which is more just and human.

Liberationist View of Popular Religion

In popular religion man expresses himself in all his dimensions.²⁸ For marginal and low-income people, religion is one of the ways to manifest their existence, live

²⁵A. Dumoulin, "Popular Religion in North-East Brazil," pp. 54-55.

²⁶T. Kselman, "Ambivalence and Assumption in the Concept of Popular Religion," pp. 24-41.

²⁷Maximino Arias, "Religiosidad Popular en America Latina," Iglesia y Religiosidad Popular en America Latina: Ponencias y Documento Final (Bogota: Secretariado General Del Celam, 1977), p. 19.

²⁸H. Ribeiro, Religiosidade Popular, p. 161.

relationships with others and proclaim their right to exist. This religion maintains a sense of dignity, a social cohesion, remembrances of the past, hopes for the future and present a certain utopia which will permit the person to confront oppression and create a new society. Popular religion expresses itself in the history of a people which at the same time is the history of salvation. Celebrating this faith with festivities, in music, dance, procession, in rites of passage like baptism and marriage and death, in solidarity and defense of human dignity, folk Catholicism expresses the love of God, translating it into symbols.²⁹

This people's religion is militant in so far as it posits an alternative historical project.³⁰ This religion is born in the marginal and oppressed classes. As a result, these religious expressions are one of the ways that the people can symbolize an alternative historical project which is against the dominant or established one. It is an aspiration of a new society and world, and of new values and morality. It envisions a change in history and a Christian utopia to be born in time. This historical goal of the poor is related to church life, and puts into practice the daily struggle to create a new fraternity among the poor

²⁹A good analysis of this in relation to the Latin American farmers is in Jose Luis Caravias, Religiosidad Campesina y Liberacion (Bogota: Indo-American Press Service, 1978).

³⁰C. Parker, "Popular Religion and Protest," pp. 33-35.

themselves. From this is born a classical Christian community that can confront the dominant classes. Therefore to announce the faith is not a simple process nor abstract. It is rather to live the absoluteness of love, to posit it in the struggle and it creates a community of brothers and sisters.

This militant people's religion engenders praxis.³¹ In this way classes who recognize themselves as Christians and are recognized by others as such, enter and live their religious practice and this in dialectic relation to the process of liberation (developing a critical consciousness), politicization, mobilization and the progressive and effective participation in the centers of decision-making. The people then live out the potential for protest (utopian), play an active role and contribute effectively in the revolutionary formation of society.

Therefore the militant dimension of people's religion realizes itself as a religious and political factor. The revolutionary consciousness of the people is at the same time its evangelizing consciousness. Both presume that the person is the subject of his/her history and the carrier of the evangelizing charisma.

³¹Interesting examples of these in Latin American history can be found in Richard and Irarrazaval, Religion y Politica en America Central, pp. 35-58; Georg Gruenberg, "Basisgemeinden und Volksreligiositaet in Lateinamerika," Verbum SVD 27, #1 (1986):79-84; Anne Dumoulin, "Popular Faith in North-East Brazil: A Psycho-Pastoral Approach," Lumen Vitae 52/1 (1987):54-55.

Ribeiro makes an important point about evangelization in popular religion.³² He states that to evangelize means to discover Christ present in the aspiration of the poor for justice and solidarity. To speak about Christ today is not to propagate a doctrine, but to have a praxis and to give it meaning in confronting the problems and exigencies of human life. To evangelize or allow oneself to be evangelized means not only to go to the school of the poor, but to put yourself at their sides to discern the causes of their historical situation. This should lead to working for their social liberation and denouncing of injustices and oppression.³³ In the dialectic between the word of God which liberates and the social situation that oppresses, evangelization means to probematize, that is, to question the possibility to overcome the conditions that appear historically insuperable and to propose steps to liberation.

In this process of liberation and popular evangelization, Ribeiro cites three important elements: silence, works and words.³⁴ Silence means an open and contemplative attitude to the words of Christ. We find his words in his presence in our life and also in how he speaks to us through the lives of the subaltern classes. Secondly,

³²H. Ribeiro, Religiosidade Popular, p. 175.

³³H.-J. Prein, "Popular Religion in Latin America," p. 40.

³⁴H. Ribeiro, Religiosidade Popular, pp. 176-177.

this contemplative attitude has meaning only in so far that it produces commitment, works and actions on the part of the Christian in the struggle for social justice. In the above dialectic between the silence and works and action, is the need also for words. These are prophetic in so far as they question, disturb and cause a concrete transformation of present situations. Also words mean a catechesis that pedagogically organizes the facts and words of Christ as a mediation of the encounter always deeper with Him in the person of the poor.

Not every act of evangelization can be liberating. At times evangelization can maintain the status quo.³⁵ The efficacy and basis of a liberating praxis is to first analyze the system of oppression and then secondly to formulate and realize a project for a new society--a society for fraternity among people. This is a liberating evangelization, not an alienating one. This liberating evangelizing then means the transformation of men and women as people, also a change in the relationship among social class and in the structures of society. In the above transformation, one moves from the social relations of domination to those of liberation.

From this struggle to create new men and women, a new

³⁵E. Dussel, "Popular Religion as Oppression and Liberation," pp. 36-88; H.-J. Prien, "Popular Piety in Latin America," pp. 37-39.

society is born a popular church.³⁶ This church is born in the lived experience of the gospel among the marginal classes and because it opts for these classes. It is in a way the sum of the struggles that unite the poor. The popular church posits itself at the margins and confronts the social and political power of the dominant classes. Its only power is the power of its faith, hope and charity, that is, the power of the gospel that has deep roots in the traditional Christian life of the exploited poor. This popular church has an authentic ecclesiological standing and represents the universal vocation of the total church. The popular church is not a separate entity from the institutional church, but it does confront the official church when it stands with the dominant classes and supports their injustices.

Popular religion in the context of critical political consciousness, in the role of the People of God and of the popular church, finds its true interpretation.³⁷ It becomes the place of producing a new civil society different from the dominating one where class consciousness, popular movements and political revolutionary organizing are encouraged and motivated by people's religion. On the other hand, the popular church finds in popular religion the expression of its values, interests, culture and weltanschauung of the

³⁶H. Ribeiro, Religiosidade Popular, pp. 178-181; P. Richard and D. Irarrazaval, Religion y Politica, pp. 32-33.

³⁷Ibid., p. 33.

subaltern classes. All this is coherent in the Christian sense and offers a direction to growth and development. Therefore the revolutionary consciousness of the people can grow in harmony with the Christian consciousness of the people, with forms of people's religion and with the popular church.

To concretize this militant popular religion and popular church, Ribeiro cites Jose Gutierrez who presents examples which illustrate the link between people's religion and the struggle for liberation in Central America. He notes new ways of praying, celebrating the sacraments and other religious acts in such an oppressive situation filled with war and violence.³⁸

In summary, God has his grace act in and among his people. The manifestations of his love take on many forms. People's religion is one of the signs of God in the church in order to challenge it to be faithful in its mission, which is to be the ferment in the world through an evangelization of the present to the future. People's religion, inside the church, is the proper way for the church to be the poor church that walks with faith, hope and charity. Its limits and deficiencies are witnesses that sin still exists in the human heart. Its strengths are the festive way that the Lord who became one of us, even the most poor of us, uses so that they are a manifestation of mercy and fraternity. Popular

³⁸H. Ribeiro, Religiosidade Popular, pp. 180-181.

religion is the expression of the lived faith and thankful love from the divine filiation and the certainty of the possibility of a human fraternity. The latter due to sin has not reached its full development. People's religion is the inculturated faith, the laity to be the church, the holy people of God in pilgrimage, which transforms the world on the way to the Father's house.³⁹

We will conclude this section on the liberationist view of popular religion by discussing the thought of C. Parker which explains the kinds of protests that can arise in it.⁴⁰ She states that in people's religion, one can find the seeds of liberation challenging the dominant culture. Through their symbolic religious representations and practices, the subordinate classes can exercise a symbolic protest to their marginal situation. It can be art of the strategy of survival of Third World people in their daily struggle to maintain their life. Parker rejects the thesis that popular religion always leads to resignation, but sees it having a variety of factors. It can be an element in alienation, or a factor in popular identity and resistance to dominant religion and culture or an attempt at social advancement and the transformation of society. It depends on the social and historical situation. C. Parker cites various examples in Latin American history of the different forms of

³⁹Ibid., p. 234.

⁴⁰C. Parker, "Popular Religion and Protest," pp. 28-35.

protest people's religion can have. In all these cases, she concludes that the subordinate classes have become aware of the contradictions in their life situation and react to defend their rights. Here the alliance of popular religion and the prophetic dimension of Christianity emerge.

At times, the symbolic protest of popular religion has an underground form. Due to the sharp oppression, the people object covertly to avoid annihilating reprisals. It allows them to survive to rebuild a meaningful world. This latent protest can serve the dominant classes for the moment. It can turn to active opposition and rebellion by the critical thinking and praxis of organic intellectuals, clergy and lay, who move the silent protest to an active and conscious one. In this way, people's religion becomes a liberating Christian faith which Parker sees operative in contemporary Latin America history.

A. Gramsci and Popular Religion as Liberator

In the above analysis of the liberationist view of people's religion, we note a departure from the thought of A. Gramsci. Certainly we have adopted his theory of the two Catholicisms, the official and the popular one, his analysis of the tension between the two and how the people's religion can be a basis of resistance by the marginal classes to adopt the official religion and the dominant culture. However, if

we look closely at his characterization of popular religion, we note that basically he has a dim view of it and popular culture. He states that the conception of life of these classes is not systematic nor elaborated, nor politically organized nor centralized.⁴¹ It is fragmented, confused, crude, a melange of many elements of the past and the present. He notes that the lower-income person is not really able to do much more.

Secondly, he did not envision popular religion nor culture to perdure as a solid base for the future Socialist society.⁴² He studied popular religion and culture so as to prepare himself and the organic party intellectuals to enter into the subaltern classes to work for the moral and intellectual reform. The masses were to be lifted from their present level of understanding to a new weltanschauung. This would be an immanent secular one since modern people do not need the traditional transcendental religion any longer. He wants to substitute the philosophy of praxis for religion because only the former can illuminate the contradictions in the world and show the possibilities to overcome them. He will accept the certain good points and strengths of popular religion and culture, and from these move the marginal classes to a new level of understanding of life. This would

⁴¹A. Gramsci, Gramsci: Cultural Writings, p. 189.

⁴²B. Hein, "A. Gramsci und die Volksreligion," pp. 162-163.

be communist, atheistic and would replace religion.

Our presentation departs in certain areas from the thinking of A. Gramsci. First, the liberationist view of popular religion is quite positive. Religion is one of the ways for low-income people to manifest their existence, and live in union with one another. It gives them a sense of dignity, social coherence, remembrance of the past, and a vision of the future and a more just society. It is a militant faith because it presents them with an alternate vision of a society free from oppression. In envisioning this new world and working for it, the Christians are formed into a community and fraternity. This militant faith engenders praxis in so far as it encourages the poor to reflect on their oppressive situation in the world and take the appropriate steps to rectify it.

This whole process thus described is quite different from the Gramscian vision of popular religion and of what the working class is capable of. Contrary to Gramsci, the liberationist view is quite coherent, systemic and organized. It provokes the working class to reflect and perform concrete action in the world. It builds community and solidarity. It has much more authentic structure and dynamism than Gramsci envisioned although it can have alienating functions which we have discussed. It grows out of the authentically human life of the people and empowers them to work for a better world. It has potential for creative action.

Second, the Gramscian theory of popular religion and the liberationist one differ on the role for the working class. The latter posits the poor and marginal classes as the privileged ones of history. Since the 1960's, the marginal people of Latin America have become conscious of their dignity and the need of human fraternity. The religious consciousness of the oppressed people is now the instrument leading them to a liberation in this world and the parousia in the next one. The poor are the privileged ones to whom the gospel is directed. They are to establish the reign of justice. They are also the instruments of evangelization through which the church converts itself and is true to its vocation of solidarity with the poor. The liberationist version however does not preclude the role of organic intellectuals in helping in this process and working with the poor to bring about a better world. This is quite a different vision from Gramsci who did not envision such leadership from the working classes themselves and where the organic party intellectuals would move these groups to a new and higher vision and understanding of life.

Third, Gramsci wanted to do away with the religious faith of the Southern Italian farmers and workers and substitute it with an atheistic socialist vision which he called the moral-intellectual reform. Different writers have noted that the revolutionary movements in Latin America which are very religiously based will challenge the Marxists to

revaluate their view of religion. The movements for liberation in Central America, the non-violent overthrow of the Duvalier regime, the role of the basic ecclesial communities in Latin America as a whole, are such illustrations. Richard, Comblin and Parker argue that the potential of people's religion for social change will challenge the Marxists to reformulate their thought.⁴³

In particular, Richard notes that the secularization process in Latin America is different from the European one. When it took place in Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, it prompted many to lose their religious faith. In Latin America, however, it has challenged Christians to rethink their faith in terms of its social and political consequences and from that base, to build a more just society.

Cornell West agrees that the religiously based movements for social change in the Third World will challenge Marxists to reformulate their view of religion and reassess the reality of culture and daily life which they have neglected.⁴⁴ West argues that Marx and Engels had a deeper understanding of the nature of religion than the crude phrase, "opium of the people" suggests. These two men understood religion as a profound human response to and

⁴³J. Comblin, "The Heritage of Popular Religion in Brazil," p. 394; Richard and Irarrazaval, Religion y Politica, p. 13; C. Parker, "Popular Religion and Protest," p. 28.

⁴⁴C. West, "Religion and the Left: An Introduction," Monthly Review 36, #3 (1982): 9-19.

protest against untenable conditions. They characterized religion as alienating because it often neglects to examine socio-economic conditions which shape religious expressions and so restricts humans powers to change these conditions. West also argues that Marxists are too tied to the European Enlightenment tradition which blocks their appreciation of religion in life and social change. It is first in the work of A. Gramsci that Marxists have take seriously morality, religion and the cultural life of the oppressed. Today, it is the Third World Marxists who continue the Gramscian thought and challenge other Marxists to overcome their condescending European bias against religion and to reassess the role of religion in social change.

West continues by stating that modern social processes of rationalization, commodification and bureaucratization have not generated a widespread "disenchantment with the world" nor a revolutionary working class consciousness among industrial workers. Rather we note revivals of nationalism, ethnicity and religion. In the developed capitalist countries, this is due to the fact that consumer society does not provide deep human meaning to life. In the developing Third World with rapid industrialization and urbanization, cultural and religious ways of life provide means to achieve new personal meaning and strength in political struggle. We note the latter in the emergence of the Theology of Liberation in Latin America. In certain Third World

countries, these religious revivals are sources for struggles against Western Civilization, such as in Iran and Palestine.

These religious revivals in the Third World demand that the Marxists take seriously the culture of the oppressed. It entails a de-secularizing and de-Europeanizing of Marxist praxis and thought. It means that oppressed people are already working for their liberation in their present cultural and religious practices and products. These must be carefully considered and seen as authentic. Marxist intellectuals have to create new forces of personal meaning, social adjustment and political struggle in order to create societies of freedom and democracy. These new forces will emerge only when the basic spheres of society, such as religion, family, labor processes and state structures are built upon and transformed. This will create and unite various groups for fundamental social change.

Chapter II: Interview Analysis

Part I: The procession presents a world view in hegemonic conflict with the dominant culture of this country.

In this section, we want to discuss the conflict between the dominant Western technological and rational culture of North American industrial society and the weltanschauung and life stance of the Caribbean immigrant. We have already noted the characteristics of the two movements and the tensions between them. We will now analyze the interviews of the procession participants to note the themes that emerge and how these as a whole conflict with the dominant culture of North America.

A major theme that runs through the interviews is the sense of and ability to celebrate important events in life with flamboyance. A Haitian lady describes well how enthusiastically the procession was done in her town:

"I come from St. Marc in Haiti. The procession is a big celebration for all the people. There are a lot of feasts in Haiti and they are an occasion for such joy. We wait for the feasts with great chaleur. There are the processions for the Rogation Days. For the feast of Corpus Christi, we build three or four altars in St. Marc. All the streets are decorated with flowers, designs with rice and coffee grinds, and with the special flowers called flamboyant which are red. There are different colored powders. The whole nation welcomes the feast. It is also the time of the roses; so they are used in the decorations. The Christians of the town decorate the houses well with different linens and rugs which hang off the balconies. It is really wonderful. The whole route of the procession is decorated; the people welcome the procession. The altars are decorated like real

palaces. All work with their heart. The children carry the flowers. There is a lot of prayer. We await God in the procession like the groom awaits his bride in the wedding. There is the mass, the first communion children march, the choir has rehearsal for two months in advance. The children and the choirs sing beautifully. We are full of joy. The rich and the poor are together. We get dressed up for that day. All have their best clothes on for the day. All the schools participate, the first communion children and the Legion of Mary. It is a national holiday with no work nor classes."

A Haitian man from another town adds an interesting detail in terms of the decorations:

"In Jeremie, there were also whole banana trees uprooted and planted in big tubs. They were then decorated. The Prince of God is coming. The people believe; God is before them."

Another Haitian man from Sault-d'Eau in rural Haiti mentions that for the feast of Corpus Christi, "farmers and their families streamed out of the mountains to participate in the feast."

The procession with its flamboyant decorations of the altars, streets and houses, with its songs and symbols is something out of the ordinary; the day is a special one. One lady describes the aura which surrounds the occasion:

"The procession moved from altar to altar and finally went back to the church. The streets were decorated with lovely rugs and linens. It was a national holiday; no one worked and the schools closed. The streets were different that day; it was like living in another world. I liked it; there was a cool breeze blowing that day that was not around on other days. The sun was so lovely. The members of the parish knelt in the street. There was also personal prayer.....Jesus made it a special day. It had a sense of mystery about it and the day was transformed. Jesus was present. The mystery transformed us. Jesus was in the procession before

us. He manifested himself. We became transformed. The streets were carefully cleaned. Also the neighborhood was decorated. The cars were not permitted on the street and also the crowd was controlled. People had to march next to the procession. There was a solemn mass."

This sense of being out of the ordinary has an ecstatic dimension to it. One of the most moving parts of the procession in Brooklyn was the return to the church. A Haitian couple describes it well; they showed me a video tape of the procession in 1986 as the crowd entered the church. Watching the video, they exclaimed:

"The people explode in church. They sing Jesus and alleluia. See Fr. Malagrecia leading some of the enthusiastic prayer.....Look at that lady in the video. She is really not there. She is so taken up with her prayer that she is in ecstasy. Fr. Malagrecia is very key to all of this. Look how the people cry in their prayers. They are really animated. Look how the people stay behind in the church and do not want to go home."

The same ecstatic explosion occurred in 1987. The people sang loud, clapped their hands as the Blessed Sacrament returned to the church, the leader of song was wildly waving her hands to lead the singing, but the people sang on their own. There were wild acclamations of the name of Jesus, and the crowd stayed a long time in the church after the closing prayers to talk to one another.

In the procession at St. Jerome's, there was a symbolic gesture which touched many people. The Hispanic altar was decorated with the theme of the Holy Spirit; he was represented as a dove. When the priest blessed the assembly

at the altar with the sacrament, at that moment doves were released from the side of the altar and flew into the sky.

An Hispanic man commented on this:

"The Hispanic altar was beautiful with the theme of the Holy Spirit and the flying doves. They touched many people. The brother-in-law of Miguel has doves and he was the one who thought of the idea. Many of the people cried at the sight of the flying doves. It was a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. It was a shock to the people; it touched all and it touched me too. The Holy Spirit was there. All of us were united there together.....The people that I watched and saw, had commitment and wanted to praise God. Some knelt down to pray. It was beautiful to see. It did fill us all. The presence of God was there. We were full of grace and enthusiasm and joy. We love the same truth."

Interesting also to note is how the participants speak of Jesus in the procession. He is the center of the celebration. One person said that it is like Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Another noted that God is "carried in the street." A Haitian man mentioned that the Corpus Christi procession is like "having a birthday party for Jesus." A Haitian lady observed that we march with Jesus in the street "so that we can show him off." All these images express how Jesus is the center of the celebration. The gaiety is around him; each of the above metaphors tries to capture this.

A lady from El Salvador added an interesting detail. Noting that altars are also built in the neighborhood back home, "people sell things in the streets and gifts are given to family and friends. This is the tradition. There are

many small shops in the streets and there is much joy."

Also, in their native country and here, the people sacrifice much time to decorate. Teams of people stay up late at night days before the event to prepare the altars, the decorations and the clothing for the children. Food has to be prepared so that the workers can be fed. It is a reward for their sacrifice of effort and time. Also after the procession, they are invited back to the house for food, relaxation and a party.

The procession remains with the people as a precious memory. One of the homeowners who had the altar in front of her house mentioned that when all the decorations and flowers were taken down, she saved as much as she could. These were sacred objects and memories, and were not to be thrown away.

This whole experience of the procession of which the people have such fond memories from back home is relived in New York City. Throughout the interviews, the participants noted that they recreate the procession as was done in the home country. One lady from Gonaives in Haiti described the procession and went on to say that it is done in the same way with the altars, decorations, parish groups and children marching and the streets cleaned for the occasion. The whole experience is to relive a tradition and custom from back home; the immigrant wants to recreate a similiar experience in this country.

All these quotes highlight the realities of festivity

and procession with their flamboyant symbols, gestures and communality. The procession's participants speak enthusiastically of these beautiful moments; the whole experience is charged with feelings and sentiments, and memories of the home country of the immigrants. These testimonies concur with the thought of Elizondo who mentions that the Hispanic immigrants have the ability and desire to celebrate important events in life. This is a communal affair which brings everyone out. It has the qualities of the extraordinary, out of the routine, mystical, spontaneity and the breaking down of barriers; all of these qualities Turner notes in the manifestations of *communitas* and which also make it dangerous to the guardians of authority. Interestingly, Weber writing at the turn of the century in Germany, notes the slow disappearance of such charismatic festivity in modern society. Here, however, we observe that it is far from dying. It is still present. The Third World countries of the Caribbean and these immigrants have brought it to New York City. We can say that these newcomers have not allowed the disenchantment that Weber spoke of to proceed as he envisioned for the 20th century.

An important point to note is how the participants speak of God in the procession. Since the Blessed Sacrament is at the heart of the event, the manner in which the participants speaking of Jesus enables us to understand the celebration. One person wrote out a description of the feast

for me and it is worth quoting part of it.

"Corpus Christi is a feast of thanksgiving and recognition and praise of God. God has been generous with us through the Son. The procession is a gesture of thanksgiving to the Father. Jesus started the Eucharist at the Last Supper. After the feast of Easter, Corpus Christi is the second greatest feast because of the richness of the Eucharist. For one year, Jesus has been locked up in the tabernacle; now he is out in the street with the people. Each day we praise him and we sing to him. We must follow him. He is silent but all who come to him, he opens his arms to them. He gives to us the kiss of peace. People do not listen to him; so he goes into the street to meet them. He walks with us. In the procession, we proclaim Jesus the king of the universe. He is king of heaven. As the king, he opens his heart to all men and women. As king of the universe, in the procession we want to show him to all. He is humble of heart. The feast is also one of pardon. We walk with him and ask his pardon for our sins. Jesus reconciles us to himself. He will do this for all who have an open heart. It is a feast of friendship and tenderness of the force of God. We must share this love with one another and love one another. If we follow him, there will be less suffering and anguish in our life. Jesus is the love of God who is alive. We receive holy communion and find the Blessed Trinity and also the Virgin Mary. Mary found all the things that we are looking for now."

This above statement sums up the manner in which God is seen in the procession. All of the interviewees touched on one or two of these points. One Haitian lady describes it this way:

"The Haitians like the feast. They celebrate the good God. We only have one opportunity during the year to celebrate God outside in the street going from house to house. God gives us a blessing; we do it together. We are outside in the streets. All together we fraternize. We feel like a big family."

These quotes emphasize the religious dimension to festivity. God and his presence in the eucharist is at the

center of the procession. The immigrant community is celebrating Him and doing this out in the streets. This deep religious dimension questions the theory of Weber of the disenchantment of the modern world. We note immigrants from the Third World desiring to celebrate their religious faith, to the point of doing this in public. This also has important benefits for the community. The people expect that God will bless them and the neighborhood, and it brings the community together. They feel like one big family that day.

These testimonies are also related to H. Cox's study of Nicaraguan popular religion. He noted how these communal festivities slowed down the imposition of modernity on the working class people and farmers by the liberal dominant elites at the turn of the century. They were a force versus atheism and agnosticism, and the individuation of life. Through these, the population defended and preserved its religious faith and strong community life. We note this same experience in the testimonies of the procession participants. The agnosticism of modern rational life is not accepted. This is also in conflict with the atheistic moral-intellectual reform that Gramsci wanted to supplant the workers' and farmers' popular religion.

Another important theme for us to note is the awareness by the immigrants that they are celebrating this event as foreigners in a strange land. It runs through all of the interviews and gives us an insight on how the

immigrants see themselves and the celebration in this country. There is the theme of suffering and sadness of the newcomer in this situation of transition. A Haitian participant put it well:

"People are looking for something. Looking for a place to fill them. St. Jerome's helps them. Other parishes no. The American mass is dead. The Haitian one is animated and excited. The people sing a lot; it is a continuation from back home. The Americans do not like such long and elaborate ceremonies. Every immigration is hard. He feels at home only in one's country. We do not feel at home in a new culture. We find it hard. We are foreigners.....One is Haitian. Being Catholic in New York City is different. Here money is the all important thing, not God. We have faith and work hard. We cannot forget our faith. We are foreigners and want to show what it is like in Haiti; they do not have the tradition in this country. The first time we had the procession, the people were surprised."

This man states well the pain of the community as it lives out this migration. There is the desire to hold on to the tradition and culture that one brings from back home. It is a universal note that is in all of the interviews. It is particularly pronounced in the Haitian interviews. Many Haitians say that they are "in exile" in New York driven out by the Duvalier regime. The word 'exile' is strong and is laden with feeling. The Haitians always used the word nostalgie to express their longing for back home.¹

¹Although it is hard for all immigrants to leave their home country and culture, throughout the interviews for this study, the Haitians more than the other two groups stress the pain of leaving home. They constantly use the term nostalgie for Haiti and feel that they are in exile from their homeland. It is an interesting question why the Haitians have such strong feelings in contrast to the other immigrant

The procession then offers a soothing of the pain as the immigrants remember their homeland and the life back there. Beside feeling out of place in the new land, the celebration is a way of holding on to valuable things which are not found in the new culture. A Haitian expressed this fear of loss; an important word to note is 'depersonalize.'

"We are also foreigners in this country. We profess our religion back home, and now we want to profess our belief in this country too. At the parish of St. Jerome, we are in the open; the people participate in the church and the procession. Their faith is developed. They want to live in a foreign country what they lived back home. We want to do it like we did it back there. We do not want to depersonalize our culture. The procession is an extension of our culture and it is in this country."

On top of this, the big American cities are dangerous places. One Haitian stated that one needs God as a protection against the robbers in the neighborhood. We can understand her fear after examining the high crime statistics for District 17. Another participant mentioned that the procession is part of Haitian folklore and identity. The belief and practice all are part of the immigrant's identity even in this new country. Radical loss of this is not desired by the newcomers.

An Ecuadorian immigrant mentions another important aspect of this foreign celebration in a new country:

"The procession shows that we immigrants are not bad and do not do only bad things. We do also good things. The procession shows what we have back

groups.

home; it is a manifestation of our faith. It shows people here things that they do not have themselves. We are not ashamed to walk in public, we are not so stuck on human respect so that we can proclaim Jesus in the streets. This is the message. It tells the good things that we bring in this country. We are good people. We are humble and poor people but we are good. We do not speak English and we have to work in factories, but we are good people."

One respondent summed up in an interesting way the reality of being foreigners in a strange land:

"The procession makes the immigrants feel a sense of being at home even in the streets of Brooklyn. The neighborhood is having such a drug problem that the streets do not belong to us nor society. When the procession stops on the block, it is Jesus coming to the block. The immigrants decorate the block and welcome him; they have taken possession of the street."

Finally, there was an interesting testimony of the value of the Haitian culture and procession in the writing of this dissertation.

"This thesis of yours will be a wonderful thing. It will touch people. They will see how powerful God is in the procession. It transforms our life. It will change the country and the nation. We must have faith in the procession. That is our way in Haiti. Each country has its own system. Each has its own bouquet. It is beautiful the procession. The professors of the university will want it and be touched by it. They will see God in it and also the Holy Spirit will come down. They will be happy when they see life so beautiful. We Haitians do not appreciate the beautiful things which we have. It takes other people to see and appreciate it. We feel proud that you are writing this. We do not appreciate it; it is a custom for us. But there is a force there.....Many people will want to read the thesis. Outsiders look at Haitians as low people. They do not see our faith."

These testimonies are important because they relate to the important ideas of V. Turner of where *communitas* breaks out in society which we discussed in chapter one. He states that it emerges in liminality, with people in transition. The immigrant marchers realize that they are in transition. They have left their home country and are in a foreign land. They are afraid of losing their beautiful culture and heritage. This heritage is religious and in conflict with the agnosticism of modern Western society. They very much feel that they are foreigners in a strange land. Also, they are looked down upon because they are ethnically different and poor, and have to do menial work in factories. For this reason, in Turner's thought, they are underneath structure and it is precisely here that *communitas* emerges.

These testimonies also concur with the thought of Elizondo on Chicano festivities. He states that the Mexican-Americans are marginal and oppressed in this country. However, through the festivities, they celebrate the positive in life, go beyond death and suffering, transcend their marginal position and affirm their human worth and state that life is worth living. These testimonies of the procession's immigrants echo the same thoughts. They will not be overcome by their marginality and foreignness in this country and by what other people think of them. For this reason as Elizondo notes, the procession is prophetic and animates the immigrants' spirit and fosters community life. This is why

Moses commanded the Israelites to celebrate the Passover each year. This is a similiar situation. Despite sorrow and marginality, people can celebrate life and God's power in leading them to a better life in a new land.

Interesting to note is the conflict of festivity with those who want rational discourse, efficient thinking and logical action. Elizondo argues that these people do not understand festivity. They have yet to learn how charisma and communitas allow people to affirm life and the creative role of religion within it.

Another important dimension to foreigners marching in a new country is how it is related to Arnold's study of the Peruvian procession in Lima. It is the marginal classes, the Blacks and the recent Indian migrants from the mountains to the city that inspire and participate most intensely in the celebrations. They put on the celebration for all the other groups and classes to watch and participate in. This is similiar to the mixture of Caribbean immigrants who publically demonstrate and want to show the whole city their faith and culture. They are marginal and new to this country, but are the inspiration and source of the procession.

Another important theme in the interviews is the question of outreach. The procession is a public act which has an impact not only on the participants, but on the whole neighborhood. One Haitian stated it well:

"That the procession is a public action is very important. We pray with our soul but also we pray with our body. It is a manifestation of our faith. Also with the manifestation of the faith, the people whose faith is cold, and those who have no faith, we can touch them and help them have faith also. This manifestation of our faith publically in Brooklyn will spread to the other parishes. It started at St. Ignatius parish and went to St. Catherine. The people who watch will ask questions; the procession will help them; there are people of good faith. God will help them and they will come to Jesus slowly. People have good faith and also bad faith; it is hard for the latter. For those who have good faith, the procession will help them be illuminated by faith."

Another person with exposure to the base communities in Haiti noted that the songs the Haitians use have the themes of importance which can instruct people and make them more aware of social contradictions.

"Many do not come to church to visit Jesus; so we put him out in the street to meet the people. It is a sort of an apostolate too. A lot of people are ignorant and need an instruction on the meaning of the real presence of Jesus in the sacrament. There are also the songs which we sing which instruct the people. For example, one song says that I hide Jesus and now we put him outside so that others can get to know him. We need a lot of faith. Another song says that why is it that a few people have millions in the bank and others starve to death. Another song says that the plight of the poor is so heavy; we must try to help them. There are a lot of people who have to leave Haiti; they are put out of the country due to the injustices and the misery. Another song says that if God were Haitian, what would he say about the poverty and the situation of the country. We see that these songs get the message across."

Another immigrant had a unique way of understanding the question of outreach.

"It is a way of evangelization. It is an apostolate. When we march, we want to tell everyone that Jesus is our king. We want to show him off."

Like the politicians having a campaign for their candidate in the elections, so also do we want to show off Jesus. We sing and pray. We praise his life and explain him to all."

Another participant mentioned that all the banners, songs, flowers, etc, attract the attention of the neighbors, even Protestants and non-believers. These can touch them. Some of the participants fast so that the procession will be a success and attract people. This builds a communication and union in the neighborhood. Parishioners are marching with songs and gesture like the Israelites walking toward the Promised Land. Prayer is just not done in the silence of the church, but the participants pray with song, joy and a procession in public.

This Haitian immigrant then goes on to make another important observation.

"There is a value that the three communities march together. God is unique and one. He is God also of variety. Whatever the people, all must love and adore God. Even if they do not speak French, we are all together and become one. It is a symbol of unity. We are all different and have various languages, but we belong to the same Catholic faith which is one. It is the same Christian faith and we are to serve our brothers and sisters in the world."

One Hispanic lady describes this in personal terms:

"They are all immigrants. The procession is an invitation to them. It tells them that we should love the tradition that we grew up with. It is our culture from back home. It gives us a sense of hope in life. We have faith in this God. He carried us to this country. The procession will unite us too. We see the resistance of the Hispanics to the other two communities. The religion unites us to one another. We see the Haitians in the procession; when we

recognize them in the streets, we say hello to them. There is a unity. Let me give you an example. There is a Haitian lady in the house here. We have a friendship; there is no barrier of communication. We talk English together. At times we walk to church together for the trilingual celebrations. There is a unity; there is a unity on the level of the person."

Some participants used biblical imagery to express the outreach to others. The procession is a light to illuminate those who are sitting in the darkness. A few noted that the route of the celebration changes each year, so that all parts of the neighborhood can be touched.

Because of the rising use of drugs in the area and the high crime rate, I frequently asked if the procession could touch and change the drug addicts and robbers in the area. Most people felt that it not easy; there were some interesting responses. Let us cite one:

"There might be a message. When people are in drugs, they are not completely lost. They can see the procession and they can ask questions. They see our faith and we can touch them. They have a spirit and God is at work. We pray and God touches them. The drug addicts are not completely lost. The procession has a power; it can do miracles. We need just a little light to do good things. Each year there are always more people. There are always good people. Zachary was converted when he saw Jesus and invited Jesus to his house."

Another respondent had a personal example. He said that drug addicts can watch the procession and this might start a process of change. But there is also need of personal contact and dialogue to change the addict. He had an experience in his workplace of a Haitian worker who took

drugs. He talked with the fellow on a religious and common sense plane. He was successful. The user dropped the habit and even came to church a few times.

Another procession marcher from El Salvador put an interesting twist to the idea of outreach. He mentioned that it would be good if White America would see Blacks and Hispanics marching and praying together. Whites have a stereotype thinking that most minorities are drug addicts and robbers. Seeing these two groups in the procession will show the White population that immigrants are religious and perhaps even more than they are.

These testimonies describe how the procession is active and dynamic, and wants to touch other people in the community. It has outreach. The marchers want to influence the onlookers who are a-religious for whatever reasons they may have. They want to present Jesus and his message to the observers. It is even a message to the marchers themselves because it is an intense public religious act and so deepens their own faith. It also helps break down the ethnic and language barriers between the marchers themselves; despite these hindrances, they are marching together and that builds bridges between them. This serious religious and cultural act can question the stereotype that Whites have of the immigrants as being all drug addicts and robbers. So the procession is a dynamic process which highlights the resistance function of popular religion that Gramsci and the

other authors mention. The marchers are not content with the indifference and agnosticism of the on-lookers and society at large. They challenge that attitude with this public action. This manifestation also questions the growing disenchantment of the world that Weber speaks about with the loss of charisma, religion, emotions and symbol in life. Far from being lost, the immigrants are out in the streets attempting to influence society to follow them, and build up the elements that Weber saw in decline. He saw these factors slowly being reduced to private life and the property of the few wealthy educated elite. Here we see that charisma, *communitas*, religion and feeling are very much being put into the public's eye by the poor and the marginal. They will not let these factors be squeezed out of life as Weber envisioned. They challenge the hegemony of Western rationalist society. As Di Nola mentions in his study, the workers are drawing on pre-industrial religious and cultural roots to combat and fill a void left by dominant modern culture.²

Also Turner notes the characteristics of fraternity, breaking of barriers, egalitarian and directness in *communitas*.³ This is operative between the ethnically different immigrants and marchers. The marchers mention that

²di Nola, "Volksreligion," p. 68.

³V. Turner, Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture, pp. 250-251.

there are barriers of comprehension and communication between themselves. But the act of marching together in the procession breaks down these walls and brings them closer together which has its impact in their unity after the procession.

Another theme that emerges in the interviews is the solidarity that is manifest in the immigrants who are active in the procession. Here I am not talking about the attempt of unity among the different ethnic groups that march, but rather an interior bond that arises among the participants and especially among those who put effort into the procession. One of the respondents mentioned the hard work that is involved in the celebration each year.

"We should do more processions all over the city. We should do this in order to sacrifice for God. I work hard on the procession in this country and back in Haiti. For a few days before the procession, we hardly sleep at night. I sleep only for a few hours. We do so much work with the decorations. Now it is easier because there are more people who help. They also give money for the decorations which is a sacrifice. All help. God is happy with our sacrifice and work. After all the work and little sleep, we then have to go to work on Monday morning. That is part of the sacrifice."

Realizing the amount of work involved in building and taking down the altars and decorations, after the procession in June, I helped dismantle the fourth altar which was the most elaborate and required much effort. While working, one of the leaders shouted to me: "Wap oue kouniea debat Haitien an a New York. Nou pa gin kob, bon travay, min leglis la epi

Bon Die a, se pou nou." ("Now you see the struggle of the Haitians in New York. We do not have money, nor a good work, but the church and God is for us.") I remembered the remark and in the interview with the person a few days later, I asked her what these words meant to her.

"In the world, there is the kingdom of riches and the people there want money. Among the poor, there is no money but we have a joy that the rich do not have. The Holy Spirit, God and the church give us more joy. There is a joy in our hearts. We do not have money and have a lot of problems. But God is with us. Really in life it is hard for us to respond to God's generosity with our effort in the processiion. So the church is with us. The Holy Spirit and Jesus are a joy for us. It is hard to express this joy. It is hard to put it into words, it goes beyond words. It cannot be put into words. The heart is full and the only response is thank you to God. That is the only word to say.....About the word 'debat,' in one sense it is a banal word. In Haiti, we had to work hard on the altars. For three months in advance, we prepared. Getting close to the date, we hardly slept we had to work so hard on it. The night before we were up all night. Back home, there was more help and people to do the work. Here there is less of it. So the heart feels good after all the work. There are not enough shoulders to do the work here."

The sacrifice and the joy of working together takes place in the context of the parish which according to testimonies given is a vibrant community. The immigrants cite the leadership of J. Malagrecas, the priest of the parish, in building a strong, service oriented community principally among the Haitians. One respondent mentioned that the parish is a community. People worship and act together. The various movements build unity. There are many Haitians in the parish and it feels like back home. If one gets sick,

people visit or call on the phone just like they do in Haiti. The people are of service to their neighbor. There is even an attempt to reach out to Americans. The parish has a sense of working together and consensus.

Interestingly, the one American family interviewed gave the same testimony. In the first interview with them before the procession, they voiced considerable discomfort and distaste for the Caribbean immigrants. However in the second interview after the procession and when asked what the celebration did teach the neighborhood, they mentioned that it was a sign of unity. They then went on to say that the parish had quite a bit of togetherness. People are friendly and help one another. The elderly are taken to church and helped in the buying of groceries. They noted that this sense of service might be unique for the times that we live in.

Continuing in the theme of community and solidarity, I asked on participant why the Haitians like pilgrimages, processions and the Charismatic Movement. She had an interesting response:

"It is a way to God. They are all together. They pray for the same thing. It gives them force. There is one communion; they are together. The word of God is heard. Also in the prayer meetings, it is good, we get more force together. On the pilgrimages, there is more force because we are all together. We pray together. There is strength in togetherness. We are all together. In New York City, we go on pilgrimages too; we like to pray. Haiti is a poor country; we only have prayer. We like the Voudou and the Christian faith. We can overcome all things through this."

One marcher commented on the sense of community among the Haitians. He observed that they are a communal people, live together and share each others lives. They are also a church orientated people which unifies them even more. This is in contrast to middle class Americans who tend to be more individualistic in their religious life.

The other ethnic groups notice the Haitian solidarity and activity in the parish. It can cause some envy and competition among the groups. The Trinidadian deacon commented that he started a Legion of Mary for the West Indians because they were leaving the parish due to the overwhelming presence and activity of the Haitians.

There are other reactions to the Haitian solidarity which tend to be more positive. One Hispanic man commented:

"It is beautiful. The Haitians are united, and are very active and committed in the parish. They offer themselves voluntarily to be active in the church. They work together. I admire them a lot. They have a brotherhood which we Hispanics do not have. We have sixty or seventy people at mass; they have three to four hundred. We see their brotherhood and unity The Hispanics, we do not have it. We go to mass, say hello and go home. We do not have a minute to talk. They have this brotherhood. The majority on the procession is Haitian. Fr. Malagrecra sees this too; he works with them more than with us."

This sense of solidarity in the Haitian community is also a source of strength for them. One Haitian commented on the marginality of her immigrant community. "We must see that we are not alone, but belong to a people. I know that I

am Black. But I am part of a people. Whites must respect me. I will not bother them."

A Haitian man had a similiar comment:

"That we are Black is not a major problem for me. The Haitian is attached to the cosmopole; he is a people to himself. He is a group apart. At his work place, he is criticized and taken advantage of. But he will return home in the evening and in the family and Haitian neighborhood he will find his force. There are parties, dances and the family and that gives us the force to continue on. The procession can help us in our suffering."

These testimonies highlight the solidarity that arises among the marchers. It is very much in agreement with Turner who notes the breaking of barriers and fraternity that is present in *communitas*.⁴ It is a building up of the sense of community and communal life. Interesting is how the immigrants understand the procession as part of a dynamic and vibrant parish life which during the whole year build community. This is similiar also to the study of H. Cox on Nicaraguan popular religion where he noted these religious festivities as ways to stimulate and foster a strong community life and not let life become individualized which modernity encourages.⁵ Elizondo also notes how the Chicano festivities strenthen their group identity and solidarity.⁶ Interesting also in these testimonies is the intense Haitian

⁴Ibid.

⁵H. Cox, Religion in the Secular City, pp. 253-254.

⁶V. Elizondo, Galilean Journey, pp. 30-31.

solidarity which the other two ethnic groups notice. This intensity engenders feelings of competition and admiration in these two.

Another important theme to emerge in the interviews is the tension between the values that are involved in the procession and those of larger American consumer society.

One Haitian respondent put the conflict well:

"The procession does have a message. The priests must speak and say that real happiness is not in money. We need money to live but the real happiness is not there. Look at the procession. A lot of people closed their business and others did not go to work to come to the procession. They lost money to participate. Our life is in God. God helps us to make money and to live. We leave our work and sacrifice to come to the procession. Money is not all; we come to the procession. The power of the procession shows with time and influences us. We see the crowd growing each year. More and more people come. They leave money and join the procession. All people say that the United States is money. Without it we cannot live. Like in Haiti, we need money to live there and here. But we are not only to see money; we also live by faith and not make money king."

Another respondent also had an interesting observation:

"The procession teaches that we do not live by bread alone. There are other things in life. We have a soul and it should be saved. There is a spiritual dimension in life. There is not only the body but also the soul. The latter is more important. The procession represents this. A few years ago, Columbia Broadcasting System came to televise the procession. Fr. Malagrega noted that they did not stay too long. They looked down on the Haitians and think that we are all in Vaudou. There are Haitians who do the Vaudou and the Christian faith. The television is also very materialistic."

An Hispanic participant continued in a similar vein.

He said that American society is a very materialistic one and there is an indifference to religion. The procession shows that this neighborhood is a religious one. For this reason, this country is foreign to the immigrant.

Another Hispanic marcher commented on the conflict between the material and the religious in life:

"Wall Street is the center of money making. There is that desire for money and the search for it. The procession will teach us not just to live for money and the things of this earth. It will call attention to spiritual things. This is the meaning of the procession. Not all of life is materialistic. The procession will be a warning against this. It will also be a brake to this. We have a proud life; the procession is beautiful and sacred. We see the big difference between the material and spiritual things. There are the things of the world. The procession will teach people to come to church; there will be a change in them. The procession will have them reflect. In their faults, they will see the light. There are many ways to lead one's life. They will see life in a better way. It will be a waking up for them. It will be a new dream. The procession shakes one up. The awakening will be between the things of the earth and those of heaven."

Noteworthy is also some of the testimony of marchers who work on Wall Street. One Panamanian who is a computer technician talked about the ambivalence among the people who work in the financial district. She mentioned that on Ash Wednesday, 1987, so many workers from the area lined up in front of the local church to receive ashes that they blocked traffic on the block. On the other hand, she continued, Wall Street is a big power structure and there are those who idolize money. She noted that "Boesky is one of them and is in trouble now. They can tumble. They have no balance in

life."

She also spoke of another example. For one of the Charismatic Movement's retreat that a local church near Wall Street had for the workers who attend the church during their lunch break, "the manager of a large corporation rented a large place to accommodate all the participants. The church was too small for the occasion. She noted that "there is a dimension of faith in some people on Wall Street." On the other side, she mentioned that the "young geniuses who juggle the system and fool with computers, their life is void. They are bored with life and as such mess with finances."

Another respondent, a Trinidadian who is a Vice-President of a firm on Wall Street had a similiar judgement. He mentioned that "it depends on who is looking at the procession. If it is a successful type, he will see another culture marching and other people. No Wall Street executive will march. Other poor people will recognize the poor in the procession. The procession teaches us that the material is not the most important thing in life."

Another marcher summed up well the tension between the two worlds:

"The procession is for the neighborhood. There are few people of Wall Street present or aware of it. The neighborhood is all Haitian. Some may accept the values of materialism. The procession is centered on the Eucharist and not on money. All are invited to the procession from the neighborhood. It is an equalizing process. It is a natural outgrowth of the church. It is an expression of its values and its presence. People work in Manhattan with the values of Wall Street, but come back to Brooklyn.

There is a tension in life between the values of Manhattan and those of Brooklyn. It is hard to have the Christian values and have to live in the other society. The procession can be a source of resistance to that society."

These testimonies present the conflict of values between the Caribbean procession and the materialism of modern consumer society. The marchers state that there is more to life than the possession of many material goods. This concurs with the study of Di Nola and popular religion in the lives of the Italian workers (see chapter one). He notes also the vacuum in the soul of modern consumer society with its stress on money and profit and the use of violence in their acquisition. The workers participate in forms of rural popular religion because it answers certain exigencies of their human life. There are religious and cultural values being celebrated which make them more authentic human beings and can be a source of resistance to alienating pressures of contemporary society. The marchers mention this when they say that people do not live by bread alone. They feel the tension between the values of working Manhattan and their communal immigrant life in the neighborhood of Brooklyn. Their vibrant cultural and religious life can be a resistance to the materialist values of dominant society. This again is an interesting example of the Gramscian hegemonic conflict between different cultural spheres.

In the interviews, I tried to develop another dimension to this tension between the material values of

mainline society and the procession participants. Latin American Theology of Liberation raises the issue of God's preferential option for the poor. From the Old and New Testament, God takes particular care of the poor and heeds their needs. My questions to the participants attempted to uncover this option. I asked them if Jesus would choose to walk on Nostrand Avenue to other areas of the city if he came back tomorrow. The responses were quite interesting. One immigrant from Guyana had an illuminating answer:

"The lower class will receive him better; they are more simple and religious. Not all will receive him however. On Wall Street people can believe too. Jesus will want to walk among the ordinary man; he will encourage all to be honorable. The people of Nostrand will ask for spiritual help and ask for all kinds of help. They will ask Jesus why he did not come back before. They need him right now. They pray to him. They have all sorts of problems. Like the Israelites in Egypt, they look for a solution. They ask when will Jesus come. They suffer in so many different ways. They have a lot of problems. There are problems in their families; at times they see no solutions. The children might be on drugs. Family life is fairly disturbed in the area. They see no solution and pray day and night. They get little response to their prayers. They will ask the master to grant their request. Family life is rough here. The children change. They become associated with this kind of society. It is hard for us."

Another Haitian participant had a remarkable insight:

"The poor have a power. They look to God more. More poor and Blacks look to Jesus for help. They suffer more. On Nostrand Avenue, there are the poor and they have no money to go to the doctor. They die waiting for the ambulance to take them to the hospital. The poor have faith. The poor do more praying."

These testimonies are related to the theory of Turner of *communitas* emerging on the margin and underneath the

dominant structures of society. In a religious sense, it is the marginal people in the Judeo-Christian tradition who can be the privileged ones to manifest *communitas* in society. It is an example of God's preference for them. Due to their marginality and suffering, they are called to manifest that enthusiasm, faith, solidarity and creativity of *communitas* and charisma for others to see. Therefore, this preference is seen on the margins of society as Turner mentions and raises the whole religious question of God's option for the poor and the consequences this has for the whole of society.⁷

In conclusion, in this section we have analyzed the themes emerging out of the Corpus Christi procession in hegemonic conflict with the values of Western rationalist society. We have noted the various elements that are in this tension. In this study, we have used the theory of Max Weber on the disenchantment of the modern world and the decline of charisma, the thought of V. Turner on *communitas*, the Gramscian theory of the resistance that popular religion can play to dominant cultures and cited the studies of Cox, Elizondo, and Di Nola in which these theories are operative.

The themes of the Corpus Christi procession certainly do illustrate the thought of M. Weber on the conflict between the rationalization and bureaucratization of modern life versus charisma and *communitas*. The procession with its flamboyance, enthusiasm, communality, religion, symbol and

⁷V. Turner, Image and Pilgrimage, p. 251.

gesture, and feelings testify to this clash. As such, the procession objects to Weber's notion of the decline of charisma and its manifestations in modern life and its relegation to the private life of a few educated elite. The Third World immigrants want charisma and *communitas* and demonstrate in the streets for it. Weber might document the alienation from religion that occurred in European society due to modernity at the turn of the last century, but these immigrants confront this agnostic spirit and will not let it dominate their life. What might be normative for one society at one time in history, is not normative for all societies at all times. This charismatic procession also confronts the materialism of consumerism.

The factors involved with the celebration are in harmony with V. Turner's theory of *communitas* and where it emerges in society. He does not necessarily see it dying out in modern life, but notes that it breaks out on the margins of the dominant structures. This does correspond to the social, economic and legal marginality of the Caribbean immigrants in relation to dominant American society. We can posit the Corpus Christi procession as an illustration of normative *communitas*, in so far as it is the *communitas* experience preserved through religious and cultural codes.

The dynamic of the procession also stressed the resistance function of popular religion that Gramsci and the other authors mention. We noted that the feast was an active

event that had outreach. The marchers wanted to influence the world around them. Using the streets, symbols and gestures, fraternity, religious faith, feeling and enthusiasm, the procession participants announce a message to the world which is in conflict with the cultural hegemony of Western industrial society. Another way of life is articulated. The immigrants are fighting the disenchantment of the modern world and the decline of charisma in the thought of Weber. They also object to certain parts of the Gramscian vision. They will not accept the attempt by Marxist organic intellectuals to present a vision of life which is 'higher' and agnostic or atheistic. The immigrants have a culture which is at once religious, enthusiastic and charged with symbol and gesture. They want others to appreciate it and not take it away. This challenges the Marxist intellectuals to reformulate their view of religion. Such a vibrant religious and cultural life questions the notion that religion is always the opium of the people. Is it not rather an authentic human experience that can express what is the best and deepest in human life? It challenges the Marxist intellectuals to not be so culturally distant from the Third World immigrants. The agnosticism of the former creates a damaging distance for the latter and hinders coalition building for social change. The Marxist intellectuals have to de-Europeanize themselves and not hold on to the alienation from religion that occurred in European

society as normative for all societies and all times. The Third World people and their struggles has this to teach them. If the Marxist accept this, they will be culturally closer to the immigrants and better prepared to work with them.

PART II:

The Corpus Christi procession expresses a form of popular religion which is in conflict with the modernizing and rationalizing tendencies in the Catholic Church since the 1960's and the Second Vatican Council.

This section will be divided into three parts. We will analyze the three interviews with Joseph Malagrecas, the priest who works with the Caribbean immigrants in St. Jerome's parish, then the interviews with Anthony Sherman, the priest Director of the Diocese of Brooklyn's Liturgical Office and finally the interviews with the immigrant marchers in order to understand their perception of the conflict involved in this section.

In analyzing the interviews of the first two men, important will be to keep in mind the critical thought we cited in the theoretical considerations of this part in chapter one. I conducted the interviews from the point of view of these and asked the two men to comment on them. Essential will be the presentation of L. Maldonado given at the conference on popular religion in Panama City, the document of the Canadian Liturgical Directors, Bulletin national de Liturgie, the notions of R. Pannet and S. Galilea.

We will focus on the three levels of conflict that are

implied in certain reform movements of the Second Vatican Council. First, the Council started a Liturgical Reform which was to clean the Roman liturgy of its 'excess.' Secondly, there was a movement to simplify church decorations by eliminating many statues, images and other ornaments. Thirdly since the Council, there has been a movement to explain the Christian faith rather than to celebrate it with a corresponding decline in the role of ritual in religious life.

Three interviews were conducted with J. Malagrecia and he articulated well the conflict between Caribbean popular religion and the various currents emerging out of the Second Vatican Council.¹ To begin, he characterizes well the people's religion of immigrants.

"The Haitians want an immediate experience of God. They respond to God's presence in signs, sacraments and sacramentals. They are a very sacramental and incarnational people. Their religious expressions are very emotional and non-conceptual"

"In the old church of St. Jerome, there were many statues and the altar had a different position. Not even the old Irish liked the changes of the new church decoration and the taking away of the altars."

"We took 280 people to New Orleans to the Charismatic Conference; there were about 225 Haitians in the group. Here in the parish, they take pilgrimages to many different places; it is part of their popular religion. They like these things because they are all together, they pray and enjoy themselves on the trip too. There is a mixing of religious and social life; it is a pleasurable thing

¹Joseph Malagrecia, three interviews conducted in Brooklyn, New York, May, June and August, 1987.

also; that is important. Soon we will go to La Vierge Noire; they like it very much. The communal aspect of the pilgrimages is very important. The bus ride is important; they pray, sing and also socialize. On the trip to Europe, in the hotel there were prayer meetings at night also. There was a lot of sharing in the hotels; we had mass each day. At Fatima, we had a holy hour. At Lourdes and Fatima, we had the candlelight processions which were very popular. There were about 700 people for the procession on the feast of the Assumption last Saturday night in the parish here.....It is all part of their popular religion. The people are more orientated to gesture and symbol and these pilgrimages, processions and the Charismatic Movement are full of these things. Their religious life is not theoretically based. The Charismatic Movement fits the Caribbean culture which is so warm and full of gesture and symbol"

"The whole spirituality of the Caribbean is very similiar to the Charismatic Movement. It is an external expression of their faith. Those who are against the Charismatic Movement would be against the procession for the same reasons - they want more a private faith and piety. The Charismatics in the parish are very much involved with the procession. They feel at home in the procession. Both are communal movements. People who are against both want more restraint, individual piety. There are Americans in the parish who feel comfortable in the procession; they are elderly. I suspect that the middle class in the suburbs might not like it. We had a procession for Good Friday. There was a lot of participation. There is a parallel between the two processions. Corpus Christi is more triumphant; the Good Friday one is sad, a mediatation on the passion of Christ. There is stress on suffering."

In these quotes, J. Malagreca exhibits a good sensitivity to the religious expressions of the Caribbean people in his area. Their religiosity is very mystical, using the concrete and symbols, and very communal. It is not given to rationalizing and the conceptual. This characterization of popular religion is similiar to the description of the Latin American bishops that we cited in

chapter one. Malagreca's analysis is in agreement with the thought of S. Galilea who argues that the Latin American faith style is intuitive and symbolic, and given to big communal celebrations and feasts.² Malagreca concurs with Maldonado who cites the need for the liturgy to appeal to the five senses, not just to one, the sense of hearing.³ Persons need ritual that appeals to their whole being, body and soul. The analysis of Malagreca fits well into the opinion of the Canadian document, Bulletin national de Liturgie, where the people want a religion in which they can touch, hear and see the holy. For this reason, there is the need for rites, celebrations, symbols and gestures. Important to note is the theme of community that runs through religious life. The Caribbean immigrant wants religious expressions that are social and in which they participate as a people. This is so similar to the theory of V. Turner on *communitas* where he notes that it breaks down barriers, fosters communication and fraternity. It is eminently social. (see chapter one)

Malagreca then goes on to comment on certain modernizing tendencies in the church which are in opposition to the Caribbean religious style.

"The American church was most successful in its immigrant work. Now this church has moved away from other Catholic churches. We have accepted a Western interpretation of the Vatican Council. Our faith life

²S. Galilea, La Religiosidad Popular y la Pastoral Hispano-Americana, pp. 13-14.

³Luis Maldonado, "Liturgia y Religiosidad Popular."

has become very rationalistic and individualistic. It is much more conceptual than affective."⁴

"The Corpus Christi procession of the parish is ignored in the diocese. The Tablet (the diocesan paper) just ignores it. They never cover the procession. The battle between la religion savante and la religion populaire is an old battle. The diocesan programs just want to explain and have classes. They do not appreciate that we must celebrate and do religious events, not just explain. Let me give you an example. H. Marcos of the Education Office in charge of Hispanic affairs has a program which is like a university program. There are classes and meetings and no one goes to them. It is too boring and intellectual. Once she called to have a joint meeting and program with the Charismatics. She felt that there are clashes between her program and the Charismatic Movement. She wanted to involve the two in one program for a day. It would be a Charismatic day and she would do some teaching. We told her that we were not interested. We had a fight with her. It is not an education office suited for this diocese. They could do better. They build a program on instruction; we do not need more talking. We need events, less teaching. They do not attract people.....Let me give you another example. There is a Sister Camille Darinzo in the diocese. She came to the procession once. She said: 'What have you done? You are not educating the people. The procession is done without the proper education. You dress the kids up as bishops.' She missed the whole point. She has the mind set of the middle class and also North American thinking. She is the Tablet representative and she never came back to cover a procession again. This was six years ago."

"There are so many people at the Christmas and Easter liturgies; there is something there. I feel that these feasts are occasions to attract people and not to teach them only."

J. Malagrecas is extremely sensitive to the

⁴Other Catholics, even middle and upper class Whites feel this same loss. See Maura Moynihan, "Out of India: Karma and Christ, A Pilgrim Makes an Effort to Come Back," Commonweal, August 1987, pp. 446-452.

rationalizing tendencies in the church since the Second Vatican Council and how this expresses itself in the daily life of the Brooklyn Diocese. In that sense, he is in agreement with Maldonado, Galilea, Boff, Cox and the other writers whom we cited in chapter one. This desire to constantly want to explain the faith rather than celebrate it does damage to the pastoral work among the immigrants. It misses their needs nor does it touch the newcomer. This critique of Malagrega concurs with the thought of Elizondo who states that the Hispanics are evangelized by participating in the rich, concrete celebrations of the whole liturgical year with its feasts and seasons (see chapter one). Pastoral workers do not reach them by the abstract teaching of church dogma. These quotes of Malagrega echo the thoughts also of M. Weber. He states that priests are the guardians of religion and want to rationalize faith and fit it into the church's routine and institutional life of which they are the custodians and on which they depend for their position. All charismatic movements and prophets are suspect until they can be routinized and institutionalized (see chapter one). This rationalizing movement since the Second Vatican Council can be part of this tendency of priests. It is also part of the trend of theological thinking which has become so academic and specialized that it loses contact with the ordinary religious life of the church and of the lay people. The rationalizing tendency of the priests that Weber

comments upon has been accentuated in the second half of the 20th century in certain currents emerging from the Council.

Continuing in this line of thought, I asked J. Malagreca to comment on the distinction between la religion savante and la religion populaire that appears in the literature.⁵ He had interesting comments:

"I agree with the distinction between la religion savante and la religion populaire. Now the savante has taken over the church. It dominates church life and also the seminaries. Some Haitian priests do not feel comfortable with the popular religion of the people."

"I have a problem with the RICA people and their meetings. The people who come to the meetings are all immigrants but the leaders of the meeting are so White and upper class. They play violins and all that kind of stuff; the people love to go because the bishop is there all dressed up with his miter. They go to greet him and talk with him. That is why I go there because the people can meet the bishop."⁶

The religious elites of the Brooklyn Diocese and their being so locked into the dominant White and upper class culture resonates with the thought of V. Lanternari on the conditions for the emergence of a popular religion (see chapter one). He argues that when the religious elites are so attached to dominant cultural stances, they cannot provide for the religious needs of the masses and as such, new popular and enthusiastic religious movement emerge. Such being the case, it is no small wonder that so many of the

⁵Robert Pannet, Marie au Buisson-Ardent, pp. 46-47.

⁶RICA - The Rite of Initiation of Christian Adults is a contemporary program preparing adults for the reception of the sacrament of baptism.

Caribbean immigrants are being converted to the Pentecostal sects whose vibrant, enthusiastic and fraternalistic life meets the newcomers' needs.

The next theme that emerges out of the interviews with J. Malagrecia is that of inculturation and pluralism of cultures.

"It is a big mistake. Tony Sherman, the Diocesan Liturgical Director and his policy is a mistake. The policy that this office advocates is that they want to make it the policy of the whole church. The immigrant church was the success of the American church and now they are moving away from this. They want to impose on the whole church architectural standards which do not fit in with the immigrants. I do not understand this. The church before tried to adjust to the immigrant needs; now it does not. The language of the liturgical office and the diocese is pluralistic, but the policy is not and it is very authoritarian. It is a liturgical dictatorship. It is very hard to get permission to put a statue of the Virgin in the church. The newly renovated church of St. Jerome says nothing to the people."

"The group who runs the office has a certain mind set. They are a group of middle class liberals. They want fine classical music and order. Rambush is one of the companies that does the church decoration; there are also other companies. In the old church of St. Jerome, there were many statues and the altar had a different position. Not even the old Irish liked the changes of the new church decoration and the taking away of the statues. For example, when I go to the RICA meetings, there are only immigrants there. Yet they insist on playing English songs and play violins. They just speak English to the assembly. They are very authoritarian in their way of acting. When we did our basement church over, we did not call them. We put in two statues of the Virgin, one for the Haitians and another for the Hispanics. There should be different Virgins for the different ethnic groups. The office opposes this; they just want one."

"There is not inculturation to touch the present immigrants. The diocese was always an

immigrant one. In the past we respected the immigrant and we did not impose one culture on them. In the past the various different ethnic parishes were a sign of respect. The liturgical committee imposes one culture on the whole diocese. They do however bow to the American Black, but the immigrants and their needs are not an issue in the church. I do not agree that the statues and images should be put into one room. It is bad. I was not in agreement that the statues be taken out of the church. Also I do not like the tabernacle on the side of the church off the main altar. I never understood why they did this. It confuses the people who do not know where the tabernacle is. Also they do not know where to genuflect. Soon they will put it back into the middle of the church. There is no sensitivity in the diocese to the different cultures. Look at the Cathedral of St. John; it is a terrible situation there. The cultural things are so upper class and White. For Lent, they had the whole church decorated with masks. They had long explanations to explain the meaning of the masks. It was awful; I took the Haitians there and they did not like it either. There is no need to explain symbols to people. There is little interest in the diocese and the country for the immigrants. The Hispanics are the biggest group in the country and also the Haitians are the largest Black Catholic group in the country."

"The liturgical office is not now run by Third World people. The office occupies itself with church decorations and should be open to the different cultures of the diocese. I would want a volunteer committee with Third World people; that would be a liturgical committee in action. They would help in making decisions. We need a liturgical committee because sometimes local pastors do awful things in church decorations. The present group does not meet the needs of the people. The rest of the diocese is the same; there is not multicultural presence there."

In these statements, Malagrecra raises the issue of inculturation of the faith so as to adapt it to various cultures. His critique of the imposition of one cultural style of the faith on such diverse groups of immigrants in the diocese is related to the critique of Maldonado and Galilea to the problem of the whole church (see chapter

one). These two men complain that there is a big distance between the official church life and the poor and marginal Latin American. Also the rationalizing and modernizing tendencies of the Second Vatican Council have aggravated this distance. The election of a conservative Polish pope who is so suspicious of any inculturation on the part of church life makes the situation worse. As a result, there is little movement in the church in this direction. A. Chupungco in his perceptive book, Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy, argues that the Council's work is unfinished. It certainly has reformed the liturgy, but has not started the second step, the inculturation of this liturgy in the various cultures of the world. In the past, the liturgy was adapted to diverse people and the same should be done today.

Malagreca's comments also raise the issue of cultural and ethnic succession in the American church. In the past, there were tremendous tensions and difficulties between the Irish, German, Italian, Polish, etc, immigrants and clergy who came to this country. The Irish bishops fought the cultural demands of all of these groups. As a result, there were break away Italian and Polish churches. The Italian one eventually came back, but the Polish one exists until this day. In one sense, with the arrival of the new Caribbean immigrants, the Catholic Church is faced with the challenge of adapting to their cultural and religious style. It is an old problem which is now characterized by the tension between

the modernizing and rationalizing tendencies of certain movements from the Second Vatican Council and the religiosity of the low-income Caribbean immigrants.

Interestingly, J. Malagrecá has some criticisms of popular religion.

"We must remember that there are dangers in popular religion also. It can be magical and needs to be transformed.⁷ We must be careful. People participate in it to get and not to give. They are not transformed.....The problem that I have with people's religion is that it is not challenging enough for the people. People come to be filled with religion but is it changing their life? These things are a good experience but is their life changed? This is the question in my mind."

I answered that from the interviews, the procession does represent a significant religious and cultural experience for the immigrants and has a message of outreach and conversion. Certainly the prayer of petition plays a large role in the procession due to the suffering from the marginal position of the immigrants. However, it does not obscure the deeper important meaning that the celebration has for the participants. I also quoted the notion of V. Elizondo who mentions that the liturgical year with its feasts and celebrations is a much more effective vehicle of

⁷The speaker here is not alluding to the distinction that Max Weber makes between religion and magic. Rather his comments reflect the common derogatory attitude on the part of some of the clergy toward the religious expressions of the working class and less educated people. To answer this negativity, I responded to the speaker and stressed the depth and authenticity of the seriousness of the procession to the people.

instruction than just explaining the faith in a classroom situation.⁸

We will now go on to analyze the interviews with Anthony Sherman, the priest Director of the Brooklyn's Diocese Liturgical Commission.⁹ Again we must keep in mind the critical thinking that was cited in the theoretical consideration of chapter one because I directed the interview from that point of view. I wanted to get his reaction to this critical thought.

He described the work of the three diocesan commissions: liturgy, art and architecture, and music. He also explained his role in them. He then went on to criticize recent church decorations at St. Jerome's and added a few details on liturgical consultants in the United States.

"The work in St. Jerome's parish in which they redid their basement has problems. They did not keep in line with the directives of the American church. They put in two Virgins, one for the Haitians and one for the Hispanics. We do not want this in order to have more unity in art."

"There are recognized liturgical consultants in this country. For any particular place they work in, they look at the history of the place and dialogue with the community to lead the community to a concept of what might be done. Rambush and Jon Rigger are two important companies; the former has the monopoly of all the cathedrals of this country."

J. Malagrecia in his interviews did note the

⁸V. Elizondo Christianity and Culture, pp. 174-177.

⁹Anthony Sherman, interview conducted in Brooklyn, New York, July, 1987.

displeasure of the Liturgical Commission with the two Virgins they put into the basement church.

We then moved to the body of the interview and I asked him to comment on the cultural underpinnings of the directives on church decoration in this country.

"It is basically Western European and not really American. It is modern and to simplify things. It attempts to implement the directive of the Second Vatican Council. The goal of the directives is to help people understand the art; they want the art to be simple and direct. They wanted to remove the excess. They would question having six statues in one spot. The mind is confused by this. It is part of the movement which put the liturgy into the vernacular. It is to make things clear and intelligible. Also in setting up the sanctuary, we want to be clear where the presider sits; it should be clear to all. Then there is the place where God's word is proclaimed and read. There is also the place where the altar is and where the sacrifice is celebrated. The reserved eucharist is to be in a clear space which is also to be a place for adoration of the eucharist. It may be a chapel. It applies all the principles, it is hard to deal with this in the present time. There are problems with the old altars. We have old altars with precious marbles; it is hard to blend the new altar with the old. The people ask what is going on here. At times the focus is still on the old beautiful altar with the flowers and the marbles. There is sort of a liturgical schism. There is the old altar with the flowers, candles and there is the priest in the shadow at the new altar. This is a living statement; we have not moved on a logical and intellectual plane."

"When I studied in Innsbruck, Austria, P. Franzen, one of the instructors, said that it takes 25 to 30 years to translate directives into institutional behavior. Some of the ideas are taking place in brick and mortar. There is a new kind of worship style, but the church building remains the same."

Important in the first quote above is the word 'excess.' It is a word of the religious elites with advanced liturgical theological training. They want to simplify the

decorated church and aim for a crisp and clear liturgical ceremony. However, this is not the preference of the working class. In the critical literature that we cited in chapter one, in the testimony of J. Malagrecia and according to my opinion, the people do not see the ornate decorations as an 'excess' but a necessity. The working class immigrant is not confused by the ornateness, but it is his way to touch the sacred. This will come out later in the chapter when we analyze the interviews of the procession marchers.

This tension over the 'excess' is an illustration of the Gramscian thesis of the conflict between the official institutional faith and that of the Southern Italian farmer (see chapter one). The former is highly organized, rational and formalized while the latter is symbolic, mystical with statues, candles, emotions, pilgrimages, feasts, etc. The disagreement over 'excess' is also an example of the theory of Weber of the tension between a more charismatic and enthusiastic religious experience versus a more routinized and rationalized one. He notes that the priests are the guardians of tradition and always the proponents of the rationalizing of the faith (see chapter one). The remarks of A. Sherman manifest the desire of the priests to routinize and rationalize the plethora of symbols and emotions of a more enthusiastic religious life according to their theological and liturgical theories.

I then summarized for A. Sherman the talk by L.

Maldonado on popular religion and the recent Liturgical Reform and asked him to comment:¹⁰

"Some of the observations are on target. There has been an effort to recapture the liturgy of the word, that is, to hear the word. But it is not finished. There is now a second generation of lectors. They have their own experience and new questions. Our people as yet do not believe that God is present in the word. The young people are more sensitive to God's word. They wonder if we really have a good realization of the liturgy of the word. We must remember that it is only in the last twenty years that the scriptures are in the hands of Catholics.¹¹ Before it was a Protestant thing. Also there is a lot of questioning of the scriptures due to the probing of the fundamentalists. There are more workshops now for Catholics to understand the scriptures."

"I agree with Maldonado that the liturgy may be too wordy. The Roman liturgy was always a head trip; there is also the movement to simplify it.....In relation to being too heady, as a church we have the tradition from the Gnostics. This movement rears its head once in a while. We want people to have 50 courses before baptism. Also the RICA can be too intellectual at times. There is an exaggerated intellectual movement in the church."

"The RICA program gives people a chance to witness to their faith. This is good for the newly

¹⁰Luis Maldonado, "Liturgia y Religiosidad Popular."

¹¹It is since the Second Vatican Council that the reading of Scripture has been encouraged for the lay Catholic. Before this, reacting to the Protestant Reformation and its stress on Scripture, Catholics were not advised to read it. With the Council's reform of the liturgy and it being put into the vernacular in 1967, the lay people now are exposed on a regular basis to a cyclic hearing of the Scriptures in the mass. Also in the 1960's, there sprung up many Bible study groups for the lay people on a parish level. Furthermore, in the reform of religious education that was ushered in with the Council, the study of Scripture was put in the religious education of the parochial schools and other catechical programs.

baptized. We need this more in the liturgy; people should be able to share their life and experience in the liturgy. We can do this in discussion groups. The sharing should take place."

Interestingly, A. Sherman agrees with Maldonado that the recent reform has made the liturgy too wordy. He continued to comment on Maldonado's talk:

"The sense of the sacred and transcendent. There is an improper way of celebrating the eucharist. The liturgy does speak to the five senses. But we must plan to do this. For example, at St. Brendan's parish, we did a few things with planning and it could have been done anywhere. We used silence a bit after each reading. There is a need to get back to the basics. For example, the vessels which hold the eucharist should be like special china in the house for dinner. Also we have to walk with solemnity and dignity in the sanctuary, not sloppy and fast. It is an external act which is important. There must be reverence for the power of the word. There is a way to pray. Do we know how to read the word? Does the celebrant care about the ceremony? Is there wonder over the mystery in our own life? If there is, it will be manifest in our liturgical performance. For example, in St. Bernard's seminary there was a movement to do the liturgy of the word better. But the priests did not know how to read the word and appreciate the language."

"There should also be mementos of silence in the liturgy. We can use incense at four or five places in the Eucharist.....This is a dimension which has been lost. We can also use the asperges at each mass. There are a lot of complaints about the liturgy; it is not that the liturgical reform was bad, but the liturgy is not celebrated correctly. It is done in a way in which it was not intended. This is a root problem. For example, the sacrament of baptism is done too fast; in the old liturgy, because it was celebrated in Latin, it had to be done more slowly."

"There are other dimensions to the problem. There has been a shift in family life and presence. There is no more sense of ritual in the household. The basic elements of ritual in family life has been lost; there is not time taken to reverence brother and sister. Eating is too rushed.....In the United States, there is not a tendency to visit the

eucharist. The churches are locked during the day; also the people are afraid to visit the church alone. Also the pace of our life is so fast. People are on the move. There is also quick liturgies with little silence; the people want it quickly done with."

"We have to be careful in symbols and gestures not to explain things away. There might be a tendency for this. RICA lets people express or explain the symbols. We explain all things. We short change ourselves and also the Second Vatican Council. We must use symbols to the fullest; we must use the old and not wipe it off. Also the symbols are not well chosen; the salad bowls for the water of baptism. There is a bad taste in the use of symbols and vestments. In some of the immersion for baptism ceremonies that I participate in, we do it with gusto and flare so that the symbol and act of immersion speak for themselves; there is no need to explain them."

A. Sherman disagrees with Maldonado, S. Galilea, the Canadian document, Bulletin national de Liturgie, and R. Pannet. All of these writers feel that the reform did damage by removing the 'excess' of symbols and gestures in the liturgy (see chapter one). This was an affront to the preferences of the working classes in worship and an insensitivity to different cultures of the world who might want more expressive forms of worship. These writers argue that this reform reflects the education and class of the reformers who want a more rational and simplified liturgical life. Maldonado would accuse A. Sherman and the reformers as being ignorant of the need for ritual in the life of people. Also they were too influenced by the movement of Secularization in the 1960's which did not really consider important the need for celebration and festivity in religious and human life. Implicit in Maldonado's argument is that the

reformers might find it profitable to study the social sciences and become more aware of the role of ritual in life. Interestingly, at the end of my interview with A. Sherman, he voiced annoyance at the social scientists for raising objections to the liturgical reform. S. Galilea from Latin America would accuse A. Sherman and the reformers as being too culturally bound to the more rational style of Western Europe. He argues that the Latin Americans need more symbol, gesture, and emotions in worship and for that reason the Orthodox Eastern European liturgy is more suited to them.

Also during the interview, I continually raised the issue of the conflict between the preferences for the working class in worship versus the tastes of the educated clergy and reformers. He refused to comment on this. He would not acknowledge the validity of the wishes of the working class although I continually quoted various writers on this point.

I then went on to summarize the analysis of popular religion in the Canadian document, Bulletin national de Liturgie, the thought of R. Pannet of France and S. Galilea from Latin America (see chapter one). A. Sherman replied:

"Popular religion should feed into the liturgy. It can happen and does happen in the diocese. A few parishes of immigrants do carry the dead Jesus in procession on Good Friday. There is also a social connotation and dimension to this act."

"Our artists find it hard in the redecoration of the churches. There is no design to remove the statues from the church. How can you celebrate the eucharist with 25 statues around the altar? Some parishes have found a solution by having a special room to have the statues and candles for the people."

This seems to have worked. To meet the need, things must be carefully chosen. The artists have a challenge. The priests are artistic bores. They just go to a catalogue and buy what they see there. They do not want to work with the artists and create something new. The church used to be open and receptive to art. The church used to be a patron of art. Now the attitude is 'do not bother me.' Let me give you an example. The artist Jon Rigger did a crucified Christ and he modified it three times and still they would not accept it. It is like the new movement to put fig leaves in the Sistine Chapel."

"In relation to the Third World people, the parish of St. Clement had a Black altar committee. They put back of the altar a drape which comes from Africa. It is well done. In the consultations we must be aware of the principles. Seven statues of the Virgin is confusing. One solution is to have a mosaic of one Virgin in the center and other Virgins around the central one. The devotion to the Virgin is rooted in the social and economic history of the people. There is the Institute of Hispanic Liturgy with Cisneros and Elizondo; they are trying to work on Hispanic liturgy. There must be flexibility in the parishes because the populations shift so quickly."

"The whole question of inculturation has not been touched in the church. The problem is that Rome does not know what to do about it and how to judge which elements should be incorporated into church life. There are different cultures and how to understand them is hard. So Rome is confused. Thank God they recently approved the creation of the Zairian rite which is one of the first experimental rites to be approved. There is a lot of skepticism over the proposed Indian rite. We have to see what comes out of Latin America. There are the ceremonies without the eucharist where the group celebrates the liturgy of the word. We will see how this passes into the whole church."

My personal reaction to this statement of A. Sherman is that although he admits this interaction between the official liturgy and popular religion, it is not really of interest to him.

He comments on the problem of many statues in the

church building. He feels that a solution is to put them into a separate room in the church. J. Malagreca and myself do not agree with him. The question of the statues is a problem for religious elites, the clergy, but not for the people. They are a stimulation to their prayer and devotion. We will comment on this further when we analyze the interviews of the procession participants.

A. Sherman touches on the question of inculturation. In an academic sense, he is in agreement with the need for inculturation and voices support for the various efforts of V. Elizondo and Cisneros in this regard. However, it is my opinion and also of J. Malagreca that inculturation is not of real interest to him. On an experiential level, he does little to foster it in the diocese and is really concerned with putting into effect the liturgical directives that he learned at the university in Innsbruck, Austria. He admits that Rome does not want the inculturation of the faith as A. Chupuncgco discusses in his book, Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy. This criticism of Rome is voiced by Maldonado and S. Galilea also (see chapter one).

Now, we will analyze the interviews of the procession marchers. My approach to the lay marchers in this regard was different from the way that I approached J. Malagreca and A. Sherman. With these two men, I was able to quote Maldonado, Pannet, Galilea and the Canadian document and get informed responses. They were familiar with the various reform

movements emanating from the Second Vatican Council and could respond according to their own way of thinking to the critical thought on these matters. It was not possible for me to have the same conversation with the grass-roots, working class Caribbean immigrants in the procession. Most were not sufficiently aware of the currents emerging from the Council. So I had to devise a different approach.

A. Sherman suggested that I become acquainted with the book Environment and Art in Catholic Worship. It contains the directives from the American Bishops' Committee on Liturgy for church decoration. In the back of this book, there are pictures for church decoration which are models to be followed. I examined the pictures in the book and selected two.¹² In the interviews with the marchers, I asked them to examine these and whether the Caribbean people would like to worship in these churches with such a style of decoration. The responses were interesting and from them we can glean the preferences of the people in liturgical worship and church decoration. Also I got other good responses by asking the marchers to compare the flamboyant decoration of the procession altars to the simple decorations in the pictures.

One of the Haitian marchers had a good reaction to the pictures which will lead us into the discussion:

¹²Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, Environment and Art in Catholic Worship (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1978), pictures 10 and 11.

"Is it the catacombs? The immigrants will not like it. It is too empty. It does not seem like a temple of God. There are no saints and no sense of celebration. It looks like a Protestant church. We are not used to such churches. I do not like it. There is something missing. One asks if it is a Catholic church. There is something missing. Where is the altar: We look for the Blessed Sacrament and the tabernacle. It is not a Catholic church. We also do not want a plain cross; we want the crucifix with the body on it. We are from Third World and the Caribbean. This is more of a Protestant church. Where is the crucifix? We look for the altar when we come to church and want to see tabernacle. We want to see them. We want to see the saints and the altar. This does not look like the Catholic church. I do not like it."

"To decorate the churches, they should have teams of each national group. If I went to Europe and saw this, I would not like it. There is a conflict between our style and the style of this book. There is a conflict between the modern style and that of the procession. In Haiti, we have a different kind of church. This picture is too simple; there are not statues and crucifix. It is too simple for us. I do not like the church too simple. I like more decoration. The church in the picture is like a temporary one in the open air or in a tent. It is not a permanent one. They should not impose the European taste on us in the Caribbean. We should respect the culture of each country. The modern church will repel the people."

The themes in this participant's comments echo through many of the other interviews. There is a sense of something missing in the two pictures; they give the impression of being dead churches, and tension exists between White made churches and the flamboyant Caribbean style. One respondent said that the Haitians like their churches like Solomon decorated the grand temple in Jerusalem.

This whole clash of styles of church decoration flared up in an interesting incident in the history of the Haitians

establishing themselves in St. Jerome's parish.

"We would want churches that are more ornate. We like it rich with flowers. In the United States I was quite upset when on Holy Thursday, I saw the altar of repose so nude with no decoration. I said that Jesus merits more than this. That did touch me and impressed me. Also on that feast, with such a nude altar, the people had no respect and did not keep silent after the mass. I was upset and did suffer a lot. I felt that Jesus was on a bald head. In Haiti, we are used to a lot of decoration and flowers and colors. The altar of repose is so beautiful. The altar at St. Jerome's was a scandal to me. It was a shock to me in the United States. Now when J. Malagreca came to the parish, we told him that we were upset with this. At first he was slow to respond. But then he did see our point. He spoke with the pastor and it went back and forth. After much pushing, it was accepted and we got a beautiful altar. At the end, the priests were happy also. It was an impressive sight and the people were quiet after the mass and respectful. There was silence after the mass. They went there to adore Jesus in silence and respect."

Interesting is the strong language that this respondent uses. She was 'scandalized' at the sight of the 'nude' altar. The altar was like a 'bald head.'

I now want to quote an Hispanic reaction to the two pictures. It is interesting to note the imagery in his language.

"The pictures on the bottom look so poor; there is little spiritual there. There is nothing attractive.....There should be a lot of music in church. We do not need songs that are sad. I am in the Charismatic Movement and also the Cursillo. The former fills me more than the latter; it is because there is more feeling expressed there with the songs, the clapping of hands and a lot of joy. Now there are also people who are upset with that kind of joyful singing. They criticize us for it. The church needs more joyful songs; that will help the church renew itself. We Hispanics need a lot of pepper in our style of worship. There are tears expressed by us. With the Second Vatican Council, there was a lot of

saints eliminated. The Protestants accuse us of idolatry. There is a distinction between idolatry and devotion. There are two different things. We do not adore the statues. I like the pictures of the churches with more statues and decoration in them."

In a similiar vein, another Hispanic has a wonderful way of describing the immigrants preferences in worship.

"Are they chapels or churches? They need something; they need a taste. We Hispanics like the altar up front and the decorations. The tabernacle is important with a light on it. We need also statues and the image of Christ in the sanctuary and the church. These churches look very humble and simple. They look kind of empty in the front; they need something to identify them."

"We need something in the church that reflects the glory of God. When I think of the grace of God and his love for us, I see a garden of roses before me which has many roses and different colored ones. God is thousands of colors and beautiful. So the decoration of the churches must have a nice altar, flowers, beautiful things, colorful things that reflect the grace of God and his love for us. These things are material but they adorn and make beautiful the churches. The churches need such decoration. It helps us see the grace of God which is reflected in the colors and the beautiful things. God is illumination and shines and is resplendent. These churches in the pictures do not reflect the grace and the love of God for us. These churches need that. The procession with the altars and the flowers flow from the heart of the people. These pictures miss something; that is my point of view. God is millions of colors and resplendent; that is like his grace and it should be reflected in the decorations. Jesus is like this too. There is something missing in these churches."

"The style is not adopted to us. We want to feel God's power and pray. We need only a temple to do this. The churches need an identification and should reflect the power of God. God put a rainbow in the bible and the world. Through it, we see the love of God. The church needs something like this. It needs something to identify it as the temple of God. We Hispanics would find something missing in these churches. There is lacking something we need."

The imagery that this immigrant uses is like poetry. The various images of flowers and color give us a glimpse of how the newcomers envision God and the kinds of symbols needed to worship him. Such a description also helps us understand why the procession causes such excitement because it is an expression of these preferences. In the above quotes, we note the sense of celebration of important events.

I mentioned that I had difficulty eliciting a response from the marchers in relation to the modernizing and rationalizing tendencies in the church from the Second Vatican Council. Examining their reaction to the pictures in the American bishop's directives was more effective in obtaining a reaction from them. However, there was one immigrant that responded to a question of the state of the church since the 1960's. The story that she tells of her home town captures so well the conflicts we describe in this section.

"I was young when the changes from the Council came in and it was not too important to us. At the time, I was in the convent and was a novice. With the changes, we kept our family names. The changes, like the Latin, some people did like. To others, the changes were a shock. The priests and the sisters changed things too fast. They broke the old laws and it was hard. Many people left the church. The changes came too quickly."

"We had our traditions from before. After the changes, there was a mix of the new and the old. We accepted the new and held on to the old ones too. We did not want the things as simple as the Council wanted it. The people still want the statues and the images. Let me give to you an example. In my town of birth, the mountain people came down to go to the big feasts and the processions; they came in droves."

Then some new Irish missionaries came to work there. They did away with the statues and the big processions. So the people did not come anymore to the feasts; they started to enter into the Protestant sects. So the Irish priests reflected and brought back the old statues and the processions. The changes were no good to the lives of the people. The humble and poor people like to live their faith in this way."

Interestingly, other commentators on Latin America also mention that the modernizing and rationalizing tendencies in the church since the Council has stimulated the conversion of people from Catholicism to the Protestant sects.¹³

These testimonies of the lay participants in the procession articulate in a surprisingly interesting way the preferences in styles of worship and religious life which are in conflict with the three modernizing currents from the Council which we are calling into question. The reaction of the marchers to the two pictures shows a definite desire that the churches be ornately decorated with statues and images. This is a preference which grows out of the culture and tradition of the Caribbean. It is expressed also in the style in which they do the procession with its ornate altars and the festive atmosphere in the neighborhood. These preferences and sense of celebration also are in tension with

¹³Joseph Comblin, "The Heritage of Popular Religion in Brazil," Lumen Vitae 46, #4 (1986):391-409; "In Brazil, Evangelicals Are on Rise." New York Times, 25 October 1987, p. 16; Raymond Masse, Les Adventistes du Septieme Jour aux Antilles Francaises: anthropologie d'une esperance millenariste (Montreal: Centre de Recherches Caraibes, 1987), p. 33.

the liturgical renewal which simplified the celebration of the mass with a reduction of ritual, gesture and symbol. The Caribbean loves these and solemnity. From their testimony, we see how they would prefer an Easter Orthodox liturgy to a Western one as Galilea and Maldonado mention in their critiques (see chapter one). Also the immigrant desires to celebrate big events which represent important realities of the faith, rather than sit in a class room and have it explained to them. J. Malagrecas comments on how the immigrants are bored with so many of the diocesan programs because they are too cerebral. These festive celebrations are full of cultural and religious meaning for the participants. V. Elizondo mentions that these festive celebrations are more effective communications of the faith than just classroom presentations.¹⁴ It also suits the expressive Caribbean immigrants whose culture is more of touching and seeing than of hearing.

The testimonies of the immigrants substantiate also the various authors whose thought is critical of the three movements from the Council which we are questioning (see chapter one). For example, Maldonado's ideas on the gap between the official liturgy and the manifestations of people's religion, the loss of ritual and gesture in the reformed liturgy, the nature of liturgy as feast rather than a catechesis, and the challenge of inculturation, these are

¹⁴V. Elizondo, Christianity and Culture, pp. 174-177.

all echoed in the testimony of the marchers. They have preferences which are not being met in definite areas of church life.

The critical thought in the Canadian document, Bulletin national de Liturgie, the critique of Pannet from France and of S. Galilea from Latin America are found also in the responses of the marchers (see chapter one). Their religious and liturgical life is rich with symbol, gesture and festivities; it is a culture of the heart and feeling which clashes with the style of the religious elites which is abstract and conceptual. These elites are different from the immigrant in their class and education. The culture of the Caribbean makes life so expressive and as such influences religious celebrations.

The testimonies of the procession marchers witness to the preferences in the style of worship of the immigrants. Their faith is one that is enthusiastic, highly symbolic, filled with charisma and *communitas*. In our discussion of the thought of M. Weber, V. Turner, H. Cox and Chartier, we noted how these religious enthusiastic movements pose a danger to the institutional church and for that matter, political authority (see chapter one). We summarized Weber's thought on how priests are constantly fearful of personal religious expressions that would be a challenge to their institutional charisma and position. They always try to routinize, control and rationalize the message of

charismatic leaders and movements. For this reason also, there is tension between priests and prophets. The Corpus Christi procession represents a manifestation of such an enthusiastic religious experience. Its inspiration and thrust comes from the people. As P. Arnold states, the clergy's role is peripheral with its participation limited to the celebration of the mass and marching with the eucharist. The festivity is basically a celebration of the people.

In the interviews with J. Malagrega, he is very much in tune with the enthusiastic religious expressions of the immigrants. A. Sherman, trained in the advanced liturgical thinking in Western Europe, has a different vision of the church's liturgical life and wants to get rid of the 'excess.' However, we might ask another question. If A. Sherman really understood the enthusiastic popular religion of the immigrants, he would immediately detect that he is not in control of them and of their free floating religious charisma which as such poses a danger to his institutional position and charisma. That is why political authority is also afraid of these enthusiastic movements and Weber notes that they use the clergy at times to suppress them because they can spawn revolutions. V. Turner, Chartier and H. Cox comment on the critical and liberating tendencies of *communitas*, festivities and popular religion (see chapter one). Their examples highlight the thesis of Weber on this point. A. Dumoulin cites the periodic messianic revolts that

occurred in history of Brazil based on the popular religion of the slaves and the marginal population.¹⁵ We would conjecture that if the religious authorities in Brooklyn knew the implications of this popular religion, they might make moves to routinize it, so that it does not challenge their power and remains within the institutional structure of the church and the control of the priests.

¹⁵A. Dumoulin, "Popular Religion in North-East Brazil," pp. 54-55. See also,, N. Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium, it is an interesting study of such enthusiastic movements in history and their ability to spawn revolutions.

Part III:

The Corpus Christi procession can be a base for creative social change and liberation for immigrants from the injustices of their marginal situation in this country.

In this section, we want to analyze the procession participants' interviews from the point of view of social change. Popular religion can be a base for motivating marginal people to work for constructive social change in their situation. We will be analyzing the interviews in the context of the Latin American revaluation of people's religion which we documented in chapter one. We noted the stages of development in this process, described popular religion as liberating from or upholding the status quo, and analyzed the various elements in its liberationist role. We will study the interviews from this liberationist point of view and see the implications in terms of immigrant life in New York City.

In order to enter into the immigrants' understanding of the procession's implication for social change, I asked them to describe their migration experience from the Caribbean to New York City. I tried to discover the difficulties that they had since they moved from one culture and society into another. This life of transition with its hardships and problems will then be the base for understanding the procession in relation to positive social

change.

Concerning the difficulties of this transitional period, the interviews do highlight the social, economic and legal problems that immigrants have. We will open our analysis with a quote of a Haitian immigrant who feels the pain of loss in leaving the home country and culture.

"I came in July 1973. I was happy to come because I could not find work back home. I had to come for economics. I had a sister here who lived alone. So I came to live with her and give her support. We are nine children in the family and not used to live alone. She came first here. She was happy when I came; she was not alone any longer. It was hard because I had to leave my parents back home. I left also my friends. I had an aged aunt and when I said good-bye to her, she said to me: 'I will not see you again; when you come back, I will not be here any more.' That was hard to take. After one year, she died and I could not go back to the funeral because I came on a tourist visa."

"A big problem is nostalgie; the second day that I arrived here, all went to work and left me in the house alone. I was not used to such solitude in Haiti; so I sat down and cried. I prayed and eventually found work. I had to help my parents. I went to learn English so that I could understand it. I could write it since I learned it in Haiti. It is hard to understand it; so I went to school for that."

"I worked in a factory doing sewing work. That was hard. The people in the factory shocked me. At lunch, I sat alone and said the rosary. They did not like that; they criticized me for that. They said that I put myself above them, but here in New York City all are equal."

Beginning life here is hard and doubly so with the illegal status with so many of the Caribbean immigrants. One newcomer describes it well:

"For those who come on a tourist visa and for those who come by boat, it is hard for them. It is

hard to ask for work when you do not have the green card. They do not feel at ease in the country. The police and immigration are always looking for them. They go to the work place and look for them. They also throw them out of the country. They do not live in peace; they are afraid and do not want to talk. Sometime they treat you bad. It depends on where you work. The illegals have to work for less money; also if you have your green card, you can look for other work. The illegal cannot look for other work. If they go to another place, they will fear the police who might go there. He has to accept the bad salary. So he stays. The bosses sometimes give them a hard time and take advantage of them. It depends on the conscience of the people involved."

"They also do the work that others do not want to do. The Haitians are forced to accept this work because he has to support all the people back home. They have sometimes two jobs to support back home. The people back home watch and wait for the money to come. Around Christmas and when school opens, they have to send more money back home. It causes hardships for them up here but it makes the people back home happy. People in Haiti think that money is found on the street here."

"They might suffer if they are Black. It could be harder."

One Ecuadorian immigrant describes well an interesting vignette which betrays the negative attitude that native-born Americans can have toward the newcomers.

"Let me give you an interesting story. It will show you people how people look down on immigrants. I go to work in the morning with another teacher who is Jewish. We were in the bus and the bus hit a car. The car was driven by a Jamaican immigrant. There was a terrible exchange of bad language between the bus driver and the Jamaican; all the bad words came out. The last thing and the worse that the bus driver said to the other driver was that he was an immigrant. That showed his attitude to us."

Many immigrants mention a further danger for

undocumented aliens. They can be denounced to immigration officials by other aliens, even friends. There can be vendettas, rivalries and one's own countrymen can denounce them. One Hispanic mentioned that he received harassing telephone calls at home from other aliens. There were people at his work who did not like him and harassed him, since they knew he was an undocumented alien.

Another area of suffering for the newcomers is their employment which tends to be low-paying factory jobs, house work and other marginal work that native-born Americans find distasteful and unrewarding. Many describe with emotionally laden words their work in the factories.

"Work in the factories is hard. You have to stand all day long. Some do sit at machines and do piece work. You better be able to do piece work or they fire you after a few weeks. If you have an accident, you are hurt and wounded in the factory work. As Blacks you do work that others do not want to do. They know Haitians are poor. They make it worse for them. They humiliate them. They put you down and make you feel that you have no value. You do the dirty work. It is work which is hard and dirty. They throw you out if you do not do it. You cannot speak English and defend yourself. You cannot speak for your rights because you cannot speak English. Also having no green card, you are afraid to talk. So you must accept the humiliations and it is hard to find work now. You take it. Also now many factories close in New York City. They move to New Jersey. It is hard for us to move there. We lose our work because we cannot move. All places of work want references and experience. How can you get them if you never worked in the first place?"

Another immigrant had this to say:

"The migration is very difficult. Even in the long run it is not easy. In this country, the people do not say hello to one another. They live in fear in the city; they do not help one another. They fear

that the other will accuse them to immigration. In our country, we help our brothers and sisters; there is no aid here. Back home, we speak with people; here they do not respond. It is hard for the immigrants to find work; if you get it, then they fire you. In the factory, the Haitians do the work that the others do not want to do. The work is dirty and hard. They leave it for the Blacks. If you take care of the elderly, the old people have harsh words for you. They use bad words and treat you bad. They treat you bad in the factory, they treat you like a dog. The dogs in the streets have a better value than the Haitians in the factory. We have experiences of this. Life is difficult."

Many interviews mentions that back home the immigrants might have been teachers or secretaries. Here due to their lack of documents, language barrier, etc., they have to accept manual work which is completely new to them and quite hard. Now they have to do work that other people refuse. The word 'humiliation' is used, and 'treated like a dog' which convey the depth of the emotionality. Similiar feelings emerge in many of the interviews.

Being Black in a White country is another major difficulty.

"The Blacks suffer a lot. In my last work, the boss did not use me to my capacity. He used me like a robot. I had to do the hard work but not the fine work. I had to clean the factory. I am an educated men but I did the rough work. The bosses do not speak well of you as a Black. They do not say hello, nor do they call you well; they have bad manners and think that you are dumb. They have no confidence in us. We do not speak English, have no facility in answering. It is hard for us to speak. We are Blacks in a White country. They start at a higher salary than us. We also do the work that the others do not want to do."

Some of the respondents also describe very personal and shocking experiences. They mention that the factory and house work are sensitive work situations. The following two quotes recite difficult experience in the latter employment situation.

"In my work, people treated me bad. I was not welcome. I cried many a time. I came to this country with no green card. I remember in one of the first houses that I worked in, I did some cooking for the family and children. Due to the ingredients used, the food had a sweet taste. The lady accused me of putting sugar in the food. I denied it because it came from the ingredients (carrots). She threw me out of the work and the house. I had to leave immediately with my bags. I was lost in the city and it took me nearly a half a day to find my sister's house with my bags. I was lost in the subway with all my baggage. At the time, I could not speak English. That was a terrible experience. Day work is hard. The men do not respect you and say bad things to you. They humiliate you; they only give you twelve dollars a day to clean the whole house for a day. At the time, I was happy with \$12; I used to find work even on Saturday and Sunday. I found work where I could."

Another respondent had also a difficult story.

"I was cleaning the house for an older lady. I noticed one day that the other people in the building were not happy because I was Black. They said that Blacks do poor work and everything in the house becomes Black because I am Black. I did not listen to her. She called the office the next day and told them that she wanted a White girl. The office said no; they like me. They dropped the lady from the employment service. I went there the next day anyway. She closed the door in my face. I called the office. I went back to the apartment; I had to get my clothes. She told me to get my clothes and valise and leave. She pulled a knife on me to get me to go fast. I got you stuff and went next door to call the office and tell them what happened. They told me that they would not find workers for that lady again. The lady was not lucid."

Other immigrants speak of the difficulties of just living in urban New York City. Most come from the lovely warm islands of the Caribbean with small cities and towns, and the change to New York City can be hard.

"I came seven years ago. It was a difficult thing. I came without my green card. I do not like US culture. One has fear in this country. One is fearful outside and in your home. There are so many robbers. We cannot live in peace here. There is always bad news on the television about more and more robberies and violence in the city. Life is enclosed. One comes home and locks the door. It is like being in a prison. One never knows who will be knocking on the door."

To end this discussion of the immigrants' hardships in this country, I want to quote one Hispanic marcher who sums up the life of the aliens.

"It is very hard for the immigrants. Let me give you an example. I know an illegal alien in the neighborhood. She cries to me each day because she does not have her green card. She cannot find work and fears that the immigration will throw her out of the country. She is married to an American citizen who worked for the government for 20 years. Although her husband can get her the papers, there are troubles because she cannot get the necessary documents from back home. There is a lot of hunger and poverty in the neighborhood with the immigrants. They have to try to get false social security cards. They cry and suffer. In this country, they do not feel free. They stay home and are shut up in the apartments. So many live in one apartment, sometimes 12-15 people. In one of the neighboring houses, we see so many people in one room. They are like sardines. Maybe this new law can help them. They buy false social security cards and they need the proper identification. Many go into the drug trade and prostitution to survive in this country. The work is hard in the factories. They throw them out easily. They pay off the books and pay them little, even below the minimum. They treat them like slaves and they have to work long hours. The work is hard and then they have to send something home

to the family. I know a girl who works 11 hours a day and makes \$125. The minimum salary is more. They pay the immigrant off the books."

We have presented these testimonies because a discussion of the liberationist view of popular religion should begin with an analysis of the difficult life situation of the immigrant. In these quotes, the newcomers describe the harshness of coming to a new country, the cultural shock, nostalgia for home, the difficulty of being poor, different and foreign, not speaking English, undocumented and facing all kinds of injustices and exploitation in the work and life situation. For many, they were taken advantage of and lived in difficult situations back home. For example, life in Haiti was not easy under the Duvalier regime and continues to be difficult until this very day. On arriving here, the immigrants find a host of new and difficult situations, which continue in another way the hardship which they experienced in the home country.

This situation is similiar to the condition of the Israelites in Ancient Egypt.¹ They too were foreigners in a strange land. What made life so difficult was that they were state slaves. As a result, they had to do hard work and they were treated tyrannically. It was an alienating work and they were frequently humiliated. The Israelites started out

¹Michael Walzer, Exodus and Revolution (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1985), pp. 27-33.

as guests in Egypt and were treated well. With time however, their political protection was lost and they were reduced to being state slaves.

We will now analyze the themes that emerge in the interviews in relation to the vision of life and hope and liberation that the procession gives to the immigrants in their marginal situation in this country.

Througout the interviews, there was a theme of hope that God would deliver the immigrants from their difficult situation in the United States. One married couple put it well:

"It gives them hope and life. From all the fear that they have here, they will be delivered one day. In the procession, we feel united in our problems. There is a community here. God is with them. There is good confort for us. We get our strength back for another year until the next procession comes. Life is a labor and a struggle and if we had not faith, we would all die here. It is hard for us because the country is prejudiced. There is racism. Look how they accuse the Haitians of being the bearers of AIDS. They blame the Haitians, but it is not true. We lose work because people are afraid of working with us. They look down on us because we are the last to come. They always look down on the last comers. Look how the Irish looked down on the Italians. The last always have to suffer. Those who come after us, will suffer to. We Haitians never wanted to come to New York. We had to come with the fiasco of Duvalier. Before the problems of that government when things were good in Haiti, the Haitians said that the work in New York City is 'like washing a dog for your job.' New York City had not interest to us before Duvalier."

Another person states well this hope of liberation in terms of the injustices to be overcome.

"They feel the injustices. In the long run, if they pray, the injustices will diminish. I must start with myself. I work and there are injustices there. If I pray and go to the procession, slowly the injustices will diminish. In face of the injustices of life, prayer is our strong point. We pray against the injustices so that they will end. We are treated badly. But God will change the injustices. He will save us. There will be changes in life. We will find it; it will not come all at once. In the long run, we will find it. We must believe and pray against the injustices. Look at St. Peter on the water. Only when he doubted, he sank into the water. Jesus can save us. I may fall and even doubt. But we must believe and reject the doubts and we need faith to fight the injustices. I pray against the injustices. In the procession, God will give us a deliverance. I will get it."

Some of the marchers enumerated the problems that they have hope to be solved. During the time after the procession, there was a big drive in the area to register people in the amnesty program for their legalization in this country. One marcher mentioned that the procession gave the immigrants hope that they could rectify their legal status. Another newcomer mentioned that the Haitians are divided according to class lines. The more educated ones look down on the illiterate. In the procession, both groups march and meet one another. They are walking like brothers and sisters; this is a lesson for their daily life during the year.

Another respondent said that the Black immigrants march and so want to give a message to White America. All men and women are made in God's image. All have the same

heart and their blood is red. The procession gives hope of a earth without the distinction of color and race.

One Hispanic immigrant felt that the procession gives him the hope of making New York City a more just and human place.

"It can bring more justice for the poor and the humble and for the workers. He will be given a just wage; there should be no more exploitation. They should fix up the houses that there will be good housing for them."

In these testimonies, the procession participants articulate a hope that God will help them overcome the injustices of their situation and that they can live in a more just and fraternal society. This theme of hope is related to a central point in the thought of G. Gutierrez. He states that the Latin American is generally exploited and believing.² Most live in poverty and on the margins or bottom of the economic structures, but they also have a faith that permeates their life. This faith is articulated in these testimonies where the immigrants discuss a hope of deliverance from their unjust situation and a reaching of a more just and fraternal life and social situation.

This theme of hope is very important and it has great consequences for social change. It is important to see this hope as one which desires to change society; it is world

²G. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), pp. 102-104.

changing. This hope that the immigrant articulates is similar to the one that Ernst Bloch discusses in his Das Prinzip Hoffnung.³ He notes two kinds of affections: those of society (envy, avarice) and those of expectation (anguish, fear, hope). Of these, hope is the most liberating and positive. At first, it is a day dream of the future. Yet it seeks to be clear and conscious. It wants to assume a concrete utopic function and mobilize human action in history. It is the ontology of what is not yet.⁴

J. Moltman, building on Bloch's ontology of hope, attempts to bring it into Christian thought.⁵ He argues that the God of the Bible is one who comes to meet us and for whom we can only wait in active hope. The present order of things is challenged by the Promise, that is, through the Resurrection of Christ, people are liberated from the limits of the present and can think and live in terms of what is to come. Running through the Old and New Testament is the theme of the Promise. The Promise is made by God to humans that He will reveal Himself and his love. This promise will be fulfilled in history and so puts revelation in an eschatological perspective. There is a tension toward what is and what is to come; people look for a new action of God. Hope in the actions of God on human's behalf is based on his

³Ibid., p. 216.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 217.

initiations for them in the past, such as, the Exodus event. The new initiations by God in the future are also nourished by the final act of God which is to take place at the end of time.

To hope then for the Christian means not to know the future, but to be open, accept it as a gift. It is accepted in the denial of injustice, in the struggle against the abused human rights and the movement to build peace and brotherhood. Therefore hope has a mobilizing and liberating function in history.

This theme of hope which the immigrants express and which Bloch, Moltmann and Gutierrez comment upon links up to the social change potential of popular religion. As we noted in chapter one, Prien states that people's religion is a predisposition to political action. Dumoulin argues that there is an energizing potential for protest in popular religion. Parker states that people's religion has the seeds of liberation challenging dominant culture and structure. We can understand these statements because of the theme of hope that runs through the lived faith of the immigrants. In their marginal situation, they are believers and their faith gives them the biblical vision of hope which challenges the unjust status quo. Instead of legitimizing the present, popular religion challenges it with a hope of a better world and future. The immigrants articulate a dream of an America where they can legalize their status, live in a society with

less class and racial lines, and where the poor will not be down trodden.

Because the theme of hope of a deliverance ran through so many of the interviews, I asked the marchers if there was a parallel between the Israelites in slavery in Ancient Egypt and waiting for their liberation, and the marginal immigrant marching in the procession. Are the latter also awaiting a new Exodus from their marginal situation? I will quote a few respondents. There might be some repetition, but the important thing is to note the words used which manifest the strong feelings of the marchers.

"There is the procession in the street and the people are marching and waiting for something. It is like the Israelites in the book of Exodus waiting for a consolation. Who is in the procession? It is the poor, the base communities, the Legion of Mary and the Christians. Even those who do not come to church regularly, they help with the decoration and the flowers. All the neighborhood and the area participate in the procession. The people do not sleep with all the cleaning and the decorating. There are designs in the street."

"In relation to the Israelites and the Haitians in the procession, they both pray for a deliverance. There are some who are discouraged. Others, perhaps 45 - 50 - 60% have hope that something will change. God will send a new Moses like he sent the old Moses to Egypt. God will also give something to Haiti. There will be deliverance for the people. They live for this. There is the procession which shows a lot of commitment."

"The procession in the United States is like the one in Haiti. It is the same suffering. Look at this little apartment. I pay \$425 a month for this place. For a couple of days we did not have light here; the landlord did not fix the problem. He could have done something before to help us. He leaves us in this suffering; he is also Haitian. Also in the work in the United States, they do not accept me. I

was working in Long Island for four dollars an hour. A White man did the same work and was making sixteen dollars an hour. So I left the work. I did the work for three men. I did all kinds of work and also cleaned. It was an exploitation like the Israelites suffered in Egypt. The Haitian people have realized that they have to talk. Even if the adults die in the struggle, they want a better place for their children."

Another respondent went on:

"God gives them aid. They need courage. He is supporting them. They cannot go back; they have sold all in Haiti to come here and now they are poor here too. They need the support and the blessing of God. He will help them; he will support them. He will help all people. I myself still suffer in my work; there are humiliations that I have to suffer. I want to leave my work and I feel tired. Yet I cannot leave it. It is hard to find work and they will not hire a person with my age. Although I have a lot of experience in my work, they will not hire me someplace else. They want young people."

"Some of the immigrants do not find work; others do work part-time. I work and others lose their work when it is slow. Many do not have the benefits that I have. They suffer a lot. My children are big, thank God. They might have a lot of young children."

"God is in the procession. The immigrants also send money back to Haiti. God is good; he will help them find work here. We, the Haitians, are poor people so we pray. We are poor and also is our family poor in Haiti. In the procession, the people look for the mercy from God. They look for him to give them their daily bread. They also look for a deliverance from their problems like Moses did in Exodus. The people in the procession want the manna like the Israelites wanted it in the desert. They look for God. The Haitians look to God for the manna. There are so many troubles now in Haiti; there is a lot of necessity."

An immigrant from Ecuador continues:

"The immigrants live in slavery in a foreign country. They want to work for their liberty. We also walk to God for a liberty and a spiritual one too. We do not work for the material things; that is

a temptation. It is bad to put the material first in life. We have to march to the true liberty. There are the injustices that we suffer under. But we are a group. Together we can conquer them; alone we cannot overcome the injustices. We pray for our liberation in the procession like the Israelites did in Egypt. That is our hope. Jesus and Moses have the same function. Jesus is our hope. As immigrants in this country and the Israelites in Egypt, we are in the same condition. We are foreigners and had to leave our own country; there is persecution in the foreign country. We are in an unknown and foreign country; we want help. We want to enjoy the liberties and opportunities here."

Another immigrant continued:

"The procession tells us to give the suffering to God. When I see all the people in church, I know that many cannot accept all the suffering anymore. They are desperate; they work in the factory. They have to pray all the time. We need faith and to call on God. God will not forget us. We need temperance.....We pray although we do not see God. It is our faith. We see him in faith. We do not know him enough. We have faith. We need confidence in him. The procession is a parallel experience with the Exodus experience of the Israelites."

A Haitian comments:

"The Haitian immigrants are looking for a way to a better life. They want their green card and hope for a better life. There are the injustices and in the procession, they give it all to God; they pray and vomit all these injustices out and their sufferings. They pray for a deliverance and want a better life. They are the people of God; they suffer. They want to see God. Like the Israelites, they want a deliverance. God will save us also."

These testimonies highlight the insight of Gutierrez that most Latin Americans are poor and believing. We note the theme of the difficult life and social situation of the immigrant and their waiting for the help of God to deliver

them from this condition. It is a situation which is parallel to the Israelites in Ancient Egypt. They were state slaves and suffered from the corve, doing harsh work and being treated tyrannically. God then took the initiative. In this liberating act, it was not only God who was active but the Israelites themselves were activated and took political and social action to march to their liberation.⁶ After the exit from Egypt and in the desert, they were formed further by the pedagogy of Moses. He confronted them on their weaknesses and evil ways, and molded them into a new people who could enter the Promised Land. In this whole dynamic between God and his people, we note the element of the Promise. God invited them to a Promised Land where they were to build a 'holy nation.' It is to be a religious and political culture. It will be a land free of oppression and oppressors if the people follow the way of God; otherwise the new land will also have the injustices of Ancient Egypt.

The Exodus story is an inspiration to the immigrants as they reflect on their difficult situation here and the oppressive conditions in their home countries like Haiti or Central America. The ancient Exodus event is a paradigm for liberation in Western Civilization. It has five elements: oppression, liberation, social contract, political struggle and a new society.⁷ These five elements are operative in the

⁶M. Walzer, Exodus and Revolution, p. 95.

⁷Ibid., p. 133.

testimonies of the people as they articulate a vision of a better life for themselves. The immigrants describe the oppression in their situation, and the efforts at liberation. It will require a new social contract in society and political action. In the end, they want to create a better and new world for themselves here and in the home country. They dream of a society where they can live with their families with enough to eat and in harmony with others; they do not want anymore exploitation.

This repudiation of poverty is very much part of the Exodus story.⁸ First, Gutierrez argues that Moses did lead his people out of poverty, slavery and exploitation into a land where they could live with human dignity. Second, the rejection of slavery and injustice is contrary to the whole thrust of the book of Genesis. Humans are created in God's image and destined to develop the earth. They grow and mature by transforming the earth and working with one another. People realize their freedom in their creative work and by cooperating together; poverty, exploitation and injustice dehumanize them. Third, humans have been made in the image of God; Christ himself became a human person and we, Christians, through our baptism are temples of God. He dwells within us through faith. So offenses against other humans are offenses against God. Jesus himself says in the scriptures that whatever we do to our brothers and sisters,

⁸G. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, pp. 294-295.

we do to him. Therefore the very liberation offered in the Exodus story is an escape from poverty and exploitation and a marching to a better life.

In the Exodus theme expressed in the immigrants' popular religion, we note it de-legitimizing the status quo. It presents to the people an alternate vision of what life can be like. In the liberationist view of popular religion, this is a key element in the whole process. For example, Kselman and Arias mention that in festivities and manifestations of people's religion, there are factors of social solidarity and fraternity which are adverse to the ethos of oppresssive regimes (see chapter one). This is a challenge to the unjust social situation. In this way, the Exodus theme contributes to the protest dimension of popular religion. We cited Prien, Dumoulin and Parker who argue that people's religion is a pre-disposition to protest, and has sees and an energizing potential for it (see chapter one). The theme of Exodus contributes to this dynamic.

It will be helpful now to go to where this energizing potential for protest is made more active in certain concrete movements. An interesting instance of this hope for liberation was made concrete by an Hispanic man who was active in neighborhood and parish development and he linked up well this work and the spirit of the procession. He is enthused about the work of the coalition called the East Flatbush Churches (EFC). It trains potential leaders for

neighborhood and church development.

"The East Flatbush Churches' meetings is a good way to get to know each other. In the meetings, we look to improve the churches and the neighborhood. Each community has each parish talk about its problems in the churches and the neighborhood. They want them to be corrected. There is a big problem of housing. People are looking for housing. The apartments are bad and very expensive. There is a lot of crime in the subways; there are robbers. People in the meetings ask how they can help the parish and the neighborhood. These meetings bring in more people and motivate the community. It brings new people to church. That helps the parish support themselves. We have programs that motivate the people."

"We must explore the future. We have to look at the necessities of the parish and the neighborhood. We need leaders who will work in these areas. When we touch these problems, the situation will change. EFC takes action. We see its importance. The leaders have a role to play; they will give force to the movements of the church. They will help with the bad economic situation, the bad housing, etc. The leaders have to work more. The EFC and the community planning board are important. The EFC is the Catholic and the Protestant churches. They must work together so that we can find solutions to our problems. This way will also attract more people to the church."

"There is a comparison between the Israelites in Ancient Egypt and the immigrants in the procession. There are the humiliations. The people in the procession who are immigrants and as such not American citizens, they pray and are walking in the procession. The Lord will see them. He will see their suffering. God will look on them with mercy; something is there. God will help all the immigrants. He will find a solution to their problems and the circumstances. The immigrants will have success with the procession. They can get things to help them. God is putting his hand, love and power on the immigrants. People will see the value of these immigrants. The powerful look down on them like they look down on slaves. But through prayer and unity, the powerful will change. They will work for the rights of the immigrants. Little by little, they will resolve these problems."

"These is Moses and Jesus and the suffering people. So the procession has an importance; it is a call to resolve the problems of the whole area, not

just of St. Jerome's. All the immigrants have a low salary, they come to ask the Lord for help; the powerful should help the poor. The procession gives them an opportunity to pray. The Lord works this way. He is in all their hearts. One has to know these people and see that the poor have their value also. They have their good points."

"The EFC is interested in the whole community and works for progress for all. The procession also works for the whole community. It is to improve it and the environment of St. Jerome. We are struggling together; there are the three languages; we want to better the welfare of the whole area. In our unity is our force. We are to unite the three races. This is our goal. The EFC also struggles for this. They want to better the community and the parish also. The procession has the same goal; they want to improve the situation inside the parish and the neighborhood. We are working for the same end to help all the needs of the community. The procession works this, for the resolution of the necessities and the problems. The procession and the EFC have different ways but the same goal."

"The EFC is to prepare the person for leadership to improve the parish and the neighborhood. We are to develop leadership. We have to prepare leaders of the parish. The procession is to get the same thing but in a different way. We need unity. The ministers and the immigrants are all there. We say to the powerful of the country that we too are human and have equal rights like the others. There is the one goal and two ways to get there. We pray for all inside and outside of the church. They are two ways, but similiar in goal."

This Hispanic immigrant articulates well his understanding of the work that is to be done in the East Flatbush neighborhood. Important for our analysis is how the work's motivation grows out of his religious life. In his testimony, we note the theme of the harsh life of the immigrants and the neighborhood, the factors of hope and the Exodus story, the movement of Christians and the churches to

action, the relationship between the work of the EFC and people's religion, and a new vision of what East Flatbush can be like and a reaching to a new maturity by the churches and the Christians in this process. Religion is the motivating base for this activity. It is an example of the centrality of religion in the Latin American working classes.

In this activating process, the various factors in liberating popular religion are operative. First, in the dynamic between the religious faith of the immigrant and the neighborhood situation of East Flatbush, is born a new vision of what the area can be like and an aspiration to create a better place to live in. Out of this come praxis. The immigrants, Christians and the churches take action. They have initially reflected on the situation and developed a program to foster church and neighborhood leadership, so that a program of social change can be implemented. This whole process is one of evangelization of self and the church. The individuals and the churches will grow in their Christian understanding and living in this movement. Individuals and the churches will mature and become effective instruments for this social change. The three factors of liberating popular religion, silence, work and word are operative (see chapter one). There is silence, a deep religious faith which is expressed in the people's religion. There is work and word analyzing the social situation, speaking out and taking action to remedy the problems. Out of this should emerge a new

church, one that is in solidarity with the poor in their work to create a better neighborhood. East Flatbush will be empowered to solve its social problems and provide the immigrants with a more wholesome environment.

In this dynamic of the EFC, and the testimony of the immigrant, we note the theory of Dussel who states how popular religion can overcome its oppressor role (see chapter one). In the latter, the people are passive and await God to solve all the problems and provide them with the necessities of life. In its liberator role, religion motivates people to take action in order to solve their problems. God works along with them, but the people are actors; they analyze the situation and develop a program to remedy the plight, and put it into action. As Parker says, the people move from covert protest to an active and conscious one (see chapter one).

Reflecting on the testimony of this Hispanic immigrant, I have asked myself why there were not more of the procession leadership involved in this EFC movement or other neighborhood empowerment activities. That would have been a more dramatic instance of the empowerment function of people's religion. They were certainly involved in the amnesty program. A good deal of the procession leadership were very active in the parish's involvement in this regard. In the interviews, they talked about their hard work in this social activity and the importance of amnesty to alleviate

the legal status and marginality of their fellow immigrants. That more of them were not involved in a neighborhood empowerment movement like the EFC might be due to the kind of leadership that J. Malagrecá provides in the parish and their own undocumented status in this country. He is an extremely effective priest who has developed the Haitian community of the parish in terms of leadership, programs, and activities. However, his ministry is very 'spiritual.' Although he is sensitive to the economic and social conditions of the area, he has not really provided leadership to develop concrete program of neighborhood empowerment, such as a Saul Alinsky community based organization. His activities are more in the pastoral field. He is also an active member and leader of the North American Charismatic Movement which since its inception, regrettably has become more conservative, very 'spiritually' orientated and has forgotten the social dimension of Christianity which came into the fore in the 1960's. One Hispanic immigrant did slightly criticize J. Malagrecá because he did not deal more with the social implication of the Christian message.

Another reason for the paucity of the procession participants in neighborhood empowerment might be due to their undocumented status. This causes the immigrants to keep a low profile. However, it need not be definitive. With the proper leadership and precautions, they can be induced to become active; this has been my experience in working in

neighborhood empowerment in immigrant neighborhoods.⁹ Also C. Chavez has mobilized undocumented farm workers in California to protest.

The most remarkable description of popular religion motivating people to protest was the Haitian immigrants' reflecting back on Haiti and the non-violent overthrow of the Duvalier regime. It was unexpected theme that emerged from the interviews. In asking them the question of the comparision between the Israelites in Ancient Egypt and themselves as marginal marching immigrants in the procession, it stimulated interesting responses concerning the oppression and struggle for liberation back in Haiti. These flashbacks also gave valuable insights into the role of popular religion and the Corpus Christi procession in this whole striving for freedom and development.

We will begin with an important statement by one Haitian from Jeremie.

"After the massacre of the families in Jeremie, the people became critically aware of the situation. They knew that they could not perform a revolution. They had to depend on prayer, the rosary gave them courage. They would see where the situation would go. There was a poor lady who sold charcoal. She had one child in school, a Catholic one. That child disappeared one day and was never found again. So the people saw that there was no other way out of the political situation than by prayer and by God. They became critically aware of the situation. Now the bishop of Jeremie, Msgr. Romulus is doing good work."

⁹An interesting example of this is discussed in Henry Cisneros, "Counter-Power in San Antonio," February 12, 1988, pp. 75-79.

This testimony by a Haitian immigrant is an instance of an underground protest of popular religion on the part of the poor. C. Parker argues that at times the oppression is so acute and the threat of annihilation is so great that the people can only protest covertly.¹⁰ They are silent because they have been silenced, not because they are dumb. This type of protest allows them to survive, and keep their group identity and ability to envision and plan for a different society. Kselman and Arias state that these festivities and processions of popular religion in times of oppression celebrate a sense of social solidarity and participation, and fraternity which is opposed to the de-humanizing regimes (see chapter one). Later on, historical practice, changed situations and organic intellectuals can move this covert protest to an active and conscious one.

This is operative in the above quote. The Haitian immigrants repeatedly told me that violent revolution under Duvalier was impossible because of the arms that the United States gave to the regime. There was no way to overthrow the government by physical force. With this harsh reality, the Haitian people fell back on their religious roots as this immigrant explains. They waited with Christian hope and the memory of the Exodus story. They wanted God to show the way.

¹⁰C. Parker, "Popular Religion and Protest against Oppression," p. 34.

It came in the 1980's when by the preaching of the Theology of Liberation, the younger clergy became the organic intellectuals which moved the Haitian people from overt protest to an overt one and the regime was overthrown by a non-violent movement.¹¹ This immigrant's words witness to this fact. The people survived, and based their hope on their religious roots. When the time came, these roots were activated to bring about the desired change. Crucial was the growth in critical awareness which the preaching of the Theology of Liberation brought about.

The suffering under the Duvalier regime was particularly difficult because it was the enslaving of Blacks by Blacks, Haitians by their own fellow citizens.

"We also pray in the procession for the deliverance of Haiti. To free Haiti from sin and for it to be a free country. We pray a lot for Haiti; the country of Haiti cannot march because of the slavery from our own Haitian masters. The people of Israel were in a foreign country and they were exploited there. We are enslaved by our own Haitian masters. That is harder for us. It is our own Haitians who enslave us. That is hard. All must leave Haiti due to the suffering. We have to get out of our own country. The Blacks are slaves to the Blacks. It is a harder slavery than Whites versus the Blacks."

The non-violent overthrow of the regime was accomplished after a long process of conscientization.

"The procession did not tumble Duvalier but it

¹¹Report of the Mission of Pax Christi International to Haiti (Erie, Pa.: Pax Christi International, 1986); John E. Keegan, 'Church Spearheads Struggle Against Haiti's Duvalierism,' " World Parish, 28 (March-April 1988): 1-3.

helped. Like the people of Israel who suffered in Egypt, the Haitians suffer in the same way. Many people say that the Catholic Church was responsible for the fall of Duvalier. The church invited the people to pray and the church conscientized the people. The people prayed and that helped. The church was an instrument; in the conscientization process, the people knew that they did not have to live in slavery any longer. The church was the instrument that taught the people that they did not have to live like that. I talk with the Jehovah Witnesses. If the church did not witness to the fact that if we are rich and not help the poor, it is a sin. Then the church is not the church. We are not to exploit each other. Why should those who have no schooling have so much money and be rich? The Haitians did not have arms in the revolt versus Duvalier. Their power was spiritual. The Haitians are Christians and they prayed a lot. God gave them the first deliverance of the land and will give them also the final one yet. There was a big conscientization effort by the church. Radio Soleil was very important; they instructed the people how we should live. The press spoke and wrote also. The base communities are important too; we must see the injustices. God does not want us to live like that. The people saw that they must take action to defend their rights. Some people want to keep the people down. But the people resent this. The base communities and prayer were important."

Other respondents mentioned that bishops, priests finally spoke out and denounced the injustices of the government.¹² They also cited the importance of the visit of the pope to Haiti when he declared that the country needed a change.

Another respondent stressed the role of prayer and faith in accomplishing what arms could not do:

¹²A good history and description of this movement is found in Report of the Mission of Pax Christi International to Haiti (Erie, PA.: Pax Christi International, 1986).

"We did it with our arms interlocked and we prayed. Weapons could not tumble Duvalier but prayer did. We prayed for a deliverance. We held up to God a deliverance and he gave it to us.....But the deliverance is not final. But there is a group of Haitians who pray and fast and the deliverance will come. God will come back and help us. There will be a final deliverance. What is going on in Haiti will also purify the country and clean it. We are convinced. We must pray. The Haitians want to accomplish things fast through God. The people without arms put down the criminal. Only God could do a thing like that."

I asked the marchers if the Corpus Christi procession was part of this liberation process.

"They did a lot of processions in Haiti and manifestations and demonstrations. They did them all over and all of the churches were involved. There were meetings and processions; in one procession, almost 200,000 people marched, all over Port-au-Prince. They went to the parish of St. Joseph, then to St. Anne and the whole city. The crowd was impressive. There was also other processions and the way of the cross. The spiritual power dumped Duvalier. The church had a part in it. The church should talk. Only she can speak because she has no fear. The priests can talk; if they are attacked, the attackers attack the universal church. Then the whole world knows of the attack. All pray for the whole church. The church spoke openly. All spoke, the bishops, the priests, etc. There is more force when all speak together. There is unity. The bishop's conference and others spoke; all were united. They talked and that influenced the people. The people of Haiti need a deliverance. The church will not send the people into more trouble. At the end, the church denounced Duvalier. At the beginning of the reign of Duvalier, some of the priests spoke and he expelled them."

One marcher had a particular Haitian way of describing the downfall. She quoted a proverb: "Bat chien, tan Met." (You can wack the dog, but then you have to face

the master.) The Duvalier regime inflicted many injustices on the people, but then it had to await the judgement of God.

The final theme that emerged out of the flashback on the Haitian struggle was that it is still going on:

"They also prayed for a deliverance for Haiti. That will come. The people have endured such suffering and the day will come when they will get the deliverance. We have one goal; that is the deliverance of Haiti. We pray for this each day. Things must be straightened out there; God will help and respond. God will help and continue. He will give and it is a wonderful thing; we will wait. Our spirit is still in Haiti. We come to this country but our heart is still there."

This overthrow of the Duvalier regime by non-violence is a dramatic instance of the prophetic role of people's religion which is testified to be the immigrants themselves. At first, there was a covert protest due to the overwhelming armed force of the regime. In the 1980's, a process of critical awareness or conscientization emerged. The younger clergy preached the Theology of Liberation imported from Brazil. This stimulated the religious Haitian poor to reflect on the situation, become aware of the economic and social contradictions in their life situation and from this, a base was built to overthrow the regime. The immigrants testify to the amount of suffering and exploitation that took place in Haiti. They also articulate the deep religiosity of the poor that always was their source of hope. They refer to the fact that they were like the Israelites in bondage in Ancient Egypt. This hope and memory of Exodus gave them a

vision of an alternate society with God helping them to realize it, a society of justice and freed of oppression.

The praxis or protest grew with the preaching of the Theology of Liberation. The different organs of the church, such as, the pulpits, Radio Soleil, the Pope's visit, manifestations of popular religion like processions, base ecclesial communities, etc., stimulated the process of critical awareness and the movement building. The people became active and were mobilized. In this process, the people and the church became evangelized; both grew to be more Christian in the confrontation with oppression and exploitation. They understood their faith more and lived it out in political action.

We note the three factors of silence, work and word operative. The immigrants testify to the deep religious roots of this movement, the faith of the people and its expressions. Work and word expressed themselves in the movement building and political action, and the prophetic denouncement of injustices. The result was a new church and Christian community which are in solidarity with the poor and the emergence of a new society where people try to build economic, political, and social structures which are humanizing and not oppressive. Despite the overthrow, the work continues because the desired society is not yet realized.

This description of the Haitian movement corresponds

to the model of Dussel positing popular religion as liberator and oppressor (see chapter one). He argues that popular religion is liberator when it motivates people to take action themselves. It is oppressor when people are resigned and wait for a miracle from God to solve the problem. Here in the Haitian movement, the people became active; they developed a critical awareness of the contradictions of their situation and acted. Their religious roots and people's religion are very much part of the motivation of this process. Operative also is the theory of C. Parker where the covert protest of people's religion moves to an active and conscious one through the growth of critical awareness due to the efforts of lay and clerical organic intellectuals. People's religion then was not manipulated by forces so that it legitimized the status quo. Rather it moved to delegitimize the unjust social situation, presented to the people a vision of an alternate society, and provoked them to action.

In this Haitian non-violent revolution, the Exodus theme of popular religion once again became active in history. The five elements of the Exodus revolutionary paradigm are present: oppression, liberation, social contract, political struggle and new society.¹³ The Haitian people became critically aware of their oppressive situation, and undertook a non-violent revolution to overthrow an unjust

¹³M. Walzer, Exodus and Revolution, p. 133.

regime. There is the on-going political struggle to build a new social contract between citizens and construct a new society. This process is called revolution and the Exodus story is a paradigm for social change in the Western tradition.

Certain Hispanic immigrants also flashed back to Latin and Central America where similiar struggles are in process:

"In South America, there is much oppression at times by one man. There is a lot of ignorance. Theology helps people see better. Also the people are now in contact with the outside world through TV and radio. The people are now more informed. We want to change the world because they are aware of the rest of the world. We cannot hold the poor ignorant. The poor fight to change the world; the rich do not want it. For example, the Phillipines. All wanted Marcos out; there is only a small minority of Communists. The majority were together, that lessens the chance for traitors of the people. If people are united, traitors are hard to find. Look at Haiti, with no arms, the people threw out the government with faith. They revolted. More power to the church. Our position is better and bigger. We will have an impact on the community. The procession will touch the oppressed. In the name of Christ, the procession will teach to others the message of Christ in humility. It will have its impact. We are going to the same situation. The procession gives hope to the oppressed. Tomorrow will be better. We must struggle always in our life. Before people accepted things, now they fight. Before ignorant, now they accept no more."

An immigrant from Honduras had similiar observation on the struggles in Central America. He noted how the church lost esteem in the eyes of the people by being so identified with the rich in the past. It is now beginning to defend the poor and overcome the past heritage.

Perhaps we can summarize this section on the struggle for liberation and the role of the procession within it by quoting a young man from El Salvador who worked with the martyred Archbishop Romero. He mentioned that the procession has three levels of meaning:

"The procession has a political dimension because these are working class people who are poor and of a different culture; they want to express themselves. The procession also has a dimension of protest. We have the same experience of being discriminated against in this country. This experience unites us. We have a union to express ourselves and the three communities are united. The procession is also religious because we have the same faith in God. He will help us to continue and go ahead. Our faith will give us strength to go ahead in life, struggle, and be on pilgrimage. The protest dimension is the three cultures and communities of workers; we are poor not rich. We work in factories and restaurants. We do not work on Wall Street. We are poor and humble. We believe in God in a materialistic world."

To conclude, in this section we have attempted to present the liberationist interpretation of people's religion as this emerged out of the interviews with the immigrants about their procession. We first presented and analyzed the hard work and life situation of the newcomers in East Flatbush. We then noted how their religious roots offered them hope and the dream of a new Exodus to liberate them from their difficult situation. These themes illustrate how popular religion can be a pre-disposition to, an energizing potential for and seeds of liberation. We cited the testimonies of the immigrants where they describe their

religious roots inspiring them to social action. The Haitian revolution, the rebellions of Central America and the work of the EFC are people actively working to ameliorate their situation. People's religion moves from a covert protest or a pre-disposition to an active, conscious movement for change. The people are empowered. There is a growth of critical awareness or conscientization which enable them to see the contradictions in their existence and act to rectify them. In this process, the alienation role of popular religion can be overcome. There is no manipulation of the religious symbols as in 'patriarchal' Catholicism and a legitimizing of the unjust social structure to support the status quo. The protest dimension of popular religion emerges and as such the latter reaches its true authenticity.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, we have considered the phenomenon of Caribbean immigrant popular religion in New York City and have analyzed it under a new rubric, the theory of A. Gramsci. This introduces fresh elements into the literature on American Catholic immigrant experience, that is, the themes of social conflict and change. This is new because the Catholic literature dealing with the European Catholic migration to the United States between 1820-1939 is based on the community building and solidarity function of religion. We do not want to deny this function of immigrant religion and we note these elements operative in the interviews of the participants of the Corpus Christi procession in Brooklyn and our analysis of them. However, the main thrust of this dissertation attempts to analyze immigrant popular religion in the line of social conflict and change.

We will cite two studies which illustrate this difference: Jay Dolan's The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865, and Sylvano Tomasi's Piety and Power: The Role of the Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1880-1930. J. Dolan studied the Irish and German parishes in New York City at the beginning of the 19th century. His analysis must be placed in the

context of the large German and Irish migration in that century which responded to the need for labor as the United States began to industrialize and urbanize. About one million Catholics, mostly Irish and Germans came to these shores between 1790-1850.¹ They came to this country which was quite anti-Catholic; there were many nativist attacks against them because they were Catholics and foreign. The type of Catholicism that the immigrants brought was one which grew out of the Council of Trent which defined the Catholic faith in face of the Protestant Reformation. It was an enclosed religion which tried to protect Catholics from the bad influences of the larger society and the Protestants.

Dolan mentions that by 1865, there were 400,000 Catholics in the city, half of the population with 32 parishes.² In 1860, there were 203,740 foreign born Irish in the city with 23 parishes for them.³ The parishes were very much part of the ethnic neighborhoods. The immigrants lived together, bought food at the local ethnic stores and worshipped on Sunday in their local ethnic parish. The local clergy attempted to preserve the faith style of the old country. Dolan notes that the Irish were quite poor and

¹John Tracy Ellis, American Catholics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956): p. 42.

²Jay Dolan, The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865 (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p.13.

³Ibid., p.22.

lived in terrible overcrowded conditions.

The faith life of the immigrants had a close link to Irish nationalism and culture.⁴ This was due to the struggle for emancipation in which the local parish was the center of religious and political life. So the Irish faith was parish orientated and continued so in the new world. Dolan observes that the early Irish parishes were noted for their poverty. The fledgling worshipping community would start in a basement, then rent a place and eventually buy a Protestant church whose congregation moved to another part of the city. Parish life was centered around the Sunday mass. The churches were packed to capacity although many Irish were not practicing Catholics. Their lack of instruction in the faith during the years of persecution was the reason for this. The Sunday liturgies were long with sermons and music. The church holidays had big ceremonies and celebrations. Baptisms and marriages abounded due to the young nature of the immigrant community. There were many parish devotions, yearly missions and parish organizations. Parochial schools were built to pass on the faith and the immigrant culture to the young and keep them away from the bad influences of the larger society which was Protestant. Dolan concludes that the neighborhood Irish parish helped the immigrants keep their faith in this new country.

In relation to the German immigration, Dolan mentions

⁴Ibid., pp. 48-52.

that by 1860, there were 119,984 foreign born Germans in the city.⁵ Forty to fifty thousand of them were Catholic and they were served by 8 German speaking parishes. The Germans came to this country with their Catholic faith and a strong sense of nationalism. They wanted to continue their faith from the old country here; the parish was the base to do this. From it, they could keep their cultural heritage and fend off the Irish and Americans. Their religious life was much more expressive than the Irish one. The big feasts and seasons of the year were celebrated with pomp and circumstance with large festivities and street processions.⁶ The neighborhood was decorated for the occasion. They built cathedral like churches to remind them of back home. There were many devotions to the popular saints, Sunday liturgies were long with much music and singing. There were many organizations for the young and the old. The parochial schools passed the faith, German language and culture to the young.

Dolan concludes his study of the German and Irish parishes of New York City by stating that they were a social institution around which the immigrants could gather.⁷ The parish organizations allowed the newcomers to relive the spirit of the old country. The religious life of the parish

⁵Ibid., p. 70.

⁶Ibid., p. 76.

⁷Ibid., p. 99.

recreated the devotional life of the old country. The church used music and art to recapture the memories of the past. As a place of worship and a center of social life, the parish sought to transmit the faith through the myriad of popular and informal ways. The parochial schools played an important role to socialize the young into the faith and immigrant culture.

Continuing the theme of immigrant parishes, Sylvano Tomasi has written a perceptive book on the Italian parishes of New York City metropolitan area. Between the years 1890 and 1924, about four million Italians came to this country.⁸ The family was the central institution in immigrant life, and religion had an important role to play. Between the year 1866-1900, there four parishes established for the Italians in New York City. By 1924, another 21 were opened for them.

At first, there was an attempt to integrate the Italians into the existing Irish parishes. This did not work. The Irish had a faith style that was more urban, organized and law observing while the Italian immigrant faith was more centered around ritual and processions. Also, there were the Irish who wanted the newcomers to Americanize quickly. In this situation, there arose conflict due to the poverty of the Italians, divergent cultural and religious habits, and the feeling of being discriminated against by

⁸Sylvano Tomasi, Piety and Power: The Role of the Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1890-1930 (New York: Center For Migration Studies, 1975), p. 38.

relegating them to hold their meetings in the basement. So eventually the ethnic Italian parishes were established.

Tomasi describes well how the immigrants established a form of religious life in continuity with their old world faith life. The old dialects and language, customs, tradition and processions were preserved to protect the immigrant from the social disorganization and shock of the change to a new culture. In their own ethnic parish, they could find unity and respect, and meaning to their isolation, poverty and cultural difference. Seeing the sect as an institution to protect the needs and interest of marginal people, Tomasi describes the ethnic parish as a quasi-sect where the Italian immigrant, who was on the edge of religious and secular society, could fulfill their religious needs, find opportunity for self expression and preserve their self-identity in face of a new culture.

In these two important studies, we note a similar point of view. Dolan and Tomasi studied the various immigrant parishes in their role of building community, identity and solidarity. The transition to this country was a hard one in which the immigrants wanted to hold on to the religion, culture and language from back home. The immigrant parishes played a crucial role for these European immigrants in this process. With this base and solidarity, these two authors argue that the immigrants accommodated themselves slowly to the new culture. They satisfied the Irish bishops

and lessened the nativist attacks.

Our study of the Caribbean Corpus Christi procession is quite different in its approach to immigrant religious and cultural life. We do not deny the community building, immigrant identity and solidarity function of religion. We noted that it was present in the interviews where the immigrants spoke about their communal and fraternal feelings from the procession and solidarity function of movements of social change of which popular religion can be a part. Yet our approach to this Caribbean immigrant cultural and religious life brought in questions of social conflict and change. We analyzed this immigrant popular religion as it conflicted with the rationalizing and modernizing characteristics of Western society and certain currents emanating from the Vatican Council and then studied its implications for social change in this country and Latin America. We borrowed much from the literature of Latin America to discuss the latter point.

Certain themes emerged from the procession participants: an ability to and joy in celebrating important cultural and religious events, God is celebrated, this festivity is done by marginal foreigners and they are extremely aware of this fact, the message of conversion and salvation to the neighborhood and city, the unity among the three distinct ethnic immigrant groups, the solidarity felt by the active workers and participants in the procession,

themes of opposition to the values of consumer society and a sense of God's option for the poor.

This whole thrust is in conflict with the dominant Western technological and rationalist culture of North America. This culture represents the giant industrial and technical enterprises of the United States, which are interlocked with large financial organizations and government bureaucracies. They are centers of economic, social and political power. The universities are producers of rational knowledge which stimulates these structures to further growth and development. The goal is efficient rational action. Individualism predominates and people want to participate comfortably in consumer society. The culture is agnostic or indifferent to religion.

In discussing this tension between dominant Western society and the culture of the immigrants, we borrowed much from M. Weber and his theory on the disenchantment of the modern world and the decline of charism. We noted that precisely the factors that Weber saw disappearing in modern society are those which are being celebrated by the newcomers. They are also aggressive and demonstrate in public to alert larger society to these values and have it adopt them. From the Third World immigrants comes the questioning of the Weberian thesis.

From the margin of dominant culture and structures arises the conflict between these two cultural stances. We

utilized the theory of *communitas* of V. Turner and its points of emergence in society to explore this tension. The solidarity function of religion is operative here, but our analysis posits this function more in the thrust of the tension between the two cultural stances: the center versus the margin.

This dissonance is manifest in the strain between Caribbean people's religion and the three tendencies we cited coming from the Second Vatican Council. The recent liturgical reform with its desire to rid the celebration of the liturgy of its 'excess,' to simplify the style of church decoration of the same 'excess,' and the rationalizing tendency in the church since the 1960's to explain the faith rather than celebrate it are all points of contention. These three tendencies fostered by the religious elites in the Council have little sensitivity to working class preferences in worship, much less in harmony with the cultural tastes of the Caribbean people.⁹ The interviews with J. Malagreca and the lay participants highlight well the discord between the preferences and needs of the immigrants and the thrust of the three movements from the Council. Malagreca's interviews described how this tension is so evident in the daily life and the pastoral programs of the Diocese of Brooklyn. We

⁹A most sophisticated study of cultural adaption in liturgical worship and the challenge of the Third World to Rome to face up to this is found in A. J. Chupongco, Cultural Adaption of the Liturgy (New York & Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982).

also saw this clash operative in the attitudes of A. Sherman, the Director of the diocese's Liturgical Commission.

Here we also raised the important issue of M. Weber of the danger from enthusiastic religious movements to political and ecclesiastical structures. They frequently are the circumstances that spawn revolts against the political establishment. Weber also discusses how the institutional church and its priests are fearful of these religious movements because they challenge their control and their institutional charism. There is always an attempt by the church to suppress or routinize these charismatic movements. In this regard, we raised the question that if the religious elites of the Diocese of Brooklyn really understood these manifestations, they would recognize this danger and try to control them more. This raises another area of conflict between the institutional church and immigrant popular religion which is in addition to the more rationalized faith versus a more symbolic and mystical one.

This conflict of immigrant popular religion confronts the rationalizing tendency as it manifests itself both in Western society and the contemporary church. The people's religion and the Caribbean culture are like a counter culture to the dominant North American one. It is a soft marginal underbelly where other values are celebrated which call into question the stance of the church elites and dominant attitudes and structures of the United States' society. It

also has gender overtones. The values of the Caribbean procession traditionally are associated with females who are considered to be the weaker sex. Dominance, power and rational efficient action belongs to men who are thought to be the stronger sex.

This whole conflict between the immigrant symbolic and enthusiastic popular religion and the rationalizing and modernizing characteristics of dominant Western society and certain currents in the reform movement from the Second Vatican Council finds echos in the tension which occurred with the arrival of the European immigration to this country in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Dolan mentions that the Irish and German faith styles were different, the latter being more given to festivity, street processions, music, etc. The Irish were persecuted for centuries. It was an underground church with no public manifestations. This conflict broke out seriously between the Irish and Italians when the latter began to arrive in the late 19th century. Tomasi notes that the Irish faith style was urban, formalized and legal while the Italian one was more given to festivities, symbol, gesture, processions, statues, candles, etc. It had the characteristics of the popular religion that we see in the contemporary Caribbean immigrants. This tension is pronounced today by the three reforming currents from the Second Vatican Council. The conflict is now an issue for the universal church; we noted how there has been a

critique of these currents from around the world, for example, Latin America and the Philippines.¹⁰ In the 19th century, the inter-ethnic conflict had also roots in the Americanizing tendencies of the Irish bishops that Dolan and Tomasi discuss. These bishops wanted the immigrants to change quickly. This would stave off the nativist attacks on the 'foreign' Catholic church. Also it would have given the bishops more control. Heterogeneity is harder to understand and control than homogeneity in the church. The diverse ethnic parishes put limits on the bishops' power. On the other hand, the ethnic parish did help the immigrants accommodate themselves slowly to this new country which they had to do.

In the history of the American church, there was the problem of ethnic succession because the Irish bishops did not like the distinctive ethnic and nationalist characteristics of the religious expressions of the various immigrant groups. This conflict is now operative with the arrival of the new Caribbean immigrants. J. Malagreca cites how the religious elites of the Brooklyn Diocese are poorly prepared to deal with the new wave of immigrants with their distinctive cultural and religious style. This conflict in

¹⁰See Segundo Galilea, Religiosidad Popular y Pastoral Hispano-Americana and Anscar J. Chupungco, Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy.

the wider American church is documented in the literature.¹¹

The whole question of the rationalizing and modernizing of certain aspects of Catholic life raises the issue that after all these centuries and inter-religious conflict dating from the Protestant Reformation, is the Catholic Church becoming Protestant in parts of its life?

Our analysis also touches the large debate in Latin America on the relation between popular religion and protest. We cited the revaluation of it that occurred in South America since the 1960's, the three schools of thought and analyzed the liberationist interpretation of it. The themes of hope and deliverance from their difficult and marginal social and economic situation which emerged from the procession's immigrants are in harmony with the liberationist currents of popular religion. The flashbacks to the contemporary struggle in Haiti and Latin America for liberation from oppressive situations and governments were exciting developments in the interviews. Enriching also was the comparison between the Israelites in Ancient Egypt awaiting their liberation and the same hopes of the immigrants in the Corpus Christi procession. The Exodus story as a paradigm of liberation was operative here.

¹¹A. Stevens Arroyo, Prophets Denied Honor: An Anthology on the Hispanic Church in the United States (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1980); Ana Maria Diaz-Ramirez, The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York and the Puerto Rican Migration, 1950-1973: A Sociological and Historical Analysis (Fordham University Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation, 1983).

This enthusiastic Caribbean popular religion raises the issue of the danger that it poses to political structure. We cited instances in history where popular religion spawned movements to challenge political regimes. In this whole discussion of the liberationist stance of popular religion, we also analyzed how popular religion is a pre-disposition to protest and the manner in which it can be made into an active and conscious one. We also treated how popular religion can be manipulated and support the status quo which can be unjust.

Our analysis is bringing to this country from Latin America a new and creative understanding of religion in contemporary society. Hopefully this dissertation will stimulate American Catholic intellectuals to take more interest in the new immigrant religious expressions. They are indifferent to the important implications of the newcomers' cultural and religious presence in the American Church and society at large.

At this point also, we noticed how this dissertation went beyond the theory of A. Gramsci. He has a negative attitude and critical attitude of popular religion and culture. Our analysis of people's religion is much more positive and dynamic and understands it as a vital current from which important initiatives of social change can emerge from the marginal and oppressed. We also noted how this liberationist view of popular religion from the Third World

will challenge the Marxist intellectuals to reformulate their view of religion which is too tied to the European experience and the thought of the Enlightenment. We are indebted to Gramsci for his original analysis of people's religion, but our interpretation of the data goes beyond him and enriches his original insights.

This dissertation also advances beyond the thought of M. Weber. We are indebted to his perceptive analysis of the conflict between the rational and charismatic elements in society. He noted the on-going growth of a rational bureaucratic life and the decline of charisma and all its elements. In our study, we note the very factors being celebrated that Weber observed disappearing. The marginal immigrants confront Western rational society with a public enthusiastic religious movement having the elements of emotion, solidarity, protest, religion, symbol, gesture, color, art, etc. In this way, the dissertation very much fits into the theory of *communitas* of V. Turner and how *communitas* emerges on the margins of contemporary society. It is the marginal Caribbean immigrant who celebrates *communitas*.

In relation to the conflict between certain modernizing currents from the Second Vatican Council and Caribbean popular religion, we cited many critical commentators from Europe, Canada and Latin America who discuss this problem. The testimonies of J. Malagrecá and

the procession participants illustrate this tension and are in agreement with these commentators. In this context, we could anticipate the resistance of the Liturgical Director of the Diocese of Brooklyn, A. Sherman, to the criticism of the Second Vatican Council. In this respect, our dissertation is in agreement with H. Cox who argues that contemporary theology has become so academic and specialized, and as such has lost contact with religion in everyday life.¹²

In our discussion of popular religion as a base for social change, the interviews illustrate this factor. The writers from Latin America whom we quote such as H. Ribeiro, P. Ricard, E. Dussel, T. Kselman, C. Parker, H.-J. Prien, and others argue that popular religion can be a disposition and energizing potential for, and has the seeds of liberation and social change. It is activated through a growth of critical awareness on the part of the people so that they understand the social, economic and political contradictions in their life situation, and mobilize and take action to remedy it. Our interviews illustrated this potential by the immigrants' articulation of the injustices in their situation, their hope of deliverance and reference to the Exodus story. We also cited examples of how this potency was activated in the Haitian revolution, contemporary revolutionary movements in Central America and the testimony of the member of the East Flatbush Churches.

¹²H. Cox, Religion in the Secular City, p. 241.

All the questions about immigrant popular religion that this dissertation raises demonstrate how this study goes beyond traditional Catholic immigrant literature. The studies of J. Dolan and S. Tomasi are fine examples of this line of thinking stressing the role of immigrant religious life as building community, identity and solidarity through the important social structure, the parish. Our dissertation accepts this analysis and raises other issues and implications of the Caribbean immigrants' popular religion. We place this religious experience in the context of the disenchantment of the modern world and the conflict between rational and bureaucratic Western modern society and the role and future of charisma. In the Catholic Church, we analyzed this same conflict in terms of certain modernizing tendencies of the Second Vatican Council and the whole issue of the danger of enthusiastic religious movements to the institutional church and political structure. Although this conflict has certain echos in the tension, for example, between the Irish and Italian religious styles at the end of the 19th century or in the problem of ethnic conflict and succession in the American church, Dolan and Tomasi and others do not discuss these conflicts in the larger perspective that we have done in this study. Also this dissertation raises the wider issue of immigrant popular religion and social change. In this sense, we relied heavily on the debate in Latin America on this subject, and this adds

a new dimension to Catholic immigrant literature, that is, the potency of people's religion for social protest and change. With the radicalization of Christianity in Latin America and the Caribbean, the new immigrants from there can bring this protest dimension to this country. It can be a very unique contribution on their part to Catholic immigration tradition and theory. Certainly C. Chavez has gone a long way to put this into practice with the Chicano farm workers and V. Elizondo in his work Galilean Journey describes the liberating factors in Mexican-American culture and religion in general.

This rich presence of Caribbean culture and religious life and their roles in social conflict and change have other important implications for the Catholic Church. We will describe some of the thought of the two brothers, Leonardo and Clovis Boff on this important issue.

Clovis Boff states that the center of Catholicism is shifting to the Third World.¹³ He cites three great periods of expansion in church history. First was that of the primitive church which was centered in the East. It was the church marked by the first great councils which were the base for its whole liturgical and theological tradition. The second epoque was concentrated in the West and made Rome its focal point during the Middle Ages. It was this church that

¹³Clovis Boff, "Emerging Third World Church challenges Rome to decentralize," World Parish 26 (April, 1986):1.

brought the faith to North and South America in the period of European colonial expansion. Clovis feels that we are now entering into the period of the Third World church. He estimates that about 58% of all Catholics live in the underdeveloped world in the southern hemispheres. Their number is growing there and diminishing in Europe and North America.

The challenge to the Christian faith by the Third World is that it is an area characterized by great poverty and misery.¹⁴ Christians and the church must respond to this challenge. By responding, they will become more dynamic and alive. The Third World is also spawning new forms of theological thinking, pastoral and organizational initiatives such as the base communities, bishop's conferences, and new forms of pastoral work. The problem is that the center of decision making is still in Rome and the emerging Third World church does not have a voice in affairs corresponding to its growth and dynamism. Nevertheless, it continues to grow and the church in Europe continues to diminish.

This new church of the underdeveloped world has burst onto the scene of history and the ecclesiastical stage.¹⁵ Through the base communities, the lay people are becoming the subjects of the church and are helped in their

¹⁴Leonardo Boff, Eglise:charisme et pouvoir (Paris: Lieu Commun, 1985), pp. 16-22.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 221-228.

conscientization process by the religious elites who have made an option for the poor. The laity now are carrying on the work of the church. The laity of this church are mainly poor, so it is becoming the church of the dispossessed. This church of the poor is democratic through the base communities while the church of the North is aristocratic marked by the leadership of the clergy and middle class movements.

This church of the marginal in the Third World is taking the responsibility for changing the society it lives in by proclaiming the social, political and historical dimensions of the Christian faith. It does not stress only the religious and sacramental aspects of the faith. The church in Europe stresses the latter two points while the church in the South wants to be prophetic and change society.¹⁶

The two Boff brothers observe that this shift has tremendous consequences for the Catholic Church.¹⁷ It will involve a redefinition of the organization in the way it is run. It will demand a decentralization of its administration, a global reformulation of its structure. Instead of the imperial-type church with all decisions made in the center and then transmitted to the world, there should be various poles and centers of decision making. The church

¹⁶C. Boff, "Emerging Third World Church," p. 2.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 2; L. Boff, Eglise: charisme et pouvoir, p. 79.

would be polycentric. Rome should coordinate and gather new ways of thinking and action from the local groups, and not always want to discipline initiative. It would be similiar to the primitive church where there were four to five centers. Instead of the bishops going to Rome to explain their work, theologians called to the Vatican to be disciplined, and the pope travelling around the world telling people what to do, Rome would visit the world, not to bring directives but to listen, serve, respect and stimulate.¹⁸

The major force for this change are the bishops' conferences around the world demanding more recognition and a voice in church affairs. The Roman Curia is threatened by this, and seeks to limit them and their spheres of action. If the episcopacy is a college established by Christ, these bishops' conferences are an expression of this collegiality and so they have theological and biblical bases.

The two Boff brothers argue that this decentralizing process cannot be halted by the Curia.¹⁹ The church of the Third World is growing stronger and its presence and perspective is being felt throughout the whole world. It is legitimate because it is continuing the process of the Second Vatican Council. Also it is involved with the masses of the

¹⁸Similiar thoughts are expressed by Paul Collins, "The Peripatetic Pope," Commonweal, September 11, 1987, pp. 484-487.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 89-121; C. Boff, "Emerging Third World Church," p. 3.

poor in the Third World; working with them to create new societies. It is these lay poor that are pushing the church forward, and it is not possible by Rome to discipline this involved church so immersed with this mass of impoverished people. Withdrawal is impossible. Rome cannot outlaw the base communities of the barrios and slums of Latin America. These communities will continue to grow and have an impact on the church and the world.

Leonardo Boff sums up theologically this process in the Third World.²⁰ He states that the Pauline vision of the church was one where there would be many active charisms that would do the work of Christ in the world and the church. These would be dynamic and creative. They are under the direction and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul envisions a church that has space, is democratic and decentralized to be the arena of these charisms. This is the model of the future church that the two Boff brothers envision.

This analysis of the Boff brothers is related to the historical and theological study of E. Troeltsch in his monumental The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches. In this study, he outlined the differences between church and sect.²¹ Church is the mainline institution into which the

²⁰L. Boff, Eglise: charisme et pouvoir, pp. 251-184.

²¹Ernest Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), pp. 331-343.

individual is born and which is directed by a trained clergy and hierarchy. The church wants to exist in society and the social structure, and have a relation to the dominant classes. The sect is a small, voluntary association, aimed at the perfection of its members who have joined it by choice. The sect tends to be indifferent, or antagonistic toward the secular order and attempts to be a moral and sufficient community in itself. The important point for our study is that Troeltsch states that before the 11th century and the Gregorian Reform, the sect and church difference was not pronounced. The early church structure fluctuated between being church and sect. It is only in the early Middle Ages with the Gregorian Reform that the church became heavily institutionalized, centralized in Rome and developed a sacerdotal and sacramental doctrine. The clergy were corrupt and the lay people were pushed aside in this institutionalization and centralization. As a result in the growing new cities of the early Middle Ages among the working class, a series of sects arose among the poor offering evangelical living to those who wanted to join. It is from that time on that there is such a difference between sect and church in the Catholic Church. Perhaps we can say that the Boff brothers are harkening back to a church of earlier times when it had a structure which was more decentralized, and enthusiastic religious movements were part of the daily life of the church. They were not considered such a danger as

they are in later times and as M. Weber describes.

The analysis of the Boffs touches on the implications of the Corpus Christi procession in the North American church today. We noted that the procession is an important cultural and religious manifestation of the new Caribbean immigrants to New York City. They have invaded many neighborhoods and parishes and want to establish their families, life and culture here. It means that the church has to make room for these new people with their distinctive culture and religious expressions. It has to unlock itself from the dominant Western, White and upper class cultural stance of its religious elites. J. Malagrecas enumerated well the cultural stance of these in the Brooklyn Diocese. The decentralizing process that the Boffs call for in the whole church has to take place on a local level in the United States so that the new Caribbean immigrants have a voice in decision making structures of the diocese. With that, they can direct pastoral life to their advantage and into expressions that suit their culture and class. The structure has to be opened up to allow these newcomers a place. J. Malagrecas states the same thing when he said that there should be local teams of immigrants who decide how the church should be decorated. Directives for this work should not come from offices which are dominated by cultural forms from Europe and which do not fit the immigrants.

This decentralization process will also help the

church to work in solidarity with the poor. It has happened often in history and until this very day where the clerical elites in Rome and the dioceses of the world have been allied with the dominant political and economic structures of a country. For this reason, they have often sided with the wealthy and powerful in history and opposed the demands of the poor. The church has not lived up to the challenge from scripture to work with and for the poor. Bishops have squelched in their dioceses movements and persons dedicated in these social movements. A more decentralized church on a world and diocesan level will allow these activities of the poor space to be and grow. This will pressure the religious elites to live up to their vocation and to work in solidarity with them. A church structure that is more decentralized will facilitate the presence of many charisms which can transform human society and make the church more honest in its calling.

In the interviews, we discovered the rich social change aspirations that lie in the immigrants' participation in the procession. They look to their cultural and religious roots to help them overcome their marginal situation in this country and establish themselves and their families here. We do not need diocesan structures and elites that are tied to the establishment. As the Boff brothers say, the diocesan structure should be decentralized and allow space for movements of committed Christians to struggle for social

justice in which the religious elites should be involved. The local bishops should not have the power to dismantle such movements. In this decentralized church, the religious enthusiastic movements will not be such a danger and threat to the church structure. The Boff vision of the church harkens back to earlier times when the church was not so institutionalized and centralized.

Therefore, the Corpus Christi procession in its cultural and social change implications concurs with the thinking of the Boff brothers as they analyze the emerging role and consequences of the Third World church. This new church is making its presence felt also in the United States and will make similar demands on the ecclesiastical structure. The hypothesis of Troeltsch fits this whole process into an interesting historical perspective.

In terms of larger American society, our interpretation of the Corpus Christi procession has important implications. We noted how this celebration has deep aspirations for social change and justice. The aliens are suffering in their marginal social and economic situation. They are awaiting a new Exodus. Leaders of social movements must be aware of these aspirations in such populations and neighborhoods. Here lies a base from which movements which are directed to alleviate the injustices facing these immigrants can be built. Good leadership in the United States can build movements for constructive social change if

they can dialogue with the newcomers, articulate goals which will address their social injustices and mobilize these populations in the work for social change.

This base for social change reminds us of the situation in the South 25 years ago during the Civil Rights Movement. M. L. King was able to build a movement and assume leadership because there was the base of the Black Baptist churches which provided him with the committed persons and means to build a movement. This is well documented in the book by A. Morris, The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement.²² This is an important example from history and sheds light on the possibilities for future movements of a similiar kind. Leadership in Latin America has realized the potential that popular religion has for building social movements. Hopefully North American activists will grow in the same realization. They might well ponder the implications of popular religion as a pre-disposition to, energizing potential for and having seeds of liberation that we discussed in this study, and the manner in which it can be brought to an active and conscious protest.

Another dimension to this study of popular religion is the role of a cultural and religious base to political protest. In the 1960's, there was conflict between the hard-core political activists and the counter culture

²²Aldon Morris, The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change (New York: Free Press, 1984).

representatives. These two groups were not on good terms because the political activists were constantly working on specific projects while the counter culture people raised the issue of one's cultural and religious roots to sustain political protest over the long haul and which provides a framework and vision for specific political action. The political activists felt impatient with these questions, yet they are important if we want people to have a potential to work for social change over a long time and not burn out after a few years. A. Stevens Arroyo speaks about this same tension in the Hispanic community and cites the conflict between Hispanic political activists and V. Elizondo who speaks of these larger cultural and religious bases of social action.²³ Our discussion of immigrant popular religious raises this larger question of cultural and religious roots in the process of social change and movements. The whole question of popular religion being a pre-disposition to and having the seeds of liberation and protest come into operation here. Dorothy Day, the famous Catholic activist of the Catholic Worker Movement, was able to sustain a life of radical social protest and build a movement because she had deep religious roots.

This interpretation of popular religion has also implications for the field of Sociology. It has been said that this study is the first Gramscian ethnography to be

²³A. Stevens Arroyo, Prophets Denied Honor, pp. 306-307.

attempted in this country. It highlights therefore the dynamic of resistance that popular religion plays in relationship to dominant Western cultural attitudes and forms in the church and North American society. It is a resistance that is coming from poor and marginal Black and Brown Caribbean immigrants to this country. For this reason, it is a most interesting field of study which has not been explored. The Latin Americans sociologists have gone a long way to analyze the implications to this new interpretation of popular religion. It is a new and creative horizon also for North American Sociology. Finally, this interpretation of immigrant popular religion will fit in well with the post-modernist trends of Sociology with its interest in culture and religion.

Table 1

New York City: Unemployment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, age, race and Hispanic origin: 1982 - 1986 annual averages.

(numbers in thousands)

	<u>Unemployment</u>					
	1986		1985		1984	
	no.	rate	no.	rate	no.	rate
<u>Total</u>	236	7.4	262	8.1	270	8.9
Men	147	8.2	153	8.5	150	8.9
Women	88	6.2	109	7.6	120	9.0
Both sexes, 16-19 years.	32	26.3	38	30.7	40	29.6
<u>White</u>	123	5.6	158	7.2	146	7.2
Men	74	5.9	94	7.4	80	6.9
Women	49	5.3	65	6.9	66	7.7
Both sexes, 16-19 years.	17	22.9	18	22.5	19	21.1
<u>Black</u>	100	12.4	95	11.5	111	13.7
Men	63	15.8	55	13.5	62	15.1
Women	36	9.0	40	9.5	50	12.2
Both sexes, 16-19 years.	14	33.3	19	47.9		
<u>Hispanic</u>	78	11.6	87	13.4	73	13.6
Men	44	11.3	52	13.6	39	12.6
Women	33	12.0	35	13.2	34	14.9
Both sexes, 16-19 years.	13	36.3				

Source: Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, U.S. Department of Labor (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office) 1986, Bulletin 2279, p. 104; 1985, Bulletin 2266, p. 93; 1984, Bulletin 2234, p. 93.

continued

Table 1

New York City: Unemployment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, age, race and Hispanic origin: 1982 - 1986 annual averages.

(numbers in thousands)

Unemployment

	1983		1982	
	no.	rate	no.	rate
<u>Total</u>	285	9.4	293	9.6
Men	172	10.3	168	9.8
Women	113	8.4	125	9.3
Both sexes, 16 - 19 years.	46	33.0	42	31.0
 <u>White</u>	 166	 8.0	 178	 8.4
Men	100	8.4	99	8.1
Women	66	7.5	79	8.8
Both sexes, 16 - 19 years.	24	26.0	27	27.2
 <u>Black</u>	 109	 13.9	 107	 13.7
Men	68	16.9	64	16.0
Women	42	10.8	43	11.3
Both sexes, 16 - 19 years.			15	48.2
 <u>Hispanic</u>	 63	 12.5	 75	 14.2
Men	38	12.5	45	14.0
Women	25	12.4	30	14.5
Both sexes, 16 - 19 years.				

Source: Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment,
U.S. Department of Labor (Washington, D.C.: U.S.
 Government Printing Office) 1983, Bulletin 2216,
 p. 103; 1982, Bulletin 2170, p. 102.

Table 2Statistical Data: 1970 CensusDistrict 17

	number	%
<u>Total Population</u>		
(1970 Census - 4th Cnt)	149,496	100.00
White (non Puerto Rican)	108,142	72.33
Black (non Puerto Rican)	33,648	22.50
Other (non Puerto Rican)	2,137	1.42
Puerto Rican	5,570	3.72
Spanish Language	12,493	8.35
Spanish Mother Tongue	9,845	6.58
Foreign Stock	76,599	51.23
Native Born, Foreign Parentage	40,782	27.27
Foreign Born	35,817	23.95

Age

<u>Total Population</u> (2nd cnt)	149,808	100.00
Under 5 Years	10,989	7.33
5 Thru 17 Years	26,700	17.82
18 Thru 24 Years	17,612	11.75
25 Thru 44 Years	36,291	24.22
45 Thru 64 Years	37,328	24.91
65 Years and Over	20,888	13.94
Under 18 Years	37,691	25.15
18 Years and Over	112,119	74.84
Median Age	34.36	

Table 2Statistical Data: Census 1970District 17

	number	%
<u>Income in 1969</u>		
Families & Unrelated individuals	56,995	
median income	\$8.193	
Total Families	41,576	100.00
Median Income	\$10,120	
With Income of \$10,000-\$14,999	11,501	27.66
With Income of \$15,000-over	9,621	23.14
Below Poverty Level	3,423	8.23
With Head 65 Yrs and Over	900	2.16
Total Unrelated Individuals	15,419	100.00
Media Income	\$3,615	
With Income Below \$3000	6,942	45.02
Below Poverty Level	4,700	30.48
65 Years and Over	2,619	16.98
<u>Year Round Units</u>	56,047	100.00
Occupied	54,803	97.78
Owner Occupied	15,442	27.55
One Family w/o Business	6,901	12.31
Co-ops and Condominiums	313	.55
Other Owner Occupied	8,227	14.67
Renter Occupied	39,362	70.23
One Room Units	1,004	1.79
Overcrowded Units (1.01+PPR)	4,483	7.99

Source: Community Profile: Fact Book: Brooklyn 17.
An Information System for Community Districts,
 NYC Department of City Planning,
 September 1977, pp. 6 and 7.

Table 3

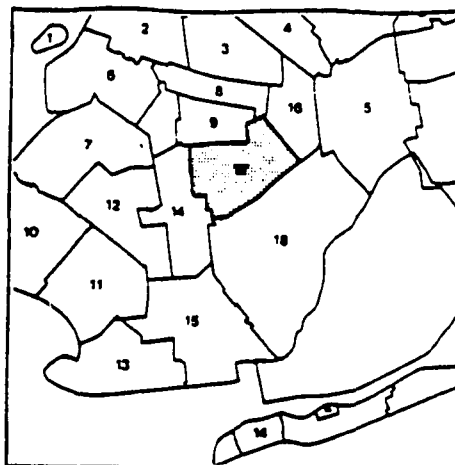
BROOKLYN COMMUNITY DISTRICT 17

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

	1970	1980	Percent Change
Total Population	145,608	154,510	+6.1%

Ethnicity 1980	Persons	Percent
White (non-Hispanic)	18,419	11.9
Black (non-Hispanic)	117,522	76.1
Asian & American Indians	2,406	1.5
Hispanic	13,888	9.0
Other	2,285	1.5

Age of Population 1980	Persons	Percent
0-4 Years	14,086	9.1
5-17 Years	34,706	22.5
18-44 Years	69,564	45.0
45-64 Years	26,093	16.9
65+ Years	9,995	6.5

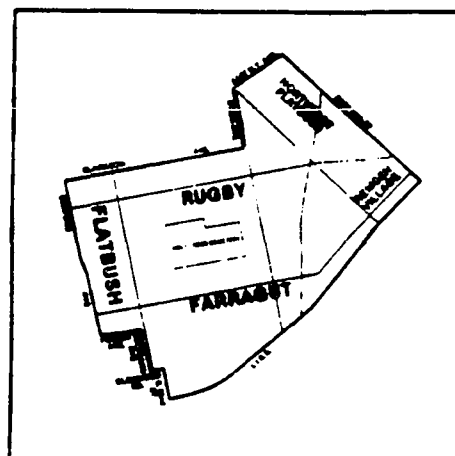


Income 1979

	Households	Families
Number	51,411	38,386
Median Income	\$13,525	\$15,650
Per Capita Income	\$ 5,365	\$ 5,010
Percent Below Poverty		18.8

INCOME SUPPORT

	1980	1985
Public Assistance (AFDC, Home Relief)	17,686	16,592
Supplemental Security Income	3,934	3,825
Medicaid Only	1,598	3,697
Total Persons Assisted	23,218	24,114
Percent of Population	14.8	15.4



HOUSING UNITS BY BUILDING TYPE

	1980	1985
1 Family	7,291	7,292
2 Family	10,646	10,626
3 Family	34,971	34,946
Total	52,908	52,864

TOTAL LAND AREA (ACRES) 2,108.1

LAND USE, 1985

	Lots	Percent
Residential		
1-2 Family	12,509	68.8
Old Law Tenements	1	0.0
Walkups	3,239	17.8
Elevator Apartments	131	0.7
Industrial	234	1.2
Commercial	1,206	6.6
Vacant Land	564	3.1
Other	281	1.5
Total	18,165	100.0

Source: Community Districts Needs: Fiscal Year
1988 (New York: City of New York, August
1986), p. 265.

Table 4New York Immigrants by Zip Codes and Country of BirthFrequency and Percent: 1983 - 1986Zip = 11206

<u>Birthplace</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Haiti	4,624	33.7
Jamaica	2,703	19.7
Guyana	1,687	12.3
Trinidad & Tobago	692	5.0
Grenada	448	3.3
Panama	408	3.0
Barbados	285	2.1
Dominican Rep.	236	1.7
St. Vincent	143	1.0
El Salvador	110	0.8

Zip = 11203

Jamaica	3,176	29.6
Haiti	2,406	22.4
Guyana	1,972	18.4
Grenada	610	5.7
Trinidad & Tobago	579	5.4
Barbados	404	3.8
St. Vincent	244	2.3
Panama	213	2.0
Dominican Rep.	120	1.1
Belize	93	0.9

Source: New York City Department of City Planning,
Computer Print-out, April 29, 1987.

Table 5All Crime: Precinct 76Number and Rank: 1982 - 1986*Personal Crime

<u>Year</u>		<u>Murder</u>	<u>Rape</u>	<u>Robbery</u>	<u>Assault</u>	<u>Total</u>
1986	No.	33	112	1,649	1,372	3,166
	Rank	17	7	12	9	11
1985	No.	26	114	1,640	1,426	3,206
	Rank	18	5	12	4	8
1984	No.	28	124	1,889	1,384	3,425
	Rank	21	3	8	5	7
1983	No.	32	82	1,582	876	2,572
	Rank	20	13	19	16	16
1982	No.	33	83	1,685	955	2,756
	Rank	19	9	16	10	14

* Precinct's Rank out of 75 in the City.

Source: Interview with Alfred Fuerst, Ph.D., City
Planning Department, New York, NY,
14 May 1987.

Table 5All Crime: Precinct 67Number and Rank: 1982 - 1986Property Crime

<u>Year</u>		<u>Burglary</u>	<u>Larceny</u>	<u>Motor Veh. Theft</u>	<u>Total</u>
1986	No. Rank	3,258 3	03,117 33	1,609 19	7,984 15
1985	No. Rank	3,076 5	02,925 33	1,355 26	7,356 20
1984	No. Rank	3,039 6	2,732 36	1,297 30	7,068 28
1983	No. Rank	2,873 17	2,207 49	815 44	5,895 41
1982	No. Rank	3,692 10	1,914 54	809 49	6,415 44

Total All Crime: Precinct 67Number and Rank

<u>Year</u>	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982
<u>No.</u>	11,150	10,562	10,493	8,467	9,17
<u>Rank</u>	11	12	11	35	38

Table 6
School Profile: PS 181

Ethnic Distribution, Utilization and Indicators
of School Performance

Pupil Ethnic Distribution
Number and Percent

	1983-1984		1984-1985		1985-1986	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Nat. Amer.	2	0.1	1	0.1	2	0.1
Asian	22	1.4	17	1.1	27	1.6
Hispanic	118	7.7	140	8.8	80	4.7
Black	1369	89.4	1422	89.5	1571	93.1
White	20	1.3	8	0.5	7	0.4

Utilization
Number and Percent

	1983-1984		1984-1985		1985-1986	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Capacity	841		859		823	
Utilization		165.0		171.0		188.0

continued

Table 6School Profile: PS 181Ethnic Distribution, Utilization and Indicators
of School PerformanceSchool Performance in Relation to Minimum Standards

<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Minimum Standard</u>	<u>School Perf. 1985</u>	<u>Comparision to Min. St. 1985</u>
<u>Reading</u>			
Grade 3 DRP	at least 60% above SRP	56.4%	-3.6
		<u>1986</u>	<u>1986</u>
Grade 3 DRP	at least 60% above SRP	59.6%	-.4
<u>Mathematics</u>			
		<u>1985</u>	<u>1985</u>
Grade 3 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	47.0%	-18.0
		<u>1986</u>	<u>1986</u>
Grade 3 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	64.2%	-.8

Note: Includes General Education Students only,
Excluding Resource Room Students and Low
English Proficiency Ones.

Source: School Profiles, Board of Education, Brooklyn,
NY, Computer Print-out, February 1987.

Table 7School Profile: PS 198Ethnic Distribution, Utilization and Indicators
of PerformancePupil Ethnic Distribution
Number and Percent

	1983-1984		1984-1985		1985-1986	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Nat. Amer.		0.0		0.0	1	0.1
Asian	5	0.6	5	0.6	14	1.4
Hispanic	58	7.2	56	6.3	63	6.5
Black	701	86.4	775	86.8	857	87.7
White	47	5.8	57	6.4	41	4.2

UtilizationNumber and Percent

	1983-1984		1984-1985		1985-1986	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Capacity	651		657		652	
Utilization		105.0		115.0		127.0

continued

Table 7School Profile: PS 198Ethnic Distribution, Utilization and Indicators
of School PerformanceSchool Performance in Relation to Minimum Standards

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>Minimum Standard</u>	<u>School Perf. 1985</u>	<u>Comparision to Min. St. 1985</u>
<u>Reading</u>			
Grade 3 DRP	at least 60% above SRP	67.0	+7.0
Grade 6 DRP	at least 65% above SRP	81.1	+16.1
		<u>1986</u>	<u>1986</u>
Grade 3 DRP	at least 60% above SRP	54.5	-5.5
Grade 6 DRP	at least 65% above SRP	80.2	+15.2
<u>Mathematics</u>		<u>1985</u>	<u>1985</u>
Grade 3 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	60.4	-4.6
Grade 6 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	76.3	+11.3
		<u>1986</u>	<u>1986</u>
Grade 3 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	60.5	-4.5
Grade 6 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	86.6	+21.6

Note: Including General Education Students only,
Excluding Resource Room Students and Limited
English Proficiency Ones.

Source: School Profile, Board of Education, Brooklyn,
NY, Computer print-out, February 1987.

Table 8School Profile: PS 269Ethnic Distribution, Utilization and Indicators
of School PerformancePupil Ethnic Distribution
Number and Percent

	1983-1984		1984-1985		1985-1986	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Nat. Amer.	1	0.1		0.0	3	0.2
Asian	28	1.8	34	0.1	29	1.7
Hispanic	129	8.3	105	6.6	125	7.5
Black	1,372	87.9	1,445	90.7	1,505	90.0
White	30	1.9	9	0.6	11	0.7

UtilizationNumber and Percent

	1983-1984		1984-1985		1985-1986	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Capacity	696		696		696	
Utilization		108.0		111.0		111.0

continued

Table 8School Profile: PS 269Ethnic Distribution, Utilization and Indicatorsof School PerformanceSchool Performance in Relation to Minimum Standards

Indicator	Minimum Standard	School Perf. 1985	Comparision to Min. St. 1985
<u>Reading</u>			
Grade 3 DRP	at least 60% above SRP	58.9	-1.1
Grade 6 DRP	at least 65% above SRP	62.0	-3.0
<u>Mathematics</u>			
Grade 3 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	59.4	-5.6
Grade 6 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	92.5	+2.5
		<u>1986</u>	<u>1986</u>
<u>Reading</u>			
Grade 3 DRP	at least 60% above SRP	67.1	+7.1
Grade 6 DRP	at least 65% above SRP	65.5	+0.5
<u>Mathematics</u>			
Grade 3 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	72.8	+7.8
Grade 6 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	92.0	+2.0

Note: Includes General Education Students only,
Excludes, Resource Room Students and Low
English Proficiency ones.

Source: School Profile, NYC Board of Education, Brooklyn,
NY, Computer Print-out, February 1987.

Table 9School Profile: i 246Ethnic Distribution, Utilization and Indicators
of School PerformancePupil Ethnic Distribution
Number and Percent

	1983-1984		1984-1985		1985-1986	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Nat. Amer.	4	0.2		0.0	2	0.1
Asian	79	4.5	108	6.1	112	6.1
Hispanic	203	11.6	156	8.9	166	9.1
Black	1,450	83.0	1,482	84.1	1,541	84.3
White	10	0.6	16	0.9	8	0.4

UtilizationNumber and Percent

	1983-1984		1984-1985		1985-1986	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Capacity	1,214		1,214		1,238	
Utilization		129.0		128.0		128.0

continued

Table 9School Profile: i 246Ethnic Distribution, Utilization and Indicatorsof School PerformanceSchool Performance in Relation to Minimum Standards

Indicator	Minimum Standard	School Perf. 1985	Comparison to Min. 1985
<u>Reading</u>			
Grade 6 DRP	at least 65% above SRP	40.8	-24.2
Grade 8 DRP	at least 80% above SRP	70.0	-10.0
<u>Mathematics</u>			
Grade 6 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	38.3	-26.7
Grade 9	at least 70% either the RCT or Regents		Not Available
		<u>1986</u>	<u>1986</u>
<u>Reading</u>			
Grade 6 DRP	at least 65% above SRP	44.3	-20.7
Grade 8 DRP	at least 80% above SRP	83.3	+3.3
<u>Mathematics</u>			
Grade 6 PEP	at least 65% above SRP	47.8	-17.2
Grade 9	at least 70% either the RCT or Regents		Not Available

Note: Includes General Education Students only, Excludes
Resource Room Students and Low
English Proficiency ones.

Source: School Profile, NYC Board of Education, Brooklyn,
NY, Computer Print-out, February 1987.

Table 10
Pupil Mathematic Achievement
A Summary of the April, 1985
Citywide Mathematics Test Results:

<u>District 17</u>	Number Tested plus LEP excl.	Total Pct. at or above Grade Level
PS 181	1,163	64.6
i 246	1,639	41.7
<u>District 22</u>		
PS 198	608	56.4
PS 269	1.025	62.0

Note: LEP - Limited English Proficiency students are presumed below.

Source: Pupil Mathematics Achievement: A Summary of the April 1985 Citywide Mathematics Test Results, NYC Board of Education, April, 1986, pp. 61 and 71.

Table 11
Percentile Rank based on Median Grade Equivalent
in Mathematics by Grade Within School
April 1985

<u>School</u>	<u>Grade</u>								
District 17	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
PS 181	74	60	58	60					
i 246					51	36	37	73	
District 22									
PS 198	47	67	49	57	65				
PS 269	70	67	59	63	62				

Note: LEP - Limited English Proficiency students are presumed below.

Source: Pupil Mathematics Achievement: A Summary of the April, 1985 Citywide Mathematics Test Results, NYC Board of Education, April, 1986, pp. 62 and 72.

Table 12
Ranking of School by % of Pupils At or Above
Grade level in Reading Achievement

<u>District 17</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Rank</u>
	May 1986		May 1985	
PS 181	66.7	331	61.3	273
i 246	48.7*	137	44.0	132

District 22

PS 198	67.2	317	58.7	298
PS 269	63.3	397	59.3	294

District 17

May 1984

PS 181	52.1	319
i 246	38.0	134

District 22

PS 198	51.0	335
PS 269	58.4	254

Note: Rank among the elementary schools is out of a total 622; Rank among the intermediate schools is out of a total 178.

Note: Includes below grade level students excused from testing because of limited-English proficiency.

* Ten percent or more of the students in this school were excused from testing because of limited-English proficiency.

Source: Ranking of School by Reading Achievement, 1986, NYC Board of Education, January, 1987, pp. 29, 31 & 44; Ranking of School by Reading Achievement, 1985, May, 1985, pp. 12 and 40.

Table 13
Utilization of School Buildings
1980-81, and 1985-86.

<u>District 17</u>	PS 181		i 246	
	1980	1985	1980	1985
Normal Capacity	1,163	987	1,218	1,238
Total Capacity	1,628	1,687	1,723	1,538
Building Utilization Percent	140%	171%	141%	128%
Overload	+462	+726	+505	+345

<u>District 22</u>	PS 198		PS 269	
	1980	1985	1980	1985
Normal Capacity	617	732	725	716
Total Capacity	656	917	708	792
Building Utilization Percent	106%	125%	98%	111%
Overload	+708	+179	-17	+74

Source: Interview with Catherine Revici, NYC City
 Planning Commission, New York, NY,
 14 May 1987.

Table 14
St. Jerome Parish School
Pupil Ethnic Distribution and Enrollment

	Black (Not Hispanic)		Hispanic	White
	no.	%	no.	no.
Fall 1986	527	97.6	12	4
1985	497	89.4	55	4
1984	478	87.4	63	8
1983	488	91.2	39	8
1982	418	82.4	75	13

Enrollment

September 1986	543
1985	556
1984	549
1983	535
1982	506

Source: Interview with Sister Mary Charitina,
 St. Jerome's Parish School, Brooklyn, NY,
 17 August 1987.

Table 15Reading and Mathematic Achievement: St. Jerome's SchoolNew York State Preliminary Competency Tests: 1983-1987.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Name of Test</u>	<u>Enroll- ment</u>	<u>Number Tested</u>	<u>Percent Tested Above SRP</u>
1982-1983				
3	Read.	55	55	69%
	Math.	55	55	62%
6	Read.	65	65	58%
	Math.	65	65	62%
8/W	Read.	42	20	90%
1983-1984				
3	Read.	64	64	69%
	Math.	64	64	66%
6	Read.	63	63	60%
	Math.	63	63	68%
8/W	Read.	56	30	91%

continued

Table 15

Reading and Mathematic Achievement: St. Jerome's School
New York State Preliminary Competency Tests: 1983-1987.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Name of Test</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Number Tested</u>	<u>Percent Tested Above SRP</u>
1984-1985				
3	Read.	72	72	60%
	Math.	72	72	54%
6	Read.	55	55	82%
	Math.	55	55	87%
8/W	Read.	54	36	96%
1985-1986				
3	Read.	67	67	39%
	Math.	67	67	49%
6	Read.	46	46	72%
	Math.	46	46	89%
8/W	Read.	45	32	96%

Source: New York State Pupil Evaluation Program:
 St. Jerome's School, Comprehensive Assessment
 Report, October 1986, Computer
 Print-out.

Table 16Profile of the Haitian Interviewees

	<u>home-</u> <u>owner</u>	<u>employment</u>	<u>income</u>
1.	no	retired- nurses aid	
2.	no	baby sitter	\$10,400
3.*	yes*	electronic technican	\$25,000
4.*		computer operator	\$17,000
5.	no	retired	
6.	yes	bookkeeper	\$17,000
7.	no	houseworker	\$10,634 after taxes
8.	no	supervisor of homemakers	\$9,100 after taxes
9.	yes	bank analyst	\$13,000
10.	yes	boarding house manager	
11.	no	care of the aged (part-time); after school pro- gram worker	\$5 per hour; \$8,400
12.	no	unemployed	
13.	no	maintenance	\$13,000

* - husband and wife

continued

Table 16Profile of the Haitian Interviewees

	<u>home-</u> <u>owner</u>	<u>employment</u>	<u>income</u>
14.	no	engineer	\$62,000
15.	no	factory worker	\$7,800
16.	no	unemployed	
17.	no	maintenance	\$20,000
18.	no	maintenance	\$10,400 after taxes
19.	no	temp. disability former factory worker	former salary \$9,360
20.	no	part-time social worker college student	\$13,000
21.	yes	part-time care of the aged	\$4.50 per hour
22.	no	unemployed	social security payment
23.	yes		
24.	no	store manager	\$18,000
25.	no	high school teacher	\$15,000
26.	yes	machine operator	\$12,688
27.	no	bank worker	\$9,750 after taxes
28.	yes	maintenance	\$12,500

continued

Table 16Profile of the Haitian Interviewees

	<u>home-</u> <u>owner</u>	<u>employment</u>	<u>income</u>
29.	no	hotel/bus boy	\$11,752
30.	yes	brokerage house	\$16,000
31.	no	secretary, house worker	\$2,340
32.	no	houseworker	\$8,476 after taxes
33.	no	maintenance	\$12,000
34.	no	cashier	

Table 17Hispanics Interviewees Profile

<u>Country of Origin</u>	<u>home- owner</u>	<u>employment</u>	<u>income</u>
Puerto Rico			
1	yes	warehouse office worker	\$27,000
2	no	maintenance	\$14,700
3*	yes*	retired	\$7,800
4*		disability	\$4,284
5	no	disability	\$3,600
6	no	factory worker	\$15,600
7	no	unemployed	
8	no	cook	\$15,600
9	no	unemployed	
Ecuador			
1	no	teacher	\$27,000
Dominican Rep.			
1	no	disability	\$4,885
El Salvador			
1	no	disability	\$4,728
2	no	college student	
Honduras	no	factory worker	\$10,400 after taxes

* husband and wife

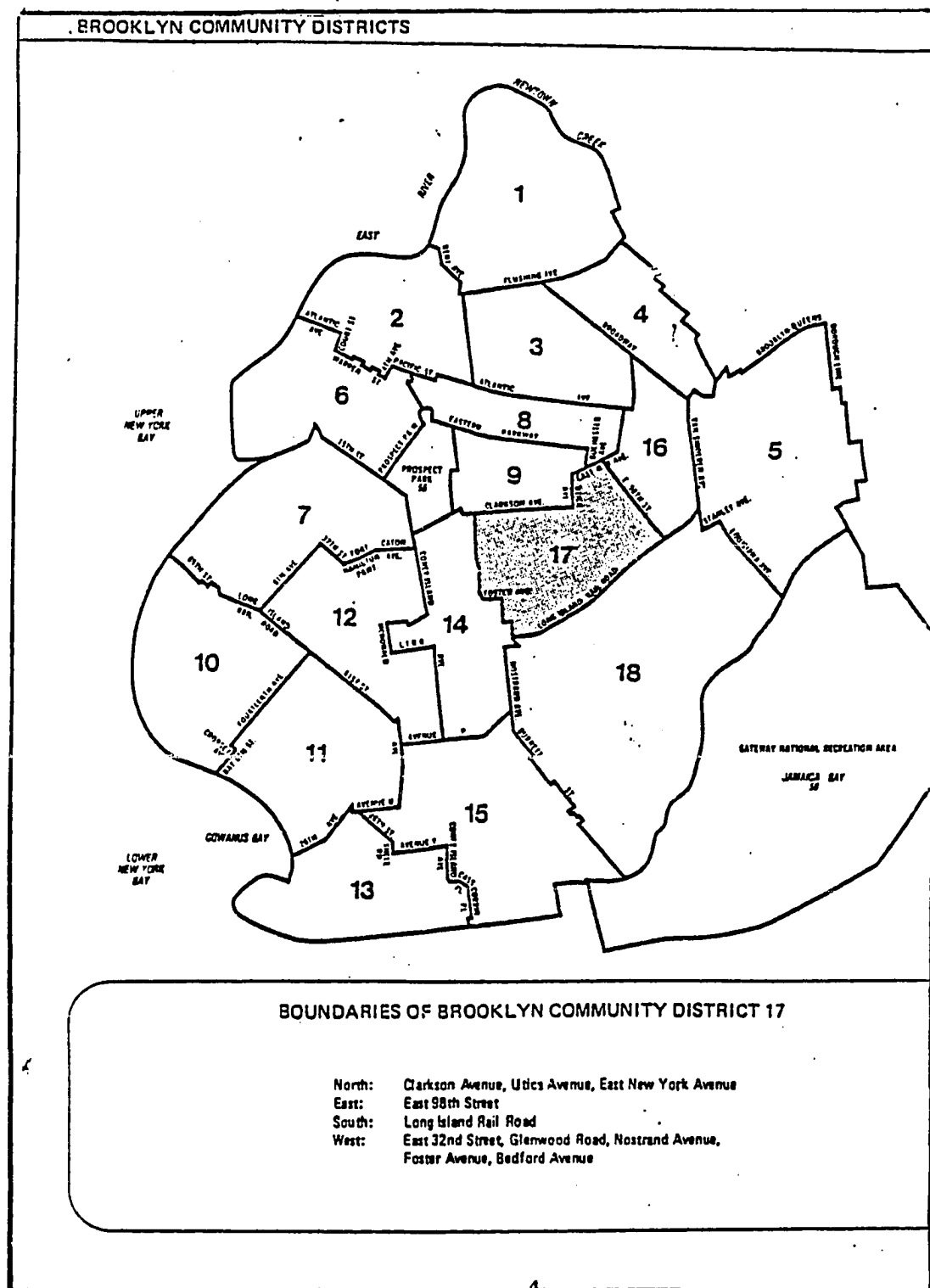
Table 17Hispanic Group Interviewees Profile

<u>Country of Origin</u>	<u>home owner</u>	<u>employment</u>	<u>income</u>
Panama			
1	no	college student	
Ecuador			
1	no	high school student	
2	no	waiter	
El Salvador			
1	no	college student	
2	no	factory worker	\$8,320
3	no	factory worker	\$8,320
4	no	houseworker	\$7,800
5	no	factory worker	
6	no	car wash	\$10,192
7	no	factory worker	\$8,320
Mexico			
1	no	restaurant worker	
Peru			
1	no	factory worker	

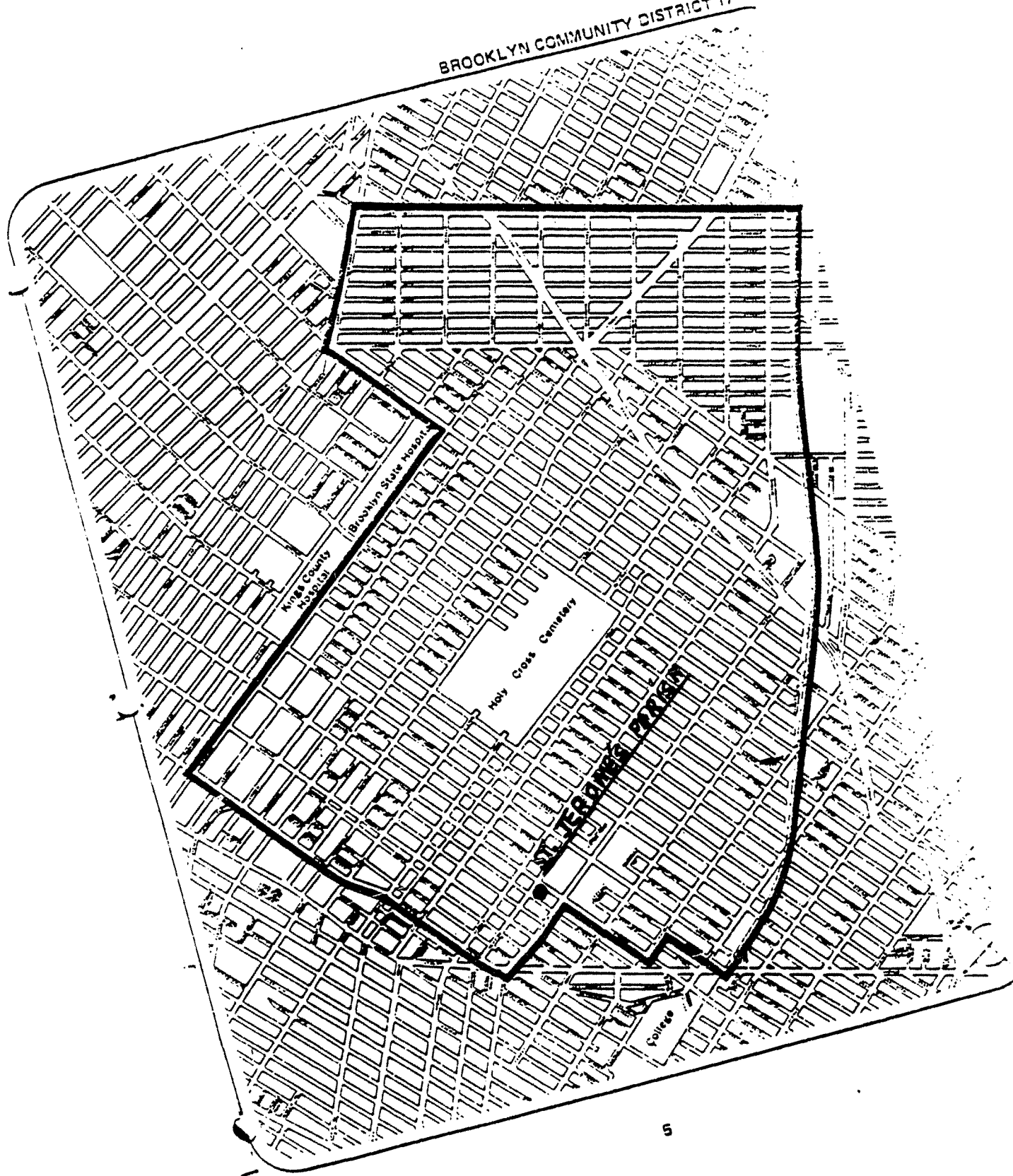
Table 18
West Indian Interviewees Profile

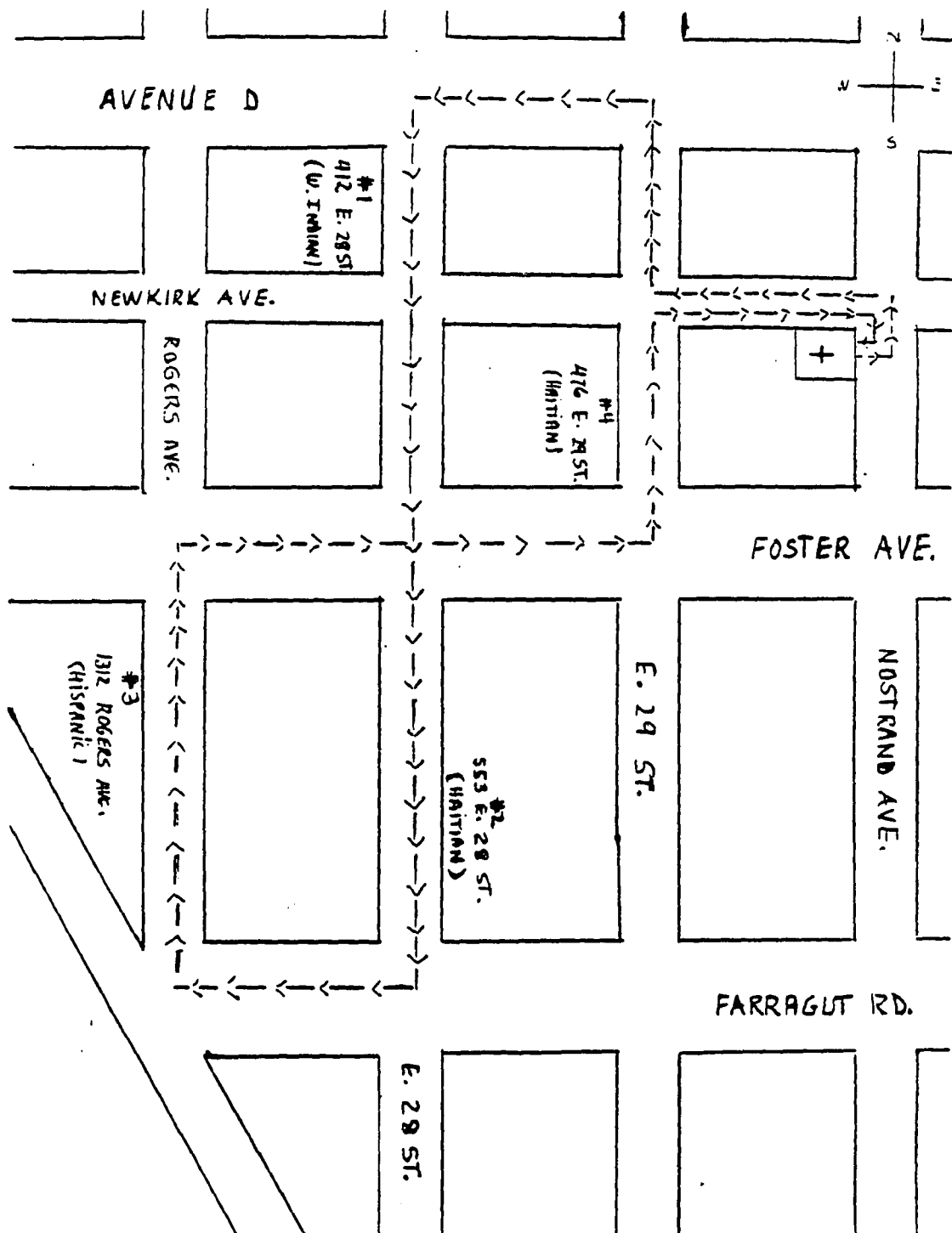
<u>Country of Origin</u>	<u>home- owner</u>	<u>employment</u>	<u>income</u>
Panama			
1	yes	computer	\$25,000
Trinidad			
1	no	houseworker	\$10,000
2	no	retired nurse's aide	
3	yes	Vice-Pres. Wall Street Firm	\$60,000
Guyana			
1	no	baby-sitter	\$10,000
2	no	bookkeeper	\$13,000
Grenada			
1	yes	nurse	\$14,000

United States			
American Black			
1	yes	retired	
2	no	retired	
3	no	semi-retired	



BROOKLYN COMMUNITY DISTRICT 17





Appendix One: Neighborhood Profile

In this section, we will delineate certain salient characteristics of District 17 so as to understand the strengths and weaknesses of East Flatbush as a neighborhood. It is one that is in transition. It has a segment of the immigrant population that has gotten foothold in the city's economic and social life, while there is another group which is marginal and struggling to establish itself.

We will begin our neighborhood profile by noting the ethnic characteristics of the area and cite the dramatic shift in population which is shown by comparing the 1970 and 1980 census data. (see tables 2 & 3)

The first statistic to note is the ethnic composition of the area from 1970 to 1980. A large shift in population took place when the area turned from a predominately White one to a Black one. In 1970, the White population was 108,142, 72.33% of the total. By 1980, it dropped to 18,419, 11.9% of the population. The Black community grew from 33,648 individuals, 22.50% in 1970 to 117,522 in 1980, 76.1% of the area. This was a considerable shift which changed the composition of the neighborhood in such a short while. In 1970, the Puerto Rican population was 5570 individuals, 3.72% of the whole which was part of the larger Spanish speaking population which stood at 12, 493 persons, 8.35% of the area.

In 1980, the Hispanic population was about the same, 13,888, 9.0% of the neighborhood. From walking around the neighborhood, holding the Hispanic population constant and for the exception of the far Eastern section of the district, we can foresee that the Black population will rise to about 88% in the 1990 census.

With the influx of the new Black Caribbean and Hispanic populations, there has been an increase of the total population. The population grew in the years 1970 to 1980 from 145,608 to 154,510 individuals, an increase of 6.1%. Also there has been a continued increase in the population from 1980-1985. The City Planning Commission notes a growth from 154,510 to 161,900, an increase of 4.8%.¹ They attribute this growth in the last five years to the continued economic expansion of the city which tends to draw more people, and the constant flow of foreign born immigrants to the area.

To determine the ethnicity of the immigrants coming to District 17, the City Planning Commission made a count of the country of origin and quantity of the issued alien residence cards during the years 1983-1986 in the various zip code areas of the city. Zip codes 11226 and 11203 cover District 17, but the two are not coterminous. In table 4, are listed

¹City Planning Commission, Capital Needs and Priorities, (New York: NYC City Planning Commission, 1987), p. 26; see also "New Study Finds More People in the City," New York Times, 24 May 1987, Sec. 8, p. 5.

the ten highest frequencies with country of birth which gives us an idea of the origins of the immigrants of the neighborhood.

In this list, we note the various ethnic groups who have settled in the Flatbush area and the quantity of cards issued. The rest of the list not shown in the tables include most of countries of the Caribbean, Central America and some Latin American countries. The presence of these ethnic groups raises the issue of the large population of undocumented aliens mixed in with the legal aliens. Both groups live together and it is hard to distinguish them. Also with such a population of undocumented aliens, the statistics from the 1980 census and the 1985 figures will not be accurate. Since the undocumented aliens will not make themselves known to census takers, these numbers represent an undercount. The director of Community Planning Board 17 estimates that there are about 200,000 Caribbean immigrants in East Flatbush, almost 40,000 more than the 1985 estimate.²

During the ten year period, 1970 - 1980, the age level dropped for the neighborhood. In the 1970 census, 61.12% of the people were under 44 while in the 1980 census, 76.6% are of that age group. Correspondingly, the number of elderly and more mature adults has declined; in 1970, the population who

²"Spirit of Trade Winds and Palm Trees in Brooklyn," New York Times, 20 September 1987, p. 76; for a larger picture, see "Hispanic Population Growing 5 Times as Fast as Rest of U.S.," New York Times, 11 September 1987, pp. A1 and A28.

was 45 years and older was 38.85% while in 1980, the same group had shrunk to 23.4%. Immigrants tend to be young when they migrate. (see tables 3 & 4)

Another difference is the growth in the number of families below the poverty line. In 1970, the number of such families was 8.23% while in the 1980 census, the percentage rose to 18.8%. (see tables 3 & 4)

Also in terms of real value, the median income of families has declined. Between 1969 and 1979, the consumer price index for New York City and North Eastern New Jersey rose 1.96. The median family income in 1969 for District 17 was \$10,120 while in 1979, it was \$15,650; this is an increase of only 1.5. (see tables 3 & 4)

Examining table 1, we note the unusually high unemployment rates for minorities in New York City for 1982 - 1986. This is another indication of the difficult economic hardships that the immigrants face, especially the undocumented ones.

For the housing of the area, the basic stock of private homes and apartment buildings are in good condition and the inhabitants are reinvesting into upgrading the structures. Walking through the neighborhood, one does see this and that is also the opinion of the local Housing, Preservation and Development Office.³ This is one of the

³Interview with Jeffrey Ewing, Department of Housing, Preservation and Development, Brooklyn, NY, 14 May 1987.

strengths of the area.

Also the district is basically residential with a majority of one-two family dwellings, with some walk-up and elevator apartments (see table 3). The former dominate the land of the area by being 68.8% of all the lots. Most of these are owned by the Black Caribbean immigrants. It is a sign that some of the newcomers are establishing themselves in their new country. A family or an extended family will buy a house, pool their money to pay the mortgage and maintain it.

The problem in housing in the district is the overcrowding.⁴ This is due to the high immigrant population. Most danger is in the two and three family residential dwellings. The immigrant owners will rent very available corner, break up a basement and attics into rooms. They will not have much capital to do good construction or put in adequate wiring to handle the new load on the electrical current. In the contemporary city, people have televisions, radios, videos, clocks, etc. With such a population density in the houses, the old electric circuit will be overloaded and fires will break out. He mentioned that three years ago, a Salvadorean homeowner had 15 aliens living in his basement. A fire broke out; eight people were killed because they could not escape fast enough due to the overcrowding.

⁴Interview with William Low, NYC Fire Department, New York, NY, 20 May 1987.

The electrical circuits cannot handle such a load. It is especially a dangerous situation in the 2-3 family houses. They are not as strongly built as the apartment buildings. The former dominate the housing in District 17.

The description of the overcrowding in the housing of the area with its accompanying dangers also testifies to the presence of large amounts of undocumented aliens. They are caught in marginal, low-paying jobs and must accept to live in such overcrowded conditions.

A sign of the development and growing stability of the immigrant community is the rejuvenation of the commercial strip in the Flatbush area. A recent article quotes the Caribbean business leaders in saying that the commercial areas are experiencing growth.⁵ The community is stable and growing, and the business community want to serve the ethnic tastes and needs. The merchants are Caribbean and Asian. These leaders noted that the residential areas are overcrowded with legal and undocumented aliens. But both spend money and the businesses are thriving in trying to meet the immigrants needs.

An area of concern for the district is the high crime rate. Examining the statistics of Precinct 67, we see that the district ranks very high among the city's 75 precincts in both personal and property crimes (see table 5). There was

⁵"Spirit of Trade Winds and Palm Trees in Brooklyn," New York Times, 20 September 1987, p. 76.

a dramatic increase in property crimes over the last five years where the precinct had a rank of 44 in total property crimes in 1982 and rose to rank 15 in 1986. In personal crimes, the number and rank in the city has been high also over the last five years. The rise is also reflected in the statistics and rank of total all crimes going from being 38th in the city in 1982 to 11th in 1986.

We note then that the area suffers from violence against property and persons. It is of constant concern to the population, and raises the issue of the quality of life. A recent article analyzes this rise in all of the city.⁶ It notes that in 21 of the city precincts, the number of murders rose by 5%. Officials of the Police Department attributed it to the increasing amount of drug related crimes in the neighborhoods. The article reported Precinct 67 as part of this trend. The incidence of reported felonies between 1985 (9,779) and 1986 (10,114) rose by 3.4%. This rise in crime in the city went against past predictions of criminologists. They noted that crime would abate after 1981 due to the decrease of the 15-24 years old population. It is true that this youth group has declined in numbers, but the rise in crime is due to the growing deprivation in the poor areas with large minority populations. Young people now have greater likelihood of being-born illegitimate and living in a

⁶"Murders Soar In 21 Precincts in New York," New York Times, 24 March 1987, pp. B1 and B2.

single-parent home than their predecessors. Precinct 67 then has serious problems in relation to all crimes, and it is part of the general condition of the poorer minority neighborhoods of the city.

Another area to be examined is the condition and functioning of the public schools. We will analyze data on four schools that are in the St. Jerome's parish area. We will examine their ethnic composition, their reading and mathematic scores and their degree of utilization. We will note the number of students in bilingual education which indicates the immigrant character of the area.

In relation to the ethnicity of the students, (see tables 6, 7, 8 & 9) the four schools have a population which is 80 - 90% Black. There is the 7 - 9% Hispanic presence with a low percentage of Whites and Asians. Only in intermediate school 246 is there an Asian student population of an average of 5 - 6% over the three school years, 1983-1986. The immigrant population of the student body is manifest in the large amount of students in the bilingual education program in Districts 17 and 22.⁷ For the Fall 1985, District 17 had 786 students in the Spanish program and 1,041 in the Haitian-Creole instruction. For the same year in District 22, there was an enrollment of 485 in the Hispanic bilingual program and 538 in the Haitian-Creole one. For the

⁷Interview with Pedro Colon, NYC Board of Education, Brooklyn, NY, 6 June 1987.

Fall 1986, District 17 had 757 Hispanic students in biligual education and 1,219 Haitian-Creole speaking students. For the same year for District 22, there were enrolled 447 Hispanic students and 636 Haitian-Creole ones. These statistics are called entitled because these students must be served by bilingual education. The Board of Education mentioned that these are high figures which show the large presence of immigrant children. There is also instruction in French because some Haitian parents prefer that language over the Creole.⁸

The overcrowding in the housing of the area due to the influx of the new immigrants is also manifested in the utilization rate of the four schools. Looking at the data on this for the three school years 1983 - 1986, (see table 6, 7, 8 & 9) we note high rates of utilization and it generally increases over time. The overcrowding is most severe in PS 181 with rates increasing, 165.6%, 171.0% and 188.0% over these three years. Also in table 13, comparing the utilization rates of the years 1980 and 1985, there are high rates of overcrowding and this increases between these years. Another concern in the four schools is the reading and mathematic achievement scores of the students. Analyzing the percentage of students at or above grade level reading achievement, we note a large percent of students who are

⁸Ibid.

below grade level requirement for the three school years, 1984, 1985 and 1986 (see table 12). We do note also a slight improvement over the three years. The school with the most difficulty is i 246. In 1986, the school also had 10% or more of its students excused from taking the achievement examination due to limited-English proficiency. This shows the high immigrant population of the students.

For the Mathematic achievement level for April 1985, we note that the it is low with many students below requirement levels (see table 10). In these statistics also, i 246 seems to be in the most difficulty. Also if we analyze the median grade equivalent in Mathematics by grade within the four schools, we note these grades are low and that i 246 is the lowest (see table 11).

In analyzing the four schools' performance in relation to minimum standards, (see table 6, 7, 8 & 9) the same difficulties in Reading and Mathematics are manifest. For the school year 1986, the Mathematic achievement scores are not published by the Board of Education in the traditional yearly review. Studying however the computer print-outs of the profiles of each of the four schools, there are persistent problems in the Mathematic achievement.⁹ Also to be noted is the fact that three schools, PS 181, 198 and i 246 are Title One schools receiving special services because they serve

⁹School Profiles, PS. 181, 198, 269 and i 246, NYC Board of Education, Computer Print-Out, February, 1987.

poverty areas.¹⁰

To conclude this section, District 17 has immigrants who are establishing themselves, such as homeowners, commercial strip vitality and reinvestment in the housing stock. On the other side, it has high poverty levels, the insecurity and marginality of a large undocumented alien population, high crime rates and public schools with achievement difficulties. Community Board 17 represents a Caribbean immigrant community in transition and trying to establish itself in a new country and city.

Interviewees Profile

The profile of the individuals and certain groups interviewed for their participation in the procession show the immigrant melange of the neighborhood and the struggling nature of the community. In the profile, some immigrants have established themselves and others are marginal in terms of work and income.

Among the West Indians, there are three homeowners among the group of seven (see table 18). Their employment runs from three houseworkers to a Wall Street vice-president.

The Hispanic profile is interesting with the diversity of countries of origin (see table 17). The majority of

¹⁰I interviewed the principal and a teacher of St. Jerome's Parish School. They testified to the challenge of teaching children whose parents are immigrants, non-English speaking and lower working class. Tables 14 and 15 give the data on the parochial school.

people are working class with corresponding low salaries considering the cost of maintaining a family in New York City. There are only two homeowners among the group. The Hispanic group interviewees are working class predominantly in employment and low income with a few students because the youth group was in this sample.

Among the Haitian interviewees, (see table 16) we see again the typical working class immigrant employment with low incomes in maintenance, factory work, and care of the elderly.¹¹ Some of the Haitians are better established in banking, computer work and office work. There are eight homeowners among the group of 34. With their low salaries, we must conclude how the extended family pitches in to buy the home, all live in it and help to pay off the mortgage.

From the profile of the interviewees, a few of the immigrants have established themselves in terms of income and homeownership. The majority are low income working class and with such salaries, we understand the reason for such overcrowding in the housing in the area. The apartments and homes are full of hard working but marginal aliens struggling to support themselves and their families (here and back home) with their meager earnings. The people interviewed were a mixture of legal and undocumented aliens. We note what kind of employment is found by both groups.

¹¹For a good description of Haitian immigrant life, see "In Stamford, Haitians Worry About Money and Amnesty," New York Times, 9 October 1987, pp. B1 and B6.

Appendix II:

Implications for Substance Abuse Prevention

In this section, we will analyze the implications of the important themes that emerge from our study of the Corpus Christi procession in relation to drug abuse prevention. These ideas depict deep human values and have an impact on how the individual and immigrant community react and conduct themselves in their new country. These themes are related to their marginal economic and social situation in the United States and offer them resources of hope and strength to overcome the difficulties and injustices of their condition. With this, they can establish themselves and their families in New York City. The immigrants are living through a time of transition which inflicts many stresses and strains on the community. Also in the interviews, the problem of drug abuse among the young was a major concern. During my presence in East Flatbush in the summer of 1987, there were community meetings with leaders and political figures dealing with the problem. (see illustration on the following page)

There is in the literature on drug use and abuse research dealing with the problem in minority communities.¹

¹M. Belinda Tucker, "U.S. Ethnic Minorities and Drug Abuse: An Assessment of the Science and Practice," The International Journal of the Addictions 20 (1985): 1021-1047.

Councilwoman Susan Alter

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COMMITTEEWOMAN
MARIETTA SMALL

COMMITTEEMAN
DANNY COUGHLIN

St. Augustine Episcopal
Evangelical Crusade
Flatbush Haitian Center
Holy Cross R.C.
Holy Innocents R.C.
Lenox Rd. Baptist Church

St. Paul's United Methodist
Our Lady of Refuge
St. Catherine's R.C.
St. Jerome's R.C.
St. Mark's United Methodist
St. Theresa Lisieux

Flatbush Development Corporation
Flatbush East Development Corporation

INVITE YOU TO A TOWN HALL MEETING

TOPIC: GETTING RID OF DRUGS IN OUR COMMUNITY

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: St. Jerome's School Cafeteria, 465 East 29th St.

DATE: Tuesday, June 2nd, 1987

SPEAKERS: Deputy Chief Francis Hall, Commanding Officer of
N.Y.C.D. Narcotic Division
Capt. Robert Kerner, Commander Officer of Brooklyn South
Narcotic Area

DRUG DEALING

The above activity is destroying our community. Help the police by supplying the following information.

Address of drug activity _____

Hours of Activity _____

Type of Operation _____

License # of car(s) _____

Please fill out above coupon and bring to meeting.

This literature gives an insight into the anomie, alienation and stress that can lead to drug abuse in immigrant neighborhoods. We will review some of this literature and then note how the themes that emerge out of the procession participants' interviews address the alienation that can lead to this social problem. We want to analyze how immigrants' deep cultural and religious roots and resources can help them and their offspring cope with the stresses and strains of their marginal situation in this country. With this, they have a better chance to reach the goals they have of establishing themselves here and not face individual and community disruption in making the hard transition from the Caribbean to life in New York City.

Substance Abuse Literature

A major theory on drug use and abuse is based on the structural-functionalist orientation.² It states that society and the social system are constructed upon shared values, norms, interaction and role expectations that allow persons to relate to one another in an acceptable context. All the norms, values and appropriate behaviour are shared and have complimentary functions. In an ideal stable society deviance rarely occurs, and when it does, it is handled in definite ways. Even in complex societies, there must be

²Harold Alksne, "The Social Basis of Substance Abuse," in Substance Abuse: Clinical Problems and Perspectives, ed. Joyce H. Lowinson and Pedro Ruiz (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkens, 1981), p. 81.

certain rules which are developed and accepted by members so that the total group can function. However contemporary societies are constantly changing due to the influence of science and technology. Therefore norms and values that support social cohesion may have less force and deviance may become more frequent.

A key concept of the functionalist perspective to explain deviance and for that matter, drug abuse, is anomie.³ It was originally developed by E.D. Durkheim in his famous study, Suicide. It describes the condition of a person who is detached from the values and norms of society. It creates a situation of alienation for the individual from the major structures in his/her social system. It can produce great strain and lead to suicide. During the 20th century, the concepts of alienation and anomie were used to explain many social problems: loneliness, transition of immigrants, crime, etc.

Robert Merton accepted this notion of anomie and developed a scheme to explain various deviant behaviors.⁴ He created a paradigm of "modes of adaption" which describes the development of various types of deviant behavior because the social system is unable to meet the needs of the various groups within it. Society should provide institutionalized means so that individuals can reach culturally approved

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

goals. Merton noted that anomie occurs when society presents the goals, but not the means to reach them. This has a great effect on minorities, the poor, new immigrants and others who are not on the tracks which lead to success in American society. In relation to these goals and appropriate means, individuals can have five responses: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, or rebellion. Retreatism is frequently associated with alcohol and drug abuse; the person rejects both the means and goals of the social system.

A further development of the functionalist approach of Durkheim and Merton is found in the work of Cloward and Ohlin.⁵ These two scholars accept the hypothesis of Merton that anomie is caused by the dirth of opportunities to reach legitimate goals. Not only do lower class persons have difficult access to legitimate goals, and so experience anomie, they also have ambiguous access to illegitimate goals. This approach helps explain why many marginal people do not get involved with crime. Only a part of this disenfranchised group have access to the criminal subculture. The crime conflict subculture might provide for some lower class youth goal achievement opportunities. Through violent delinquent gang activity, young people achieve status and fame by being willing to fight and so risk the infliction of injury on themselves.

⁵R. A. Cloward and L. E. Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Groups (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).

There is a third subculture, the retreatist one where the only requirement is to use drugs. Youth who are unable to achieve success in conventional society nor enter the criminal subculture, become involved with the retreatist style.

There have been critiques of the various functionalist models. It is noted that the addict's role might not be completely retreatist because the abuser lives out his role, certainly rejects the values and norms of conventional society, but is active and innovating in developing his/her new life style and space.

These functionalist theories have led to a number of interesting social experiments based on the hypothesis that the opportunity system must be changed so that marginal groups will not become alienated. Deviant behavior can be so prevented. Mobilization For Youth, a program developed on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the early 1960's had considerable success with the disadvantaged youth by creating educational and employment opportunities.

Another approach accepts part of the functionalist approach, but goes beyond it. It is in agreement with the latter by noting that something is wrong with society, not necessarily the individual, which generates deviant behavior. Therefore in one way, deviance is a foreseeable response to the institutions of a social system which locks people out and leaves them powerless.

This school of thought, called the Radical Sociologists, is interested in political action that would change the economic and legal structure of the society which is seen as supporting the social base of drug abuse and deviance in society.⁶

In the school of thought of social structures that provide unequal opportunities for many groups and so make them disenfranchised, two of the following studies analyze drug abuse in minority communities.

In relation to the Black community, Primm, Cook and Drew agree with Merton that society does not offer sufficient means to realize legitimate goals.⁷ Drug addicts like others choose other illegitimate goals. An important factor in the occurrence of drug abuse is economic. It has been shown that the amount of drug dependency is related to the availability of employment in this country. The three above authors made a study of central Harlem in New York City to analyze the causes of substance dependency. They examined the data on educational achievement, income, housing conditions and medical indicators. They studied the incidence of the mortality of narcotic addicts in New York City and the

⁶Harold Alksne, "The Social Basis of Substance Abuse," pp. 84-85; see also John Helmer, Drugs and Minority Oppression (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975).

⁷B. Primm, D. Cook, and J. Drew, "The Problem of Addiction in the Black Community," in Substance Abuse: Clinical Problems and Perspectives, ed. J.H. Lowinson and P. Ruiz (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1981), pp. 703-716.

parallel incidence and prevalence of narcotic addiction among Blacks in the city and central Harlem. These three authors then discuss the question of stressful life events and situations and note how the Blacks in Harlem live under great stress due to the difficult social environment.

"Black Americans in Harlem live with morbidity and mortality rates far higher than those of Whites and suffer disproportionately on every social indicator available for study. Given, especially, racial prejudice, continuing high unemployment, and crime in the Black population districts, it is unquestionable that Black Americans suffer an inordinate amount of stress. We can readily speculate that the reason Blacks are represented so disproportionately among drug-dependent cohorts is the existence of unbearable high stress, the need to ameliorate its incapacitating effects of self-administration of dependence-producing drugs, and the absence of body defenses against these drugs as a preexisting result of stress itself. Stress can hardly be expected to diminish for the Black resident of Harlem. Short of a massive social change in America, therefore, drug dependency will not doubt continue as a physical resultant of stress, itself the creation of a host of unfavorable social indicators, for Black Americans today."

"We conclude this review of the social indicators in Harlem by asking the impartial observer, is it not a small wonder that all residents of Harlem are not using drugs to alleviate the stress that is inevitably to be encountered in association with daily life there?"⁸

These authors conclude that there is a causal relationship between the stressful conditions of the Black community of Harlem, the availability of exogenous opiates and their use. The high rate of narcotic addiction is an

⁸Ibid., p. 712.

attempt by the community to self-medicate in order to cope with their difficult life and social situation.

Gomez and Vega made a study of drug addiction in the Hispanic community in the same line of thought.⁹ They go on to state that the Hispanics bear the burden of a stereotyped image reinforced by the mass media and live under a stigma that the prejudice of the majority put on minority groups in American history. Among Hispanics, they include Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans and other groups who are at present one of the four main minority groups in this country and in the 1990's will be the nation's largest one.

Gomez and Vega make a review of the literature on drug addiction in the Hispanic community. They find the conclusions not definite and research at times contradictory. They do note that the Hispanic addict is not different from addicts of other ethnic backgrounds in terms of predisposing neurophysiological and biochemical factors, nor in psychogenic ones. They find that the difference between the Hispanic addict and others lies in "the sociocultural factors in which horizontal mobility (foreign or domestic migration) and/or vertical mobility (an upward or downward stress-producing move on the socioeconomic totem pole)" are

⁹Angel G. Gomez and Donald M. Vega, "The Hispanic Addict," in Substance Abuse: Clinical Problems and Perspectives, ed. J.H. Lowinson and P. Ruiz (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1981), pp. 717-728.

important.¹⁰ There is also the strain of acculturation to a new culture. All these factors influence the Hispanics' quality of life and affect such important areas as health, education, housing, etc. This difficult social situation produces a continuous, cumulative stress that is precipitating and perpetuating, leading at times to escapism through the use and addiction to certain substances.

These two studies, one of the Black community and the other of the Hispanics, are similar in that the respective authors point to the difficult economic and social conditions in the environment of the two groups, the stress that it produces in the members and the use of controlled substances as a way of coping with such hard conditions.

In line with the stresses and strains in the daily life of the Hispanic immigrants, Vaillant made an interesting study of this problem in the context of the Hispanic immigrant family.¹¹ He found a correlation between immigration, the cultural disparity of parent-child and substance abuse. The rate of addiction for the offspring of people who immigrated from another country or from another part of the United States is three times as high than the incidence for the immigrants themselves. Vaillant also found that the rate is especially high for the offspring of the

¹⁰Ibid., p. 727.

¹¹George E. Vaillant, "Parent-Child Cultural Disparity and Drug Addiction," Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases 142 (1966): 534-539.

immigrants who were born in New York City, higher than for children of the immigrants born in the home country. The immigrants in early youth lived in the culture of their parents. When they migrate, they are already identified with their family, parents and their culture. So they are less anti-social and less likely to become addicted to drugs and be admitted to Lexington, KT (USPHS Hospital). But the child of the immigrants from the earliest years, experiences values and a culture at variance with that of the parents. Vaillant noted the abnormal dependence of the addict's mother on her children. This might be caused by three factors: a) the immigrant parents are under much strain due to their coping with the new environment, b) parental migration may be related to parental instability, c) the immigrant mother who has left her family might not be able to meet the needs of those who are dependent on her and paradoxically, may be hindered in letting her child mature and be independent. Vaillant adds that the immigrant family experiences the loss of the family they left back in the home country and feel guilty about this. Immigrant parents tend to depend on their children for emotional support and become fearful when the children grow up and want to be independent. The Vaillant research is interesting because it highlights stresses and strains that are operative in the immigrant family, and the cultural disparity between immigrant parents and their offspring in this country.

The theme of Vaillant of the cultural disparity between immigrant parents and their children is in agreement with another author I. F. Lukoff.¹² He notes that in the behavior of drug use and abuse among younger people, there seems to be a process of disengagement from conventional values and norms which precedes the entrance into substance use. There is a decline in the legitimacy of conventional norms and values and the agents of social control. The drug initiant then goes on to create his/her own life space and style.

Another important study of substance abuse is P. Iiyama, S.M. Nishi and B. Johnson in the book, Drug Use and Abuse Among U.S. Minorities.¹³ They note the racial disparities in drug use and abuse and the criminal justice system. Much of the White subculture of crime remains privatized and does not have much street visibility. In substance abuse and use in the Black and Hispanic communities in New York City, there is much street visability and so individuals can be more apprehended by the police and be subject to coverage by the mass media. This study discusses the implications of the large Black and Hispanic

¹²Irving F. Lukoff, "Toward a Sociology of Drug Abuse," in Theories on Drug Abuse: Selected Contemporary Perspectives, ed. D. Lettieri, M. Sayers, and H.W. Pearson (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1980), p. 209.

¹³Bruce Johnson, S. M. Nishi, and Patti Iiyama, Drug Use and Abuse Among U.S. Minorities: An Annotated Bibliography (New York: Preager Publishers, 1976).

representation in the substance use and abuse subculture. First, in relation to the distribution of the age cohorts in the city, there is a decline of the White population while the cohort age sizes of the Black and Hispanic populations are larger than the Whites due to the large immigration to the city of these two minority groups. Secondly, there is the shift in the economic life of the city with the decline of the manufacturing sector.¹⁴ This latter has traditionally offered employment opportunities to immigrants and low-skilled people to lift themselves out of poverty. This manufacturing base has declined in New York City's economy, and now there are high unemployment rates in minority communities. Concomitant with this, is the creation of the illicit market as a quasi occupation for people in minority communities. This market has two components, non-drug crime and drug distribution crime. There is a creation of an underclass that lives off such an illicit market. This study is interesting because it highlights the particular economic and social factors in the minority communities leading to high visibility and incidence of drug use and abuse. It fits into the line of thought of Merton, Ohlin and Cloward, which deal with deviant activities and the whole question of means

¹⁴The implications of this are discussed in "Minorities on Verge of Becoming New Majority of Labor Force in New York City," U.S. Department of Labor, Middle Atlantic Regional Office, December 14, 1987, (mimeographed); see also "Minority Shift on Work Force is Reported," New York Times, 15 December 1987, B1.

availability and goal achievement in U.S. society.

Another theory of substance abuse which will be helpful in evaluating the themes of the procession participants is that of R. A. Steffenhagen, based on the notion of self-esteem.¹⁵ He postulates that the psychodynamic factor undergirding substance abuse is low self-esteem. Self-esteem grows in a person when he/she masters situations and achieves goals. Low self-esteem can occur when the goals set are too high or when obstacles block the attainment of realistic goals. Now goals are chosen by the individual, but the social system also provides them. According to Merton, success in the American ethos is linked to the amassing of money. This goal is set up by the American social structure, but does not always provide the means to reach it. When the goals set by society are not attained by an individual, low self-esteem will not necessarily occur. The person can lower his/her goals so that the individual can realize them and so have a sense of achievement and self-worth.

Steffenhagen concludes that all behavior is goal directed. People perceive and evaluate themselves in relation to their achievements. High self-esteem results when the evaluation is good and socially useful; when the evaluation is negative and on the socially useless side of

¹⁵R. A. Steffenhagen, "Self-Esteem Theory of Drug Abuse," in Theories of Drug Abuse, ed. Lettieri, Sayers & Pearson, p. 162.

life, low self-esteem results. It is a key variable in drug abuse. If people feel inferior, they try to protect their negative self-image through compensating mechanisms which create more problems in interpersonal relations and add to the feelings of inferiority. When we correlate this theory to certain themes from the procession participants, we will see factors operative which can build self-esteem for the immigrants.

Another area of research which will be helpful is that dealing with the role of religion in drug abuse prevention.¹⁶ Religious membership is a variable which has the ability to predict a non-substance abuser. There are three functions of the religious factor. First, religious body membership shows that the parents are part of and support the traditional socialization process, and want to pass such norms on to their children. Second, participation in such a group would provide substitute parenting figures if the true parents were unwilling or unable to provide appropriate models and traditional socialization. Third, in the religious group, a person finds a peer group who is traditionally socialized and supportive of such. Also such peers will not make drugs available to an individual.

Sandra Coleman comments on the relationship between

¹⁶R. Gorsuch, "Interactive Models of Nonmedical Drug Use," in Theories of Drug Abuse, ed. Lettieri, Sayers & Pearson, p. 22.

religion and drug abstinence.¹⁷ This correlation in the research may be due to the fact that the individuals basic needs are generally met by the traditional socialization factors, which include the institution of religion. This might explain why youngsters from traditional families are less apt to engage in drug abuse.

In these few pages, we have summarized certain themes in the research on drug use and abuse in minority communities. Much research deals with the question of goals of American society and the means available to reach them, and the difficult economic and social system in minority communities which have definite social and psychological effects on the individual. We will now review some of the factors which characterize the East Flatbush Caribbean neighborhood which we described in chapter two. It is a neighborhood with many of the typical social problems and strains described in the substance abuse literature. We will also review some of the important themes that emerged out of the procession participants' interviews in which the immigrants address the factors of anomie, alienation and the strains in their life. The cultural and religious roots of the newcomers offer these communities resources and strengths not to be overcome by their marginal situation, but to master

¹⁷Sandra Coleman, "Incomplete Mourning and Addict/Family Transactions: A Theory For Understanding Heroin Abuse," in Theories on Drug Abuse, ed. Lettieri, Sayers and Pearson, p. 88.

it and so establish themselves on a firmer ground in urban life.

Research Findings

In the neighborhood profile in appendix one, we concluded that East Flatbush in Brooklyn is an immigrant neighborhood in transition. It is a community struggling to establish itself in this country; as a result, it has strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, it has a large amount of homeowners, the commercial strips are stable and growing and there is much bilingual education in the schools. In terms of weaknesses, we noted the large presence of undocumented aliens, high unemployment rates for minority groups in New York City, serious overcrowding in the housing, public schools which have low reading and mathematic achievement, schools are overcrowded, extremely high rates in crimes against persons and property, and the dangers to life and property by fire in such overcrowded housing conditions. In New York City which is dividing into two cities, the haves and the have-nots, East Flatbush has characteristics of both sides. It is struggling to 'get in' and establish itself in this new country.

This neighborhood profile fits in with the description and analysis of minority communities which we noted in the various studies on drug use and abuse. Important are the structural theories of the acceptable goals posited by a society and the problem of not supplying sufficient means for

all groups to be able to reach these. This imbalance causes deviant behavior. We quoted the two studies, one on substance abuse in the Black community of Harlem and another study of the Hispanic community. In both of these studies, the authors cite the harsh social, economic and cultural deprivation of urban minorities as a major cause for this social problem. These bad conditions cause strain in individuals and drug use and abuse is a way to cope with this strain. Iiyama, Nishi and Johnson's analysis of drug abuse in minority communities is in this line of thought and also points out the decline of manufacturing which cut off the traditional employment route of minorities and immigrants out of poverty.

The neighborhood profile of East Flatbush exhibits the same social and economic problems that these researchers cite in other minority communities. The Caribbean immigrant coming to this country frequently is an undocumented alien, has to accept marginal, low paying employment due to language, legal status and his own lack of skills. On the other hand, the job market in New York City is expanding in areas that demand high skills of entrants. The community suffers from high crime rates, overcrowded schools with low achievement scores, overcrowding in the housing, etc. So the neighborhood profile shows East Flatbush as a community in which there are the social and economic factors that encourage drug use and abuse. We are dealing with a

neighborhood that can be prone to this behavior.

We will now review some of the interviews of the procession participants in which we will note the same social and economic factors emerge and the participant's description of the strains and stresses in their lives due to their marginal situation.

In chapter two analyzing the interviews in the light of their immigration hardships, we note how the procession participants mentioned the strains and sufferings of their migration to this country. They constantly talk about the pain and nostalgia of leaving home. Here life is hard. Many are undocumented, do hard and unpleasant work in factories and employment which native Americans do not want to do. They are Black and Brown and feel the harsh fact that this is a White dominated country. There is the language problem and economic struggles due to low salaries. All the problems that we noted in the neighborhood profile come out in a personal way. The interviews put flesh and blood on the statistics of the immigrant neighborhood and we note how these social problems are experienced and are a suffering to the immigrants. In addition to the difficulties of coming to this country, the immigrant knows that he is looked down upon; he is an unwelcome guest. One Educadorian procession participant describes well this sad experience.

"Let me give you an interesting story. It will show you how people look down on immigrants. I go to work in the morning with another teacher who is

Jewish. We were in the bus and the bus hit a car. The car was driven by a Jamaican immigrant. There was a terrible exchange of bad language between the bus driver and the Jamaican; all the bad words came out. The last thing and the worse that the bus driver said to the other driver was that he was an immigrant. That showed his attitude to us."¹⁸

We can conclude by noting that the neighborhood profile in appendix one and the testimonies of the procession participants shows us the stresses and strains in the life of the immigrants as they come to this country. They are socially, economically and legally marginal and suffer from this. Now the Corpus Christi procession is something valuable to the immigrants because it provides them with important meaning and strength in their marginal situation. The procession is significant in their life and has a definite relationship to their difficult life condition and offers them the hope of changing their situation. In chapter two, we noted the themes that emerged out of the interviews. The immigrants articulated well their difficult experience in this country and how the procession offers to them a hope that they can overcome these problems and injustices and establish themselves and their families in their new country. They feel the inequalities and difficulties of their immigrant situation and await from God the help to resolve the injustices and problems. Meaningful here is now the immigrants mark a parallel between themselves in the

¹⁸This quote is repeated from chapter two.

procession and the Israelites in Ancient Egypt awaiting the Exodus and liberation. The Haitian participants had revealing insights on the religiously based non-violent revolution that overthrew the Duvalier regime. We also cited the interesting interviews of the active members of the East Flatbush Churches who linked up the procession with neighborhood empowerment. So the procession is an instrument to provide an alternate vision of what life can be for the newcomers and provides the strength to struggle to create a better and more just society for them.

The themes that emerged out of the interviews in relation to festivity are also very useful in our analysis. There is the theme of the celebration of important events in life; in this procession, God is celebrated. The newcomers do it despite that they are foreigners in a strange land. They have a beautiful culture and religious life and want to manifest it in public; it enhances their self worth because they have beautiful and valuable things in their community life. The procession is a dynamic reality, reaching out and touching the neighborhood with the message of conversion and salvation. It is international and binds the three ethnic groups together. It also builds solidarity among the active members of the procession. It is a symbol of their vibrant community life and this gives the immigrants strength to face the adversities of their marginal life. The procession confronts consumer society and its materialist values. The

cultural and religious roots of the newcomers highlight other important areas of human life, not just the material.

The stresses and strains of immigrant life that the neighborhood profile point out and which the newcomers so well describe are similar to the tensions and difficulties in minority communities which researchers have cited as one of the causes of high substance abuse in these groups. The themes that emerged out of the procession participants' interviews illuminate factors that would militate against the anomie and alienation that can arise in persons who live in such difficult social and economic situations.

One of the major themes in the drug research literature is the notion of anomie from E. Durkheim. It is the state of rootlessness that an individual experiences when he is detached from society's norms and values. This is a particular problem for immigrants because they are in transition between two worlds. They come from one culture and are accommodating themselves now into another. This causes confusion and strain in the newcomers and also in the first generation offspring who also feel themselves in transition between the two cultures. The Corpus Christi procession is a significant cultural and religious event in the life of the immigrants. Its celebration anchors and reinforces the deep cultural and religious roots that the newcomers bring to this country. They value these roots and this celebration helps them retain this heritage and thus

preserves their identity in this time of transition. In coming to this country, they need not lose good and treasured values and customs that they bring from back home. They can keep these but also slowly accommodate themselves to the new culture. So the celebration of the procession helps them overcome anomie and keeps their roots in the values and norms of their native culture and identity.

The cultural and religious meaning and force in the procesion also addresses the harsh and unjust social, legal and economic realities of their marginal situation in this country. Most of the research we cite highlights the problem of society setting its goals but not providing the means to reach these to all segments of that society, especially to the poor, new arrivals and racially different groups. This causes a harsh economic and social environment in minority communities in this country, and drug use and abuse is one way to cope with the stress that emerges in daily life.

The Corpus Christi procession celebrates values and communal life which directly address these adverse social and economic conditions. First we noted that the procession is a dynamic and active celebration of an immigrant community. It is deeply related to their cultural and religious roots which go back to the home islands of the Caribbean. The newcomers are so proud of these roots that they want to celebrate these even in their new strange country. It is an active festivity announcing the message of

conversion and salvation to all the onlookers and the neighborhood. It gives the participants a sense of solidarity and community strength. It questions the materialist values of consumer society by also highlighting other human and religious values in life.

The celebration offers hope and an alternative vision of a life freed from the marginality and injustices that the immigrants now suffer from. They will not accept as final their harsh life but await God's help to liberate them from their difficult situation in New York City. They are struggling for and awaiting a second Exodus. This is related to the struggles for liberation in Haiti and other Central American countries. The procession gives a new vision of an alternate life and the newcomers await God's help in this whole process. God will not abandon his people.

We note then that these themes are important to help the immigrants cope in an innovative way with the stress and strains of their hard life. It presents the immigrants with a dream of a life of justice, brotherhood and economic justice and the motivation and group support to work for such a goal. Rather than being destroyed by the lack of means to establish themselves and their families in this country for all the reasons there are for this, it stimulates the newcomers to make the transition to fashion their new life here. The immigrant gets encouragement from other members of the community who are in the same struggle and who continue

on, and this is reinforced with the sense of solidarity with their brothers and sisters in the Caribbean and Central America who are in a similar movement.

The drug researchers note that substance use and abuse is one way to cope with the harsh realities of the life of minorities in this country. This coping takes two forms: an individual can take drugs or/and sell them as an illicit occupational route. The procession offers these groups another way to cope which is active and positive. It relates to the notions of the Radical Sociologists who see the need for society to change so that the disenfranchized and have-nots can come in the mainstream. The procession gives the minority groups an alternate vision of the society and the cultural and religious strength to realize this goal and new world. The life condition of the immigrants has stress and strain in it, but the deep cultural and religious values of the procession provide an authentic way to cope with and overcome them also. It motivates the immigrants to work in solidarity and in social movements to overcome these injustices and marginality.

The themes of the procession interviews also address the problem of low self-esteem as a cause for substance abuse. Steffenhagen mentions the problem of low self-esteem when individuals cannot master their goals. This is due to a variety of reasons. The new immigrants are in a stressful situation and attempting to realize their ambitions in this

new country. There are obstacles: their undocumented status, poverty, racial and cultural backgrounds, language, the changing economic structure of this country with the decline of manufacturing, etc. In addition, they are not accepted by mainline American society and looked down upon as immigrants and stereotyped as drug addicts or robbers. The self-esteem of the immigrants is a fragile thing. They need support and strength to achieve their goals in this new land. This will give them a sense of positive self-esteem in being able to reach these in a difficult situation. It means also adjusting one's ambitions and constantly trying to find another door open when one is closed in your face. In such a difficult condition, one can understand how the immigrants's self-esteem can become negative as they attempt to scale the hurdles of their new life in this country. The procession also is one manifestation of a strong Christian community which can give the newcomers support as they establish themselves here. Christians will be a support to positive self-esteem.

Our analysis of the Corpus Christi procession relates to the research by Gorsuch on religion and drug non-use. Gorsuch notes how a religious community can influence a non-initiant to drug use. Religious membership shows the parents are having an impact on the socialization process of the young persons, or substitute parental figures are doing the same. Also the peer group that a youngster will find in a

religious body are those who also have been socialized in the tradition of their parents. Such a peer group would not make drugs available to other young people.

The Corpus Christi procession is one vigorous manifestation of a vibrant religious community built around the parish. The interviews show that the parents want their children to be part of the parish life and as such share the cultural and religious roots of the family and be involved with other Christian youth. Many of the immigrants interviewed voiced concern about the youth. Both parents have to work and as such do not have much time to spend with their children. This allows the youth to be influenced by their peers. The parents welcome the church youth movements and other activities in which their children can be involved so as to offset the influence of the larger peer group. I interviewed twice the Hispanic, and the Haitian youth groups. The youngsters were articulate on the meaning of the procession and did march on the day. This was particularly true of the Haitian group. The cultural and religious values of the family are being communicated to the youth who are active in religious activities of the parish. This then socializes the young people and acts as a preventive to substance use and abuse.

In this appendix, we related the themes of the procession interviewees to the research on drug use and abuse in minority communities. In the latter, we noted the themes

of anomie, the lack of means to reach established and legitimate goals, the changing economic scene in the United States with the decline of the manufacturing sector, the role of self-esteem in substance abuse and the impact of religious membership and peer group on the young. In face of the stress and strains of marginal immigrant life in this country, a vigorous cultural and religious life can offer the newcomers an authentic human vision of life, a world that is based on human dignity and justice and the strength to overcome the injustices and problems in their marginal life. It also provides a vigorous community life and solidarity where shared cultural, ethnic and religious values can unite people and give them strength as a group. This vibrant life and the values involved can be passed on to the youth which is the age group where drug use and abuse has its entry point. Also to young people who want to use drug sale as an occupation, a vigorous cultural and religious life and community will help them have second thoughts about this way of life and encourage them to find opportunities in more legitimate occupations in the city.

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