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In This Country but Not of It: Immigration and Religion Among Colombian Evangelicals in the United States and Spain

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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DIEGO DE LOS RIOS

Abstract: This dissertation examines how the experience of migration and the context of reception influences religious ideas and practices. Using the experience of two branches of a Colombian Evangelical church, one in Miami, Florida and one in Madrid, Spain, I explore the extent to which context of reception and the experiences of migrants shape their narratives, ideas about belonging, and evangelism strategies. Blending neo-institutionalism theory and lived religion, this comparative ethnography highlights how local, national, and transnational factors play a role in the religious practices of people. Throughout the dissertation, I highlight how adaptation is constrained by both internal and external factors that include, but are not limited to what previous literature on religious adaptation would suggest. While much of the literature comparing the role of religion in the lives of immigrants in the US and Europe has focused on examining whether or not religion is beneficial or damaging for migrants' well being, I shift my focus to religious adaptation, and not on religious compatibility. Ultimately, I explore how blending lived religion and neo-institutionalism can tells not just about immigrant religion, but also about how people and organizations adapt to an increasingly globalized and transnational world.

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Since I started graduate school, my favorite part of reading any article or book has always been to look at the acknowledgments. A part of me thinks I've enjoyed it a little too much. And thus I find myself going through a lot of different, sometimes contradicting emotions, as I sit down to write my own. One the one hand I feel an intense sense of accomplishment. A part of me always felt like I would never make it this far. But if the best dissertation is a finished dissertation, then this one is amazing. There is also a unique feeling of freedom: while the entire process of writing these following pages has been overshadowed by a constant fear of not have enough to say, here I feel like I will have too much to say.

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Introduction

Research Question

How do the act of migration and the social and historical context into which immigrants are received influence how they practice their religion? The answer to this question is particularly pressing considering we live in what Castles and Miller call "the age of migration" (2003). There are currently more people living outside their country of birth than in any other point in recent history (Kivisto and Faist 2009). Furthermore, contemporary migration patterns impact more countries, as points of origin and host countries, than ever before.

Migration reshapes both sending and receiving communities. Immigrants bring with them cultures, languages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and religious traditions that often differ from those of the native population. Historical patterns of immigration can influence how new immigrants relate to more established populations in receiving countries. The United States has long and established - albeit contested and conflicting - history of migration. Contemporary migrants originating from Latin America, Asia, and Africa are unlike previous waves of immigrants that predominantly came from European countries (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). In Europe, migration flows have recently reversed: over the past fifty years, nations that were historically migrant-sending nations have become common immigrant destinations (Hansen 2003).

No area of difference between migrants and native populations has received more scholarly and political attention than religion. Sociologists Nancy Foner and Richard Alba (Alba and Foner 2015; Foner and Alba 2008) argue that while religion operates like a barrier to assimilation for immigrants into European society, it operates more like a bridge to assimilation into American

society. European political actors tend to agree that religion, and Islam in particular, is a barrier to integration, and traditional religious values are seen as antithetical to Western European secularism (Kivisto 2014). American politicians are divided on the subject. Conservative politicians, like Donald Trump, have suggested that the US restrict immigration by religious affiliation.[1] To this, Liberal politicians and public intellectuals continue to highlight the United States' history and philosophical foundation as a country that values immigrants from all religious backgrounds.

Though the relationship between religion and immigration has received considerable attention from both sides of the Atlantic, the focus of this attention is not equitable for two reasons. The first complication can best be described as an "apples and oranges" problem: there are different demographic compositions of immigrants in Europe and the United States as well as a lack of actual comparative research between the two places. Research on religion and immigration in American and Europe respectively has focused on groups that reflect the geographic and religious composition of the migrant populations in each setting. American research has focused primarily on Latino (Guzman Garcia 2016; Menjivar 2003; Mora 2013; Tweed 1997) and Asian (e.g. Ecklund 2006; George 2005; Kwon 2010) immigrants, most of whom are either Catholic or Christian,[2] while most research on religion and immigration that emerges in the European context has focused primarily on North African and Middle Eastern migrants, most of whom are Muslim (e.g. Cesari 2004; Korteweg and Yurdakul 2014; Peach and Vertovec 2016; Voas and Fleischmann 2012)). In contrast to the research produced in the United

[1] https://www.cnn.com/2015/12/07/politics/donald-trump-muslim-ban-immigration/index.html
[2] Exceptions to this trend include Carolyn Chen's (2002, 2008) work comparing Buddhist and Christian immigrants in the US or Prema Kurien's (1998, 2006) work on Hinduism among Indian immigrants. Since September 11, 2001, a burgeoning body of research has also focused on Muslim immigrants in the United States (e.g. Peek 2005; Warner, Martel, and Dugan 2012; Read 2015; Mattson 2003; Eck 2002).

States, which tends to focus on how religion impacts each facet of the migratory experience, much of the research in the European context focuses on different forms of conflict between immigrant communities and the host cultures (i.e., education, headscarves, gender roles). Drawing conclusions about the differences and similarities about the relationship of religion and immigration in the United States and Europe therefore relies on comparing research projects, rather than comparative research.

The second complication to comparing the relationship between immigration and religion in Europe and America is that most analyses of religion and immigration tend to treat religion as operating independently from other areas of social life. For example, a number of quantitative scholars have examined the role of religion in predicting migrants' labor market participation and economic incorporation (Connor 2011; Connor and Koenig 2013; Koenig, Maliepaard, and Güveli 2016). These scholars assume that religion operates independently from other areas of social life, taking a particularly static view of religion in the context of migrants' experiences of reception. As a result, much of this research tends to ignore the extent to which the migratory experience shapes people's religious beliefs and practices.[3]

To overcome the two issues detailed above, this research project directly compares the experience of Colombian evangelicals living in the United States and Spain. As I explain in more detail below, Colombians living in the United States and Spain are an ideal case for comparison: Colombians in these two countries tend to have relatively similar backgrounds regarding socio-economic status they tend to come from the same regions of the country; and they migrated during the same time periods. Although the majority of Colombians who migrate (and the overall

[3] This pattern is observed in the sociology of religion in general and is not unique to studies of religion and immigration, as Smilde and May (see also Smilde and May 2010; Smilde 2013) observed.

majority of Colombians) are Catholic, Evangelical churches function as ideal sites for a comparative study that intends to keep religious affiliation constant across sites as they are less hierarchical and thus more flexible.

Religion and Immigration in the United States and Europe

Over the past three decades, a significant number of sociologists and scholars in other disciplines have recognized and articulated the important and usually positive role of religion for immigrants in the United States (e.g. Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Warner 2000; Yang and Ebaugh 2001). Much of this research has taken an instrumental approach to religion, focusing primarily on what religion does for immigrants. This approach stems in part from a larger trend in the sociology of religion, what Smilde and May (2010) call the "strong program" in the sociology of religion. Some of the examples in this line of research include work analyzing the resources religious organizations provide for immigrants (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Hirschman 2004) as well as research on how religious participation influences and contributes to immigrants' development of new identities (Chen 2008; Joshi 2006).

Contrastingly, he connection between religion and immigrants' experiences has received a much more critical evaluation in Europe. Alba and Foner observe that "religion has come to be viewed as a problem for immigrant minorities and for the societies in which they live now" (119 2015:119). One example of this more problematic understanding is Connor and Koenig (2013), who found that there is a religious penalty for minorities when it comes to occupational attainment. However, it is difficult to separate European research on religion from its context since most of the claims that are European researchers make are specifically about Islam. As some scholars have recently observed, when examining the racialization of Islam it is difficult to disentangle whether the outcomes migrants experience are the result of racial or ethnic

discrimination, or religion specifically (Meer 2013; Selod 2015). While researchers in Europe and the United States come to different conclusions about how religion affects immigrants' experiences, both share an understanding of religion as an independent variable.

Following Smilde's (2013) critique of the strong program in the sociology of religion, this dissertation moves beyond the autonomous understanding of religion. Instead of exploring how religion operates independently from other areas of social life, I examine how religion intersects with other aspects of immigrants' lives. Rather than looking at what religion does for immigrants, my approach reverses the question and explores how migration and the context of reception shape the religion of immigrants – in other words, looking at what immigration does *to* religion. My research assumes a complex relationship between immigration and religion that recognizes that while religious identity and belonging shape migrants' practices, the experience of migration also impacts people's religious narratives, identities, and practices.

How Context Shapes Religion: Examples from Research on Organizations and Identity

Previous research has shown that context influences certain aspects of religious life. In the the United States, R. Stephen Warner (2000) has observed a pattern he labels "de-facto congregationalism." According to Warner, when immigrants move the United States, their religious groups tend to adapt and resemble American Protestant congregations, regardless of the religious tradition or how they were organized in their country of origin. Although Warner's congregationalism thesis has received some criticism (Cadge 2008), other research supports the thesis that there are specific patterns of change that religious organizations make as a result of migration, including changing leadership structures to rely more heavily on lay members as opposed to religious professionals, obtaining nonprofit status, and tending toward ethnic exclusivity.

De-facto congregationalism can be best understood as a version of DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) organizational isomorphism, the process by which organizations begin to resemble other organizations in the same field. Since the institutional field of religion in the United States is dominated by congregational Protestantism, immigrant religious organizations mimic this form to gain legitimacy. In the United States, where there is a long-standing history of religious de-establishment and pluralism, congregations provide the ideal organizational form for immigrant religious communities to provide spiritual, cultural, and material resources to its members (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000).[4]

A second body of research, in many ways parallel to the one described above, explores how the context of reception matters for the religious and ethnic identity of immigrants. In the American context, this line of research extends back to the middle of the 20th century, when Will Herberg (1955) argued that religion was the vehicle by which Europeans became Americans. Americans, as Edgell and colleagues (2006) have shown, are more accepting of religious others than they are atheists and the non-religious. Thus, scholars have demonstrated how the religious, ethnic, and national identities of immigrants to America find new permutations, further establishing religious identity as an acceptable avenue for entry into American society (Cadge 2004; Cadge and Davidman 2006; Kurien 1998).

In Europe, on the other hand, it is difficult to imagine that any immigrant group could "become European" by becoming religious (Foner and Alba 2008). While dominant religious organizations, such as the Catholic church in Spain, have provided social services and engaged in activism on behalf of immigrants (Itçaina and Burchianti 2011), more often migration increases the sense of competition among religious groups. As De Galembert and Kepel (1994; cited in

[4] Most research on organizational adaptation has been written by scholars describing American organizations.

Itçaina and Burchianti 2011) emphasized in his research on migration and religion in France, migration gives rise to a tension between compassion for the excluded (manifested in services provided for migrants) and fear of religious revival (and competition). Furthermore, for minority groups, the experience of exclusion and marginality can lead to what Cesari calls "oppositional religiosity" (2004).[5]

While scholars have given significant attention to how immigration impacts religious organizational structures, individual expression of religious and ethnic identities, and religious attendance (I review the literature on this subject in more detail in chapter 2), there is a dearth of research on how religious beliefs and practices change as a result of immigration.[6]

We know that other aspects of migrants' lives adapt to their new contexts: food (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983), music (Cepeda 2010), gender roles and family structures (George 2005; Smith 2005). Why should religion be any different? This dissertation examines how migration changes the ways immigrants conceive of and practice their religion. I focus on a Colombian evangelical Church, Casa Sobre la Roca, and its branches in Miami, Florida, and Madrid, Spain. In the following section, I introduce Casa Sobre la Roca, contextualizing its emergence and international growth within the context of Colombian migration and the diversification of the country's religious landscape.

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[5] Challenging the idea of a Muslim oppositional religiosity, Beaman (2015) finds that middle-class, second-generation Muslims frame their religious identity in such a way that it fits within the broader ideas of French Republicanism.

[6] Arnold Eisen (1983, 2009), whose research explores how the Jewish notion of *chosenness* changed as a result of migration from the United States to Europe, stands out as one of the few scholars who are currently exploring this connection. According to Eisen, as Jews moved from Europe to North America, where they experienced less segregation and discrimination, their ideas about what it means to be the "chosen people" changed.

Colombian Migration

Any discussion of Colombian migrants must first begin by contextualizing the migration phenomenon within the country's history and its complicated sociopolitical past and present. As Ayala and colleagues (2001) point out, Colombian migration is not a new phenomenon. However, the ubiquity of migration's impact among Colombians is relatively recent. Migration as a phenomenon affects most (if not all) Colombians. While the populations of Colombians in the United States and Spain are smaller compared to other immigrant communities, the percentage of citizens who emigrate from Colombia is relatively high: according to Colombian official statistics, about 1 out of 10 Colombians lives outside the country (Ramírez, Zuluaga, and Perilla 2010). In 2006, then Vice-President Francisco Santos, who briefly lived in Spain, contrasted Colombia's relatively closed and isolated past with the more recent trend of emigration, remarking that Colombia had become a country of "emigrants, of refugees, and of displaced people" (2006).

It is estimated that there are anywhere between 900,000 and 1.5 million Colombians living in the United States (Bidegaín 2006; Guarnizo and Espitia 2006; Migration Policy Institute 2014), making Colombians the largest South American group in the United States. Most Colombians have settled in Florida and the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. In Florida, most choose to live in South Florida, either in the Miami metro area or its vicinity (Bidegaín 2006). Throughout the early 2000s, it was estimated that about 1,000 Colombian families were entering the United States through Miami, although it is unclear how many of them moved to other parts of the United States ("Más de 600 mil Colombianos Abandonarían el país en 2010," 2010).

Spain is the second most popular migration destination for Colombians after the United States. In 2007, Colombians represented the third largest non-European immigrant group after

Ecuadorians and Moroccans (Instituto Nacional de Estadistica (INE) 2011).[7] In Spain, 22% of the total Colombian population in Spain resides in the Madrid metropolitan area. Valencia and Cataluña follow with about 15% of the total Colombian population in each (Garay Salamanca and Medina Villegas 2008).

Colombians have been migrating to the United States and Spain for decades. Initially, most Colombians who migrated to these two countries were highly educated elites. As Guarnizo and Espitia report (2006), the first Colombians migrating to the United States did so in the 1940s and 1950s. These groups included "intellectuals, artists, international students, people with degrees from American Universities […] and international bureaucrats who decided to stay on at the end of the official missions" (Guarnizo and Espitia 2006:373). Similarly, many members of the Colombian elite migrated to Spain before 1950 (Garay Salamanca and Medina Villegas 2008). This population of migrants usually came to study in Spain, taking advantage of the currency differential between the Spanish peseta and the Colombian peso (Garay Salamanca and Medina Villegas 2008).

Migration patterns to the United States changed radically following *la violencia*, a decade of political and social instability beginning in 1948 and ending in 1958 during which sympathizers of the two most important political parties confronted each other in violent encounters throughout the country (Bushnell 1993). The period of *la violencia* was first followed by a military government under Col. Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. Rojas' regime was replaced after Liberal and Conservative political leaders formed a coalition, the Frente Nacional (National Front), and instituted an agreement between the two parties to share government offices and appointments between the two parties. While superficially both sides agreed to stop fighting, *la violencia*

[7] See http://www.ine.es/prensa/np648.pdf & http://www.ine.es/prensa/np499.pdf

incited the emergence of leftist guerrillas groups FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) and the ELN (Ejercito de Liberación Nacional). Newly formed right-wing paramilitaries, which received support from the Colombian and American governments, aggravated the violence (Sanford 2003). In the 1980s Colombia entered what many refer to as a "dirty war" involving leftist guerrillas, paramilitary groups, the military, and drug traffickers, and hired assassins known as *sicarios*. The political volatility and widespread violence Colombian citizens experienced during this time led to increasing flows in both rural-to-urban migration and international migration.

Though Colombian violence has received most of the attention in the media, the country's economic instability has also been an equally significant factor fueling migration (Cepeda 2010). In the late 1990s, Colombia went through one of its worst economic crises, resulting in the worst economic recession in the country's history (Garay Salamanca and Medina Villegas 2008). The poor implementation of neoliberal policies, including the opening of the country's economy to allow the importation of goods under President Cesar Gaviria (Garay Salamanca and Medina Villegas 2008), and later on the implementation of Free Trade Agreements with the United States (Cepeda 2010), combined with increased spending on defense, resulted in a decrease in other public services and increased unemployment and underemployment, all of which contributed to a new wave of migration to the US and Europe.

Most Colombian immigrants in the United States and Spain migrated during this last wave in the past three decades (Garay Salamanca and Medina Villegas 2008; Rojas 2006)and share relatively similar demographic characteristics: Most come from urban areas and have higher levels of human capital than the Colombian average (Bidegain 2006). Additionally, most of the Colombian population in both the United States and Spain originates from the same urban areas:

Bogota, Cali, Medellin and the medium-sized cities in the "zona cafetera" (the country's coffee belt) (Garay Salamanca and Medina Villegas 2008). While the Colombian population living in the United States and Spain is in no way homogeneous, the relative similarities between the migrant profiles (mostly urban, relatively educated, and recent migrants) makes Colombians living in these two countries ideal for comparison, as the relative similarities allow the researcher to "control" for many characteristics.

Colombian Religion

Like most other Latin Americans, the majority of Colombians identify as Catholic (Cooperman, Bell, and Sahgal 2014). Currently, around 80% of the population identifies as Catholic. Protestants, including Pentecostals, non-denominational evangelicals, and mainline Protestants comprise anywhere between 11 and 15% of the population.[8] As I explain in more detail below, changes in the political and religious landscape have created a fertile ground for religious diversification. This diversification has extended beyond the country's national borders, reaching Colombians living abroad. In some cases, Colombian churches like Casa Sobre la Roca, have followed migrants, establishing churches in foreign cities with large numbers of Colombians. In others, large numbers of Colombians have joined new or existing churches in their new cities.

[8] The CIA Factbook (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html) claims a 79/14% ratio of Catholics and Protestants, while the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Documents/FichasPais/COLOMBIA_FICHA%20PAIS.pdf) says it is 87/11.

Casa Sobre la Roca and Colombian Evangelicalism

I first heard about Casa Sobre la Roca (CSR)[9] in Colombia when I was growing up in Bogotá, Colombia. The original church, where the headquarters is located, was not far from the house where I spent most of my childhood. I have two striking memories of growing up near Casa Sobre la Roca. First, I remember how upset my parents and our neighbors would get when churchgoers would illegally park on our streets to attend Sunday services.[10] The church's membership had grown so fast that they quickly ran out of parking space, forcing congregants to park on the adjacent streets to the church (including the one where I lived). The second thing I remember well is the sounds of the church, especially on Sunday mornings. I remember hearing loud and lively music, shouts, and cheers coming from the church. More importantly, I remembered feeling confused that such liveliness could be coming from a house of worship; the music and cheers from the audience were completely antithetical to what I considered "religion." Like most Colombians of my generation, I had grown up in a Catholic family. I attended a K-12 Catholic School where mandatory weekly mass was pale and gloomy, especially in comparison to the services of churches like Casa Sobre la Roca.

At the time, many of the people around me referred to CSR and other Protestant churches that began to pop up around the city using negative terms such as “sects,” “cults,” and “brainwashers.” It would take years before I realized that CSR and other churches that emerged

[9] The name translates to "House on the Rock." The name comes from the final part of the Sermon on the Mount, from the Gospel of Matthew. "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matt 7:24). I have kept the name in Spanish to avoid confusion with numerous churches that have a similar name in English.

[10] The parking issue has not gone away and has even received media attention. In 2014, a Colombian online magazine included Casa Sobre la Roca in a published story on churches in Bogotá that disturb traffic and parking in residential neighborhoods https://www.kienyke.com/historias/iglesias-cristianas-bogota.

during this time were part of a much bigger process occurring in the 1980s and 1990s in Colombia and across Latin America: religious diversification.

As religious legal scholar Vicente Prieto (2011) points out, Colombian history and national identity have been shaped by Catholic culture. Like most Latin American countries that were once Spanish colonies, Colombia's history has been characterized by a relatively uniform religious monopoly and hegemony from the Catholic Church since the times of conquest.[11] The stronghold of the Catholic Church increased in 1887 when the country entered in a concordat with the Church and in 1902 when the country was officially consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Rios 2009). Strong devotion to manifestations of Virgin Mary and a variety of Catholic Saints have long been a part of Colombian culture.

However, as Latin America experienced tremendous religious change during the second half of the 20th century, Catholicism lost some of its monopoly status (Cooperman et al. 2014; Levine 2012). The growth of Protestantism in Latin America has been so big that some scholars have gone as far as asking whether Latin America was turning Protestant (Freston 2008). According to a PEW Research Center report published in 2014, throughout most of the 20th century almost 90% of Latin America's population identified as Catholic, while today only 69% of the population identifies as Catholic (Cooperman et al. 2014). Brazil, which has arguably received the most attention from scholars interested in the topic, has become both the world's largest Catholic country and home to the world's second largest Evangelical population after the United States (Freston 2004). According to the authors of the PEW report, this dramatic change is mostly explained by religious switching, primarily by the large numbers of Latin Americans

[11] Except for a three-decade period (1854-1886), Catholicism was the official religion of Colombia until 1991.

who are joining evangelical Protestant churches (Cooperman et al. 2014).[12] Table 1 shows the breakdown of this phenomenon by country.

In Colombia, the Catholic Church grew during most of the 20th century. In 1910, 80% of the population identified as Catholic, and, by 1970, that number had gone up to 95% (Cooperman et al. 2014). While 92% of Colombians surveyed by PEW in 2014 said they were raised Catholic, only 79% currently identify as such. Of this 13% change, 8% can be attributed to people who now identify as Protestant and 5% to people who now identify as religiously unaffiliated. While in the early 2000s the Protestant presence in Colombia was seen as relatively weak (Freston 2004), the 2014 PEW data demonstrates that the country is following the footsteps of other countries in the region.

Some scholars have offered a variety of explanations to account for the growth of Protestantism in Latin America, including Colombia. Structural explanations tend to explain the success of Protestantism in Latin America by linking it to the dynamic social change the region experienced during second half of the 20th century, characterized by rapid industrialization, urbanization, and massive internal migration (Beltran Cely 2012). In the case of Colombia in particular, sociologist Cornelia Butler Flora (1973) argued that the growth of Protestantism Pentecostalism could be explained by looking at peoples' dislocation experiences of unemployment, underemployment, and migration. This cultural explanation understands the

[12] As David Smilde (2005) points out, there is a terminological difficulty when speaking about Protestants in Latin America, as "two-thirds of Protestantism in Latin America is what in North America would be called Pentecostal." Furthermore, many scholars and Latin American Protestants themselves use these terms interchangeably. However, as will become clearer throughout this study, members of Casa Sobre la Roca constantly differentiate themselves from Pentecostals and prefer the terms "evangelicos" and "cristianos." I have chosen to favor my respondents' preferences.

success of Protestantism in Latin America by suggesting that its emphasis on personal responsibility and individualism are attractive values for many marginalized groups.

Table 1: Religious Change Among Catholics from Childhood to Today

Country	Raised Catholic	Currently Catholic	Net Change
Nicaragua	75	50	-25
Uruguay	64	42	-22
U.S.Hispanics	77	55	-22
Brazil	81	61	-20
El Salvador	69	50	-19
Dominican Republic	75	57	-18
Puerto Rico	73	56	-17
Argentina	86	71	-15
Costa Rica	77	62	-15
Honduras	61	46	-15
Peru	90	76	-14
Chile	77	64	-13
Colombia	**92**	**79**	**-13**
Venezuela	86	73	-13
Ecuador	91	79	-12
Guatemala	62	50	-12
Bolivia	88	77	-11
Mexico	90	81	-9
Paraguay*	94	89	-5
Panama*	74	70	-4

* not statistically significant

Source: Cooperman et al., "Religion in Latin America widespread change in a historically Catholic region", 2014. PEW Research Center

While explaining the success of Protestantism in Latin American is outside the scope of this study, it is important to situate the emergence of Casa Sobre la Roca within the broader context of religious pluralization that occurred in Latin America and Colombia specifically. As Colombian sociologist William Beltran Cely (2012) claims, one of the leading characteristics of the pluralization of the Colombian religious landscape has been what he calls "the resurgence of

religious feeling and the amplification religious expression with the emergence of new movements and the revival of old ones." Pentecostalism and other forms of Protestant Christianity became increasingly popular, particularly among the urban and rural poor. According to Beltran Cely, new religious movements (NRM) including Pentecostalism and other non-denominational churches are better suited than the Catholic Church to help individuals deal with the anomie and uprooting many Colombians have experienced, especially during the second half of the 20th century.

At the same time, as more non-Catholic churches were being opened, and thus changing the religious landscape of the country, Colombia was going through legal and institutional changes that further challenged the Catholic Church's established monopoly. Most important of all was the new constitution of 1991,[13] which among other things de-established Catholicism as the country's and the state's official religion, guaranteeing individuals the freedom to practice their religion. As article 19th of the constitution states, "Freedom of religion is guaranteed. Every individual has the right to freely profess his/her religion and to disseminate it individually or collectively. All religious faiths and churches are equally free before the law" (Colombian Const. Article 19). The 1991 constitution was the pinnacle of a process of de-regulation and religious de-establishment, allowing non-Catholic religious organizations to compete for adherents. However, as Colombian sociologist Carlos Arboleda (2005) points out, pluralism was achieved faster legally than it was achieved socio-culturally. Despite having a more favorable legal environment, non-Catholic groups continued to be stigmatized (exemplified by my earlier

[13] The 1991 Constitution was the result of both a regional trend in which a number of Latin American countries to rewrite their constitutions (Garcia-Guadilla and Hurtado 2000) and, more specifically, an attempt by the Colombian government and society at large to provide a solution to the ongoing, drug-fueled conflict and the related institutional problems associated with it (Banks and Alvarez 1991).

mention of Catholic Colombians characterizing churches like Casa Sobre la Roca as sects and cults).

Many of the churches that emerged during this period were the result of foreign churches that were sending missionary envoys to Colombia. At the same time, the country was experiencing endogenous religious diversification, as many native-born Colombians founded new churches (Beltran Cely 2012). Among these, Casa Sobre la Roca emerged as one of the most popular in numbers and reputation. In this context of increased religious diversification, but with the relative stigma associated with anything other than Catholicism, Casa Sobre la Roca emerged as a church that differentiated itself from others by emphasizing middle-class and upper-class identity, style, and sensibility. The story of how Casa Sobre la Roca (CSR) was founded is important not just for historical reasons, but also because it provides an archetypal narrative that many people use in telling their conversion stories and in attempting to differentiate CSR from other evangelical churches.

Casa Sobre la Roca was founded in Bogotá in 1987 by Dario Silva. Before becoming an evangelical pastor, Mr. Silva had achieved relative success as a journalist and news broadcaster. His journalism career reached a peak during the presidency of Julio Cesar Turbay (from 1978 to 1982), whom Silva favored in his reporting and even called a friend. Shortly after Turbay's liberal party lost the elections, and conservative Belisario Betancourt took office as President in August 1982, Silva received an official notification informing him that the ministry of communications had revoked his broadcasting license.

Without his broadcasting license, Silva experienced an emotional and financial crisis. In many of his sermons recounting this period, Silva often speaks about how in his darkest moments he even considered committing suicide. Desperate for money, one of his relatives

invited him to a prayer group and introduced him to someone who could lend him the money. In an interview with a Colombian newspaper, Mr. Silva recalls imagining that his relative's friend would be "an old lady with long hair and a long skirt, with a Bible under her arm, displaying spiritual righteousness" (Parra Benitez 2016). Instead, Silva recalls meeting a beautiful and elegant woman. When they met, she read him a passage from Job that resonated so much with his situation that it left him in shock.

Retelling the story in sermons at many of the branches of CSR, as well as in interviews with newspapers, Mr. Silva recalls how that first encounter was the first step in turning his life around. It was his own *metanoia,* a term frequently used in church to speak about people's decision to become evangelicals and turn their lives around. Shortly after receiving a loan from his relative's friend, he joined her prayer group, which met in an upper-middle-class house in the north-east of Bogota. He began to "Christianize" his life, applying biblical solutions to his problems.

Eventually, he paid his debt back and got back on his two feet. He found a job as a journalist, this time at a morning news show, which allowed him to spend his nights studying theology and attending prayer group meetings. He married the woman who lent him the money and introduced him to Christianity. As the group grew, the two decided to turn it into a church and founded Casa Sobre la Roca in 1987. With barely a couple dozen people, the church initially met in the garage of a residential home. The group quickly attracted more people and outgrew the garage, so they rented a residential house and adapted it to work as a church.

Once they outgrew the house, they began acquiring the adjoining properties, until eventually, they owned the entire block. In addition to building a large worship area (nave) that is well over 10,000 square feet, perfectly suited for the several thousands of visitors who come for one of the

five services on Sundays, CSR has built a cafeteria, administrative offices, classrooms, and a bookstore. They have also opened a K-12 school, located some 15 miles outside of Bogota in the suburban town of Cota. In addition to its main church in Bogota, Casa Sobre la Roca has grown nationally and internationally. In Colombia, the church has opened more than 28 churches in different cities, including one in every major metropolitan area in the country. Additionally, the church has expanded internationally over the past 15 years: they have opened three locations in the U.S.; one in Madrid, Spain; and, more recently, one in Panama City.[14] They have also attracted the attention of Colombian celebrities both at home and abroad.

Although much focus on the rise of Protestantism in Colombia and Latin American has been centered around the urban and rural poor, Casa Sobre la Roca is evidence that this diversification has not been exclusive to these groups. Along with some other churches,[15] Casa Sobre la Roca has grown primarily among middle and upper-middle-class people in the country's largest urban centers (Beltran Cely 2012). Among other things, CSR has developed a reputation for being a elite sort of church, as some of its members include politicians, television celebrities, and famous professional athletes (JetSet 2012). The high profile of some of its members has also worked to augment the church's popularity and help reduce some of the stigma once associated with non-Catholic churches.

Silva has attributed the success of his church to the effectiveness of his message. In an interview with Colombian Magazine *Jet-Set*, Silva explained: "When people realize that this serves to practice in a world of success and happiness in all aspects, they get excited and take it as a lifestyle and a way of being (*forma de ser*)" (JetSet 2012). Perhaps the most convincing

[14] As of August 1, 2017, there are some indications that the Church will soon be opening a new branch in Barcelona.

[15] Other churches include La Cruzada Estudiantil (which follows y Profesional de Colombia) and El Lugar de Su Presencia, both of which have also grown internationally.

explanation of why Casa Sobre la Roca (and a few other churches like it) have grown so much comes from sociologist William Beltran Cely (2012), who argues that the same structural factors that make Christianity attractive to rural and poor Colombians have also affected urban, middle-class Colombians. By catering specifically to the middle-class and upper-class individuals, CSR reached people who were rarely evangelized.

Casa Sobre la Roca, not the only Colombian church that has expanded internationally. Other Colombian evangelical churches, like Mision Carismatica Internacional (MC12) and Iglesia Ministerial de Dios Jesucristo Ministerial (International Church of God Jesus Christ, IDMJI) have also expanded in a similar fashion. In 2006, Colombia's leading newspaper El Tiempo published a story titled "Colombian Churches exporting faith," profiling several Colombian churches that had grown internationally, including Casa Sobre la Roca (Garibello 2006).

Casa Sobre la Roca Beliefs and Ideas

CSR defines itself as a non-denominational, Evangelical church ("Lo Que Creemos" Anon n.d.). Like other evangelical churches, Casa Sobre la Roca claims that that the Bible is the "full and infallible word of God, revealed to man by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and consequently the only rule of faith and conduct" ("Lo Que Creemos" Anon n.d.). The church's identity centers around six areas or components. Understanding these components is important not just to have an idea of what people at CSR believe, but also to see why Casa Sobre la Roca is particularly well suited as a site to study the relationship between context and religious practice.

First, the church highlights the importance of getting to the essence of Christianity, which has been abstracted and tangled by what the church calls “denominational sectarianism.” According to Casa Sobre la Roca’s beliefs statement, this rests on three presuppositions: “spiritual vitalism,” meaning that the essence of all life comes from God; “theological actualism,” or recognizing the church must always be reformed in order to remain relevant; and finally,

"biblical solutionism," or the idea that the Bible functions as the owner's' manual and that the solution to any problem will be found there ("Lo que Creemos" Anon n.d.). In short, Casa Sobre la Roca strives for relevance through change (echoing the protestant motto "*ecclesia semper reformada"* often attributed to theologian Karl Barth).

Second, the Church emphasizes that in order to reach the essence of Christianity while remaining flexible to cultural change, it is necessary to build a church around firmly placed bastions of orthodoxy: specifically, the Bible; the three ecumenical creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed); and the first six councils. According to CSR's identity statement, these three elements constitute "what we Christians have believed in every place and in every time everywhere and at all times" ("Lo Que Creemos" Anon n.d.).

Third, CSR's identity contains a specific relational component that guide people's behavior concerning a) other evangelical Christians, b) Catholics and Orthodox Christians, and c) people of other religions. The church has simplified this relational dimension of its beliefs into an easy-to-remember slogan that is repeated continuously throughout classes, sermons, and church documents: "among Christians, unity in variety; with Catholics and Orthodox Christians, coexistence in difference; and with other belief systems, tolerance in the distance" ("Lo Que Creemos" Anon n.d.). How this translates into action become much clearer in chapter 3, which deals the collective identity of the churches in Madrid and Miami.

Fourth, the church's identity is grounded on what it claims is a clear sense of its origin and its future. According to the website, the church must be "classical at its root, contemporary in its action, and avant-garde in its vision." The church warns against the dangers of informal religions, arguing that it is important to remain under the historical umbrella of Christianity. Furthermore, the church emphasize that "today's people need today's solutions" ("Lo Que

Creemos" Anon n.d.). This is the second instance in CSR's list of beliefs that the church emphasizes Christianity as a solution to worldly problems.

The fifth component of the CSR's identity is its emphasis on what they call "the church's roots." First of all, CSR recognizes Evangelical Christianity's Jewish origins, including the fact that they worship "a Jew named Jesus." Secondly, the Church states that there is a "root of grace," directly linking the church to Calvin's ideas that God's grace is the determinant for salvation. Third, the church identifies as a missional church,[16] which the church's website links to European (and, in particular, British) tradition of missions; fourth, a strong connection with Spanish ethnic heritage and a rejection of indigeneity and blackness as being hybrid and syncretic; and finally, the church sees a democratic root in the fact that if humans are equal in the eyes of God, they must be equal in the eyes of the State ("Lo Que Creemos" Anon n.d.).

The final component of Casa Sobre la Roca's identity is its emphasis on what they call "integral Christianity." According to the church's website, an integral church is one that is moderate and in the middle of trends, "equally distant from extreme interpretations." Furthermore, the church states that the ideal approach for the church in modern times is to "contextualize Christianity within a culture, without transculturizing it; That is, preserving its orthodoxy intact, but making it flexible to constant change." Moreover, the church must emphasize actualism: "Today the emphasis must rest on the needs of postmodern man, which differ from those of the twentieth century. The growing boom in thirst for knowledge necessitates a bold leap from the preterite church to the futuristic church" ("Lo Que Creemos" Anon n.d.).

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[16] Chapter four examines this issue in more detail. While the Church claims to be a missional church, I argue that the church in Madrid has taken on an adapted attractional model. Chapter four explains in more detail what the differences are between these two approaches.

Casa Sobre la Roca's approach to evangelical Christianity, which they call "integral Christianity," summarized in the points above, is one that is not only suited for adaptation but built around it. For example, its emphasis on what they call theological actualism highlights the fact that the church recognizes the importance of adaptation and reform as necessary for church survival. Likewise, the fourth component listed in the church's identity statement recognizes that the church must be both contemporary in action and avant-garde in its vision. CSR's idea of integral Christianity (being within culture, as opposed to outside and against it), highlights the churches approach to Christianity that is *in the world* but not of it. In other words, Casa Sobre la Roca's particular interpretation of Christianity recognizes that while Christianity may ultimately be about otherworldly salvation, people encounter worldly problems in their everyday lives: solving these problems and achieving otherworldly salvation are not just compatible, but complimentary or one and the same. To put it simply, CSR mixes modern-day self-improvement with otherworldly eschatology.

In many ways, and perhaps intentionally, CSR's integral Christianity challenges the traditional Weberian typology of religious orientations. Max Weber proposed a typology for religion that distinguished between mystical and ascetic religions, on the one hand, and this-worldly and otherworldly religion, on the other (Weber 1946). Inner-worldly religion aims to improve or affect human life in the present world, while otherworldly, or world-rejecting, religion is oriented towards rewards that will be obtained in another world (i.e. an afterlife). While Casa Sobre la Roca rejects anything that could be classified as mysticism,[17] their approach

[17] Casa Sobre la Roca rejects mysticism as a way to differentiate itself from Catholics and Pentecostals and to highlight the rational, almost intellectual, aspect of Christianity that fits nicely with its class-orientation.

to Christianity sees this-worldly problems and otherworldly salvation as being intricately connected and influenced by each other.

In addition to its mission statement, Casa Sobre la Roca's positions can be best described as moderate, especially when compared to other more conservative (particularly Pentecostal) churches. Unlike many popular Colombian churches that emerged around the same period, CSR has no rules regarding appropriate outfits for congregants to wear during religious services. As one reporter noted in a newspaper article, it is not uncommon to find young women wearing fashionable clothes during worship services (Cabarbas 2005), something many of my interviewees brought up as one of the things they liked about CSR.

Likewise, the church avoids what it labels "legalist" and "prohibitionist" approaches to Christianity. For example, rather than restricting members' diets or prohibiting alcohol the church emphasizes moderation. This approach both highlights the church's modern, urban, and middle-class identity, while also differentiating it from stricter churches. For instance, in a recent article published in the church's *Hechos y Cronicas* magazine, an anonymous author claimed that one of the reasons people have such a negative view of evangelical Christianity is because they assume it consists of a series of prohibitions they do not want to accept. However, as the article explains, "neither Christianity nor Christians should be legalist. The Bible is not legalist." As church founder Dario Silva explains in one of his books, the approach to biblical legalism is the legacy of American Pentecostalism and is most evident in developing countries and marginal communities in large cities (Silva 2000). The extent to which the church uses moderation as a boundary marker between itself and Pentecostal churches will become more apparent in chapter 3.

However, the church is also relatively conservative on issues like marriage and sexuality. For example, the church's website lists of "core beliefs" states "the family, based on monogamous and heterosexual marriage, is an institution established by God, and that its preservation is necessary for the survival of society." Divorce, according to CSR, is only acceptable in two cases: "irremediable" adultery or abandonment of an unbelieving spouse. Traditional family values are also prevalent in the Church's structure. In the "Meet Our Pastors" pages of the CSR churches in Colombia and abroad, the all-male ministers are profiled not as individuals but as couples with their respective wives. Finally, in recent debates about same-sex rights in Colombia, church officials have been very vocal about their church's stance against same-sex relations. In a recent interview with an online publication, church founder Dario Silva told a reporter that "same-sex relations are spiritually unlawful" (Artunduaga 2012). More recently, in a 2016 controversy over bullying at public schools, Senator Viviane Morales, a prominent politician who is also a member of the church, opposed a government anti-bullying campaign because, according to her (and many Evangelical and conservative Catholics), it promoted gender confusion among young kids by teaching them that gender was a social construct, separate from one's biological sex ("La Explosiva Carta de Viviane Morales" 2016).

Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid and Miami

Having provided a brief overview of CSR's history and its core beliefs, I now turn to the two branches that are the main sites for this study. Both Casa Sobre la Roca churches in Miami and Madrid were started with the same objective: to reach out to Colombians living in the South Florida and the Madrid areas respectively. This goal included reaching out to people who might have been members of CSR other evangelical churches before migrating but also focused on attracting new members to join.

Miami

The first Casa Sobre la Roca founded abroad in Miami, and was started in 2001 by Dario Silva's son-in-law, Silvano Espindola. Originally from Argentina, Silvano Espindola had a relatively successful career as a professional soccer player in Colombia. Towards the end of his sports career, Espindola converted to evangelicalism and became an active member of CSR in Bogota, where he met his wife. After serving in various volunteer positions, Espindola became a minister and helped lead different groups at the church, including a Timoteos, a group for teenagers, and the very successful soccer academy "Fair Play." Additionally, Espindola and his wife, who was in charge of running the church's K-12 school, provided couples counseling to church members.

When we sat for an interview in Casa Sobre la Roca church in Boca Raton, about an hour north of Miami, Espindola told me he was recently surprised to hear that his father-in-law was planning to open a church in Miami. "I said 'wow! that is great news; I have some people in mind who would be excellent candidates to run the church, he told us." When Silva told Espindola that he and his wife were the candidates for the job, he was shocked. He thought it was better to have a Colombian, rather than an Argentinean like himself, running the church, especially since the primary goal was to attract Colombians living in South Florida. However, since Espindola was an Argentinean citizen, and his wife had an American passport, they would not have to worry about visa issues. When Silva asked him what his answer was, Espindola recalls telling him "I am going to pray, I am going to fast, and if God tells me to go, I will go."

While the decision to leave Colombia was difficult, Espindola recalls that it was nothing compared to the challenges of arriving and settling in Miami. He told me that one of the first things he remembers upon arriving in Miami was someone telling him that "Miami was the city where young pastors came to die." When I asked him what he meant, he explained that Miami

was a place where many churches failed, and so it had developed a reputation for being a cemetery for young preachers.

Upon arrival, Espindola and his wife contacted a small group of former Casa Sobre la Roca members living in the area. In May of 2001, just a few weeks after their arrival, and mostly through word of mouth, they were able to get about 20 people to attend an informational meeting. Despite having only 20 people, Pastor Espindola recalls how he and his wife were convinced they needed a place big enough for 500 people because they had faith that the church would grow quickly. Through the initial group, they began spreading the word. Additionally, the Casa Sobre la Roca branches throughout Colombia started making announcements, requesting members tell their relatives living in Florida to visit the church.

Figure 1 - Casa Sobre la Roca Miami (Author's photo)

Shortly after, the church rented out the cafeteria of a private Christian school in North Miami, where it held its first service. Attendance at the first service was unusually high; 200 people showed up. The following week, less than half of them showed up, but Espindola and his

wife stayed hopeful and optimistic. Attendance grew, slowly but consistently, after that second week. Within a couple of years, the church had grown so large that parking became an issue just as it had happened with the first church in Bogota. The owners who were renting the school to them threatened to end the lease, and the CSR leadership took this as a signal that it was time to look for a new place.

About three years after the first service, Casa Sobre la Roca acquired the building that would become its permanent home. The church found a property just a few blocks east of the Miami Lakes area, in Hialeah, a neighborhood with a relatively low residential population and mostly warehouses and commercial buildings. The large building had once operated as a television studio and production warehouse. Its multiple large rooms could be easily divided and rearranged depending on the occasion. When I began doing my fieldwork, the church had turned the largest studio room into the church's main nave, where three Sunday services were held every week. A second room was occasionally used as a dining room or event space for special occasions. Some of the administrative offices had been turned into classrooms and a day-care room. Another was undergoing renovations to be used as a recreational facility.

The area is home to a large and diverse number of churches. According to data from the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA), there are 48 religious congregations within a mile of Casa Sobre la Roca. Of the congregations listed in the data set, 24 are identified as lacking a religious affiliation or as non-denominational. The list also includes several Pentecostal and Assemblies of God churches, eight Baptist churches (including Southern Baptists and Baptists Other), and one Catholic Church. The building's location - north of the city but centrally located near suburbs like Miami Gardens, Miami Lakes, and Hialeah - and its accessibility from the Palmetto Highway, made it the perfect place to have a church catering to

Colombians living in the Miami and Fort Lauderdale area. Furthermore, the building had ample parking space attached to it (enough for at least 50 cars within the premises). Moreover, on Sundays, people could park on the grass just outside the church, with little risk of having their cars towed or disrupting the neighbors.

Although the building looked like most of its neighboring warehouses from afar, a 40 foot tall cross made out of steel rods and a large Christian flag (a white flag with a red cross inside a blue canton) flying under an American flag let everyone who drove by knew that this is no ordinary warehouse, but rather, a church.

Compared to other churches in South Florida there was little that set Casa Sobre la Roca apart from other churches. From the outside, there was nothing that hinted that it was a Colombian church. On my daily drives to the church, which took anywhere between 25 and 40 minutes depending on traffic and the route I chose, I would count dozens of churches and sites of worship – most of them catering to Latin American and Caribbean immigrants.

Madrid

Unlike its counterpart in Miami, there is nothing on the outside of Casa Sobre la Roca Madrid to let people know that this is an Evangelical church. The first time I visited the church, when I was trying to get access for my fieldwork, I was convinced I had the wrong address. The church is located in the middle-class neighborhood of La Colina, a neighborhood in the northeast district of Madrid known as "Ciudad Lineal" or linear city. Developed in the late 19th century by Spanish urbanist Arturo Soria y Mata, Ciudad Lineal was originally conceived as a residential community where families lived in single-family homes with spacious gardens,[18] thus fulfilling

[18] Arturo Soria's vision for Ciudad Lineal is best described by his saying "For each family, a house; in each house, a garden and an orchard." See: https://www.madridiario.es/noticia/200776/distritos/ciudad-lineal-el-sueno-urbano-de-arturo-soria.html

Soria y Mata's vision of bringing the rural to the urban environment. Although many of the original homes had been replaced by newer and taller multi-unit apartment buildings, a few single-family homes remained, including the one Casa Sobre la Roca had turned into a church.

While there are no available data on congregations in the area, I have been able to identify several religious organizations and congregations within a one-mile radius of Casa Sobre la Roca Miami. According to my research, there are 10 Churches within a 1-mile radius (Not counting CSR). Of these 10 churches, four are Catholic, one is Russian Orthodox, two are Baptist (including one founded by American military personnel), and two are non-denominational. Additionally, there is a Catholic convent that is right next door to Casa Sobre la Roca.

Figure 2 - Casa Sobre la Roca Madrid (Source: Google Maps)

The property was separated from the sidewalk by a 10-foot wall and fence, with a door for pedestrians and a gate for cars, both of which were closed when I arrived there. In addition to not having any signs, the relatively large space between the house inside and the wall meant that the

music coming out of the church could barely be heard. On my first visit, I stood outside confused for a minute or two – checking my phone to make sure I had the correct address. Then a family of three walked past me and opened the door. With the door open, I was able to peek inside and saw a white and blue banner by the house's front door. Had it not been for that banner, I would not have known at was at the right place.

Like the church in Miami, Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid was founded with the purpose of serving the Colombian community. However, it was Colombians living in Madrid who approached the church's headquarters in Bogota and asked if they could open a church. Andres Peñaloza and his family moved to Madrid in the mid-2000s, when Colombian migration to Spain had reached its peak. Peñaloza had been working in the legal department of a large multinational company. In the mid-2000s he was offered an opportunity to move to Madrid. He and his family had been attending Casa Sobre la Roca in Bogota for a few years before moving.

Like many other Colombian Evangelicals who moved during this period, upon arrival, they looked for an Evangelical church where they could congregate. Some of the churches they found were immigrant churches, with large numbers of Colombians, Ecuadorians, and other Latin Americans. Others were mostly for Spaniards. Eventually, he decided to stay at a church that was predominantly Spanish, although he found a small group of Colombians he became close friends with.

While Peñaloza was in Bogota for a work trip, he visited his old congregation and talked to a few church members who told him about church members and relatives who were looking for a place to congregate in Madrid. After discussing this issue with Dario Silva, and upon his return to Madrid, Peñaloza got together with another Colombian couple from Casa Sobre la Roca. Together they decided to organize a prayer and Bible study group. They invited a few people,

mostly through contacts in Colombia and through their Colombian friends in Madrid. For the first meeting they organized, they invited about twenty people. No one showed up. Still, they tried again the following week, and about ten people showed up. "And like that," Peñaloza tells me, "a month later we had a couple of dozen people, but we could not call ourselves a church because I was not ordained."

Both Peñaloza and his wife had been active members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Bogota. They had gone through all the available Bible study classes (four semesters). As a couple, they had also provided couples counseling to other church members, and Peñaloza had used his background as a lawyer to volunteer with the church's group of young executives and entrepreneurs. However, as he reminded me, he was not an ordained minister. Dario Silva advised the group to abstain from meeting on Sundays to avoid any confusion and to make sure people kept going to the churches they belonged to at the time. Furthermore, while he supported Peñaloza and his efforts to grow a community, he continually told Peñaloza to keep his day job, since the church in Colombia could not afford to pay him a pastor's salary. A few months after the meetings began, Dario Silva visited Madrid on vacation. The group rented some meeting space in a hotel to hold a religious service. After seeing the group, Silva was convinced that it was a good idea to start a church in Madrid and that Andres Peñaloza was the right person to do it. Peñaloza traveled to Bogota in early 2009 and became an ordained minister.

For the first couple of months, Casa Sobre la Roca held its Sunday services at a hotel on the northside of the city, where they rented a medium-size conference room. Within a year, the group contacted the church headquarters in Colombia and asked for support in renting their own space. Their objective was to have something that could be used throughout the week and that would allow the group to have more than one room, especially to accommodate childcare. After

looking around the city and its surrounding suburbs, they settled for the residential home that (as of this writing) continues to house the church. The building's large yard and enough space for four or five parked cars provided plenty of space for kids to play and the church to host community meals and other events. Inside the house, the walls separating the living room from the dining room and kitchen had been removed, turning most of the first floor into a worship space. Upstairs the bedrooms had been converted into administrative offices and a counseling space. The church had signed a multi-year lease and was paying around €3,000 (around $4,000 USD when I was doing fieldwork) a month for rent.

When I asked the pastor why they had chosen that particular house, especially considering that for the same amount of money they could have rented a larger space in the suburbs, he explained that they wanted to maintain the church's identity. "We have always wanted to reach out to everybody, but especially the middle and upper middle class, so we wanted to avoid renting a warehouse and becoming like those other churches you see in industrial buildings on the outskirts of the city." At the time of the interview, I did not think much about his answers. From the preliminary research I had done before going to Madrid, I had learned that a lot of immigrant churches preferred to be located in the industrial parks in the suburbs, where they could rent large spaces that could accommodate large crowds. A few months later, when I arrived in Miami, I realized pastor Peñaloza was describing exactly the kind of church that Casa Sobre la Roca had built in Miami.

In addition to being in a smaller, more "middle class looking" building, the location Casa Sobre la Roca had selected for its church in Madrid was conveniently located just half a block away from a metro stop, and near a major street intersection with bus stops served by several bus lines. This meant that the church was easily accessible for anyone living within Madrid's metro

area. For me, it meant that the church was a quick 30-minute metro ride from the center of the city. I quickly learned that most people traveled to and from the church by public transportation, as opposed to Miami, where most people drove. Quite surprisingly, it meant that on most Sundays people socialize on the trains and buses to and from the church. It also meant that, unlike in Bogotá and Miami, parking was never a big issue for the church or the neighbors.

Although the church in Madrid had grown substantially since opening in 2008, it had yet to reach the same membership numbers as the church in Miami. When I began doing my fieldwork in Madrid, the church had a membership of about 320 people (according to Pastor Peñaloza). Of these, some 220 were regulars, attending weekly service and occasionally participating in other events. The remaining members attended less frequently, but according to the pastor, this was due to scheduling and travel more than anything else. Additionally, on any given Sunday, the church would have anywhere between 10 and 30 people who were either new or who came and participated in church activities irregularly. When I last spoke with the pastor, he told me that the church was deciding between looking for a bigger space, as they had outgrown the house, or simply holding an extra service on Sundays to accommodate the growing crowd.

Like Miami, Madrid also felt like a city with a large concentration of churches. Unlike Miami, however, most of the churches in Madrid were Catholic. While Evangelical Churches (including Colombian churches) have grown in popularity, Madrid is nowhere as religiously diverse as Miami, and Evangelical churches tend to be located on the outskirts of the city – in the industrial parks that pastor Peñaloza was trying to avoid. Furthermore, displays of religion in each city vary significantly. In Miami it was not uncommon to see people standing in corners with signs or megaphones, preaching religious messages. In the seven months I lived in Madrid, I only saw one group of people publicly do something like this, and it was a group of Ecuadorian

and Central American migrants outside of the immigration offices who were handing out "God Loves You" cards.

In many ways, the churches of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami and Madrid have a lot in common. Most of their members come from the same regions of Colombia, have similar educational backgrounds, and migrated for many of the same reasons. They both belong the same international organization. They use a lot of the same educational materials, and many of their ministries overlap. Furthermore, it can be said that the churches operate in what Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004a) call a transnational field, linked to each other and other Casa Sobre la Roca churches in Colombia, the United States (Boca Raton and Orlando), and (more recently) Panama.

At the same time, the churches are not carbon copies of each other. As illustrated above, the churches have grown in significantly different ways, not only when it comes to their facilities. Table 2 highlights some of the differences between the two churches in terms of size, membership composition, and location. The information in the table comes from my own observation. Actual membership data from either church was not available during the time I was doing my research. It is important to note that variation in Madrid was more noticeable because of the size of the church (e.g. larger number of single adults 45+).

In the following pages, I turn my attention to what I call constrained adaptive action: the collective process in which Colombian immigrants take their religion and make it meaningful, relevant, and practical to their daily lives. As I argue throughout the following pages, each community has developed and adapted over time and in response to the challenges they face in their particular context.

Table 2

	Miami	**Madrid**
Size	~600*	~350
% Colombian	80-90%	>95%
Other nationalities	Argentina, Honduras, Venezuela	Ecuador, and (very occasionally) Dominican Republic
Origin in Colombia	Bogotá, Cali, Medellin, Coffee Region and Northern Coast of Colombia	Bogota, Coffee Belt region, Cali
Family composition	Primarily families, including a large number of families with kids	Mix of families and single/divorced older adults
Other differences	Large 18-25 group, reflect by vitality of EPIC (young adults and students) group	Small, almost no 18-25 people. Few people in this group volunteered in other church groups. No EPIC group during my fieldwork
Location	Industrial building in suburban area	Residential building in residential neighborhood

Migration, Religious Adaptation, and Religious Change

The story of Casa Sobre la Roca is ultimately a story about religious adaptation. What are the factors driving this adaptation? While the market approach to religious change dominated much of the research on religious change in the second half of the 20th century, two approaches have emerged in the past two decades that are better suited for answering this question. After providing a brief overview of the religious market approach and its shortcomings, I highlight how neo-institutionalism theory and lived religion, in combination with a transnational focus, provide a useful framework for understanding religious change and adaptation.

Following the demise of secularization theory in predicting the fate of religion in modern society (Stark 1999), many scholars began applying economic principles to the study of religion, commonly referred to as the "religious marketplace" or "religious economies". According to this

approach, religious economies function just like other commercial economies: "they consist of a market and a set of firms seeking to serve that market" (Finke and Stark 1998a). Like in other market economies, the religious market approach rests on the assumption that competition drives innovation, as it results in more efficient and energetic firms (Finke and Stark 1998). Deregulation of the religious market will lead to more pluralistic markets (i.e., more firms), which will increase competition and thus result in more energetic firms. The religious economy approach has received substantial criticism (Chaves and Gorski 2001). Specifically, scholars have pointed out that market approaches fail to account for the social embeddedness of religious behavior and the relationship between culture and rationality (Edgell 2012). More importantly for this study, market approaches are narrow in their focus on religious identification and church attendance as measures of religious vitality and proxies for religious change.

A second explanation for religious change stems from scholars applying neo-institutionalist theory to studies of religious organizations (Wilde et al. 2010). Neo-institutionalism pays particular attention to the institutionalized (i.e. taken-for-granted) aspects of organizational behavior and the way organizational processes and choices are shaped by an organization's environment (DiMaggio 1992). In contrast to the religious economies approach, and following Bourdieu, NIT sees religious organizations operating within a field (Edgell 2012) rather than a market. Furthermore, rather than competing for resources and customers, NIT sees organizations competing for political power and institutional legitimacy (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Sociologists of religion have used neo-institutional theory to explore a variety of issues, including the religious isomorphism observed in immigrant religious congregations as described earlier in this chapter (Warner 1993), explaining different congregational models and their

effects on civil engagement and social activism (Edgell Becker 1999) and explaining the role of national differences in predicting religious elites' decisions (Wilde et al. 2010).

While NIT might provide a way to move forward in studies of religion, there are at least three limitations of this approach when thinking about immigration and religion from a transnational perspective. First and foremost, the NIT approach to religion tends to focus on organizations (Chaves 2009; Edgell Becker 1999) or religious elites (Wilde et al. 2010). While both organizations and religious elites might be easier to categorize within relatively well-defined organizational fields, the same cannot be said of practitioners. Religious organizations might provide secondary services and interact with other organizations in different fields, but they are first and foremost religious organizations (at least when speaking about Christian congregations). Beyond a small number of religious professionals, most religious actors live religious lives that extend beyond the boundaries of religious organizational fields. Individuals do not 'check' their religion when they exit the church's door. Religion is both influenced by and influences what happens outside of the congregation.

Second, religious organizations in general, and immigrant congregations in particular, can operate at the intersection of more than one organizational field. While immigrant churches are first and foremost religious organizations (and thus operate in a religious field), immigrant congregations also operate as minority/ethnic organizations, non-profits, civic and political organizations, and even health centers.[19] To understand different levels of civic and political engagement among immigrant congregations in two countries, one must not only examine the way the religious field is organized, but also the way it overlaps with and blurs with other social fields.

[19] Many Evangelical churches, Casa Sobre la Roca included, operate as hybrid "wellness" organizations (Lee 2005), mixing self-help with religion.

Third, as immigrant organizations with ties to a home country, many religious communities and their members operate transnationally, occupying what Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004) call a "transnational social field." To give a very simple example, this means that a Colombian congregation in Miami is influenced by and must balance the demands and constraints of the organizational religious field in both the United States and Colombia.

By taking cues from the emerging approach known as "lived religion," my goal is to overcome some of these shortcomings. Lived religion emerged out of an interdisciplinary group of scholars from social sciences and humanities hosted by Harvard's Divinity School in the mid-1990s (Furey 2012). This approach, which emphasizes religious practices as being inseparable from everyday life, provides complementary information about how immigrants practice religion and the extent to which these practices are different from institutionally accepted forms of religion (Hall 1997; Hayes 2011; Orsi 2010). The lived religion approach focuses on religious practices and experiences of individuals beyond institutionalized settings (Edgell 2012). While recognizing that the congregation is *the* primary place where people learn about and practice religion, my approach is attentive to the fact that religious communities and individuals inhabit multiple (and often transnational) social fields. Furthermore, by focusing on what average people and not just elites do, I can examine how religious narratives, identities, and practices are shaped by the experiences of everyday people.

In This Country but Not of It

The central claim of this dissertation is that religious practices change as a response to the specific challenges immigrants face in their daily life. The experiences of members of Casa Sobre la Roca are shaped by their experiences of outsiderness on two different levels: as Evangelicals, and as immigrants.

First, as Evangelical Christians, members of Casa Sobre la Roca must negotiate being *in the world but not of it*. Like other Christians, members of Casa Sobre la Roca learn that the world is flawed and imperfect, but rather than withdrawing and becoming ascetics; they live "in the world" as stated in their identity statement. As mentioned earlier, members of Casa Sobre la Roca practice a Christianity that is both inner-worldly and otherworldly, emphasizing a Christianity that sees this-worldly problems and otherworldly salvation as being tightly intertwined. Rather than solely focus on otherworldly salvation, Casa Sobre la Roca promotes a Christianity that solves people's everyday problems – employment, marriage, and immigration status. In taking care of their everyday, this-worldly problems, members of Casa Sobre la Roca are also working on their ultimately, otherworldly concern: salvation. What this looks like in practice will become clearer in later chapters. This *"in the world but not of it*" dimension of outsiderness is exacerbated by the fact that Colombian evangelicals identify as part of a larger religious subculture (the worldwide Evangelical community). The experience of being an Evangelical Christian in the United States is different from what it is like to be an Evangelical Christian in Spain for both normative and regulative reasons.

Second, as Colombian immigrants living in the United States and Spain, members of Casa Sobre la Roca experience life as outsiders in two different cities, each within a different country. At the local level, the experience of migrants is influenced by cultural and demographic factors of each city (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, and Waters 2002, 2004). At the national level, immigrants' experiences are shaped by each country's national narratives (Korteweg and Yurdakul 2014), citizenship models (Koopmans 2005), and philosophies of integration (Favell 2016).

Combined, these sets of factors make the United States a very different context of reception from Spain. The United States is seen as a country of immigrants that embraces religious

freedom and pluralism, where religion participation and identification are seen as not just acceptable but also desirable forms of participation in American society. Since the publication of Will Herberg's (1955) *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, multiple scholars have provided supporting (although at times modified) evidence for the claim that religious participation and religious identity go hand in hand for many immigrants in the United States. As Khayati Joshi has said very succinctly, "religiosity – in addition to its role in cultural maintenance and perpetuation – is central to the formation of an American identity" (2006:15).

In Spain, on the other hand, immigration is a more much recent phenomenon, and up until 2001, Colombians did not need a visa to travel Spain. Furthermore, many Colombians benefited from laws that privileged descendants of Spanish citizens and family reunification (Valiente 2003). However, Spanish society has a different relationship with public displays of religion than the United States. Following the Spanish Civil war in 1939, "all vestiges of the separation of [the Catholic] Church and State were wiped out" (Edles 1998). For the first two decades of his post-civil war rule, General Francisco Franco enjoyed the support of the church. Besides declaring Catholicism the official state religion, "Protestants lost their right to hold office, worship publicly, and to proselytize" (Edles 1998:110). Following the end of Franco's regime in the late 1970s, and with a new Spanish constitution in 1978 that once again separated church and government (Fox 2008), Spanish society has become less accepting of public displays of religion, and individual religion has become highly privatized. Spain's recent transition from a migrant sending to a migrant-receiving country and its complicated history with religion make Madrid an entirely different context of reception from Miami.

Finally, as Colombians living outside their country and congregating in a Colombian church and thus remaining somewhat connected to Cola Roca inhabit a transnational field (Levitt and

Schiller 2004). Colombian Evangelicals living in Madrid and Miami are connected to their families, their friends, and their communities through a variety of networks, including the Church. The church where they congregate is also connected to a larger international organization. As such, their practices are best understood as being simultaneously embedded within more than one context.

Chapter Roadmap

The following chapters explore how members of Casa Sobre la Roca experience of being in a country but not of it differ in the United States and Spain. I begin my analysis by looking at the religious language people utilize to make sense of their experiences. Following historian Timothy Smith (1978), I argue that migration is a *theologizing* experience, putting people in unique situations and forcing them to make sense of them. While some of the challenges and situations Colombian migrants face are the same in both settings, I argue that in some events, such as in the economic crisis of 2008, previously held narratives might be challenged or no longer provide satisfactory explanations for people's experiences. In such cases, further theologization is required, as people find themselves in needs of new vocabularies of motive (Mills 1940) to justify their decisions and make sense of their situation.

In the following chapter, I begin looking at how collective identity is simultaneously shaped by local and transnational factors. As people move, they often must have to re-imagine their communities and their relationship vis-a-vis their host societies. I show that, while some boundaries shift depending on specific elements of the new organizational field in which immigrant religious life takes place, collective life at Casa Sobre la Roca is still heavily influenced and constrained social dynamics in the country of origin. I extend my analysis beyond

group boundaries to examine how context shapes the group bonds that each group utilizes, by paying particular attention to the expressive dimension of group culture at each church.

In the final chapter, I examine how each group translates its collective identity, considered in the previous section, into collective action. I focus on the different practices of evangelism used by Casa Sobre la Roca in each city. I highlight how, over time, each church has developed its own unique evangelism repertoire, with different ideas about where, how, and whom to evangelize.

What I present here is a story of a religious community responding, as best as possible, to the challenges of being an immigrant in two different settings. However, while my attention is more focused on highlighting differences, it is important to emphasize that, as Evangelical Christians and as members of Casa Sobre la Roca, these two groups have a great deal in common.

Furthermore, religious (and cultural change) doesn't always happen radically. In this case, it is gradual, slow, and incremental. What I present here is a model for religious adaptation. While scriptures or religious dogma might never change (in theory), the way people interpret them does.

Casa Sobre la Roca's churches (and I would argue that other non-denominational churches are the same) are particularly well suited to adapt to these kinds of challenges. Their relatively flat and flexible structure, their rejection of rituals and religiousness (even if just rhetorically), and their ability to "mix and match" to form scripture makes them particularly flexible and malleable in the sense that they can adapt easily to new challenges and improvise.

Chapter 2 - Revisiting Migration as Theologizing

This chapter focuses on the religious meaning that people ascribe to their migratory histories. Following historian Timothy Smith, I argue that people rely on religion to make sense of their experiences, past and present, and also to guide their future. I show how Colombian Evangelicals in Madrid and Miami interpret their migration histories and experiences using similar language. I also observe how Colombian evangelicals in Madrid rely on a different narratives and interpretations to justify their decision for staying in Spain after the 2008 crisis. I argue that in cases Colombian Evangelicals engage in theologizing by re-interpreting religious stories and messages and making them coherent and relevant with their own personal and social reality.

Keywords: theologizing, cognitive adaptation, religious motivation.

"I made the decision to come to the United States to deal with the lack of economic stability for me and my family, because Colombia was going through a tough time, not just financially, but socially, too," Rafael tells me. Like most Colombians who moved to the United States and Spain between 1990 and 2007, Rafael's migratory experience was influenced by the economic and social situation of Colombia.

When he first moved to the US, Rafael didn't think much about his legal status, overstaying the six months his tourist visa allowed After the terrorist attacks of September 11, Rafael became more concerned about his and his family's legal status and applied for political asylum.[20] Although he doesn't discuss his grounds for claiming asylum, he tells me he always had a legitimate claim, but until September 11 he hadn't thought about applying because it was simply easier to be in the US illegally. After their first request had been denied for what he described slight mistake on his part, Rafael and his family decided to appeal. The process took about a year and a half, and included interviewing with immigration judges, paying fees to lawyers, and finding documents from his old job back in Bogota. "It was a very complicated time, we spent a lot of money on lawyers," Rafael tells me. But then, as he explains how the whole issue was solved, he tells me that "Well, God had a plan, and *he* made it happen, *he* made it so that my family and I would get the asylum in 2003."

Like most Colombians living in the United States and Spain, Rafael and his family decision to migrate were influenced by the social, economic, and political turmoil of Colombia in the 1990s and early 2000s. Furthermore, like many other Colombians living in Miami and the United States, Rafael and his family applied for political asylum to normalize their legal situation in the

[20] Aranda and colleagues (Aranda, Hughes, and Sabogal 2014) point out that many of the Colombians they interviewed in their Miami-based study also applied for, and were granted asylum. According to the RAD Diaspora Profile from the Migration Policy Institute (2014), however, most Colombians become permanent residents through an immediate relative.

United States. Rafael acknowledged the social and political conditions that led to his migration and the relatively privileged position and ability to hire lawyers, and yet Rafael used religious language to make sense of his family's experience.

Like Rafael, all of the people in this study made sense of their migratory experience using religious references. To understand this pattern, I argue that people use their religious imagination to make sense of their personal histories. Throughout my research, I noted how people use religious language, stories, and frameworks to make sense and give meaning to their past, present, and future situation as migrants. While the practice of framing personal experience through the religious imagination was constant among migrants I spoke to, my data shows significant variations by city in the kinds of stories that people tell.

In the following pages, I explore the reciprocal process by which people use religion to make sense of their lives and conversely examine how they rely on their personal histories to make their religious stories available to them as meaningful. Borrowing from historian Timothy Smith, I conceptualize this meaning-making process as *theologizing*. Moving away from previous understandings of theologizing that rely on religious identification and religious attendance, I focus on theologizing as a bi-directional process of sense-making. Furthermore, I argue that the process of theologizing is an important component in the process of religious adaptation, as people reinterpret the religious narratives vis-à-vis their life experiences and vice versa.

Migration as Theologizing

In one of the most cited articles on religion and immigration, Smith (1978) argues that the experience of migration to America was often a *theologizing* experience. Smith compared the experiences of European immigrants coming to the United States to when "Abraham left the land of his fathers, or when the people of the Exodus followed Moses into the wilderness, and when

Jeremiah urged the exiles who wept by the rivers of Babylon to make the God of their past the hope of their future" (Smith 1978: 1175).

Smith argued that migration often resulted in theological reflection, a longing to make sense of people's decision to migrate and their experience of uprooting. Far away from the religious life that they were accustomed to their home countries and from the religious symbols they were most familiar with, migrants still looked for religious explanations to make sense of the "mysteries of individual existence as well as the confusing agonies of anomie." (Smith 1978: 1175). Echoing Durkheim's ideas about anomie, Smith argues that migration creates perceived normlessness. However, whereas Durkheim argued that religion's role in providing (and power to provide) moral order was declining with modernity, Smith saw religious communities as being primordial sources of moral order.

Sociologists have interpreted Smith's theologizing argument in a variety of ways. Many have argued that *theologizing* refers to an increase in religious attendance and participation, which is not surprising giving the fact that Smith claimed theologizing was the opposite of secularizing (Smith 1978:1182). Raymond Williams (1988), for example, argued that immigrants became more religious after migration. He claimed that in the United States "religion is one of the important identity markers that helps them preserve individual self-awareness and cohesion in a group" (1988:29). Like Williams, migration scholars Doug Massey and Monica Espinoza Higgins (2011) interpret Smith's thesis to mean that migration will increase religious participation. Using quantitative data, they find that migration is alienating and disruptive, and it results in a lower rate of religious participation for most people. Although their analysis does not support their theologizing hypothesis, the formulation of the research question reflects how theologizing is often understood as a spike in religiosity, and measured by looking at religious

participation and attendance. Work by Wuthnow and Christiano (1979) and Finke and Stark (1992) supports the alienation thesis, showing that migration disrupts people's lives and that it results in lower levels of religious participation.[21]

According to this interpretation, migration is either theologizing and leads to higher rates of religious participation, or it disrupts people's' lives and alienates them, but it cannot be both. However, qualitative studies of immigrant religion have argued that migration is theologizing precisely because it is alienating (Bramadat 2011; Chen and Jeung 2012; George 2005; Hagan 2012). For Bramadat (2011), for example, migration represents a rupturing experience from tradition, family, and other familiar contexts, forcing people to re-imagine not just their national identities but also their religious ones. Likewise, Chen (2006) argues that the experience of migrating disrupts existing networks, forcing people to imagine new communities and ways of belonging. As R. Stephen Warner (2000) points out, migration promotes people to reflect and ask the question "Why are we here?" These qualitative studies align with Smith's (1978) argument that religion is a refuge from anomie.

My specific approach follows these qualitative approaches that see migration as both theologizing and alienating. By relying religious language and ideas to make sense of their experiences (whether these are migratory or not), theologizing is one way in which people answer the question "Why are we here?" Theologizing is then a particular kind of meaning making that highlights both the creative capacity of human actors and the flexibility and adaptability of religious ideas.

[21] Whether or not migrating results in increased or decreased levels of religious attendance or religious switching is not relevant in this chapter, but for studies that deal with that subject see Massey and Espinoza (2011), and Connor (2012a).

From this particular perspective, theologizing is akin to the broader set of processes of frame alignments (Snow et al. 1986) often used in the social movements literature. Building on Ervin Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974), Snow and colleagues argue that in order for people to participate in Social Movement organizations, individual interests, values, and beliefs must be somewhat congruent and complementary with an organization's activities, goals, and ideologies. Rather than a priori assuming that this congruence must exist, Snow and colleagues have shown how organizations regularly engage in one of four forms of frame alignments. Following McRoberts' (2005) use of the social movements and frame alignments language, I see theologizing as ongoing hermeneutical work done by churches and members to make religious narratives and ideas speak directly to the lives of congregants.

Additionally, in studying how regular people engage in this meaning making exercise, I also draw from the "lived religion" approach, introduced in the previous chapter. As Robert Orsi (1997) explains, doing "lived religion" means scholars must take an empirical approach to religion, one that understands and examines religion as it is connected to human action. Likewise, Kelly Hayes points out, doing lived religion enables scholars to "shift out attention away from religion as a set of more or less institutionalized discourses and practices that exist apart from individuals, to the myriad ways individuals employ these discourses" (2011:27) in their daily lives. Furthermore, as Richard Callahan proposes, taking a lived religion approach requires one to look for religion beyond institutionalized settings and "seek out the way that people have made religious sense of their worlds" (2008:4).

Inspired by the lived religion approach, this chapter follows Orsi's invitation to scholars of religion to pay attention to the "creativity and improvisational power of theology as a component of everyday life," what he calls "the practice of *theologizing* in determinate circumstances"

(1997:9).[22] Orsi tells us, religion is "shaped and experienced in the interplay among venues of everyday experience […], in the necessary and mutually transforming exchanges between religious authorities and the border communities of practitioners, by real men and women in situations and relationships they have made and that have made them"(1997:9).

This particular interpretation of theologizing is also influenced by Marla Frederick's (2003) work on African American women's spirituality. By focusing on spirituality, Frederick highlights the creative agency of individuals, specifically pointing out how spirituality is connected to the political and economic realities of the people she studies. Highlighting creative agency rather than handed down doctrines, allows one to understand how people ascribe religious meaning to their lived experiences. Following the lived religion approach, my goal is to understand how religion is connected to migrants' everyday experiences. In particular, I am interested in understanding the dialectical process by which people attach religious meaning to their experiences as migrants while also using these experiences to make sense of the religious stories available to them.

I prioritize what people tell me about their experiences and how they interpret religion, without focusing on whether or not it is coherent with what might be considered Christian or might be condoned by each person's respective church. These religious meanings,[23] at times contradictory, highlight the multiplicity of ways in which people use religion to make sense of the situations in which they find themselves on a daily basis. At the same time, these meanings also help people develop a religious imagination, not unlike C. Wright Mills' concept of the

[22] Orsi's use and italicizing of the term theologizing is revealing. Part of what scholars following the lived religion approach try to do is not just challenge the idea that theology belongs to the elite or the popular, but also to challenge that duality altogether (while still recognizing the power differentials that exist in religion).

[23] Religious meaning is only part of the equation or only one side of the story. Religion isn't just about making sense or dealing with the reality that people find themselves in. It is also about action and about changing that reality. Evangelical Christianity provides multiple frames for people, including a diagnosis, a prognosis, and a rationale for action (Polletta 1998:139). But evangelical Christianity also provides a technology of the self.

sociological imagination. Rather than coming up with a causal argument of how religion influences people's migrations experiences, my emphasis here is on what C. Wright Mills calls the "vocabulary of motives" (1940). In line with Mills, I treat these vocabularies of motives as social phenomena to be explained.

Furthermore, following the lived religion approach, I see theologizing as independent and, at times, in contrast to religious doctrine. As I see it, doctrine is both systematized and somewhat static. Furthermore, doctrine tends to be produced by religious elites (i.e. theologians) and tends to flow from the top down: it is passed along from them in the forms of sermons, classes, and other activities. Although the people in power at the churches that I studied play a crucial role in the process of theologizing, these theological explanations are not simply handed down to people from religious authority, such as a pastor or priest. While doctrine places constraints on how communities and people theologize, it does not entirely determine how people use religion to interpret their experiences. Theolozing is one form of religious adaptations that is constrained by doctrine, among other things.

As more and more research shows, people possess a significant degree of autonomy in the interpretation and personalization of the religious stories they are exposed to (Bramadat 2011; Frederick 2003). However, these interpretations and personalizations are also social in nature; they are not the result of isolated Bible reading. The people I study come to these interpretations collectively, in both religious and non-religious spaces. They did this in obvious ways, such as listening to sermons and reading the Bible, as well as less expected ways, such as discussing religion in the metro; listening, sharing, and discussing podcasts and sermons from other churches; getting together to have dinner and talk about what they liked and didn't like about a sermon.

Understanding theologizing as a process contributes to our understanding of international migrations patterns and flows and furthers our knowledge about the role of religion and religious institutions in the experiences of migrants and their process of adaptation and incorporation into their host society. For the most part, theories of the push and pull factors of international migration continue to ignore the cultural context of migration and privilege structural explanations (for a review of these theories, see Massey et al. 1993). A handful of studies examine the role of religion by trying to understand how religious affiliation might influence the likelihood someone migrating or not, usually attributing the effect of religion to networks or chain-migration (Connor 2012b, 2014). However, as Ebaugh and Hagan (2003) have shown, migrants rely on religious institutions and narratives throughout the migratory process.

Following Ebaugh and Hagan (2003), I show how Colombian migrants use religion to deal with issues like uncertainty, separation, and loneliness. Furthermore, as I argue later in the dissertation that understanding how religion influences people's interpretations of their migratory experiences can help us better understand how immigrants interact with both their host society and with their home countries.

My interpretation of theologizing is, to a certain extent, analogous to Mooney's (2009) idea of cultural mediation. For Mooney, religion organizations provide mediation through beliefs and rituals, helping immigrants cope with the struggles of being an immigrant. Like Mooney, I argue that participating in religious lives provides immigrants with an opportunity for meaning-making. They do this while listening to sermons or collectively singing before a worship service, in organized prayer groups, or while they eat at a picnic organized by the church. Colombian

Evangelicals, like other Evangelicals, engage in a dual interpretive exercise:[24] They make sense of the Bible (and God) while making sense of their lives. In doing this, they also form a sense of belonging to a moral community that extends beyond their local church and includes not just other Colombian Evangelicals who might be congregating in different cities,[25] but also the worldwide Evangelical community. How these communities are formed is the subject of the following chapter.

Unlike Mooney, however, I find that context does play a role in shaping how the theologizing happens. I attribute this variation to two factors. First, as I explained in the introduction, the Evangelical church I studied do not have the same hierarchical structure as the Catholic Church; it is allowed certain level of flexibility in the way it does and says things. Second, and perhaps more importantly, while the scripture is being interpreted is the same manner (although the churches to use slightly different translations of the Bible), migrant community members understand their experiences in significantly different ways. This is particularly evident when people in Madrid explain why they decided to stay in Spain rather than return to Colombia or migrate somewhere else. Since theologizing functions as a feedback loop (making sense of scripture to make sense of one's life and making sense of one's life to make sense of scripture), the result is different.

In the following section, I highlight some of the most common narratives that people used in Madrid and Miami. I highlight how some of these narratives are consistent across cities, and how in some instances there is significant variation between the two cities. I find that Colombian Evangelicals tend to rely on relatively similar narratives when making sense of their decisions to

[24] I think this is similar to Giddens' (1987) double hermeneutic. Although Giddens wrote about social science, but the same could be said about theology.

migrate and their early experiences in each city. However, when discussing the possibility of migrating somewhere else or returning to Colombia, there is a shift in the kind of stories people use. Two particular narratives emerged in my interviews and fieldwork: one is a reference to an Old Testament story of Joseph's interpretation of the Pharaoh's dream. The second is a reference to the Epistle to Romans, where Paul talks about visiting and evangelizing Spain on his way to Rome.

Theologizing the Decision to Migrate

Mauricio, an IT professional from Bogota in his mid 30s, was always one of the first people I saw when I entered the church in Madrid. We bonded quickly after I started doing my fieldwork as people in the church joked that we looked like twins. We were about the same height and weight, and most importantly, we were both bald and shaved our heads. Like all of the people I interviewed in Madrid and Miami, Mauricio interpreted his migration story, including his decision to migrate, using religious language. When he was in his early 30s, he was still living with his mother in Bogota. Although he had studied systems engineering and had an impressive list of qualifications, Mauricio had failed to find full-time employment and instead worked as a freelancer. He felt stuck and frustrated. Once when he was praying, he asked God for help. When he retells the story he is very clear in telling me he wasn't just asking for a better job; "I was asking for very specific things," he says. His requests were so specific that he felt like he "asking for a bunch of crazy things." Not only did he ask for a better job that would allow him to move out, but he also asked for a generous vacation package, a meal allowance paid for by his employer, and, of course, health benefits.

Within a few weeks, a colleague told him that there was a large consulting firm looking for people with his background and skills. Mauricio thought this was the answer to his prayers: a

large company that would not just hire him full time but also provide all the benefits and perks he had been asking for in his prayers. Mauricio applied for the job and eventually got an offer. The only problem was that the job was in Madrid, not Bogota. As ready as he was to move out of his mother's house, moving to a different country seemed a bit extreme. So Mauricio did what he thought he was supposed to do: he prayed again, this time asking God for guidance.

Mauricio recalls that in the days that followed he could feel God was telling him to take the job. "I felt like God was telling me to take the job, testing my obedience," he told me. And so, with a couple of days left to make up his mind, Mauricio told his mother about the job offer and asked for her advice. He recalls her reply: "And my mom says the craziest things; she said that she had been praying and asking God that I'd get a job outside Colombia, specifically in Spain." He interpreted his mother's words as a clear sign of God telling him what he needed to do.

From a sociological point of view, Mauricio's story fits within what sociologists normally call "brain drain," a pattern wherein trained workers living poorer countries relocate for better wages (Goldin, Cameron, and Balarajan 2012). Like other relatively highly educated Colombians I spoke with, Mauricio benefited from having a college education in a highly specialized field and relevant work experience that allowed him to apply and eventually get the job that would help him move. And yet, when trying to make sense of his decision and the cultural and structural factors that earned him the opportunity to find higher-paying work in another country, Mauricio was instead convinced that the job was God's response to his prayers, and perhaps his mother's.

Not everyone I met during my fieldwork had the same background as Mauricio. In Madrid and Miami, I met people from a variety of educational and class backgrounds: from constructions workers who moved to Madrid and Miami before the real-estate bubble market

collapsed in 2008 to lawyers and engineers who had moved for better-paying jobs. Yet, regardless of how and when they had moved, the people I interviewed in Spain and the US always attributed some form of divine intervention to their migration experiences.

Most of the people I spoke with told me that violence and economic instability had been major factors in their decision to migrate. Yet, when I asked them to try and recall what that decision making process had been like, nearly everyone mentioned God's role in the decision. Even in cases where people were able to move due to structural advantages such as educational background or a family network, people were more likely to explain their experiences (and in some cases their advantageous positions) using religious terms.

Not everyone who migrated did so for labor reasons. Many also left Colombia because of safety reasons. The long conflict with the leftist guerrillas, the paramilitaries, and the government described in the introduction, combined with other forms of violence that emerged as a result of extreme poverty and drug cartels, contributed to the displacement of many people migrating from rural and medium-sized cities into Colombia's largest cities and also to other countries. Many of the people I spoke with moved because they wanted to get away from the violence that surrounded them in their former communities.

The first interview I did with a church member in Miami was with Carlos, a man in his late 20s from the Valle del Cauca region. Carlos had struggled with drugs and alcohol in his late teens and early 20s. When I met him, he had been sober for over a year. He was very adamant about the fact that the church played a big role in him staying out of trouble. Carlos and his mother Silvia migrated to Southern Florida in the early-mid 2000s. When Carlos was four, his father was assassinated for political reasons. In fear for their safety, Silvia decided she and Carlos would move to the United States. At first, she came by herself so she could make enough

money to send for Carlos. While she was in Miami working, Carlos lived in Cali, Colombia with a relative. The money that she was making in Miami went a lot further in Colombia, and since she did not know anyone in Miami, she wouldn't be able to work and take of Carlos.

During the time that they lived apart, both Carlos and his mom began going to Christian churches regularly. There, they found the emotional and spiritual support that helped deal with their painful separation. The separation was made more difficult when Silvia was disallowed from travel back to Colombia as a condition of obtaining asylum. As she recalls, "The church was the only thing that gave me strength I needed to live." Eventually they were granted asylum, and Carlos was able to travel to Miami to reunite with his mother. Like Rafael's story at the beginning of this chapter, Silvia and Carlos experiences with the asylum process reflects not just Colombia's internal conflict and turmoil, but also the certain aspects of the US's policies towards asylum seekers. Still, Carlos tells the story through a different lens. For him, it was going to church that made the situation better. God intervened not just in their asylum application, but more importantly, in giving them the strength they needed to get through the time they spent apart.

For those in the audience, participation in church life provided cognitive frames to make sense of and deal with the pain and trauma of separation, even of it was post facto. First, because the pastors and other leaders of the church had been through similar situations, the sermons and other talks often included personal stories of their experiences as migrants. Like the people who described their stories to me during our interviews, the pastors and leaders spoke about their migratory experiences during church events as being a part of God's plan. Andres Peñaloza, the pastor of the church in Madrid, spoke about how he moved to Spain to continue working for a company he had been employed with for years. In sermons, classes, and conversations, Mr.

Peñaloza remembers thinking at first that this was a gift from God, as it would bring opportunities for him to offer his family a relatively better future such as better education and better universities. Later, when he got ordained and started Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid, he realized that his job had just been a small piece of a larger puzzle that included opening a church in Madrid. When I asked him where that plan was going now, he spoke in broad terms. He told me that all he knew at the moment was that he needed to make the church strong and form new leaders so that they could continue to evangelize, first to other Colombians and eventually to Spaniards.

Likewise, Ricardo Jalube had moved out of Colombia for work reasons, first to Mexico and then to Miami. Unlike Mr. Peñaloza, Pastor Jalube moved looking for work, not because of work. However, like Pastor Peñaloza, Mr. Jalube was highly educated, holding masters degrees from prestigious private universities in Colombia. He also had several years of experience working for multinational companies. Consequently, Jalube had an easier time moving first to Mexico and later to Miami to look for new opportunities. When he first arrived in Miami, he even ventured in the real state business, something that would cost him and his family most of their savings when the real estate market collapsed.

It was this misstep that eventually led to his involvement as pastor of the church in Miami, where he had been congregating for a few years. Like Pastor Peñaloza, Pastor Jalube shared his personal story with the church, especially during sermons when he talked about the importance of involving God in every decision one makes. Jalube regularly contrasted his time in Mexico, when he wasn't involving God in his decisions, with his time in Miami, where he did, as evidence of God's grace and power.

When the pastors shared their stories with the congregations, they made it clear that while it was ultimately God who decided everything, it was up to individuals to be obedient and follow God's plan, even if that plan meant making sacrifices such as separating from one's family. They also emphasized that in the end, God had great things planned for *everyone*.

Casa Sobre la Roca pastors like to give a series of sermons that deal with specific topics, with each series lasting anywhere between three to five weeks. During one of these series in Madrid, for example, Pastor Peñaloza gave a series of talks that he titled "Celestial casting" wherein he focused on biblical characters with relatively humble and unassuming backgrounds who had gone on to become pivotal in the development of Christianity. During this particular series of events, the pastor constantly made connections between the biblical characters of his sermons and the members of his church, remarking on similarities such as shared backgrounds from humble families or current work situations. Ultimately, the pastor would end the sermon asking people to consider how if God had used these people for great things, there was no way of knowing what he had planned with members of Casa Sobre la Roca.

But sermons were just one of the ways in which these narratives spread. Equally important were the smaller more intimate meetings that people attended throughout the week. Midweek prayer meetings and smaller groups held on the weekends provided a more interactive space where people not only listened but also discussed and collectively learned to connect their personal stories with teachings and stories from the Bible.

Weeknight meetings usually lasted about two hours, including about half an hour of singing, an hour of meeting, and finally 30 minutes for socializing. Like sermons, midweek study groups were usually organized as series of talks focused on a broad topic or a character from the Bible. Job, whose faith is constantly tested in the Old Testament, was a common theme in Madrid.

Parenting and family roles were probably the most common topic for midweek meetings in Miami. These meetings were smaller, more intimate, and ultimately more interactive than Sunday services and sermons. Sermons were interactive to the extent that the congregation read from the Bible together or people replied with "amens" and "hallelujahs" to the pastor's remarks. Midweek study groups, on the other hand, usually included discussions, space for questions between the audience and the speaker, and sometimes small group discussion.

The churches also organized smaller meetings on Thursdays and Fridays for members in particular age, gender, and marital status (couples or widowed/divorced) categories. Like the midweek meetings, these groups were constructed around a topic or a series of topics (in Madrid, for example, the men's group read all of Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Life*). Like midweek meetings, these groups were usually highly interactive. If a sermon felt like a large university lecture, the other meetings felt like discussion sections (though the topics of discussion were not always connected). Either the pastor or other group leaders would use the opportunity to have more interaction with church members.

These midweek meetings and smaller groups were important because they allowed people to get to know each other and hear about their individual problems. As Carolyn Chen (2008) writes, these kinds of spaces are designed to be intentional practices of intimacy, where people feel safe in sharing personal problems and issues that would usually be reserved for very close friends and family members. It helps that these kinds of intimate encounters were usually accompanied by singing and emotional prayer, both of which contribute emotional energy (Collins 2014), making participants feel connected, and importantly, making the intimate interaction meaningful.

These were the spaces where community was built, where unfamiliar church attendees met and got to know each other. More importantly, it was a place where people helped each other in a

variety of ways: they shared work opportunities and relevant information and gave each other a hand in times of need. For example, two construction workers in Madrid who lost their jobs in 2008 were able to find permanent employment through other church members after both of them shared their unemployment concerns in small group meetings. Likewise, several of people in Miami told me that they had found housing after members of the church shared their struggles with other members of the church.

But the groups also provided a space where people could collectively engage in the hermeneutical work needed to make sense of both religious stories and personal experiences. Not everyone was lucky enough to find a new job through the church. And housing was a relatively simple problem to solve compared to some of the other things people deal with regularly. Instead, people spent time talking about what the Bible had to say about what people were going through. It was in these cases where people helped each other the most, not by providing tangible solutions but by helping each other find meaning and figure out how their stories fit in with a larger narrative about God's will and his omnipotence. It was in these spaces that personal pains and struggles of separation were reframed as part of something larger and became meaningful.

During my fieldwork in Miami, I met someone who was experiencing something quite similar to what Carlos experienced when he was separated from his mother. Briana was a woman in her late 20s who had two kids with her boyfriend/partner, who lived in Cali, Colombia. After being physically and psychologically abused, Briana had decided to move to Miami, where she knew some people. However, because of some legal fights (and what she described as some shady tricks from her partner), Briana was separated from one of her kids, who was now with the father living in Cali. Briana's story was well known by people in the church, and it was common for church leaders to make a special prayer for her when possible. During a youth retreat, for

example, Gustavo, the leader of the youth group, took a moment to lead the entire group in prayer on behalf of Briana. In an emotional moment, Gustavo would claim that he knew that God had a special place in heaven for mothers who had been separated from their children and that God would eventually reunite her family. The rest of the group, about 30 in total, would reply with "Amen," "Hallelujah," and other positive affirmations to each of Gustavo's claims. Eventually, Briana burst into tears and fell to her knees in front of the group. The circle of people got as close to her as we could, and as the prayer circle dissolved, people took turns hugging Briana.

Months after the emotional incident, I had the opportunity to interview Briana, who shared with me a similar feeling to what Silvia had expressed when I talked with her and Carlos. The church and the community gave her the strength she needed to be able to survive the pain of being separated from one of her children. But it also provided her with a framework to look and make sense of her decision to leave one of her kids behind. Briana had decided to move to Miami to get away from her abusive partner. Because her partner had fought to make her leaving as complicated as possible, Briana had only been able to bring one of her kids with her: her daughter, a US citizen born in the US. She told me this as she got teary-eyed, watching her daughter play in a McDonalds' playground as we had coffee. How else could she make sense of her decision to save at least one of her kids apart from feeling like it was all a part of God's plan?

Briana's story is helpful in understanding how small group gatherings provide more than just a community of like-minded people or networks where people have access to resources that they wouldn't be able to access otherwise. It is in the emotionally-charged group prayers that Briana's reality becomes meaningful. Nothing about her reality has changed; she's still separated from her son, and it could even be argued that the reminder makes that even more painful. But in sharing

her issues with the youth group, Briana, like many other people who have shared her struggles, is reminded that God has a plan for her and that her separation is a painful but meaningful part of that plan. In accepting that she's an important part of this plan, in surrendering herself to God, Briana gives meaning and purpose to an otherwise meaningless and painful situation.

Making Sense of Being an Outsider

While migration itself was a painful and disorienting experience, the process of adaptation was followed by an entirely different set of challenges. The majority of the people I spoke with reported feeling that life in the new country had challenges they never expected to face. While moving required tremendous sacrifices, including separation from loved ones, life in the new country presented people other challenges including downward mobility, mental health issues, and lack of support networks.

Among the most common issues immigrants face (and in many times connected to the pain and sacrifices they make in the migration process) are mental health issues such as depression or anxiety. Psychologists in Spain had begun using the term "Ulysses' syndrome" to refer to the set of mental health issues often observed among migrants (Loizate 2006).[26] Many of the people I spoke with recalled feeling depressed, low in energy, and in some instances even suicidal after migrating. Adapting to their new home wasn't easy, and for many, the process was made more complicated by the separation from loved ones and the stress associated with long work hours. Their experiences are reminiscent of what Timothy Smith described as the "agonies of anomie" that cried out for religious explanation (1978:1174). In both cities, people expressed feeling lonely, overworked, and at times lost.

[26] This term was introduced by Spanish psychologist Joseba Achotegui. However, in Colombia, the expression was popularized by Santiago Gamboa, whose fiction book with the same title explores the drama of Colombian migrants living in France and dealing with these kinds of issues.

Camila, a graphic designer and photographer in her early twenties, moved from Bogota to Miami when she was a teenager. She first came to the US she with her father, leaving her mother and sister behind. We met for coffee at a Starbucks in Miami Lakes, where she drank a black coffee. Camila turned down my offer for a pastry or a cookie, explaining that she was in the final week of a diet inspired by The Book of Daniel in the Old Testament.[27] I felt guilty eating a chocolate chip cookie, which I had ordered before knowing she was in the final days of her diet, but she kept telling me I should go ahead and eat. She explained that the first couple of months after she migrated to the US were the hardest: "I knew what I was coming for; I knew it would be hard without my mom; and although I never fought with my dad, it wasn't the same as being with my mom." She tells me her life changed when Casa Sobre la Roca opened in Miami. Although she had been congregating at Casa Sobre la Roca in Bogota before moving, the first couple of months in Miami she didn't go to any churches. Things got even harder when her father traveled to Colombia and was not allowed back in the US. Camila was forced to stay in Miami with her aunt. It was then that she started going to Casa Sobre la Roca, where she became an active member and reconnected with people she knew from her church in Bogota.

Not everyone had to go through the kind of separation Camila went through during their first months in their new country, but people in Miami expressed similar feelings of loneliness and isolation, bordering on depression. Praying and getting involved in the church provided an opportunity to not only make the situation more bearable but to make it more meaningful. As one of the first members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami, Camila's found a purpose for being in the US and a motivation to stay. Her decision to migrate and the emotional and social disruptions

[27] For a more detailed account of the rise of Christian dieting, see R. Marie Griffith's (2004) *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity*.

that happened because of her move became pieces of a meaningful puzzle thanks to her involvement in church life.

In many cases, the hardships associated with migration are exacerbated by downward mobility. When many imagine what life will be like in their new country, they envision themselves finding a comfortable job that pays well. Many hope that their Colombian education will give them an advantage as they begin a new life. After arrival, they find that their Colombian degrees carry little weight in both Spain and the United States. Thus, migrants are forced to take lower status jobs or in positions they are overqualified for. For example, while Jorge studied to be a high-school teacher in Colombia, when he moved to Madrid he only found work delivering groceries in the nearby suburbs. Likewise, Rafael had worked as a mid-level executive for multiple corporations in Bogotá. After moving to Miami, Rafael worked for many years in construction and then as a school bus driver, a job he felt didn't pay as well did not take the same physical toll on him.

Like other people who experienced a loss of occupational status, both Rafael and Jorge shared with me their initial frustration in taking these jobs. They also explained that at church they had learned about the importance of humility in everyday life. For example, Jorge told me that he had learned his new trade by watching the pastor do a lot of the construction work during the early days of the church. Jorge was impressed by how the pastor, who at the time was still working as a lawyer, had no problem getting his hands dirty and laying some bricks to make the church a reality.

I witnessed something similar when I was asked to help cook for 120 people in Madrid during an autumn event. I was first contacted by the pastor's wife, who asked me if I could help the church collect money for an upcoming celebration. I said I would be happy to help, thinking

the church would ask me to take pictures or help set up as I had done at other special events. Instead, I was told that I would be helping prepare sancocho, a traditional Colombian soup made with potatoes and green plantain, among other ingredients. When the day came, I showed up to the church early in the morning and met with Carolina, a woman in her early 40s who was in charge of cooking. Carolina asked me to go to the kitchen, wash my hands, and put an apron on. For the next 3 hours, I would peel enough potatoes and plantains to make soup for over 120 people. I had worked in kitchens before and personally loved cooking, but the cramped space, lack of quality kitchen equipment, and scale of the task was an entirely new to me. Furthermore, peeling green plantains was annoying in a surprising and indescribable way, as the flesh of the plantain would get under my fingernails and cause an uncomfortable amount of pain.

While I complained in my head about the discomfort of cooking for so many people, the group of people cooking with me never stopped smiling. They took turns sharing stories about their migration experience. One woman talked about working as a professional nurse in Colombia before moving to Spain, where she now worked as a maid for an older Spanish couple. Another man named Diego, who was the church's groundskeeper, told us about how humbling it was to work for an organization that served so many people. On that day I bonded with people from the church who I would not have met otherwise.

After my cooking shift, the pastor's wife, Monica, asked me about my experience. She was interested in knowing if I had learned anything valuable while working in a relatively uncomfortable space. I told her that I had really enjoyed talking to people from the church I normally would not talk to, and that I had really enjoyed cooking with the group. I also told her that my fingers were hurting from peeling plantains, but that I would get over it soon. When I her a few weeks later, she explained to me that because the church was relatively small and had such

a small budget, they relied heavily on volunteers. Most church members came from a Colombian middle-class background where volunteering isn't exactly valued. Monica explained that most people were usually reluctant to serve at first since most of the things the church needed members to do could be considered lower status. Working in the kitchen, cleaning the church between services, and working in construction, were all considered lower status tasks that many people felt they were too good for, according to her. The church leadership was working hard to make sure people understood that no one, not even the pastor, has a specific task or job. As she explained this to me, she uses examples from Jesus' life serving and helping other people.

Geovanny, a man from the Cartago who had joined the Madrid church just a few months after it had been started, told me that he had a humbling experience after his first visit when he saw the pastor laying bricks and fixing one of the building's outside walls. Displaying his jovial and joking character, Geovanny told me the story while making fun of the pastor's technique for bricklaying. Geovanny worked full time in construction and was surprised to see an educated lawyer like Mr. Peñaloza doing this kind of thing for free and for the sole reason that it needed to be done.

Both Geovanny and the pastor mentioned this incident when I asked them to talk about the early days of the church, and they both remembered it as a way to do what their faiths told them to do: to live one's life following the example of Jesus. In fact, the pastor often spoke about the sacrifices he had made by leaving his job and starting a church. Telling this kind of stories did two things. First, it served to combat stereotypes about Evangelical pastors stealing money from their congregations. But more importantly, it served as an example of how to follow God's calling. Clearly not everyone was supposed to be a pastor, but everyone could contribute to the church in one way or another.

Because the church in Miami had been around longer, it did not require a committed volunteer base to work on big issues like fixing the building as the Madrid church did. Still, the church in Miami also emphasized the importance of volunteering, especially in the age-specific and gender-specific groups that met throughout the week. In the bi-weekly meetings organized for men and women, for example, the groups would plan regular dinners for the entire church. Every two months or so, the church community would be invited to a family-style dinner completely catered by one of the church's groups. Likewise, the church in Miami organized regular meetings where groups of men and women volunteer would make family-style meals for the entire congregation. At this kind of event, the pastor and his family usually worked as volunteers, serving food, cleaning the church, and doing any other necessary tasks. When I spoke with the pastor in Miami, he explained to me (in a bit of a sanctimonious tone) that this was one way in which people became productive members of the community. Like the pastor's wife in Madrid, Pastor Jalube explained that people needed to volunteer and contribute to receive the other benefits that the church would provide.

My research is not the first to highlight the ways in which immigrant churches encourage members to volunteer. Other scholars have argued that churches are sites where people learn to be contributing members of society (Ecklund 2006). Immigrant churches function sort of like laboratories or training grounds where people experiment and participate in civics. They learn about volunteering and take on leadership positions, thus learning how citizenship works outside the religious sphere (Foley and Hoge 2007; Mora 2013). Even people who have an uncertain legal situation are allowed to engage in the form of active citizenship by contributing to their communities (Numrich and Kniss 2007). What my research shows is that phenomenon isn't confined to the United States. Although there is a long history of volunteerism as a form of

citizenship that is an important part of American history and identity, I found that the church in Madrid is just as likely to promote the importance of volunteering and serving the community, even if volunteering isn't as central to Spanish-national identity.

More importantly, what my research shows is that this emphasis on volunteering serves another, perhaps more important, purpose. Besides teaching people to participate and teaching them values that are supposed to be associated with their new country of residence, volunteering provides people with an opportunity to learn religious teachings about humility, respect, and honor. Sheba George (2005) argues that the church becomes an ideal place for men specifically to make up for the loss of status they can experience after migration. In the group that she studied men were more likely to occupy higher positions of status, positions that would have normally been reserved for women in their home country. Likewise, Charles Hirschman (2004) points out that immigrant churches provide members with the three Rs: refuge, respectability, and resources.

While both George's and Hirschman's analyses hold true in my case, the kind of functionalist approach to immigrant religion fails to capture what is unique about immigrant congregations. In the case of CSR, it is difficult to argue that men are more or less likely to do something after migrating, since the church is heavily dominated by couples and the church emphasizes couples as units of leadership (for example, group leaders work in couples so that the men's group is led by the man who is married to the women's group leader; the only exception to this is Miami's divorced members group, which is led by two divorced people). And while it might be true that the church provides members with opportunities to volunteer and gain social recognition, it would be reductionist to argue that the only thing members get out of volunteering is some extrinsic reward unrelated to religion.

What I found during my fieldwork and interviews is that by volunteering and doing things that could have otherwise been considered lower status allowed people not just to build community, but also find meaning. Laying bricks to fix a wall or working in a kitchen peeling potatoes and plantains becomes more than an easy way to recuperate status when said activities are accompanied by religious messages about humility and following the life of Jesus. Furthermore, these messages can then be translated into people's lives outside the church to help people find meaning in their jobs.

The connection between finding purpose and meaning in volunteering and finding it outside the church became evident during a mid-week meeting in Madrid that focused on a portion of the Gospel of Mark. Jorge, one of the leaders of the church who was in charge of leading the conversation this particular week, told everyone who was present to open their Bibles and go to Mark, chapter 9. Most people either had their Bible or accessed them through their mobile phones. For everyone else, the church had some spare Bibles people could use (though the church emphasized always having at least one personal Bible, or a mobile app, to highlight, save, and annotate specific parts of the text. Jorge waited a minute or two for everyone to find the passage, and when it seemed like everyone had found it, he signaled to the group to read. Everyone in the group reads together: "Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all." (Mark 9:35).

Over the next 30 minutes, Jorge discussed with the group what it meant to be the last and to be the servant of all. He relied on personal anecdotes and stories from the congregation. Using stories from other church members was particularly effective, since most people knew each other. Jorge used examples from members of the church who had moved to Spain and taken new jobs. He compared these stories with what he described as the typical immigrant attitude of

complaining and not doing certain jobs because they were seen as lesser professions. Jorge explained that when any job is done with dignity and following Christ, it glorifies God. Jorge connected this with the verse from Mark he had read earlier, saying that Jesus was talking about doing things that people don't necessarily want to do, such as helping children or the poor. Doing these tasks was ultimately doing a good thing and would receive rewards from God. Jorge went on to ask the group members to read from Mark, but this time from chapter 9, verse 41: "Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward."

Small group meetings were ideal spaces to take any part of the Bible, from a verse to an entire passage, and engage with it collectively. I attended countless group meetings like I described above both in Madrid and Miami. In these meetings, members read and tried to make sense of scriptures by looking at what the Bible could tell them about their lives. They engaged in the collective hermeneutical work necessary to make their religion and their lived experiences speak to each other and make sense.

Religion After the Crisis

So far my analysis has focused on how people engage in theologizing to answer the questions "Why did I come here?" and "Why am I here?" My findings are consistent with what other scholars have shown about immigration and religion in the United States, yet I have also tried to emphasize how the same kind of meaning-making work happens in Spain. These findings support previous work by other scholars (Chen 2008; Mooney 2009; Smith 2005) highlighting how religion does more than provide material and cultural resources that could also be found in other organizations such as ethnic association.

The people who moved to Madrid and Miami did so under similar circumstances: escaping violence, looking for better jobs, etc. Likewise, up until around 2008, both cities were popular immigrant destinations. It is not surprising that the kinds of religious explanations that people provide to make sense of their journeys and their experiences are relatively similar. People interpret job opportunities or family networks as being blessings from God. Likewise, there are similarities in the experiences of migrants in both cities, such as working jobs that might be considered of lower status or feeling disconnected from their communities. Again, because these experiences are relatively similar for Colombians in the United States and Spain, it is not surprising that the kind of religious imagination they apply to these situations is similar.

But the experiences of Colombian immigrants living in these two cities are only similar up to a point. After 2008, the economic crisis in Spain affected immigrants disproportionally. Although the United States also suffered from a recession, and a pretty bad one, the American economy recovered faster than it did in Spain. *La crisis* in Spain presented a new set of challenges and experiences that made many people question their decision to migrate (Noticias Caracol 2010, 2012). For those who had moved to Spain and worked in construction and other real estate jobs, the crisis was a particularly hard. Many lost their jobs; others experienced a decline in their wages (Ioé 2011). Among immigrant men, unemployment neared 30% (Ioé 2013).

If the experiences of migration already make people question themselves regarding their motivations for moving (Why did I come here? What am I doing here?), then certain events make people ask "Why should I stay?" In many cases, migrant found answers in religion. Situations like this require people to use what David Smilde (2007) calls imaginative rationality. Following a pragmatist approach to culture proposed by Emirbayer and Mische (1998), Smilde

proposes that in this case religion, culture is the product of the creative intelligence of people who find themselves in problematic situations. Imaginative rationality is the process in which "people encounter problems, create new projects to address them, and then reflectively evaluate the success of these projects" (2007:52). The first part of this chapter argues that because many of the problems that Evangelical Colombians face in Madrid and Miami are similar, the concepts and narratives they come up with have a lot in common. However, the 2008 crisis forced people to re-evaluate their situation and previous actions.

One way to think about what happened in 2008 and onward it to think of it as a rupture. Until that point, both Spain and the US had been doing relatively well economically and thus were attractive destinations for Colombian immigrants. Thus, the stories of the people I speak with are relatively parallel. By the time I began doing my fieldwork in Madrid, Spain's unemployment was still rising (at one point it reached 26.2% among the overall population, and it was much higher among the immigrant population). Things got to the point where the Spanish government began to offer migrants part of their social security savings in cash if they decided to return to their home countries. After years of being an immigrant-receiving country, Spain became an emigrating country once again.

Many people who moved to Spain for a job lost their visa sponsorship. Those who had migrated before 2001 did not need to worry about visa, since they received legal residencies when Spain entered the European Union. At the same time as Spain's economy was going through a crisis, Colombia's economy was recovering (The Economist 2009), and perceptions of security had improved substantially under the Alvaro Uribe's government (McDermott 2010). For a moment it seemed like things were better in Colombia than they were in Spain. In fact,

many people moved back to Colombia. Others relocated to other countries in the European Union, and some even migrated to Canada.

But many people stayed. Why some stayed and others did not doesn't really matter in this chapter. Since my data does not include Colombians who decided to move somewhere else, anything I say on this matter will be purely speculative. What matters for me is how the migrants who remained interpreted the change in plans. If people interpreted the opportunity to migrate to a "greener pasture" as a gift from God or an answer to their prayers, how do they make sense of their blessing becoming a crisis? To answer this question, I asked people if they had ever thought about moving somewhere else, and why they had or had not. I asked them to tell me about the kinds of things that were going through their head when they lost their jobs. I found that people often relied on religious language to justify their decision to stay. Just like people had interpreted their opportunity to move as the work of God, they saw the economic crisis in a variety of different ways but always attributed it to divine forces. Two narratives became apparent during my interviews and fieldwork: The first one I call “the seven years of abundance and the seven years of famine” narrative. This particular narrative is directly linked to the book of Genesis in the Old Testament when Joseph tells the Pharaoh that his dream of seven skinny cows and seven fat cows is meant to symbolize seven years of abundance and seven years of famine. The second narrative is linked to a short but important reference that the Apostle Paul makes in his letter Romans, where he tells them that he is on his way to (what would eventually become modern day) Spain.

The Decision to Stay: Seven Years of Abundance and Seven Years of Famine

Like many of the people I met in Madrid, Geovanny interpreted his move as divine intervention. A native of Cartago, a medium city in the Valle del Cauca region of Colombia,

Geovanny had moved to Madrid in the early 2000s before Spain started asking Colombians to apply for visas. Like other medium-sized cities in Colombia, Cartago had been disproportionately impacted by drug money and violence. Tired of living in this kind of environment, Geovanny moved to Madrid using money he received from a relative who lived in Spain. Once he repaid the first loan, Geovanny asked for a second loan that he used to move his wife and their baby daughter with him to Madrid. After moving to Madrid, Geovanny worked in construction, where he was making enough money so that his wife could stay at home and take care of their daughter. Once their daughter was old enough to go to school, his wife began working as a caregiver for older adults around the city. At one point, the family was making enough money that they were able to send some back to his family in Cartago, and invest in opening a little shop that specialized on fixing motorcycles.

Things were going well until 2008 when the Spanish economy crashed. The housing market collapsed, and all of a sudden, Geovanny's job was at risk. Although he never lost his job completely, he took several pay cuts. Eventually, his salary was cut in half, and his wife wasn't able to find as much work as she had been able to previously. Among other things, they had to stop sending money to Colombia. Geovanny considered going back to his native Cartago. His wife, however, wanted to stay: "My wife told me, ‘We've had seven years of fat cows, now we'll have seven years of skinny cows; we will not leave this country that has given us so much.'"

At first, I didn't make much of the skinny and fat cows that Geovanny spoke about. I had heard the expression growing up in Colombia a couple of times, and thought it was just a colloquial way to speak about ups and downs. However, as I talked with more people and attended church services regularly, I began to hear people speak about the fat and skinny cows

repeatedly. One day, after hearing sermons by pastor Peñaloza when he spoke about enduring through hard times, I looked it up. It was a biblical reference to the book of Genesis.

In the particular story that the phrase references, the Pharaoh has a dream where he is standing by the Nile "when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows" (Genesis 41:1-4). Following this, the Pharaoh has another dream with seven heads of good grain and seven heads of grain "sprouted - thin and scorched by the east wind. The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads" (Genesis 41:5-7). After failing to get a satisfactory interpretation from the kingdom's wise men, the Pharaoh sends for Joseph, son of Jacob, to help him interpret his dreams. Joseph tells the Pharaoh that the seven fat cows and the seven ugly and gaunt cows represent periods of seven years of abundance and seven years of famine respectively. Joseph then instructs the Pharaoh to appoint a "discerning and wise man" to be in charge of his kingdom and appoint commissioners who will save one-fifth of all that is harvested during the seven years of abundance so that "the country may not be ruined by the famine" (Gen 41:33-36).

Once I understood the story from which the reference came from, I began noticing it even more. Sometimes I would hear the skinny and fat cows references; other times I would the seven years of abundance and seven years of famine reference. I noticed that people used these references to Genesis 41 during prayer meetings and smaller groups others. It was a common way of helping people endure hard times.

In some cases, people used relatively loose interpretations of the story to talk about how there were good times and bad, and it was important to keep the faith during the particularly hard

times. In other cases, people offered more literal interpretations of the story. In one sermon, Pastor Peñaloza explained that he was hopeful about Spain's recovery from the crisis, saying that in the Pharaoh's dream the famine only lasted seven years.

The comparison members of the church made between the Spanish crisis to the seven years of famine story has significance on multiple levels. First, the story provides a framework they could use to interpret their experiences before and during the crisis, making them both meaningful and even making them compatible with larger religious interpretations of people's migratory experiences. The years preceding the crisis were the fat cows, the seven years of abundance that most people had experienced or at least heard of. Most people who had lived in Spain during those years had made enough money to not just live comfortably in Spain, but in many cases send money to relatives in Colombia. Some, like Geovanny, had even invested some of their money by opening businesses or buying property in their hometowns. Others had opened businesses in Madrid.

The cyclical nature of the seven cows stories allowed people to look back and recognize a time when things were better, when the figurative cows were fat and people were doing well. Even for those who arrived later during the so called years, the fact that many people in the church could speak about the fat cows made the stories real. Thus, while not everyone in the church had been around for those times, they did form an important part of the church's collective memory.

The story also provided a religious explanation to why the crisis had been worse in Spain than in other countries. According to the pastor, Spain was different from other countries that had had a crisis during that time because of two reasons. First, Spain was less religious than others; specifically it was not a Protestant country. The pastor compared how Spain had done

compared to other countries like the United States and Germany and employed religion as the explaining variable. It wasn't just that God punished some more than others. The pastor relied on a very Weberian explanation of why some European countries and the United States were doing better than Spain, speaking not just about people's work ethics, but also emphasizing the importance of having leaders (Barack Obama and Angela Merkel specifically) who came from religious backgrounds.

Additionally, in the eyes of many church members, and especially the pastor, Spain's pre-crisis leftist government had been quite careless and wasteful with its spending during the years that preceded the economic recession, and it had not done a good enough job of saving during the "fat cows." Again, the pastor used other countries as a comparison, especially the United States. He explains that people in America did not on rely on the government during a hard time as people in Spain had, which allowed the government to save and be prepared for the economic downturn.

Finally, the story of Joseph and the Pharaoh's dream also provided people's experiences with a timeline. By saying that the skinny cows represent seven years of famine and Spain is in a crisis not unlike that described in the book of Genesis, people not only knew that the crisis would come to an end, but they also had an idea of when the crisis would end. Thus, when I asked people why they had decided to stay and not move somewhere else or return to Colombia, many of them told me that things would get better sooner rather than later. This prediction that the crisis would end soon, that it would only last seven years, was deployed quite frequently in small pre-war groups when people expressed feeling desperate or lost because they could not find regular jobs or because they were not making enough money.

Completing the Apostle Paul's Mission to Evangelize Spain

Another common way people justified their decision to stay in Spain was to connect their experience with Spain's evangelization and the role that members of Casa Sobre la Roca saw as potentially playing in this mission. Many of the people I spoke with told me that they had decided to stay in Spain because they felt like Spain, more than other countries, was a country that needed more Christians.

Jaime, a young man from Medellin, told me that after the crisis he was tempted to move somewhere else where he could make more money. When I asked him about the places that he considered, he told me that he has some friends who have moved to English-speaking countries like Canada and the United States, and from what he heard one could make good money working construction. When I asked why he hadn't moved, he explained: "I feel like here I got closer to God and that God put me here for a reason." Then he went on to say that he feels like God wants everyone from the church there for a reason: "God wants us to be here; he wants us to do our *obra* [work]." The specific obra that Jaime is speaking about is evangelizing.

As I explain in more detail in chapter 4, evangelizing is a central component of Casa Sobre la Roca's identity and mission. At first, it is not surprising to hear Jaime talk about wanting to stay in Spain to do God's work. Like Jaime, other people in Madrid spoke about the importance of spreading Christianity. This was in sharp contrast to the way people spoke about their presence as Christians in the U.S., who understood their roles as preserving and defending Christianity and not necessarily spreading it.

The way people spoke about the need to Christianize certain countries was consistent with the fact that many members of CSR in Madrid refer to Spain as an almost "godless place," and casually connect this perceived godlessness to the economic recession. Interestingly, members of Casa Sobre la Roca relied on one particular verse from the Epistle to Romans to justify their

decision to stay. In the epistle, Paul tells the Roman that he plans to go to Spain on his way to Rome: "…Since I have been longing for many years to visit you [Romans], I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there after I have enjoyed your company for a while" (Romans 15:23-24).

The fact that Paul never made it to Spain[28] meant that people were fulfilling God's plan. And, unlike other personal plans that people had learned through prayer, this was clearly stated in the Bible. As immigrants living in Spain, members of Casa Sobre la Roca saw themselves as completing Paul's journey.

Although not everyone spoke about Paul's specific plans to go to Spain, almost all of the people I interviewed explained that their decision to stay was connected to the condition that there was a purpose for their presence in Spain, and part of that purpose was spreading Evangelical Christianity. This was the obra that Jaime spoke about when he explained why he felt like he could have a bigger impact in Madrid though he was had been tempted to move somewhere else.

This particular kind of talk was never present in my conversations in the United States. Part of this difference can be explained by the fact that most of the people I interviewed in Miami didn't need that explanatory vocabulary because only a handful of people in Miami expressed considering returning to Colombia or migrating to another country. Of those who did, most talked about moving to other states or other cities within the United States, and a few talked about moving a few hours north to cities like Orlando or Tampa. The majority of the people I spoke with in Miami rarely talked about leaving the United States; most people had never considered leaving the United States. And understandably so: regardless of how bad things got in

[28] See Otto Meinardus (1978) According to some Spanish folklore, Paul *did* make it to Spain.

Miami during the economic recession, people always felt like things were still better than in Colombia.

This is not to say that People in Miami didn't think religiously about their presence in the United States or evangelism. Many of the people I interviewed saw their presence as Evangelicals in the United States as helping maintain the country's history of religious identity. For them, the United States was already a Christian nation, and as evangelicals their job was to make sure it stayed this way. But members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami did not engage in the same kind of theologizing when thinking about their decision to stay in the United States. When I asked people whether or not they had considering moving back to Colombia or migrating somewhere else, the most common answer I received was a simple "no."

When I asked people to explain, they rarely mentioned God or religion in their answer. Only handful, like Miller, recognized that it was foolish to try and guess God's plans, but that for the moment returning to Colombia was not even a possibility. "I wouldn't go back to Colombia," Miller told me. He went on to say that although he loved his country, returning "would be going backwards, so I wouldn't do it, so Colombia is outside my personal plans. It might be that God has a plan and perhaps I have to go back and accept it." Although Miller's situation was unique – he was one of the few people I met during my fieldwork whose legal situation was still unresolved – his answer was representative of what a few other people told me about plans for the future.

More often than not, people simply didn't think much about going back, not even during the crisis. For a lot of the people I interviewed, the crisis happened at a time when going back would have meant losing asylum status. Rafael, for example, told me that while the crisis was hard, he didn't even think about going to Colombia at the time because doing so would have put his

papers in jeopardy.[29] Now that his situation was normalized and he was a US citizen, he visited Colombia often, but didn't really think about going back anytime soon, except maybe when he retires.

Ultimately, what I found in my interviews was that similarly to the people in Madrid, most people in Miami didn't really think about returning to Colombia, because doing so would mean going backwards. What was different, however, was the kind of language each group used. People in Madrid regularly used the two narratives described earlier to justify their stay. On the other hand, people in Miami rarely deployed religious language to justify their decision to stay.

Conclusion

The stories in this chapter show that people engage with religious stories and text in creative ways to develop religious explanations to make sense of their lived experiences. These explanations are not just a result of a handed-down doctrine that people quietly and uniformly absorb as they listen passively to religious discourse from the pews. Quite the contrary: these are ideas that people develop and revise collectively, in church and outside of it, with co-religionists and by talking to other people. More than anything, these are theologies that are grounded in lived experience.

As R. Stephen Warner (2000) points out, migration promotes reflection. This process of reflection is what I have called *theologizing*. Theologizing, as I see it, is more a process (of thinking and connecting scripture/doctrine with individual and collective histories), than it is an outcome (i.e. religious participation). Migration is theologizing to the extent that it will, in many

[29] Asylum status can be revoked when an applicant "Has voluntarily availed himself or herself of the protection of the country of nationality or last habitual residence by returning to such country with permanent resident status or the reasonable possibility of obtaining such status with the same rights and obligations pertaining to other permanent residents of that country" (https://www.uscis.gov/policymanual/HTML/PolicyManual-Volume7-PartM-Chapter6.html)

instances, result in people reevaluating and reformulating what C. Wright Mills (1940) calls "vocabularies of motive."

While much of the literature on religious adaptation focuses on competition as driving factor for religious change, my analysis above supports McRoberts' (2005) claim that religious particularism and religious differentiation are the result of the hermeneutical work that people and communities engage in to make sure religious ideas speak directly to people's lives. When people interpret new and unfamiliar experiences in a congregational setting, they collectively find new meanings to new old, familiar stories, or fine new stories meaningful. In doing this, they adapt their religious beliefs in small but significant way.

Chapter 3 - What Kind of Church Are We? Boundaries, Bonds, and Collective Identity

This chapter examines the different symbolic boundaries and group bonds members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid and Miami use. In examining of group boundaries, I argue that members of CSR combine religious and class boundaries to differentiate themselves from other groups. I show that some of these boundaries reference groups, and the ways people distinguish themselves from themselves from these groups vary across sites. Furthermore, I show that members of these churches use boundaries and social distance to inform and locate themselves in what Kelly Hayes calls "moral topography." The second part of the chapter explores the congregational culture of each church and how groups use social bonds to establish and maintain collective identity. By examining the genres of music at each church, I show how they have developed distinct identities. While the church in Miami embraces a pan-ethnic "Latino" identity, the church in Madrid sees itself as a bi-national Colombian and Spanish church.

Keywords: collective identity, symbolic boundaries, group bonds.

"If an adult couple is going to the same church for more than a year and they are still not married, and the pastor hasn't said anything for this long, then there's something wrong with the church, not with you," says Juan Jose, a single-father from Cali in his late 40s, describing his experience seeing other churches before finding Casa Sobre la Roca. The conversation started after our host had offered me a glass of wine, which I declined saying I wasn't much of a wine drinker. Benjamin, who was around 50, and other men who were between 40 and 60 years old, started telling me that one of the things they had learned to do in Spain was drink wine. "I wasn't much of a wine drinker, either. And then I moved here. And I've learned to enjoy wine," Juan Jose explained. He continued to tell us that one of his favorite things to do in the summer was to go to an outdoor bar or restaurant, and in very stereotypical Spanish fashion, have some wine and tapas. He told us that he especially enjoyed doing this with pastor Peñaloza, who had a reputation as a great conversationalist.

Shortly after I turned down the glass of wine, someone offered me a shot of Colombian aguardiente, an anise-flavored alcoholic drink made out of sugarcane that translates to "firewater" or "flaming water." Seeing that most everyone else was drinking and all the attention had turned toward me, I accepted. Geovanny didn't drink, but he was making sure that everyone else did. For a moment I forgot I was in the suburbs of Madrid and was transported to Colombia, when I would spend afternoons with my friends eating, drinking aguardiente, and enjoying the company of one another. Few things are as popular across different classes and regions in Colombia as the tradition of drinking aguardiente at parties.

We took turns drinking from a couple of shared shot glasses. Because the shot glasses changed hands so frequently, there wasn't time to sip the drink, so we drank the aguardiente as a shot. As Geovanny poured the drinks, we started talking about other churches. Someone brought

up how in some churches drinking was wholly forbidden. Of the seven or so of us who were involved in the conversation, four people had attended a church where drinking was frowned upon. Some, like Juan Jose, had been to more than one church where that was the case. Everyone now was a member of Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid. More than anything, the church promoted moderation and responsibility, especially when it came to drinking wine, which was considered an essential custom in Spanish culture.

Juan Jose spoke about his religious past. He told us that at one point he became one of those "crazy hallelujah-type Christians" going around the city late at night, condemning people simply for having fun and enjoying life. We all laughed. Geovanny, who knew Juan Jose well, made fun of him saying that it was because of people like Juan Jose that Evangelicals had such a bad reputation. "I was in a church where you were not allowed to drink at all," Juan Jose continued telling us, "I went to a party once, and people were freaking out because some of us wanted to dance." A couple of people laughed in disbelief. Everyone knew about churches that emphasizes restrictions on people's lives in order to develop strong and lasting relationships between individuals and Jesus, in other words, to become "real" Christians.

We continued talking about different churches while drinking and eating. At one point the conversation shifted as we started talking about the kind of congregation where everything was allowed, and rules did not matter. Again, most people had some first or second-hand experience with those types of churches. A few of the people said that these churches care more about money than they did about people; as long as people tithed and contributed 10% of their salaries, there was no real intention of following the Bible.

Ernesto, a man in his mid-40s, described going to prayer groups where the emphasis was more on money than prayer, where the organizers stood at the door collecting people's

contributions. As if trying to one-up Ernesto's story, Benjamin recalled other churches he had visited. He told us about a church located on the outskirts of the city where people would show up hungover and smelling like alcohol, but no one said anything.

Curious to learn more about these churches, I asked if it was possible that pastors did not want to turn people away from the church because it was better to have them at church than for them to be outside drinking. Both Ernesto and Benjamin disagreed. Benjamin asserted that there had to be something wrong when a church was more concerned with getting people to contribute money than change their behaviors.

The conversation then turned to marriage and cohabitation, which I learned were significant issues with some of the immigrant churches in Madrid. Juan Jose explained that many of these churches did not do enough to get people out of living in sin, perhaps because cohabitation might not be considered as bad of a sin as others like drug addiction or alcoholism. "Many of the churches I've been to don't do anything to encourage people to get married," he told us. As I listened, I remembered that during one of the first interviews with pastor Peñaloza, I asked him what he considered to be the most pressing issues within the congregation, and he replied that cohabitation and unmarried sex were high on his list.

Johan, who was in his late 30s and was perhaps the only person in the conversation besides me who didn't have any children, told us that in his previous church no one cared that his wife had never been baptized. Likewise, Benjamin told us that before coming to Casa Sobre la Roca he had been going to another church where no one cared that his girlfriend (now wife) was still a practicing Catholic. It was then that Juan Jose proclaimed that when a church does not do enough to get its adult members into stable marriages, something must be wrong with the church.

During the conversations we shared at the party in Madrid, members noted what differentiates their church, which they considered to be the "right" kind of church, from others types of churches. As sociologists have established, groups engage in this sort of boundary work regularly, and doing so is indispensable for the formation and maintenance of collective identity (Lamont and Molnar 2002; Pachucki, Pendergrass, and Lamont 2007). Furthermore, as I explain below, besides aiding with differentiation, these distinctions provide people with a topography they can use to locate themselves in relations to others (Hayes 2011). As with other Evangelical groups, the collective identity of Casa Sobre la Roca members in Colombia, Spain, and in the United States, relies on referential distinctions to help people develop a shared sense of a moral community (Smith and Emerson 1998).

Equally important, although perhaps less apparent, in the formation and maintenance of a strong group identity is the use of group bonds: the cultural elements and markers that link members of the group to each other, other institutions, and society at large. In the story above, people bonded over the fact that they all found a church of "healthy doctrine" (a term commonly used to describe Casa Sobre la Roca) and over their shared Colombianness, which they incarnated by drinking aguardiente and eating empanadas. Moreover, they bonded, or at least attempted to bond, to their new country by talking about the importance of following local customs, like the Spanish tradition of drinking wine. Combined, these boundaries and bonds constitute the core elements of each church's collective identity.

Considering that both groups belong to the same larger religious organization and their members share many demographic characteristics, it would intuitively make sense to expect their identities would be mostly the same. While there is substantial overlap between the two groups, the churches have developed different collective identities. Although these identities share a

clear root (Evangelical and middle-class), several elements have changed as the groups have adapted to their local context. In the first part of the chapter, I focus on the kinds of symbolic distinctions people in Madrid in Spain use. I show that these symbolic distinctions serve a more complex function beyond merely separating CSR members from other people. Rather, I show how boundaries help people mentally position and organize their own group as well as other groups. I analyze how some instances of boundary work highlight differences between group members and people outside the group. More importantly, I rely on Kelly Hayes' formulation of "moral topography" to examine how people use distinctions to locate themselves in relation to others in categories such as religion and, morality.

In the second part of the chapter, I shift my focus to the bonding elements of group culture, or group bonds, the cultural elements that hold each group together and make group interactions meaningful. As my analysis shows, some of these bonds are very general and broad, such as identifying with the church as a family, and others are more specific, such as shared identification with the respective genres of music in each church. My analysis shows is that while there is some consistency in the boundaries and group bonds across sites, there are noteworthy exceptions. Throughout the chapter, I highlight both the similarities and differences to examine how context matters in the formation and maintenance of collective identity. In the conclusion of the chapter, I bring these commonalities and differences together, linking them to existing literature on place and identity.

Symbolic Boundaries & Moral Topography:

Lamont and Molnár define symbolic boundaries as the “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space” (2002:168). Boundaries facilitate social interaction by providing people with agreed upon ways of sorting

reality, whether it is sorting between good and bad, old and young, or us and them. Additionally, boundaries have consequences beyond simple differentiation to the extent that they can determine, or least influence, which people have access to material and symbolic resources (Bean 2014; Onasch 2017).

Christian Smith (Smith and Emerson 1998) builds on the concept of symbolic boundaries in his subcultural identity theory, arguing that religious groups construct and maintain strong subcultural identities by creating distinction from and tension with relevant outgroups. For Smith, moral boundaries trump other forms of social distinction, since "the human drives for meaning are satisfied primarily by locating human selves within social groups that sustain distinctive, morally orienting collective identities" (1998:90). Thus, in the case of North American Evangelicals, their identity is built around the distinction and tension between themselves and mainline Protestants.

One of the limitations of Smith's subcultural identity, however, is the fact that it does not take into account how religious and racial/ethnic identities interact (Chai 2001). For example, Choi's study of Korean congregations illustrates how immigrant religious organizations often rely on ethnic and religious boundaries in combination to maintain group distinctiveness. Likewise, Carolyn Chen's (2008) work on Taiwanese immigrants shows that ethnicity influences which groups are considered relevant out-groups and how boundaries are drawn.

In addition to religion and race, I show that a group's boundaries and "relevant outgroup" are also influenced by class and status. As the analysis in this chapter illustrates, members of Casa Sobre la Roca rely on notions of decency, respectability, and orderliness when making symbolic distinctions to make evaluative judgments and confer status to themselves and other groups, much like Anderson (2000), who observed people making distinctions between "decent" and

“street” families. These distinctions became apparent when members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami and Madrid shared ideas about what constitutes “proper” Christianity, drawing distinctions between themselves and the two most relevant reference groups, Catholics, and Pentecostals, as well as distinctions between themselves and other groups and from "the world," broadly conceived. The analysis below shows that most people aspire to be "decent," and in doing so they differentiate themselves from those they consider to be "indecent" or "worldly" (or in Anderson's case, "street").

Besides allowing people to make categorical differentiations between groups, these distinctions help members of Casa Sobre la Roca make positional judgments vis-à-vis other groups. Group distinctions and the work associated with making those distinctions operate not just as markers but also as social coordinates that indicate difference and location. In other words, symbolic differentiations don't just determine who is in and who is out, but they also contribute to the establishment of social distance - the perception of nearness to other people (Alba and Nee 2009). Social distance is important since not all “outgroups” are created equal, and some ‘others’ are symbolically further than others.

In the case of Casa Sobre la Roca, perhaps the best example of how people establish social distance is the church’s relational slogan: "among Christians, unity in variety; with Catholics and Orthodox Christians, coexistence in difference; and with other belief systems, tolerance in the distance" ("Lo Que Creemos" Anon n.d.). As I show in this chapter, people engage in different forms of boundary work regularly, and in some cases differently. This positioning resembles the participants in Kelly Hayes (2011) study of Afro-Brazilian religion. Hayes uses the concept of a “moral topography” to refer to a “local terrain of social relations, practices, ideas, and discourses

that classify people and spaces according to widely shared (although not uncontested) ideas about propriety, decency, and legitimacy" (2011:72).

Analytically speaking, the idea of a moral topography is helpful in two ways. Firstly, the concept allows us to think about identity and symbolic distinctions beyond simple differentiation. Instead, the idea of a moral topography is powerful in that it helps us think about people, groups, and practices regarding their position, distance, and relation to other aspects of social life. As Hayes explains, "categorical oppositions [are] part of a naturalized schema of identity construction that positioned the self about other bodies and spaces, each evaluated according to its putative moral status" (100).

Secondly, the idea of a moral topography is also helpful when trying to understand how notions of space, place, and geography influence and are influenced by collective identities. Like many Evangelical Christian communities, members of Casa Sobre la Roca differentiate between themselves and the world. These differentiations are based not just on ideas of what it means to be an Evangelical, but also on what the world is. By examining the symbolic boundaries used by members of Casa Sobre la Roca and relying on the framework of a moral topography, I ask the following questions: How do members of Casa Sobre la Roca ascribe moral value to specific people, groups, and practices, about space and place? How do these ascriptions change from one city to another?

Consistent with the work of other scholars, my analysis reveals is that members of Casa Sobre la Roca use markers of theological superiority and religious purity to differentiate themselves and position themselves as morally superior to Pentecostals, Catholics, and others (including people in other religions, "seculars," "new-age types," and atheists, and are broadly defined by the church's founders as part of "other systems" of belief). Additionally, in Madrid

people rely on geographical and spatial differentiation to distinguish between themselves and Pentecostal churches that meet in suburban warehouses. These distinctions reflect more than just theological differences separating Casa Sobre la Roca's approach to Christianity (known as "integral Christianity") from other groups, they also differentiate Casa Sobre la Roca (us) from and about other groups (them) based on class, decency, and appropriateness. This, in turn, gives members of Casa Sobre la Roca a sense of worth that extends beyond their religious identity.

While boundaries and identities shift as people move, the story in this chapter is also one of religious continuity. While boundaries must be reestablished, shifted, and reimagined in order to stay relevant, the core of the churches' identities remain the same. Adaptation is constrained not just by external factors such as demographics, but also by Casa Sobre la Roca's ideas about what "true" Christianity must be like.

In the following sections, I break down the major types of boundaries that people draw between themselves and others. I begin by focusing on the use of moral boundaries that members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami and Madrid draw against other Catholics and against their former Catholics selves.

Boundaries with Roman Catholics[30]

Of all the symbolic boundaries and distinctions that people used in Miami and Madrid, none were more consistent across sites than the distinction members of Casa Sobre la Roca made between themselves as Evangelicals and Roman Catholics. This distinction makes sense, especially when examined from Smith's understanding of subcultural identity, which states that "social groups construct and maintain collective identities by drawing symbolic boundaries that create distinctions between themselves and relevant outgroups" (1998:91). As explained in detail

[30] I use the terms Roman Catholic and Catholic interchangeably.

in the introduction, most Colombians grow up Catholic, even if just nominally (Cooperman et al. 2014). Furthermore, most Colombians who currently identify as Evangelical grew up as Catholics. Consistent with those statistics, the overwhelming majority of the people I encountered at Casa Sobre la Roca had grown up in Catholic households and had practicing relatives and friends. Thus, it was not surprising that the most common symbolic differentiation member made was to distinguish Evangelicals from Catholics.

Members of Casa Sobre la Roca in both cities made these distinctions primarily on the grounds of religious differences, claiming that Evangelicals in general and Casa Sobre la Roca in particular provided a more real version of Christianity. Prioritizing scripture over ritual, emphasizing more recent and "accurate" translations of the Bible, and challenging Catholic devotion to Virgin Mary were common forms of symbolic differentiation used by members of the churches in Madrid and Miami. By claiming to practice a purer and realer version of Christianity, members of Casa Sobre la Roca turned the "essence" component of their identity (first mentioned in the introduction) into a powerful tool for group cohesion and social distinction.

These distinctions were most evident in the new member classes I attended in both cities. At both churches, the classes used the same instructional materials, including lesson books designed in the church' headquarters, and PowerPoint presentations designed to supplement the books. In addition to the lesson books and PowerPoint presentations, instructors introduced their personal experiences when teaching the class. These convert classes, as Galonnier and de los Rios (2015) explain, relied on particular pedagogical strategies to teach recent converts how to be religious.

One of the lessons that every student was required to pass to complete the class was called "El Manual del Fabricante" (the Manufacturer's manual) and focused on the Bible and how to

use it daily. When I participated in the class in Madrid, Geovanny, whom we met in the previous chapter, was the teacher in charge that day. Geovanny went through the lesson following the guidebook. As with the activity structures of other prior lessons, the instructor read a question and one of the students answered by reading a passage from the bible. Once the passage was read by a volunteer student, the rest of the class would write down the answer or fill in a blank in the lesson books. While most of the instructors usually followed the lesson book closely, Geovanny went off-script this day. With his usual casualness that bordered on goofy, Geovanny started talking about what he felt were the biggest distinctions between Evangelicals and Catholics. He began by talking about what he considered to be one of the main differences between the groups, and a central component of church identity (described in the introduction): bibliocentrism, or the idea that the scripture is at the center of Christian identity and life. He contrasted CSR's bibliocentrism with the Catholic tendency to incorporate things that weren't in the Bible. According to Geovanny, nowhere was this more clear than with the role of the Pope in the Catholic Church. He noted that any mention of the figure of the Pope or prescription to locate the central authority of the church in Rome never appear in the Bible,.

That same day, Geovanny also made a distinction between Catholics and Evangelicals based on the translations of the Bible each group used and explained that evangelicals used a translation of the Bible (the Nueva Version Internacional, the Spanish equivalent of the NIV translation) that was not only more recent but also a more accurate and more accessible than the version used by Catholics (the Reina Valera translation). Students in the class shared anecdotes of their experiences, trying to make sense of the Reina Valera's convoluted and anachronistic language. People laughed when Geovanny compared reading the Reina Valera to reading certain

antiquated poetry. Everyone agreed that no even people in Spain spoke Spanish that way and that no one had spoken like that for who knew how long.

As I sat in class and listened to Geovanny, I tried to remember what I had learned as a Religious Studies major during my undergraduate years. At the same time, I realized that the accuracy of his claims did not matter as long as the people took the distinction seriously. What was important was that people made these distinctions regularly, as many members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami and Madrid emphasized that Catholicism incorporated a lot of non-biblical elements (such as the worship of Saints and the devotion to Virgin Mary, both of which are very prevalent in South American and Spanish Catholicism).

Just like Geovanny made a distinction between Catholics who saw the Pope as an authority, other church members often differentiated themselves from the Catholic friends and relatives who believe that by worshiping specific Saints they would compel God intervene on their behalf in specific ways. Since these elements were not in the Bible (and were considered “tradition” rather than scripture), Evangelicals are able to both draw a boundary and paint themselves as more legitimate Christians than Catholics.

Connected to the issue of Papal authority and the Pope's role in the Catholic Church, members of Mountain Church also drew distinctions between themselves and Catholics arguing that as Evangelicals they had a more personal and unmediated relationship with God. Derek, who moved to Madrid to study medicine, was telling me about one of his fellow medical school students who was also an ordained nun. He told me about a conversation with his classmate and explained that he revealed that he had a problem with the way nuns and priests approached religion: "I think being that devoted to God is a beautiful profession […] I wish God would call on all of us to serve like that. However, many of these people distance themselves from their

congregation, they withdraw from other people precisely to find a space of purity and sanctity with God, and then they have lost the connection with their brothers, with the other believers, and they have built a barrier." Derek's image of what a nun or a priest is supposed to be like paints Catholicism as a religion that emphasizes otherworldly asceticism to the extreme, and in doing so, emphasizes the fact that as an Evangelical Christianity is more real and more connected to people and their experiences.

Expanding on why he thought that this barrier separating Catholic nuns and priests from people was problematic, Derek explained: “The Catholic priest is behind an altar, and you sit there, feeling completely separate from this person who appears like a saint and clearly you are no saint, and this person is not doing anything to ‘come down’ and get closer to you, to help you get closer to God, which is what they [priests and nuns] are supposed to be doing.” While Derek admired their devotion, he felt like this dynamic generated unnecessary distance between people and God. Casa Sobre la Roca’s approach to Christianity, on the other hand, solved this issue by providing a direct and unmediated connection to God.

The importance of this direct and unmediated connection to God also came up in conversations about the role of religious leaders in the church, especially in connection to Catholicism. Like Derek's discomfort with a removed and distant clergy of the Catholic Church, other members of the church expressed feeling like Evangelical Christianity and Casa Sobre la Roca had a better approach to positions of authority and priesthood. Whenever people talked about the role of pastors and leaders in the church, they always recognized that these people were there as guides or teachers, rather than mediators. People used phrases such as "the Lord is my

pastor, but the pastor is not my lord" to express their opposition to a tendency to worship individuals over God. [31]

The symbolic differentiation used by Colombian Evangelicals to distinguish themselves from Catholics didn't just separate Casa Sobre la Roca from everyone else, but also separated the new (and better) Evangelical self from the old Catholic one, adding a temporal element distinguishing people as they are (or ought to be) versus how they used to be. This form of differentiation is particularly important because most Colombians and most members of Casa Sobre la Roca grew up and still lived in predominantly Catholic environments. However, it would be erroneous to assume that because most people grew up in Catholic families they had similar experiences. In fact, my interviews and conversations with Casa Sobre la Roca members revealed the complexity and diversity of the Colombian Catholic experience. During my interviews, I asked members about their religious backgrounds. Their answers would fall on a spectrum between those who grew up in religious households and considered themselves devout Catholics to those who had grown up nominally Catholic and only attended religious services occasionally. By contrast, only two people, both who were in their early 20s, had grown up in Evangelical households (though households that had converted within a generation). None had grown up in a nonreligious or a differently religious background.

The majority of the people I interviewed grew up in nominally Catholic households. Gustavo's story is a exemplification of this kind of upbringing. A native of Bogota who was in his early 40s, Gustavo was married and with two children. He had a charismatic personality that was well known around the church. At the time of our interview, Gustavo had just been assigned to lead the young adults group in Miami (he has since been transferred to Orlando, where he and

[31] Other people used the same phrase when talking about the dangers of other Christian churches where people were more concerned with the pastor and his charisma than with developing closer relationships with God.

his wife now run another branch of Casa Sobre la Roca). When I asked him how religious he used to be, he told me he was “zero religious, I went to a religious [K-12] school and a religious university, but I was not religious at all.”

Other people grew up in very religious households. Jorge Ivan, 38 and married, was expecting his first child when I was finishing my fieldwork in Madrid. Jorge Ivan had never finished college, but he had successful career working in the human resources office of an insurance company. Jorge Ivan liked to joke and talk, at times exaggeratedly, about how religious his family was when he was growing up. Jorge Ivan attended a religious school most of his life and had grown up in a family with a strong devotion to Virgin Mary. Growing up he had attended a few weekend retreats focused on praying and studying the life of Mary. When he was in his early 20s, he joined Casa Sobre la Roca in Pereira, a medium-sized city in the coffee belt. Gustavo and Jorge Ivan’s backgrounds were at the opposite ends of a spectrum. Like Gustavo and Jorge Ivan, most of the people I interviewed had at one point attended religious institutions, ranging from progressive Jesuit universities to k-12 schools affiliated with neoconservative group Opus Dei.

The people I interviewed also varied in how they described their immediate family’s relation to their religion. Many of the people I spoke with had grown up with some version of what Miguel Angel de la Torre (2009) calls "abuelita theology," or “little grandmother theology.” According to de la Torre, Hispanic and Latin American Catholicism is often characterized by a strong reliance on women, especially older women, to transmit religious beliefs, practices, and spirituality within families. Correspondingly, many of the people I interviewed mentioned their grandparents (and in particular their grandmothers) as important figures in their religious lives. In cases where people grew up as practicing Catholics, grandparents were important role models

that shaped people's ideas about spirituality. In cases where people grew up more detached from the church and considered themselves nominally Catholic, abuelitas were the point of reference people used when talking about their (lack of) devotion and commitment to Catholicism.

Regardless of how religious people were growing up, every person I interviewed made a distinction between their old, Catholic self, and their new, born-again Evangelical self. Gustavo, for example, described his nominally Catholic upbringing as being a “disaster,” characterizing it as empty of any real religious content. "It was a shame," he told me. Like Gustavo, many people associated their old, Catholic selves with sin and worldly behavior. It was not uncommon for people to talk about excessive drinking, occasional drug use, and premarital sex as common behaviors from the past, all while claiming to be "Catholic."

Other people had more positive memories of their religious past but still drew a clear distinction. For example, many of the people I interviewed recalled their past religious lives as being overtly ritualistic. Jessica, a young college student who moved to Madrid with her family when she was a teenager, described her religious upbringing as being full of rituals: "We used to do the rosary and stuff, do Christmas *novenas* every year, because you know for them [Catholics] that is sacred.” Jessica was referring to common practices that constitute an important part of Colombian popular Catholicism, many of which are not approved by the official church.

Since becoming Evangelical Christians, however, people have changed. They have experienced what is commonly referred to as a *metanoia,* transformative change in one's heart and one's ways. Gustavo, who said his Catholic upbringing was a shame, now speaks with pride about both his commitment to Casa Sobre la Roca and evangelism in general. He calls himself a champion of Jesus. Likewise, Jessica explains that she has not only left behind the rituals

associated with her Catholic upbringing but many of the other things she used to do before becoming an Evangelical (including listening to secular music).

As Shoshana (2007) points out, these temporary differentiations between the old self and the new self highlight the transformative nature of group experience and membership. As members of a community of people who are mostly converts, the subcultural identity of members of Casa Sobre la Roca rests not just on a differentiation of "us" from "them," but also on a very strong differentiation of the "new" self from the "old" one, which is also associated with the relevant reference group.

Although the distinctions between Evangelicals and Catholics were mostly consistent across sites, there was one important difference. In Miami, Catholicism was associated with the old selves and with Colombian culture (as opposed to US culture). In Madrid, on the other hand, Catholicism was strongly linked with Spanish culture and history. As such, the boundaries church members created between Evangelism and Catholicism presented members of Casa Sobre la Roca with a paradox. On the one hand, as Evangelical Christians reject anything that isn't "pure" Christianity (i.e., in the Bible), they were inclined to reject many Catholic traditions like nativity scenes, *el dia de los Reyes* (a Spanish holiday celebrating the visit from the three wise men). On the other, as immigrants trying to fit in with their new society, they had to adapt to their new country and learn new customs.

Catholics were not the only group from which members of Casa Sobre la Roca differentiated themselves from. In the following section, I highlight the kind of symbolic boundaries that people drew between themselves and other Christian communities. Rather than simply showing which additional groups people differentiated themselves from, I also want to emphasize the extent to which church members mix moral boundary work with socioeconomic and cultural

boundary work, as Casa Sobre la Roca's middle-class identity also provides a strong basis for differentiation from other Protestant groups, especially Pentecostals, and from Jehovah's Witnesses. The status and class dimension of these distinctions is one that usually goes under-analyzed in sociological studies of religion.

Boundaries with Other Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses

Shortly after I started doing fieldwork in Miami, on a Saturday morning, I heard someone knock on my door. Assuming it was my landlord, who came by from time to time to give me fresh fruit or vegetables she had picked up from the market, I opened the door. I was shocked to find a two people from a nearby congregation who were doing the rounds in my neighborhood, inviting everyone to join them the following day for worship service. Since I was scheduled to do fieldwork at Casa Sobre la Roca the following morning, I respectfully declined the invitation. They proceeded to offer me a copy of The Watchtower, a magazine published and distributed by Jehovah's around the world. Only when I received the magazine did I realize their affiliation. They tried to start a conversation about the importance of reading the Bible and of doing so as part of a community. When I told them that I was a part of a nearby church where reading and studying the Bible were highly encouraged, both of them smiled, wished me a good day, and walked away.

As Omar McRoberts points out, "most city dwellers in the United States have at some point been approached by Witnesses on the street if not at their front doors" (2005:87). I would eventually get used to this kind of thing - it also happens from time to time in Chicago. However, that first time, I was surprised. After living in Madrid for seven months, I had completely forgotten about the fact that in certain neighborhoods in the United States, people walk around knocking on doors to talk to them about religion and to invite them to church. I lived in a small

carriage house that was in the backyard of a bigger residence, a place relatively removed from the main street. So it was strange to have someone walk in through the driveway to knock on my door.

Just a few weeks after the incident, during a prayer group at the church in Miami, one of the church members came wearing a suit and a tie, a surprising outfit considering the relaxed environment of the weekday meeting. Other people in the group poked fun of him, telling him he looked like Jehovah's Witness, calling him "brother" (unusual among church members, who addressed each other by their first names or by nicknames) and asking him when the next cult meeting would take place. What surprised me and caught my attention on that day was how people made fun of this particular member for being dressed up. Everyone who was around laughed and mocked the person, saying things like "please don't come knocking on my door" and so on. They sustained the joke throughout that night.

A few months before, during one of my final weeks of fieldwork in Madrid, I was invited to have dinner at the pastor's house to celebrate his son's birthday. On that day, something similar happened. Mauricio, a 35-year-old systems engineer from Bogota, showed up to the dinner after a job interview, wearing a dark pinstripe suit, a white shirt, and an elegant tie, with a leather binder and a notebook in his hand. When he walked in the living room, where the rest of us where having a glass of wine and talking, people joked that he looked like on of those Pentecostals who stood by the immigration authority offices outside of Madrid, waiting for immigrants to preach to them a watered-down version of the gospel. As had happened in Miami, people laughed and joked throughout the night, asking Mauricio if he was going to try and sell people a new Bible or if he was going to start asking for donations any time soon.

Jokes serve an important purpose for group life. As Fine and DeSoucey (2005) point out, jokes create comfort in group life by building commonalities. By engaging in joking, groups drawn symbolic boundaries, both in the content of a joke and in the differential response (Smith 2009). Furthermore, as Smith points out, Evangelicals operate "with a strong sense of boundaries that distinguish themselves from non-Christians and non-evangelical Christians" (Smith 1998:124).

However, the kind of jokes people made when making fun of those who were unusually dressed up also reveal an important kind of boundary work being made between members of Casa Sobre la Roca and other religious communities. Furthermore, although it was clear that Catholics were a relevant outgroup across both sites, the other groups that were members chose to distinguish themselves from varied across sites. While both of these boundaries differentiated members of Casa Sobre la Roca from the broad category of "other Christians," there were some indications that the composition of the category of "other Christians" were quite different in each city. In Miami, the most relevant "other Christian" group was Jehovah's Witnesses, while in Madrid it was Pentecostal Churches.[32]

This kind of variation is consistent with what other researchers have found among immigrant religious communities. It suggests that the development of immigrant religious identity and subjectivity is shaped by context, particularly to the extent that in different settings, people will encounter different reference outgroups (Chai 2001; Chen 2008). As I discuss below, research on immigrant religion has expanded Smith's subcultural identity theory to take into account ethnicity and national identity as essential factors in helping religious communities develop

[32] As mentioned in the introduction, these differentiations are a part of CSR's identity statement: "Entre Cristianos, unidad en la variedad. Con católicos y ortodoxos, convivencia en la diferencia. Frente a los demás sistemas, tolerancia en la distancia."

strong identities. In the section below, I contribute to this line of thinking by examining how class boundaries and notions of order, decency, and respectability influence the way members of Casa Sobre la Roca construct their collective identities. In the case of Madrid, in particular, I pay attention to issues of space and place to examine how people ascribe moral and class difference to churches, and how they use these distinctions to build their identity as members of a "healthy church."

Religious Boundaries as class distinction

As I have explained above, people did not always engage in boundary work using theological distinctions. Quite often, people would draw differentiations between themselves and other groups using a mix of cultural, socioeconomic, and geographic boundaries.

For example, when Mauricio described the transformation he had observed in some of his friends after they started attending church, he explained that “Christianity is for cultured people (gente culta), for people who want to learn, to build a foundation and from that foundation start working for the rest of their lives.” Like Mauricio, many people at Casa Sobre la Roca Madrid and Miami emphasized the importance of continuous learning as a central part of their religious identity. Rather than thinking about religion as something that one did once or twice a week, Casa Sobre la Roca emphasized a kind of Christianity that was more akin to an education.

Part of this emphasis on education was a result of the fact that most CSR members were converts and had to pass convert classes. It helped members of CSR differentiate themselves from other churches and prepare themselves for confrontations/discussions with non-Christians. Ideally, every church member was supposed to be educated enough about Christianity to be able to confront any of the criticisms or challenges they were likely to get from non-Evangelical relatives or friends.

Jessica, the college student introduced earlier in this chapter, explained that one of the things she enjoyed the most about CSR was the fact that the church emphasized studying and learning as important part of a Christian life. The way she saw it, people did not just go to church because it was what they were supposed to do, but in reading and learning about it, they developed an understanding of *why* they needed to do these things. By doing this, members of Casa Sobre la Roca were in a better position than other Christians to confront the criticism that they were likely to receive from non-Christians and to talk to interested people (friends and relatives) who might want to know more about Christianity. Jessica mostly spoke about the importance of studying, differentiating CSR from other, less educated churches where studying was not as important. By emphasizing education and knowledge, Casa Sobre la Roca achieved two goals. First, and quite explicitly, the church prepared members to deal with the challenges and questions they were likely to meet outside of the church. Equally important, and at times equally explicit, was the fact that by emphasizing education and self-advancement, CSR was promoting middle-class values, thus differentiating itself from churches where class and education might not be as important.

Another form of differentiation that blurred the line between the moral and the socioeconomic boundary was a distinction members of Casa Sobre la Roca drew between their church and churches that emphasized the "prosperity gospel." Diana was in her mid-thirties and had moved to Madrid from the north coast of Colombia. At the time of our interview, Diana was working part time for the church as an accountant. Additionally, she played in the band most Sundays and sang backup vocals. Diana was one of the most involved people I met at the church in Madrid. She was also one of the most welcoming. We met on a weekday after she was done with her work at the church. I invited her for coffee at a mall that was two metro stops from

CSR. When we started talking about her religious background, she explained that before finding Casa Sobre la Roca she had been going a church for many years before realizing it was the wrong place for her. Diana had been going to an Evangelical church for many years before moving to Spain, and when she moved, she started attending one of the first places she discovered. She explained that it was only after going to this church for a while that she started feeling uneasy about it, like something was not right. During our conversation Diana was careful not to say anything that would damage her former church's congregation, staying true to Casa Sobre la Roca's idea that among Christians there should be "unity in variety." However, when I told her she could tell me what she did not like without telling me the name of the church, she explained that she realized that this was "one of those popular churches that preach the prosperity gospel."

Diana's language was revealing in two ways. First, by referring to the church as an *iglesia popular* (popular church), she was not only referring to the church's success, but also to the church's socio-economic composition, specifically that most members were immigrants and working class. Secondly, by referring to the prosperity gospel and the fact that she found it problematic, Diana was making it clear that Casa Sobre la Roca was *not* like these churches. CSR was neither popular nor did it follow the prosperity gospel.

Like Diana, some of the people I talked to discussed feeling uneasy about churches that paid so much attention to money - not just giving the church money but also emphasizing Christianity as a way of making money. Jessica, whose comments about learning and education I discussed above, told me that the first time someone invited her to Casa Sobre la Roca she hesitated because she imagined it would be the kind of church where the pastor lived a luxurious life paid for by the money the church collected from tithing, while many church members struggled to

make ends meet. Jessica's idea of a luxurious church was common among people who expressed hesitation about visiting Casa Sobre la Roca for the first time.

This narrative was particularly salient during my time in Madrid. Concurrently to my fieldwork in Madrid, a news story broke in Colombia about a corruption scandal within the leadership ranks of Colombian Pentecostal church named Iglesia de Dios Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional (IDMJI). The scandal broke after a video from one of the sermons at one of IDMJIs churches was leaked to the press. In the video, church leader Maria Luisa Piraquive preached that people with disabilities could not preach at her church.[33] The video prompted an investigation that revealed other internal scandals and fiscal mismanagement within IDMJI. [34]

In Madrid, IDMJI represented the single most common Christian group that members of Casa Sobre la Roca drew distinctions from. Sometimes it was based on theological grounds, such as the IMDJI "prosperity gospel." Other times, the differentiation was more about style; people described IMDJI and other churches as loud and disorganized. Finally, in other occasions, people blended the theological and the stylistic boundaries when talking about common practices in Pentecostal churches like speaking in tongues, the use of faith-healing, prophecy, and other "gifts of the spirit." Repeatedly, interviewees said they felt that at other churches paid more attention to the gifts of the spirit and not enough attention to everything else.

While doing fieldwork in Miami I had the opportunity to attend two classes that focused on the same topic (the Holy Spirit) taught by different instructors. At the core, the classes were relatively similar: they used the same book and fill in the blank type activities and each had ample time for discussion. During one of these discussions, the issue of the issue of speaking in tongues (glossolalia) came up. One of the students asked Maritza, the volunteer instructor if it

[33] See http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-13362215
[34] See http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/partidos-politicos/escandalos-de-los-piraquive/14829655

was normal for people to speak in tongues during church services or during one of the monthly fasts. Maritza explained that "some churches that call themselves Christian have turned this into a relajo (mess)." She went on to explain that speaking in tongues was a legitimate gift from the spirit, but in some churches there was so much emphasis on speaking in tongues that people would fake it.

About a month later, the instructor of the second class, Iris, received a very similar question. She stopped reading from the book and told the class that speaking in tongues was not necessary, as some churches might suggest. She told us that many Pentecostal churches relied too heavily on the gifts of the spirit in order to appear vibrant and lively and attract more people. She claimed the best thing to do was to think of ourselves at Casa Sobre la Roca as "Pentecostals hitting the break and Baptists hitting the speed pedal," and explained that Pentecostals tended to be too emotional while Baptists tended to lack emotion by comparison. Iris explained that Casa Sobre la Roca was a more balanced church. Then she proceeded to read from the lesson book: "God's biggest interest is to reach our conviction before reaching our emotion. Thus it is important to have the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the way we carry our life."

Scholarship focused on Pentecostalism has highlighted this particular issue as the main differentiating factor between Pentecostals and other forms of Evangelicals. As Gaston Espinosa (2014) notes, the Pentecostal belief that speaking in tongues is physical evidence of Holy Spirit baptism separates Pentecostalism from other branches of Christianity. Likewise, renowned scholar of Pentecostalism David Martin notes, "the heart of the distinctive appeal of [Pentecostalism] lies in empowerment through spiritual gifts offered to all" (2002:1).

For an outside observer, these differences might seem to be purely stylistic or aesthetic. However, the fact that people regularly drew a boundary between themselves and Pentecostals,

especially with what many experts consider the defining element of Pentecostal identity, shows how important it is. Thus, while some sociologists (like Christian Smith) and some polling centers (like Gallup) might want to categorize Evangelicals with Pentecostals under the same umbrella, the reality is that at least for this group of Evangelicals, there is an essential difference between themselves and Pentecostals.

Casa Sobre la Roca does not completely minimize in the importance of speaking in tongues, or of the other gifts of the spirit. Rather, they believe that Pentecostals have overemphasized and misinterpreted the way the gifts of the spirit work. Peñaloza explained in one of our many conversations that for Casa Sobre La Roca, glossolalia is not a sign of baptism, but it is a "don" (talent or gift). He explained that people do not go around flaunting the fact that they can speak in tongues. As such, it is something that must be treated respectfully, with care.

Like many other people, Pastor Peñaloza used the language of order when explaining what was different about Casa Sobre la Roca from other churches, especially Pentecostal churches: "What we have is a *despelote* (chaos) of a bunch of Pentecostal churches and the so-called "garage churches," where anyone with just a little bit of knowledge decides to open a church, and that isn't bad. What is bad is that they aren't prepared. The bad thing is that they do disorderly things in the name of Christ, they do anti-biblical things, and that is really complicated."

The anti-biblical things that pastor Peñaloza is referring to include not just pretending to speak in tongues, but also use prophecy and faith healing, all of which are common in Pentecostal churches and IMDJI in particular. The underlying narrative in these differentiations indicate that while God does grant people the gifts of healing, speaking in tongues, and prophecy, Pentecostal churches have taken advantage of the emotional appeal of these kinds of

practices to attract people to their churches. By labeling this kind of practice as "unhealthy doctrine" (doctrina no sana), CSR was able to not only emphasize its religious superiority over Pentecostal churches but also its class difference. By emphasizing a more biblical approach to Christianity, members of Casa Sobre la Roca understood studying the scriptures as the most important method for spiritual growth. In doing so, they created and recreated a more "cultured" and sophisticated, but also biblical, form of Christianity, one that was more appealing to middle-class people or at least to their middle-class sensibilities.

In addition to differentiating themselves from Pentecostals on the theological grounds discussed above, members of Casa Sobre la Roca also distinguished themselves from other churches using the language of strictness. Not long ago sociologists of religion were convinced that strictness was a necessary condition for church strength and cohesiveness. The argument, first presented by Dean M. Kelley (1978, 1996) and later popularized by others like Laurence Iannaconne (1994), could be reduced simply to say that strict churches are stronger.

Whether or not they were aware of the sociological literature on strictness and religion or not, members of Casa Sobre la Roca drew a boundary between unnecessarily strict churches and their own church. Whether they were referring to dress codes or with the prohibition of alcohol, members of Casa Sobre la Roca rejected the "legalism" that they perceived to be common throughout some branches of Christianity.

Maritza, the volunteer instructor of the class mentioned above, spoke clearly about this in our interview. Like many of the other members of Casa Sobre la Roca I interviewed in both cities, Maritza invited me over to her house so we could talk comfortably. She lived in Miramar, a town directly of the Dade county limit. She lived by herself in a modest but spacious house. Her home decor reminded me of relatives' houses I would visit growing up, except Martiza did not display

any religious items. During our conversation, which took place in her living room, Martiza explained that she liked Casa Sobre la Roca because, compared to other churches, she was given more room to develop individually and to express herself, something she did not find in the Pentecostal church she attended before:

DD: You were telling me that before joining Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami, you attended a Pentecostal Church. Can you tell me a little bit more about that church? Why did you stop going?

Maritza: Well, the Pentecostal church I went to, I made great friends, I met a lot of great people, including the pastors, but I never got to identify with the … how would you say this… the doctrine of the church, because… it is not like they forced you to go with a long dress, have long hair, not wear makeup, etc. however, in that respect I always felt like I didn't fit in because I would wear slacks, or I was dressed differently […] When I came to Casa Sobre la Roca and learned about the difference between Pentecostalism and the integral church, which is our kind of church, I felt more comfortable; I felt more at home; I felt like this is what I wanted.

In the interview, Maritza referenced a trope many others I spoke mentioned regularly. This trope was also very much a part of the church's repertoire. Unlike many of the other churches they had visited, members claimed that Casa Sobre la Roca was a place where people could develop personal relationships with Jesus while still being themselves. According to my informants, the church was a place to grow, learn, pray and praise and not a place where they went to be told how to dress or what to eat. Here they made a distinction between unnecessary strictness (sometimes described as "legalism") and the more modern and relevant integral Christianity promoted by Casa Sobre la Roca.

As the vignette at the beginning of this chapter illustrated, members of Casa Sobre la Roca liked to think of their church as a moderate or a “middle of the road” church. This means that the church and its members constantly strive to find a balance between being both modern *and* biblical. That, of course, meant different things to different people, but there were some consistent themes that emerged when people described the different ways in which the church managed to do this.

For many people, having a middle of the road church meant that the church did not force people to behave in particular ways. In conversations at the church, CSR members often brought up dress codes. Like Maritza, Juan Jose mentioned dress styles to illustrate what he did not like about other churches and what he liked about Casa Sobre la Roca. When I asked why before coming to Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami he had avoided Christian churches, he explained that he "imagined a church with the women wearing a skirt down to her toes and her hair down to her waist and the men would all wear suits and ties, always, and they all carry a bible under their arm. That is why I was never attracted to it."

Casa Sobre la Roca was, by comparison, the kind of church where people had more freedom when it came to their wardrobe. And to a certain degree, this was true for the men. At any Sunday service, most members would wear denim jeans or sweatpants and a t-shirt. Occasionally, the church would chastise individuals who dressed a little too liberally, especially women. While they never critiqued church members personally, pastors often used sermons to send explicit messages about what was considered appropriate and what wasn't.

During one sermon, when Pastor Peñaloza was talking about how people needed to start trusting God rather than worldly things like money or their jobs, he began talking about a recent trend he had observed among members of the church who were becoming very "health

conscious." "I am not opposed to people going to the gym and being healthy," he told the congregation, "but I worry when people do this just because they want to look good... especially men who want to look good." Following this, he immediately switched the topic of the sermon to women in the church and how they need to watch how they dress: "[like men who work out to look good], women are so worried about their appearance that they will dress in certain ways, and like I have always said, when a woman is showing a lot of meat, she will find a butcher" (la que anda mostrando carne encuentra un carnicero). By butchers, Peñaloza was not referring to professional butchers but to men who are only interested in "carnal" desires. This was not the only time pastor Peñaloza used phrases like this; he even admitted that he "always said" this. This kind of talk emphasized decency, especially for women, as an essential element of an Evangelical's life.

For others, they chose the church over others because it was lively. In Spain, for example, many of the people described liking the church because it was "guay" - an idiom used by Spaniards to say something was cool. Interestingly, many of the people who referred to Christianity as being "cool" in Madrid also spoke about how Christianity was about continuous learning and self-improvement. To promote the idea of a cool church, the pastor and some of the leaders regularly came up with plans and events that would attract young people.

Finally, the church differentiated itself from other Christian communities that were withdrawn and distanced from the world. This form of differentiation made sense because Casa Sobre la Roca's identity statement recognized the importance of being *in* the world. Jorge, who worked as a leadership coach for business people in Madrid, told me that the kind of integral Christianity he saw in Casa Sobre la Roca was more up to date and down to earth than a lot of the Protestantism he witnessed in other places and especially in the past. When I asked him what

he meant, he explained that many people, including some Christians, assumed Evangelicals were like the dumb kid in the classroom, always quiet "with the Bible under their arm going around mumbling "I cannot do this, and I can't do that.'" Jorge explained that he found this to be highly problematic since it caused many Christians to be completely withdrawn from the world. "We are all children of God, of course, we have to be around other people and quite on the contrary, we have to bring happiness to others, having a strong identity and knowing that there are some things you won't negotiate, but being with others."

Like Jorge, almost everyone I spoke with recognized that being in the world was a necessity among Christians. Although I will focus on the specific strategies that each church used in the following chapter, it is important to recognize and highlight how people used the language of being in the world as a boundary marker. Jorge, for example, differentiated between those "christianoids" (a word he used regularly that I believe refers to a mix between Christian and android) who carry a bible under the arm and the more real and modern Christian, the kind of Christian Casa Sobre la Roca tried to form. Other people used similar language to differentiate between those who are Christians just for show and who carry a Bible under their arm and the true Christians who carry Jesus in their hearts. Finally, other people differentiated between Christians (and Catholics) who were completely withdrawn from the world such as nuns or priests, as was described in the earlier section about boundaries people draw between themselves and Catholics.

Group Bonds and Church Identity

Symbolic differentiation like those described above are necessary for groups to have a cohesive identity. They help people distinguish between those who belong and those who do not and provides a mental map or topography that locates people according to their worthiness.

These differentiations, binary and oppositional in some instances or categorical and relational in others, provide people with coordinates in the moral topography.

However, group identity does not survive on differentiation alone. As I argue below, group bonds - the "stuff" that link people together - are also important elements of group life. I begin with a conversation about group bonds and links, the shared ideas about what the church collective is (rather than what it is not). I then focus on an example of these links - their music choices - to highlight how each church decides to perform their identity. Next I highlight how differences in the musical styles represent the different ways in which each group envisions their identity as a group and their place in their host country.

Congregational Culture: Family Church Vs. Community Church]

While much of the identity work that people engage in centers on defining who they are not, there was also a lot of identity work to emphasize who they were - defining and articulating what people in the group have in common without necessarily referring to an outside group. As Eliasoph and Lictherman (2003) note, group bonds are an important aspect of what they call “group styles.” While Eliasoph and Lictherman (2003) define group bonds as “members’ sense of mutual responsibilities to each other,” my conceptualization of group bonds is broader.

My conceptualization of group bonds also includes symbolic and emotional ties linking individuals to larger communities. I conceptualize of group bonds to include what Levitt and Glick Schiller (Levitt and Schiller 2004) call ways of being and ways of belonging. Ways of being refers to the "actual social relations that individuals engage in" while ways of belonging refers to "practices that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group" (Levitt and Schiller 2004:1010). Group bonds operate as cultural objects (Griswold 1987) that are produced by group members and consumed by at least three audiences:

first, group members are consumers or and consumed by members of the group; second, potential new converts, including relatives and friends of current members; and finally, people who come in contact with church members, even if they are not the targets of evangelism.

Some of these bonds are religious links, mainly lacking any national or ethnic character. Members of Casa Sobre la Roca in both Miami and Madrid (and probably in all the churches in Colombia) share relatively similar ideas about what kind of church they want. In one of the questions I asked all of my interviewees, I inquired about the DNA of the church. People almost always replied using similar language about the importance of community and the importance of the church as a family.

In Madrid, Church members usually described Casa Sobre la Roca as a family. Most of the people knew each other, and the church was small enough that whenever there was a first-time visitor, church members did their best to spot them and make sure they felt welcomed. The family-like orientation of the church influenced how the group approached evangelism. During Sunday services, the size and family culture of the church meant people recognized newcomers easily; I experienced this first-hand on my first visit to the church in Madrid. In addition to the Sunday services, the church regularly hosted dinners or small concerts, and members of the congregations could invite their non-Evangelical friends knowing that they would be warmly welcomed into the church. It also meant that if a church member or group of members stopped attending services regularly, congregants would notice and follow up. People shared a mission to "grow together in Christ," through learning, prayer, and service. As a result, the church in Madrid had a tiered volunteering structure with different positions assigned to different people depending on the time they had belonged to the church and the number of (church offered

classes) they had completed. Despite being a relatively small community, the church had figured out a way to offer opportunities for everyone.

While a handful of people in Miami told me that they thought of the church as a family, most of the people stated that Casa Sobre la Roca felt like a community. From an outsider's perspective, one could describe CSR Miami as a community of communities, people became members of the church primarily through involvement in one or more of the church's groups, such as the young adults or the men's groups. Because the church was significantly bigger, it was clear that not everyone knew each other on an individual level, although they did know the members of their small groups. Furthermore, while serving in the church was important, and there were many opportunities for people to serve, service was not necessarily available to everyone. Instead, membership in a church group was a prerequisite for serving. Though the church in Miami was twice as big as the church in Madrid, it did not have as many opportunities for people to serve outside small groups. Instead, the church fostered group belonging through active participation in the groups that meet throughout the week and that organize a lot of the events where members could bond The community orientation of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami also influenced the church's approach to evangelism. While people did invite friends and relatives to come to the church, the group primary focus was to go out and engage with non-members. In the following chapter I explore in more detail the specific differences of how each group approached evangelism.

These relatively shared understandings of what the church is like are not unique to Casa Sobre la Roca. As Edgell (1999) has shown, congregations develop cultures and these cultures include shared understandings of group identity or answers to the question of who we are.

Metaphors to the church as the family and the church as a community are among the most common among ways of defining group culture in Edgell's study of twenty-three congregations.

The Varieties of Ethnonational Bonds: The Ethnic Church and Bi-National Church

In addition to sharing ideas about what kind of church they were, members of Casa Sobre la Roca also expressed feeling connected to other members of their church by a sense of a shared past or a shared heritage. To different degrees, people at Casa Sobre la Roca expressed feeling linked to other members of the church using what Walker Connor (1993) calls the "ethnonational bond." Walker refers to the ethnonational bond to make sense of the emotional perceptions and collectively held ideas of a shared past. In the following section, I explore how members deploy different ideas of a shared past and a shared ethnic/national identity in each church. I argue that in Miami, the church relies on a (pan)ethnic notion of identity that extends beyond Colombians to include all Latinos. In Madrid, on the other hand, the church must reconcile its immigrant identity with its desire to be a Spanish church. In doing so, the church develops a bi-national identity (Colombian *and* Spanish). While these differences were evident in conversation and throughout church activities, I highlight one particular area in which they were particularly salient: music.

Musical Worship and Ethnic Identity

On my first visit to Casa Sobre la Roca Miami, the very first thing I noticed was how much bigger the nave - the principal room where services are usually held - at this church is compared to the nave in Madrid. The large church building in Miami, adapted from an old television studio, stood in sharp contrast from the residential house used by the congregation in Madrid.

The second difference I noticed was the music. I had grown accustomed to the rock-like music played by the small band in Madrid. Although it was not my preferred style of music, it

was closer to what I listened on my own. However, in Miami things were different. Not only was the stage bigger; the music was also bigger. The band had at least ten musicians (later I would find out they rotated depending on the service and on the weekend). The music they played was not just Christian music; it was *Latin* Christian Music.

Most of their songs were influenced by Latin rhythms like salsa, vallenato, merengue, or cumbia. From time to time, they would play a rock song, but even when they did so, they would add bongos, timbales, and congas. My lack of knowledge about music made it hard to describe these differences as I was taking field notes, so I often improvised as best as I could. For example, I noticed the singer would usually have claves (a pair of wooden sticks) which he would use to set the rhythm (usually a 2-3 or a 3-2) for the rest of the band. Sometimes the band would have one or two of the backup singers play maracas. As far as I could tell, none of the people playing in the band were professional musicians, but on Sunday mornings, it felt like a professional production had been put together for the congregation.

The Miami band was strikingly different from the relatively small band used by the church in Madrid. Four, sometimes five volunteers, usually in their late teens and early twenties, played a set of drums, a guitar, sometimes a bass, and a keyboard. Usually one, but sometimes two, people sang and played a backing instrument like a second guitar and the rest of the band would do the backing vocals. While the music played by the church in Miami can be described as Latin, it was very light (if not washed-out) pop-rock music.

Despite their different musical repertoires, which I expand on below, the churches shared a passion for music, a passion that is probably widespread in Evangelical churches across the world. It is easy to understate the centrality of music for congregational life in both Miami and Madrid. Every church activity began and ended with music. Worships services started with a full

hour of musical worship led by the band. Smaller meetings usually began with collective singing that lasted ten minutes to half an hour. In many ways, the lively music was a way of "warming up" and charging people's emotional energy, getting them in sync and fully ready for what was next. During longer events, such as the once-a-month fasts in Madrid or the yearly 24-hour fast in Miami, music recharged people to get through intensive spiritual sessions. It gave people an opportunity to get on their feet and move around. The songs were relatively repetitive and easy to follow and sing along to. Second perhaps only to prayer, music worship (alabanza, as people call it) was the greatest generator of emotional energy.

Across both sites - and indeed across many Evangelical churches - worship music is structured similarly. Its lyrics are easy to learn and sing along to, and equally important, they contain memorable catchphrases and lines, most of which are adaptations or variations of biblical verses. One such song is Chris Tomlin's "Nuestro Dios," [35] which features a buildup after the chorus that leads to a bridge that repeats "If God is for us, then who is against us?" more than half a dozen times. Likewise, Hillsong's "No Other Name"[36] ends with that phrase "there is no other name, there is no other name," repeating over and over again while the instrumental music fades out.[37] As the music is fading out, the pastor or band-leader takes over and leads the congregation in prayer, usually taking a hook form the song's lyrics to get people started.

Anthropologists T. M. Luhrmann's work on the Vineyard church illustrates the importance of music in Evangelical churches: "This God is intensely human in this music, and the singer wants him so badly that the lyrics sound like a teenage fan's crazed longing for a teen idol she can touch. Unlike older church hymns, you do not sign about God but to God, directly to him in the

[35] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpM6N55qvYk
[36] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BuifDijlFY
[37] Both the Hillsong and the Tomlin song were more popular in Madrid than in Miami. They are both translations of English songs.

second person, and with unbridled yearning […] But this God is also a supernatural substance. These worship songs suggest that you, the singer, feel him in your body, like bones in your thighs and blood in your arteries" (2012:5).

Lyrics, however, are not enough to elicit the kind of emotional response one sees during religious meetings at Evangelical churches. People also raise their arms, sing out loud, and are encouraged to dance or move however they think it is necessary. While the entire group is singing as one, the musical parts of congregational life are at once filled with collective effervescence and individualistic self-expression. As I sit here writing about musical worship and listen to the songs, these songs remind me that when I was doing my fieldwork, I shared those feelings, even if just momentarily. I am reminded of the fact that at one point I too felt a little like the people I was observing.

While both churches followed similar approaches to music in the sense that they included it in the same events and for about equal length, there was significant variation was in the styles of music that each church chose for its services. The church in Miami played songs form a variety of Latin and Latin American Christian artists, mostly artists like Marcus Witt, Jesus Adrian Romero, and Alex Campos. Take for example songs like Marcus Witt's "Renuevame"[38] and Alex Campos' "Al Taller del Maestro,"[39] Both of which borrow heavily from more popular (and secular) Latin genres like bachata and son Cubano respectively. These songs tended to be heavily influenced by pop music, and like most Christian songs, followed relatively predictable patterns that made them ideal for musical worship (they were repetitive, catchy, and have easy to remember chorus). They also contained certain elements or markers like guitar riffs, percussion

[38] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNHtwDiRI50
[39] httaps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlwPoKbH5tw

instruments, and call-and-reply sections that distinguish them from other kinds of Christian pop, especially the Christian “soft rock” that was more common in Madrid.

While the church in Miami was playing these Latin-infused songs, most of which were written by Latin American and Latino artists, the church in Madrid relied primarily on songs that were originally written by America and European performers . Among the most popular songs played by the band in Madrid were translations of Hillsong’s (which I mentioned above), Chris Tomlin, and Su Presencia’s translation of Darlene Zschech’s "In Jesus' Name." Although these songs shared some of the same characteristics as the songs described above (easy to remember lyrics, call & response), musically speaking they were closer to rock and pop than they were to any Latin genre.

This isn’t to say that people in Madrid did not listen to Latin American artists and that people in Miami didn’t listen to non-Latin artists. In fact, when I asked people what kind of music they listened to in their private time there was little variation between cities (although there were other forms of variation worth exploring somewhere else, like region of origin and age). The big difference was the kind of music that was played during religious events.

More often than not, musical choices are seen as a reflection of a church’s composition, especially as it relates to education and class (Ammerman 2005; Chaves 2009). Research on American congregations, for example, shows that having a choir in church is correlated with higher levels of education and higher family incomes (Ammerman 2005:39). Likewise, music choices are related to the racial and ethnic composition of a church (Marti 2009).

But musical choices do more than simply reflect a group's identity. As Allison Schnabel (2012) shows, music doesn't just reflect existing social relations, it also forges them. When people engage in what musicologists Christopher Small (2011) calls musicking, they are making

an affirmation of who they are: "Those taking part in a musical performance are in effect saying—to themselves, to one another, and to anyone else who might be watching or listening—This is who we are" (Small 2011:134).

While engaging in musical activities is important for generating emotional energy (Collins 2014), musical content and musical style are also important in the construction of bonds, to God and the group. The stylistic elements (rhythm, beat, etc.) that differentiate one kind of music from another are also important identity elements. Again, music constitutes one example what recent scholarship on transnationalism and diaspora call the diaspora aesthetics. Ethnic and transnational communities are not just imagined, they are "felt" through the shared experiences like music.

How then do we make sense of the musical differences between the two churches? Music was one way in which an important difference between the two churches emerged. In a nutshell, these differences reflect the fact that over time, the churches develop different collective identities vis-a-vis their host societies. Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami embraced the pan-ethnic Latino identity, whereas the church in Madrid tried to emphasize a more "neutral" and non-ethnic identity as a way of trying to reducing differentiation from their host society.

National and Pan-ethnic Identities Beyond Music

These differences in musical choices also reflect the way that people spoke about what they felt was their church's identity. In one instance, one of the group leaders in Miami explained that Casa Sobre la Roca Miami was a "Latino Church where most people happened to be Colombian." This sentiment was echoed in conversations with a few of the non-Colombian members of the church in Miami, who told me that they always felt at home in Casa Sobre la Roca because, despite the fact that most of the people and the leaders were Colombian, the

church was a Latino church. In Madrid, on the other hand, people expressed wanting to have a church that was first and foremost Spanish, while still maintaining the Colombian roots of the first Casa Sobre la Roca.

As I explained in the introduction, both churches had relatively similar demographic characteristics. The vast majority of the people who went to Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami were Colombian. Because valid data on church membership was unavailable, I had to rely on reports from the pastor and other church administrators, who agree that between 85 and 90% of the church's 600 members are Colombian. Likewise, Pastor Peñaloza in Madrid estimated that a little over 95% of the church's 350 members are Colombian.

In both churches, the majority of non-Colombian members were from other Latin American countries, although there were some minor differences in the composition of these groups. In Miami, the church had a small group of Argentinians, some Central Americans, and some Venezuelans. In Madrid, on the other hand, most of the non-Colombians were from Ecuador, and there was a handful of people from the Dominican Republic who frequented the church but were never considered regulars. The church in Madrid claims to have had a small number of Spanish-born members who had relocated for work reasons before I began doing my fieldwork.

Demographically speaking, both churches were quite similar. And yet when people spoke about the kind of church that they wanted, their answers varied significantly. For people in Madrid, the ideal Casa Sobre la Roca was going to be a church where everyone, especially Spaniards, would feel welcome.

While there was no easy way of knowing the demographics of new members in Madrid, during my fieldwork, I determined the general composition of new members was by attending "welcome" lunches organized for those who had recently joined the church. Every other month,

the church organized a meal to welcome people who had come to the congregation for the first time over the past seven weeks. While in Madrid, I attended this lunch twice: once as a new member and once as a volunteer to serve food and help with clean up. On both occasions, the general makeup of the new members strongly resembled the makeup of the church. Of the 30 or so people who came to the lunch each time, most of them were Colombian. The others tended to be Ecuadorian and Dominican, and I only saw one Spanish person at these lunches, but I never saw him attend the church after this.

Though the church did not have any Spanish church members, this does not discourage the church from emphasizing its "Spanish" identity. While the music appeared to be "non-ethnic," during sermons and classes (such as the "New Life" class for converts), there was much talk about the best way to be Spanish. Members spoke of respecting elected officials (even if religiously speaking, the church disagreed with their opinions), following simple laws like noise ordinances and traffic laws, and more importantly, working to get people's legal situation sorted out. Pastor Peñaloza and other church leaders were aware of the fact that Colombian immigrants have a negative reputation in Spain - they are often associated with drug trafficking and, by proxy, drug consumption. Because of this, as immigrants and as Christians, it is the responsibility of members of Casa Sobre la Roca to sort things out and be the best citizens they can.[40]

People also expressed a desire to fit in with Spanish culture as much as possible, such as in the example of the conversation about wine drinking described I described at the beginning of

[40] This is what I call a “becoming Christian by becoming Spanish” which is the opposite of what is usually thought of as ‘becoming American by becoming Christian."
The directionality is reversed: people must first get their business together in Spain as a sign that they are good Christians because a good Christian is a good citizen.
In the US, religion is seen as a proxy for belonging, and religious communities are pathways for participating in civil society, so to become a Christian is in one way to become an American.

this chapter. Overall, people in the church saw it as their duty to try and become as Spanish as possible and to try to diminish the ethnic differences between them and their host society.

Unlike the church in Madrid, people in Casa Sobre la Roca Miami were more open to the idea of having a hyphenated identity. On multiple interviews and conversations, when I asked people what kind of church Casa Sobre la Roca was, they did not have to think twice before telling me it was a Latino Church.

While other immigrant churches in the Miami area to hold services in English, Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami decided long ago to conduct most of its business in Spanish. Part of that was a reflection the founder's mission to create an integral church that would bring Christianity to all of "Hispanoamerica" (a Spanish term for the Spanish speaking countries in America - different from Iberoamerica, which would include Spain). However, it was also a reflection of the fact that in Miami, one can get by without learning English, and many of the kids of Colombian immigrants grow up speaking Spanish.

Another contributing factor in the development of a hyphenated identity is the fact that, unlike its counterpart in Madrid, where the leadership was entirely made up of Colombians, Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami had multiple leaders from other Latin American countries. This was in part a reflection of the church's history in Miami: its very first pastor was an Argentinean who had lived in Colombia, where he converted to Christianity.

Additionally, it was also a reflection of the city's diverse demographics. In 2010, over 65% of the Miami-Dade population identified as Hispanic.[41] If Casa Sobre la Roca wants to grow in Miami, there is no immediate need to attract non-Latinos, since the city’s large Hispanic population means there will always be a niche market for ethnic churches.

[41] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/12086

Finally, it is important to take into account the fact that there are important macro-level differences in how diversity is viewed in each place. First, there are national differences between the United States and Spain in regards to the importance and acceptance of pan-ethnic identity. While the United States (and in particular places like Miami) have seen the development of strong pan-ethnic movements and identities (Mora 2014), there have been such identity-based movements in Spain.

Relatedly, the U.S. and Spain differ in how they deal with diversity; each country have different models. These differences impact the way groups this of themselves vis vis-a-vis their host society. These, in turn, influence the way groups will engage with the outside world, which is the topic of the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on different elements that make up the collective culture of each congregation. I have focused on boundaries and bonds of group membership to highlight the similarities and differences of how people in each city think, and act, as members of a larger collective that link them to Colombia and their host country.

There are some things worth highlighting in closing this particular chapter. First, by expanding my analysis of boundaries by thinking about what Hayes calls a "moral topography," I have tried to highlight the way in which ethnic, moral, and class boundaries intersect. I note this because while recent research on religion has begun paying attention to the role of race and ethnicity, especially research immigrant religion, much of these discussions have omitted any serious consideration for class and status. I have tried to fill this lacuna by showing how religious and class ideas often influence each other and manifest themselves in the process of symbolic distinctions.

Secondly, I have tried to extend the discussion of collective identity beyond boundaries. While I agree that boundaries are an important part of group life, and in particular in the formation and maintenance of Evangelical identity, I find them to be insufficient explanatory factors. In other words, any serious analysis of collective identity must take group bonds into consideration.

Finally, I have tried to highlight both similarities and differences in collective boundaries and group bonds in an attempt to understand how place shapes collective identity. My approach is inspired by Japonica Brown Saracino's (2015) call for scholars to do a "sociology of variation." Recently, Brown Saracino has shown that collective identity develops vis-a-vis specific features or elements of a city/place. While a superficial reading of this chapter might support a similar conclusion, it is important to highlight that these two churches have more commonalities than differences. However, rather than contradicting Brown Saracino's conclusion, my findings simply highlight that in the case of transnational organizations and communities, place matters – but it is not the only thing that matters. In the following chapter, I look at how members of Casa Sobre la Roca take the core of their collective identity – that they are Evangelical Christians – and turn it into collective action.

Chapter 4 Doing Evangelism: Private and Public Religion in Miami and Madrid

This chapter examines the different evangelism strategies members of the two churches use. Picking up from the previous chapters that focused on how individual religious narratives and collective identity change after migration, this chapter shifts the focus to collective action. Specifically, I focus on church members' organized efforts to publicly share their religion, actions that I broadly fit under the category of evangelism. While scholars have traditionally understood evangelism as a form of religious marketing, fueled primarily by competition, this chapter argues for a reconceptualization of evangelism as a form of "doing religion." The analysis illustrates how contextual differences influence the way people in each city practice their religion. I focus on three distinct dimensions of evangelism: First, I highlight different ways people conceptualize and practice evangelism; second, I examine variation regarding where to evangelize; and finally, I highlight views and practices regarding who should be the target of evangelism. By contrasting these three dimensions, I argue that members of the church in Miami engage in what can best be described as *public evangelism*, whereas those in Madrid participate in *private evangelism*. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what these findings and reconceptualization tell us about broader debates regarding religion and immigration.

Keywords: evangelism, religious practice, doing religion.

On the evening of Wednesday, July 16, 2013, a group of 80 people gathered in Casa Sobre la Roca Madrid. About 30 of these people were first-time visitors to the church who were there to attend a concert by artist Osman Perez. Perez, a Colombian folk singer who is moderately famous in Colombia, performed an intimate "unplugged" concert in celebration of Colombian independence. Perez had made a career singing *vallenato*, a Colombian folk genre of music originally from the northern part of the country but now popular nationwide. The church advertised the event through social media and word of mouth, asking members to invite their non-Christian friends and relatives. During the event, Pastor Andres Peñaloza and some of the lay-leaders approached newcomers and invited them to Sunday's service and made themselves available to answer any questions about the church.

Just a year later, on Sunday, July 20th, 2014, about 30 Casa Sobre la Roca Miami members gathered in the parking lot of Miami's Sun Life Stadium where some 8,000 people, most of them Colombian, attended a festival celebrating the anniversary of the Colombian independence. The group of CSR Miami members was there to evangelize and invite strangers to their church, located just 10 minutes away. As members walked around approaching strangers, the pastor and a group of experienced lay-leaders stationed themselves at a nearby tent, ready to talk to visitors, answer questions, and, if needed, pray for them.

Both of the examples above illustrate a central component of Evangelical Christianity in general, and of Casa Sobre la Roca in particular: that to be a good Christian, one must also spread the good news and evangelize to others. While much of the research on evangelizing approaches it as a form of religious marketing done with the primary objective of organizational growth, I conceptualize evangelism as a performance of a collective identity. For members of

Casa Sobre la Roca, the act of sharing their faith with other people becomes a performance of and confirmation of their identity as Evangelical Christians.

Throughout my fieldwork, I observed that *how* people evangelized varied from city to city. In Madrid, people relied heavily on close personal networks. Most people shared their religion with close friends and relatives. When the church organized an event to attract new members, such as the concert, they tended to do so privately, either inside the church or in a rented venue. The church in Madrid seemed to operate under the understanding that it was best to get people inside the church before trying to evangelize to them. By comparison, members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami were more likely to reach outside of their close networks, sharing their religious convictions with co-workers, acquaintances, and strangers. Furthermore, Casa Sobre la Roca Miami organized regular outings where members went together to public spaces with the sole objective of evangelizing.

From a sociological perspective, these differences presented an empirical puzzle: If both churches belong to the same religious tradition and organization, how can we explain the difference in how they engage with the world? To make sense of these differences, I argue that we should understand their practices as operating on a spectrum ranging from "private" at one end to "public" in the other. Members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami practice what I call "public evangelism," which relies heavily on proselytizing efforts where members of the church approach strangers in public and non-religious spaces. In contrast, members of CSR Madrid practice what can best be described as "private evangelism," which principally relies on close personal networks such as friends and immediate relatives and hosting events that are not explicitly religious.

The chapter begins with a discussion of literature pertinent to religious innovation and competition, especially in the context of immigrant and ethnic churches. I highlight some of the criticisms and shortcomings of each of these subfields and explain why they do not offer a satisfactory explanation for the different evangelism strategies described in this paper. To develop a more comprehensive understanding of the variations observed in the churches and to deepen our understanding of evangelism as an important component of religious practice, this article brings together recent developments in the sociology of religion with concepts from the sociology of culture. In the paper, I emphasize evangelism as a way of doing religion (Avishai 2008). By this, I mean that evangelism is a collective performance of religious identity and is both situated and situational. As such, religious practice takes place in the context of existing symbolic boundaries, regulations, cultural regimes, and institutional structures.

Furthermore, I treat evangelism as part of the evangelical cultural toolkit, that is, as a part of the cultural repertoire that motivates and guides actions (Swidler 2013). By focusing on evangelism as a cultural repertoire, and following Lamont and Thevenot (2000), I emphasize national differences and the extent to which variation between different forms of evangelism prevails in each country. By combining these two approaches, the analysis moves beyond traditional goal-oriented approaches and instead focuses on evangelism as an end in itself.

Religious Marketing, Generational Change, and Religious Isomorphism

Scholars have usually conceptualized evangelism in particular and proselytism more broadly as forms of religious marketing. Religious marketing refers to the set of strategies and efforts organizations carry out to attract and retain members (Ellis 2015; Wilde 2001). According to proponents of this approach, compared to groups operating within settings of government regulation or religious monopolies, religious groups in pluralistic societies are incentivized to

engage in more marketing (Finke and Stark 1998). In other words, people evangelize as a means of recruiting new members, and they are driven to do so by competition. In an environment where groups face stiff competition, there is an incentive to proselytize more and to do so in innovative ways.

A second explanation for why different churches participate in various forms of evangelism focuses on generational changes to a church's or a group's composition. According to this approach, immigrant and ethnic churches will adapt to make up for a loss of membership due to aging among first-generation immigrants (Stevens 2004). Over time, immigrant congregations will do their best to appeal to second and third-generation immigrants as well as to potential non-ethnic members by doing such things as changing the language in which they offer services (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000) and offering classes for converts or developing parallel congregations (Numrich 1999). Generational turnover, not competition from other religious groups, is the primary incentive for adaptation and innovation when it comes proselytism.

A third and final approach used to explain differences in approaches to evangelism follows the new institutionalism approach proposed by Powell and DiMaggio (1991) discussed briefly in the introduction. According to this approach, religious organizations adapt as a result of isomorphism (1993). From this perspective, normative pressures explain variations in immigrant congregations' evangelism strategies (Stevens 2004). Religious change, according to proponents of this view, results from organizations adapting primarily as a means to obtain legitimacy.

What these three approaches have in common is the fact that they operate under the assumption that religious practices in general, and evangelism in particular, are extrinsically goal-oriented and motivated by instrumental rationality. Recently, scholarship has called into question the connection between instrumental rationality and religious practice (Avishai 2008;

Mahmood 2011; Smilde 2007), and the sociology of religion has seen a resurgence of more cultural approaches that pay particular attention to the social embeddedness of religious meaning and religious practice (Bender et al. 2012; Edgell 2012; Smith et al. 2013). Moving away from the instrumental rationality approach that sees religion as a product akin to something people buy in a market (and that is consumed with a goal in mind), some cultural sociologists have suggested we understand religion as a set of repertoires (Edgell 2012). Swilder (Swidler 1986, 2013) uses the analogy of the repertoire to argue that culture instills certain skills and habits in people. Just like a musician adds different pieces to her repertoire and performs each with a different level of skill, so does the carrier of cultural repertoires acquire different habits, skills, and objects that make up a cultural toolkit. Johnston and colleagues explain that just as a musical set might contain more than one song, a cultural repertoire "is composed of a varied set of understandings, thought habits, values, routines, and ideas" (Johnston, Szabo, and Rodney 2011). From this approach, sociologists of religion can examine how people create and recreate specific religious repertoires through continued interaction (Chen 2008).

Ideas about evangelism and proselytism constitute an important part of many religious groups' cultures. Numerous researchers have shown the centrality of proselytism among different religious groups. Data from the national congregational studies suggests that like almost 90% of American congregations make an effort to recruit new participants (Chaves 2009). While scholars have explored proselytism in a variety of settings and traditions (Ellis 2015; Snow 1993; Wilde 2001), research on Evangelical Christianity has shown that for Evangelicals, sharing Christianity is a central part of their lives as Christians, making formal and informal strategies for sharing religion a central component of the evangelical repertoire both in the United States (Chen 2008; Smith 2000; Smith and Emerson 1998).

Parallel to the growing popularity of the cultural approach described above, an increasing number of scholars have moved away from understanding religious behavior as strategically motivated, and instead focus on the connection between religious action and the construction of religious subjecthood (Avishai 2008; Brophy 2016). From this approach, evangelizing is one way in which Evangelicals "do religion" (Avishai 2008). Evangelizing becomes a way of performing one's religious identity rather than simply a way to achieve a specific goal such as organization growth. Approaching evangelism as a form of "doing religion" reconciles the (seemingly contradicting) inward and outward orientations of Evangelical Christianity. While on the surface Evangelical Christianity might be concerned with one's personal relationship with God, by evangelizing to others, Evangelicals enact an outward component. In other words, to be a good Christian, one must both accept Jesus Christ *and* make an effort, individually and collectively, to bring others to Christ (Ammerman 2005). As evangelism scholars, Chilcote and Warner (2008) point out, while growing the church is a consequence of evangelism, the primary purpose of evangelism is a communal way of being through which people become disciples of Jesus.

In the case of immigrants, religious life provides an opportunity to be involved in their communities, both in the host and home countries. For example, the more involved immigrants are in their churches, the more likely they are to participate in their ethnic and non-ethnic communities, both in their host countries (Cadge and Ecklund 2007) and in their country of origin (Levitt 2001, 2009). Thus, understanding the different ways in which immigrants participate in religious activities, including evangelism efforts, provides valuable insights into how faith-based organizations mediate immigrants' interactions with their host societies (Chen 2002; Mooney 2009).

Following these two approaches, I conceptualize the drive to evangelize as part of Casa Sobre la Roca's cultural repertoire. As described in the introduction, Casa Sobre la Roca emerged in a specific social context in Colombia during the late 20th century. The church's original strategies for proselytism emerged as a result of both this social context and the biblical call to evangelize. While Casa Sobre la Roca's drive to proselytize was motivated by religious reasons, the specific strategies they used originally were also influenced by ideas about class (much like the collective identity of the churches discussed in chapter 2). Below, I describe in more detail the specific strategies that Casa Sobre la Roca utilized in Colombia for growing.

Following this, I turn my attention to the specific evangelism practices utilized by members of the church in each city. I argue that as the church has grown internationally, either as a result of members moving to other countries or the church recruiting Colombians abroad, their motivation to evangelize has remained constant, but the churches have been forced to adapt the way they do so. I focus on three dimensions of evangelism: how people evangelize, where they do it, and whom they evangelize. I show that while members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami rely on reaching out to strangers and evangelizing in non-religious spaces while people in Madrid rely on hosting non-religious events and reaching out to personal networks to grow. To facilitate the comparison, I label these strategies public and private evangelism, respectively.

Casa Sobre la Roca and its Early Evangelism

As described in more detail in the introduction, Casa Sobre la Roca was founded in Colombia in the late 1980s, at a time where the Colombian religious landscape was changing and diversifying rapidly. While much of this was happening in rural and poor areas of the countries, especially driven by the popularity of Pentecostal and other Protestant churches (both Colombian and foreign), Casa Sobre la Roca emerged early on as a middle and upper-class church. As such,

the church avoided many of the evangelism practices more commonly used in those Pentecostal and Protestant churches. Rather than going out to the streets, Casa Sobre la Roca did most of its evangelizing through word of mouth. Casa Sobre la Roca relied almost exclusively on members telling their friends and relatives about the Church and the power of Evangelical Christianity.

The church did not advertise and rarely left their building to attract strangers. Instead, the church took advantage of its founders and early members' social networks and status for growth. This, paired with Colombia's unstable economy during the 1990s, resulted in an institutionalized set of strategies that encouraged members to invite friends and relatives who were going through financial hardship. Using founder Dario Silva's reputation and story as evidence of its efficacy, Casa Sobre la Roca emphasized Christianity as a solution to people's problems.

Like the Venezuelan Evangelical churches Smilde (2007) studied, one of Casa Sobre la Roca's main attraction was that it provided alternatives to people's very real problems. The church relied on its strong interpersonal networks to help members and their relatives deal with increasing economic instability and physical danger. Like the church's founder, many members of Casa Sobre la Roca I met during my fieldwork who joined the church during its early years reported initially attending the church out of desperation, as a response to an invitation of a family member or a close friend.

Casa Sobre la Roca proved that it could grow nationally without having to sacrifice its middle-class orientation and maintained its relatively low profile compared to other churches. Unlike other churches, CSR avoided much of the negative attention that other non-Catholic groups received. Since its founding, Casa Sobre la Roca has (for the most) avoided politics, and

while its leaders have enjoyed financial success, the church has never experienced any financial scandals.

The same social networks also helped the church during its early day in Miami and Madrid. These networks were instrumental in connecting early members to each other, providing a "base layer" of members who were in charge of doing the initial groundwork such as organizing prayer meetings and finding appropriate space for meetings. Furthermore, these networks have continued to supply a low but steady number of members, as people continue to migrate to the United States and Spain, even if just temporarily.

While those networks might provide people to keep the church growing, Casa Sobre la Roca, like other Evangelical churches, emphasize sharing Christianity as a part of one's religious commitment. Though outsiders might see evangelism as a simple outreach and growth strategy, for members of Casa Sobre la Roca evangelism is an enactment and an affirmation of their faith and their identity. This particular performance of religious identity is best understood in the context of what is usually known as the “Great Commission," found in Acts 1:8, where Jesus bestowed upon the disciples to go out and spread the good news. At Casa Sobre la Roca, the commitment to the great commission is equally important as the acceptance of Jesus Christ as one’s savior. The importance of evangelizing and the centrality of the activity as part of one’s Evangelical identity are emphasized during sermons, songs, classes, and other church activities. Whether it was before a Sunday service or before having a meal, congregants commonly requested during any prayer,for God to give them the motivation and guidance to do his work and spread his message.

Likewise, during baptism ceremonies, which in Madrid took place once a month and in Miami took place about every 3-4 months, newly baptized church members would make a public

gesture where they not only accepted Jesus Christ as their lord and savior, but publicly committed to sharing the good news. In doing this, members of Casa Sobre la Roca were making religious activism and evangelism an explicit part of their religious identity. As David Smilde (2007) points out, the Great Commission provides a ready-made logic of social activism. This logic is abstract enough that different groups can easily adapt it to the skills and resources that are available to them. In other words, the Great Commission provides an action-oriented element to Evangelical identity: the *be* an Evangelical, one must evangelize.

Since evangelism as a central component of CSR's collective identity, congregants were required to continuously work to perform and demonstrate their commitment to their Evangelical identity. However, as I show below, despite making the same pledge and having the same motivations, each church adapted this part of its identity into significantly different evangelism practices.

I argue that the change observed cannot be explained solely using any of the theories reviewed earlier. According to the religious competition model, the church in Miami would be more innovative since it operates in a more pluralistic market and faces more competition. What I found is that both churches innovate, but they do so in different ways. Similarly, the isomorphism hypothesis that churches would begin to resemble similar organizations fails to account for the fact that both churches would innovate as a way to stand out from, rather than mimic, other organizations. Isomorphism might explain why the Church in Miami engages in public evangelism: public spaces in the United States are common sites for religious activism and one need only to visit a subway station in any US major city to witness evangelism in action. However, isomorphism fails to explain why the church in Madrid practices evangelism the way it does: rather than mimic other churches, Casa Sobre la Roca Madrid innovated by learning to

evangelize privately. And finally, the generational change model might be at work in the long term, but it does not explain change over a shorter period of time.

Instead, by focusing on evangelism as practice, I show that members of Casa Sobre la Roca adapt this practice in response to both their religious identity, the dynamics of class associated with their faith, and relevant contextual factors, including the ethnic and racial makeup of each city. While growth itself is an important motivation for evangelism, it is not the sole reason people engage in it. Instead, the data below show that people engage in evangelism because it is a part of their collective identity as Christians. As such, each church develops its repertoire of evangelism which distinct ideas on how to evangelize, where to evangelize, and who to target in their evangelism practices.

Miami: Public Evangelizing

When Casa Sobre la Roca decided to open a church in Miami, they began holding Sunday services in a space they rented from a local Christian school. During the earlier years, the church benefited from CSR's well-established reputation among Colombians and the strength of their transnational networks to attract new members. In a way, the church followed the same strategies used by Casa Sobre la Roca in Colombia, with the notable difference that this time members shared information transnationally. Most of the earlier evangelism happened through friends and family members who attended the church in Colombia. According to many of the people I spoke with, members of the church in Colombia would hear in regular announcements before and after services that there was a new CSR church in Miami and would then tell their relatives in the South Florida about the church. The announcements were one of the most successful modes of broadcasting news of the new church.

By the time I began doing my fieldwork in 2013, Casa Sobre la Roca Miami had grown considerably, almost exhausting the transnational networks they had used during their early years. Three things characterize public evangelism: First, the church in Miami focused on telling members that the best way to engage with people was by approaching them directly and talking to them about religion. To this end, the church had an evangelism ministry, made up of volunteers and in charge of organizing church-wide campaigns. The group was also tasked with providing guidance and resources to other church groups interested in doing their own proselytizing. The evangelism ministry was heavily involved in many of the events described in this chapter. For example, in an evangelism outing organized by the young adults ministry, which I describe in more detail below, the evangelism ministry provided support in selecting the place and coordinating transportation for those who could not drive there on their own. The members of the evangelism ministry knew the church's surroundings and had ideas about which public spaces were suited for collective efforts.

Second, the church emphasized the importance of evangelizing in public spaces and at events. Most of their collective efforts to evangelize were organized in public spaces or during large public events and frequently the church organized days when volunteers would go to nearby residential neighborhoods and shopping malls. During these days, the objective was to either approach strangers and talk to them about the church or to hand out printed information (usually produced by the evangelism ministry) about the church.

Finally, as a collective effort, public evangelism focused on strangers and people's "weak ties" (e.g., coworkers or classmates) rather than relatives or friends. In other words, rather than utilizing people's existing networks, Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami engaged in public evangelism by reaching outside of its members' close networks.

The practice of public evangelism was not uniformly present or agreed upon equally by everyone in the church, and in fact, depending on the group or the occasion, there was always some variation. However, there were elements of these practices that were relatively consistent across church groups and events. Beginning with the pastor, church leaders spoke about their desire to evangelize in this way during many of the interviews, highlighting the centrality of evangelism in the church's identity and mission.

For example, during an interview with Pastor Jalube, the head pastor in Miami, he explained that the church had been working very hard to reach out to as many people as they could. Using language that was more appropriate for a business meeting than for a church, Pastor Jalube explained that the leadership in Miami had been working on the church's strategic plan and short- and long-term goals, explaining that the leadership had a clear set performance indicators that allowed the church evaluate its impact and effectiveness. The primary short-term goal of the plan was to begin evangelizing the residential communities in the neighboring area, and, in what seemed like a departure from the church's middle-class identity, focus less on class and more on proximity.

As part of this strategic plan, the church had begun organizing outings in the nearby neighborhoods for the general membership and assisting many of its groups in doing the same. The church had identified a few areas within a 10 to 15-mile radius. The pastor explained that he wanted to do this because he had read a recent academic article about how most people like to attend a church that is within 20 minutes of their home. Once these areas had been identified, the church sent out groups of people to distribute flyers made by the evangelism ministry. Sometimes the flyers were informational, postcard-sized flyers that would be distributed door-to-door and to pedestrians in the shopping centers. They would feature a biblical passage on one

side and information about church services, including meeting times and the church's web address, on the other. Other times, the church would distribute flyers promoting specific events, such as a 24-hour fast held twice a year or a concert.

For the day-long fast, Jalube explained how the church was going to use it as an opportunity to get people involved in evangelism activities: "We've printed some postcards, and we're going to distribute them in the surrounding areas. We'll break into groups to distribute them from door to door and also to give them o people by hand here in downtown Miami Lakes, in Miami Gardens, and we're also going to Opa-Locka and the surrounding areas so that people can find out that there is going to be this fasting event." The evangelism ministry mentioned earlier was in charge of recruiting volunteers from within the church to proselytize in these neighborhoods.

The day-long fast served multiple purposes. On the one hand, organizers described the event as an opportunity for "spiritual recharge" where members could engage in an intense and prolonged prayer and praise session. At the same time, in the weeks leading up to the event, the church promoted and encouraged members of the church to get involved in volunteer efforts to evangelize. In doing so, the church was sending a clear message: people supposed to get involved and these residential communities were appropriate places to proselytize. In doing this, the church was collectively establishing a presence in the neighborhoods surrounding it, promoting the idea among its members that the world outside was in need of evangelizing and the best way to do this was to reach out to them in their neighborhoods.

However, while it was clear that the outside world needed evangelizing, this did not mean that every space outside the church represented an appropriate place for evangelism. In one of the outings organized by the church, when a group of young people talked to people in a residential neighborhood, the leaders made it clear that we were only supposed to approach

individuals who were outside, either walking or sitting on their porches. After standing in a circle and praying together, asking God to give the group the strength they needed to go out and do his work, one of the group leaders said: "Remember we only go as far as people's doors, we're not Jehovah's witnesses." This kind of joke was common among members of Casa Sobre la Roca, and it was not unique to Miami. In the previous chapter, I discussed the importance of this kind of joke for drawing boundaries between Evangelicals and other groups. In this case, the group leader was drawing a boundary between members of Casa Sobre la Roca and other groups, as well as using the joke to teach people an important lesson about appropriate spaces for evangelism. Although those in attendance reacted with laughter, his comments made it clear that there was a distinction between public space, where it was appropriate to talk to people about Christ, and people's homes, a private space that was off-limits.

In addition to establishing the outside world as a place in need of evangelizing, the unique approach to evangelism used in Miami required members to view people outside of the immediate networks as potential converts. In the early days of my fieldwork in Miami, the church rented out a nearby movie theater to screen the movie *The Son of God*, which had just come out. Rather than selling individual tickets, the evangelism committee sold tickets in pairs, and as one person explained "With the second ticket you had to invite someone, someone who wasn't from your family or a close friend, they had to be people from outside the church, it could be your friend or your coworker, but it had to be someone who didn't know about the Lord." Some 200 people attended the movie, and the church leadership hailed the event as a grand success.

To promote the kind of evangelism that reached out to strangers, Casa Sobre la Roca Miami spent a significant amount of resources teaching people *how to* approach strangers. The church

benefited from an extensive and well-established network of Christian coaches and consultants working for organizations like LiderVision,[42] a subsidiary of HarperCollins. At the time of my fieldwork, LiderVision worked as a publishing house as well as a booking agency through which churches could book speakers, coaches, and training resources.

For example, the evangelism campaign that took place during the Colombian Independence celebration described in the opening vignette, was preceded by about five weekly events organized around evangelism. One some nights, small groups of people met at the church to discuss potential activities to attract people to the church's tent: it was decided that the church would set up a karaoke station, and that when people signed up to sign, the church would collect their emails to send them a recording of their song and invite them join to church. At another one of these meetings, a group of volunteers was designed to order the white t-shirts that members of the church wore on the day of the independence celebration. Hosting these events helped the church get ready for the big event, and also reinforced the idea that evangelism was a central component of church life.

In what was perhaps the best-attended session in the week leading up to the SunLife Stadium event, the church invited an outside speaker who worked for LiderVision. Pastor Jalube sent a number of messages in the days before the event making sure people knew about it and said that anyone who wanted to get a discounted ticket to the Colombian independence had to attend this event. The session focused on "relational evangelism," an approach in which church members befriend strangers before evangelizing them. The excerpt below is from the notes I took that day:

"After leading the group in prayer, Pastor Jalube introduced the instructor, Mr. Hector Mora. During the introduction, Pastor Jalube described Mora as "an expert in relational evangelism"

[42] Lidervision seems to have dissolved, and now when visiting lidervision.com, the browser automatically transfers to http://www.recursosparalaiglesia.com/ (Resources for the church, in Spanish, also owned by Harper Collins).

who had years of experience in "Christian coaching" and motivational speaking. Mr. Mora, who spoke with a thick Argentinian accent, took the microphone and began talking. His talk felt more like the motivational TED talks that had become popular in the last couple of years than a seminar to help church volunteers in their evangelism efforts. Mr. Mora was charismatic in his approach and talked about how older methods of Christian evangelism focused on trying to do things for others. He explained that while this might have worked for 2000 years, the world was changing, and so churches needed to adapt to survive. "Everything Christians have been doing for 2000 years, they have been doing for others," he said, as the group took notes on their phones, iPads, and notebooks, "but now it is the time to begin doing things with others." He then discussed the importance of making connections with people before evangelizing. He argued that if members of the church went out and became acquainted with ten people, statistically speaking, one of them would become a Christian or may already be a Christian who was still looking for a church: "When you go out there to the Colombian festival, you might meet someone who in Colombia went to x or y church, and then because they moved to Miami and all they do here is work work work, they don't know anyone… they don't have any friends or family. These are the people we need to reach; these are the people who need us the most, we need to approach them and make friends with them."

As Mr. Mora and Pastor Jalube made it clear during the rest of the seminar, the celebration of the Colombian independence would be the ideal place to evangelize since it would be a large reunion of Colombians. Mr. Mora and the pastor emphasized the fact that as immigrants, it was likely that many of these Colombians were unfamiliar with the church and were working so hard that they probably lacked a support network and community.

In addition to focusing on teaching people how to approach strangers, a lot of the training and discussion around public evangelism focused on dealing with possible adverse responses. People had to be prepared to deal with rejection or an aggressive response from a stranger. The same event discussed in the previous excerpt covered some of the dangers of trying to evangelize at an event where people could be drunk. On numerous occasions, Mr. Mora, the pastor, and other church leaders told volunteers that the day of the event they should always go around out in groups of four. Furthermore, they church leadership also asked people to make sure each group had no more than two women, fearing that drunk men at the event would be more interested in flirting than talking about religion.

Likewise, in the young adult group in Miami, which went out once a month in what they called "Impact Nights," leaders repeatedly talked to those participating about how to deal with people who were unreceptive to their message. Before going out on those nights, the group would get together and pray. Among the many things they asked for during their prayers, one of the most frequent requests was the strength to understand and accept the rejection they were likely to face. For example, before going out to evangelize in a mobile home community, the group gathered in a circle in a nearby parking lot to pray. Daniel, one of the men in charge that night, said the following during one of his prayers: "Dear Lord, please open up the hearts of the people we are about to encounter, please help us do your work as best as we can, but do not let us forget that it is you who has the real power. And please, remind us that when people turn us away, it is not about us, but about you Jesus, and we should not take it personally." In doing this, Daniel, like other people in charge of the evangelizing at the church, made it clear that not everyone would be as receptive or welcoming, and that rejection was a likely outcome in many of the interactions with strangers.

Discussions about rejection did not just prepare people to handle situations of failure, but also functioned to make people think about evangelism as a goal in and of itself. By focusing on the act of evangelism rather than on the outcome, the church collective shifted the motivation away from numbers. Ultimately, what mattered was not so much how many new members would come to church but how many existing members were actually involved in evangelism. The following event, which was one of the few evangelism events that didn't take place in the surrounding areas, illustrates my point.

Shortly after the evangelism outing described above, a few members of the young adult group approached Gustavo, the group leader, and suggested doing an evangelism night in a place where the group would have a greater impact. Favio, a young man in his mid 20s who works in the food industry and is one of the only non-Colombians in the group, suggested going to Overtown, a neighborhood located directly north of Miami's downtown. A historically black neighborhood known as Central Negro District and Colored Town in the early 20th Century, Overtown was once a dynamic and prosperous Afro-Caribbean and Afro-American neighborhood (Connolly 2006). Overtown went through a dramatic change after the building of interstate highways I-95 and I-395. The neighborhood's social fabric suffered significantly, and what was once a mecca of Afro-Caribbean diasporic life is now a hotbed for homelessness, drugs, prostitution, and crime (Levin 2009).

While I was not present for any of the conversations when the decision was made, multiple people told me that at first Gustavo and other church leaders were hesitant about doing evangelism in a neighborhood like Overtown. However, Favio and others (including Carlos, the young man we met in chapter 2, who was a recovered drug addict and had spent some time in Overtown), insisted that if the purpose of evangelism was the spread the word rather than grow

the church, and that this was the right thing to do. After a doing some research and consulting with the church's leadership, Gustavo agreed to organize an outing that focused on evangelism and social service. With the help of the organization he works with and the church, Gustavo secured about two or three dozens free bibles. Additionally, members of the group who volunteered to go out that night received a free black t-shirt with the words "EPIC IMPACT" written in the front in neon-green. Volunteers had to commit to participate in the event on Friday night, but they were also responsible for helping out with money, clothes, and food donations.

On the day of the event, a group of about 12 met in the church's parking lot and drove downtown to Overtown. As was the case with other evangelism events, we began with a prayer. Among other things, the prayer included mentions to how we needed to be prepared to be turned away and how we could only bring the word of God to people, but we couldn't force them to hear it. Once the prayer was done, Favio and Gustavo explained that we would pray again once we got there, and that when we did so, we should not close our eyes as we normally did since we were in a relatively bad neighborhood.

We quickly drew attention when we arrived downtown, and within a few minutes, 20 to 30 people approached us. Gustavo, who always liked to joke, said that we were selling used t-shirts for $25. He then cleared things up by telling people that we were there simply to share some food, clothes, and good news with people, and that all we wanted in return was for them to join us in prayer. During the prayer, Gustavo explained that we had come here from a Church that was simply hoping to bring a little bit of happiness to the people who live in this area, and hoping that they'll see God's love in a similar way to they way "we" church members have been able to see it. He thanked the homeless people for being so friendly and reminded them that when they're with God, no situation is too hard or too difficult.

That night, we talked with people from Haiti, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Cuba, and Colombia. While at least in terms of their national origin, these were the kind of people Casa Sobre la Roca wanted to attract, it was clear from the beginning of the event that it was unlikely any of them were ever going to go to the church. Despite being approximately 15 miles north of Overtown, travel times to the church by public transportation ranged from 90 and 120 minutes. And yet, when we walked around overtown handing out clothes, food, and bibles, the members of the church took evangelism as seriously as that had taken it any other Friday night or during the celebration of the Colombian independence.

The examples used above show that the members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami have developed over time their way of doing evangelism. Together, these practices represent what I call public evangelism, an evangelism that is coupled with a conviction that that public spaces are appropriate arenas for proselytizing and that strangers are the ideal people to evangelize. In this kind of evangelism, it quickly becomes evident for all those involved that the objective of the interaction is religious recruitment. Because of these two characteristics, public evangelism also has an active component that teaches people how to deal with rejection and negative reactions. These kinds of strategies are significantly different from the ones found in Madrid, where Casa Sobre la Roca engages in what I call private evangelism.

Madrid: Private Evangelism

The primary element of the set of practices Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid used to evangelize non-members and attract them to join the church was organizing events. In practice, this meant that rather than going outside to public spaces to evangelize, members of Casa Sobre la Roca did the work of conversion by putting on non-religious events to bring people's friends and relatives to the church. Specifically, the church would organize concerts, host dinners, and invite speakers.

Many of these events were advertised as non-religious events so that they seemed accessible to non-members. In addition to focusing on these kinds of events, this particular repertoire of evangelism is more focused on evangelism that targets friends and relatives as opposed to the public evangelism that caters more to strangers. Finally, unlike the public evangelism repertoire, failure is not as a central component of these strategies, and people have relatively few concerns about their safety.

At the same time, they are more likely to focus on inviting close friends and relatives of current members. This repertoire of private evangelism is relatively similar to the way the Casa Sobre la Roca originally evangelized in Colombia: It relies on close personal networks to attract potential members while also drawing a clear boundary from other churches, primarily working-class churches. At the same time, since Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid attracted a primarily immigrant membership, it could organize non-religious events targeting the Colombian community to engage in evangelism.

The primary component of the private evangelism repertoire the importance of bringing people into the church as opposed to approaching them outside the church setting. This particular emphasis on bringing people into the church to then evangelize to them is referred to as an "attractional model" among Christians. In this approach, the church organizes events, some of them non-religious, that could be of interest to potential members. They make it a priority to tell members about the importance of inviting their friends to the event. Once visitors are inside, the church evangelizes to them. During my fieldwork in Madrid, I participated in a variety of events that fit this attraction model, including dinners and talks by non-religious speakers.

One of the most common ways to attract people to church was by emphasizing the non-religious elements of an event but in doing so, the church was not trying to trick people into

joining the church. Instead, the goal was more to show that Evangelicals were fun and dynamic people who did more than sit around praying and singing religious songs. They idea was to challenge people's preconceptions about who evangelicals are and what things they do for fun.

For example, when the church celebrated the Colombian independence by hosting a concert of a Colombian artist, they marketed the event using artist's relative fame and the success he earned before converting to Christianity. Rather than promoting the event as a Christian-music concert, the church advertised it on social media and the radio as a vallenato concert, a Colombian folk music genre. Thus, church members told their friends that this was a unique opportunity to see the artist perform, for free. Mr. Perez and his band didn't disappoint and performed some of their earlier songs, but they also played plenty of their more recent songs and took time between songs to tell people about how religion had changed their lives. While I was never a fan of vallenato growing up, I felt at home briefly during the concert; and since it was one of my first visits to Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid, I witnessed firsthand how holding this kind of non-religious event helped the church carry out its mission to spread the word to as many people as possible.

The real evangelizing began as soon as the concert was over. Immediately after the concert ended, the pastor invited visitors to stay and sometimes spend with members of the church, to "see what the church was about." That night, as was the case on many summer nights in Madrid, the church had set up an outdoor seating area that resembled a restaurant's terraza, the popular outdoor seating areas that people frequent in the hot evenings of Madrid's summers. In this area, the church sold a variety of finger food, including Colombian empanadas and patatas bravas, a

typical Spanish dish of fried potatoes with hot sauce. People enjoyed these snacks as well as others while they drank non-alcoholic sangria and soda.

It would have been easy to forget this was happening in a Christian church were it not for the numerous volunteers walking around and talking to visitors, asking "Did you like the concert?" and "Would you be interested in joining us this Sunday for service?" Since almost everyone who had come to the concert knew a member of the church, the evangelizing happened almost inadvertently. Concurrently, Pastor Peñaloza and his wife walked around greeting people: "Not what you were expecting at an evangelical church, right?" Pastor Peñaloza and the other church leaders had made it their mission that one could be Evangelical and still have fun.

The church took advantage of its transnational networks to host a number of outside guests that were attractive to non-members. In addition to Osman Perez, the church regularly hosted Christian comedian Jose Ordoñez. Ordoñez had achieve national fame in Colombia in 1990s when he hosted comedy radio shows and later his own TV show (*Ordoñese de la Risa*). In addition to his show, Ordoñez gained popularity in Colombia and, to a lesser degree, in the rest of Latin America by setting the world record for telling jokes on live radio for 24 continuous hours. Ordoñez would continue to break his own records: according to Colombian newspaper El Tiempo, in 2014 Ordoñez told jokes for 86 hours.

Like many other secular entertainers who become Evangelicals, Ordoñez' religious story is one connected to his professional and personal failures. His success as a comedian was accompanied by a personal failures, including substance abuse and separation from his wife. However, when Ordoñez joined Casa Sobre la Roca in Colombia, he began to turn his life around. He continued telling jokes but removed obscene material from his repertoire. Eventually, he found that he could combine his stand-up comedy skills with his love of Christ, and he

became a pastor. He now lives in Miami, where he preaches at multiple churches, including Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami where I saw him on numerous Wednesdays during my fieldwork.

While fully employed as a pastor in Miami, Ordoñez still travels around the world doing comedy that is presented as secular. Since Casa Sobre la Roca first opened its doors in Madrid, Oroñez has visited the church multiple times and hosted comedy nights. Additionally, he has occasionally been invited as a guest pastor to the church's sunday services. Like the Osman Perez's concert, Ordoñez's secular events have become an important part of the church's evangelism strategy. Whenever Ordoñez visited Madrid, the church rents a conference room in a nearby hotel and hosts a comedy night, which they then advertise through social media and personal networks. While the timing of my fieldwork did not allow me to attend any of his visits, it was obvious from my conversations with people in Madrid that having guests like Ordoñez was central to the church's idea of evangelizing by hosting non-religious events and celebrations that would attract people to the church, and then once in the church (although not always literally *in the church*) approach them and talk to them about God.

The most important of these events was the yearly Thanksgiving dinner, an idea the pastor had gotten from talking to his friends in the United States. In the weeks prior to the dinner, the pastor and the other church leaders worked very hard to make sure that all the details were taken care of, and just like in the weeks preceding the Colombian independence in Miami, the weeks before the Thanksgiving dinner in Madrid were filled with meetings meant to prepare people for the event and get them ready to evangelize.

For example, a significant amount of planning and time went into deciding how they should seat people at the dinner. In a lunch dinner that took place a 2 weeks before the dinner, a group of leaders discussed how to make sure that every guest was sitting at the table where they would

feel the most welcome. Because the seating would be assigned before the event, it was important to make sure that in addition to sitting with the people who had invited them, each guest could also sit with people who could have the biggest impact when speaking about the church. Eventually, they decided that it was necessary to group people by age and marital status, so they created tables for groups like young-adults and young couples table. At each of the tables, they designated one person to be responsible for collecting newcomers' contact information and following up with them in the coming days, and, if possible, inviting them to a Sunday service.

The church had a set of established yearly events that it organized to get people in, and they all followed a very similar pattern: the church would host a non-religious event so that church members could invite their non-Evangelical family and friends. Once inside, the church as a community would show them that Christianity was not a cult. While it is easy to interpret this kind of pattern as a performance or a show that the church put on, the reality was that this was pretty much the way the church operated every weekend. The only difference was that during regular Sunday services the church would get anywhere between 1 and 10 new visitors, whereas during the special events the number would go up substantially. Still, whenever a person visited the church for the first time, the pastor and other leaders did everything they could to make sure the person felt welcome.

During my fieldwork, both at the events and the meetings that take place before the events, it became clear that the church was working hard to create an environment that would be attractive to people. Because of this, it was often common to see the pastor remind members that the events hosted by the church were not always religious, although they were always Christian in the sense that they were not going to deviate from their biblical beliefs or teachings. Rather than going out

on missions like their counterparts in Miami, members practice their evangelism inside the church.

This is the second dimension worth contrasting with regards to the different ways people in Miami and Madrid do evangelism. While the church in Miami was more than comfortable going outside of their building to talk to people in public spaces, members of Casa Sobre la Roca made it very clear that public spaces in Spain where not the most ideal places for evangelism. Rather than bringing religion out to the people, the church felt like it was more productive to bring people into the church before evangelizing to them.

When I asked members of Casa Sobre la Roca if they had ever considered going out to evangelize in the same way that their counterparts in Miami did, most of them simply reply that this kind of practice would not be acceptable in Spain. The fact that members of Casa Sobre la Roca had a clear demarcation of public spaces as inappropriate spaces for evangelism is not surprising given Spain's long and troubled and unsettled relationship with religion. Although none of the Colombians I met during my fieldwork had lived in Spain during the Franco regime, it was common knowledge among most people that non-Catholics, and Protestants in particular, had been oppressed during the Franco regime. Furthermore, the relatively recent de-establishment of the Catholic Church as the official religion of the country meant that most members of Casa Sobre la Roca felt like, as a whole, Spain was simply not as open to religious diversity as the United States.

Finally, members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid considered different kinds of people as acceptable targets of evangelizing. Most of the people I interviewed had found the church through a friend or relative and felt that this was the best way to share Christianity was to do so with close friends and family. While a few people had tried to share the gospel with coworkers or

strangers, most had negative experiences, so it was more common for people to keep their religious lives private.

The church developed a set of strategies for people to share religion with their relatives and friends in cases where they were not open to talking about religion. This approach, which can best be described as "show-don't-tell," consisted of focusing on changing a particular aspect of one's life to show how Christianity could have a positive effect. Thus, the church emphasized "right conduct" as one of the most important characteristics of being a good Christian. One of the most often cited passages at Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid as from Matthew 7: 15-23, which states that "good trees produce good fruit." During sermons and religious classes, the pastor and other lay leaders emphasized the importance of proper behavior as a way of demonstrating other people (those at work and in one's family especially) what Christianity is really about.

Conclusion

While members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami and Madrid have found different ways to engage with others to evangelize then, they have done so without compromising a central part of their identity as Evangelicals: the desire to share the gospel with them. In the daily negotiation of how to perform their faith, immigrants imagine new ways to do evangelism. These new methods are, not surprisingly, the result of religious influences. But they are also the result of religious factors, primarily racial and ethnic factors that influence the extent to which Colombian evangelicals experience being outsiders in their new cities.

Market approaches to religious innovation might help us understand the reasons why Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami operates the way it does and why it relies on public evangelism as a strategy for growth. But the same market approach is insufficient for understanding how religious groups operate in fields that have constraints beyond competition. These other forces,

like cultural attitudes by the general public about religion, influence the extent to which people are allowed to speak about, and proselytize, in public. Rather than settling or becoming lazy by the lack of competition, as market theorists would predict, Casa Sobre la Roca in Madrid is driven to innovation by factors other than competition.

The chapter has explored how Colombian Evangelicals adapt their ways they engage in evangelism. By focusing on evangelism from a cultural and performative lens, and by emphasizing the different strategies, scripts, and ideas, the focus has been on the way people do evangelism rather than on the extent to which they are successful. I have argued that the repertoires of evangelism that each group utilized are quite different, with the church in Miami relying on what I call public evangelism, while the church in Madrid uses in what can best be described as private evangelism. Whereas public evangelism stresses the importance of approaching strangers, forming new relationships, and going out of the church to non-religious spaces and events to bring people to church, private evangelism relies on the use of close personal networks and non-religious events at the church as a way of recruiting new members.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Rafael: I've had many jobs since I moved to the United States. I've worked in valet parking, and in a factory cutting metal. I've driven a public school bus. I've painted houses, and I've worked in plumbing. I've changed toilets… I mean, I've done a lot of jobs. Since I decided to come here, I was aware that I would have to do whatever job I could get, whatever it was. And well, it hasn't been easy, but there's a story to tell, with my daughters, my family, the Lord has blessed us because he has provided, he has not forsaken us. We have had situations like everyone else, and I believe that the US is a complicated country, it practically devours you.

DD: Why do you think so?

Rafael: Because here you have to work and you have to work very hard. You have to fulfill economic expectations; you have to pay rent, pay your car's lease, pay the auto insurance, pay your medical insurance, and so on. All those things that maybe when you come from another country perhaps you're not ready to do […] It is always a competition. Always about making more money to take care of more things.

Rafael, whose story we first read about in chapter 1, was explaining something many of the people I spoke with talked about too. For him, as well as for all of the people whose stories are featured in this dissertation, migrating from Colombia to the United States or Spain resulted in numerous challenges. While most people migrated motivated primarily by a desire to get away from the difficulties of life in Colombia, including urban and rural violence and limited professional and economic opportunities, the act of migration put Colombians in unexpected and challenging situations.

These situations included dealing with separation from family and loved ones, as well as unmet expectations and sometimes downward mobility. Most of the people I interviewed had moved to Madrid and Miami by themselves, leaving behind friends and family. Additionally, repeatedly, the people I met told me that after moving to Miami and Madrid they had to take jobs that ,although better paying, resulted in a loss of status compared to what they were doing before moving. Furthermore, multiple people I spoke with told me that while they were making better money in their new countries, they were also spending a lot more time at work, or working unusual schedules. In a handful of cases where people were lucky enough to migrate with their loved ones, working extended hours resulted in less free time, and many people had their family disrupted by their new demanding schedules.

To complicate things even further, immigrants suffered just as much, if not more, from the consequences of the Great Recession of 2008. Like with the native-born population, the Great Recession pushed immigrant workers into joblessness and even poverty (Liu and Edwards 2015). For Colombians living in the United States and Spain, the economic consequences of the Great Recession challenged people's migration projects. Almost in the blink of an eye, the economic conditions that had attracted people to move to Miami and Madrid where no longer there. While many people decided to return to Colombia, the focus of this study has been the stories of those who chose to stay despite facing increasingly challenging and at times precarious life conditions.

Like Rafael, the members of Casa Sobre la Roca I talked to during my fieldwork made sense and found motivations to persevere in their journey as immigrants thanks to the teachings of the church. Like previous researchers who have studied religion and immigration, I saw firsthand how actively Casa Sobre la Roca gave its members what Charles Hirschman calls the three Rs of immigrant religion: resources, refuge, and respect. But just as important, I saw how Casa Sobre

la Roca gave people a religious lens through which they could make sense of their experience. Through the church, Casa Sobre la Roca members learned to interpret their migratory experience using Biblical stories and make their experiences part of a larger religious narrative. Belonging and participating in the church gave people access to meaningful religious narratives, identities, and strategies of action.

It is not surprising to understand why Casa Sobre la Roca and other churches like it are so attractive to Colombian immigrants. After all, when Dario Silva founded Casa Sobre la Roca, Colombia was going through one of its worst political and economic crisis. Furthermore, Silva himself had gone through a professional and personal turmoil before founding the church. To add to this, many of the church leaders, including Pastor Jalube in Miami and Pastor Peñaloza in Madrid, talk openly about their various personal and professional issues before joining the church. This emphasis on finding religious solutions to theseworldly problems is a central part of Casa Sobre la Roca's approach to Christianity; it is at the center of their identity under the idea of "biblical solutionism" first presented in the introduction.

Furthermore, the kind of evangelical Christianity that Casa Sobre la Roca promotes is particularly well suited for immigrants who find themselves living as both foreigners and religious outsiders. By emphasizing that evangelicals must be *in the world, but not of it*, Casa Sobre la Roca teaches its members how to live in a country while not being of it. Much like some of the churches' in Omar McRoberts' (2005) *Streets of Glory* use of exile as a frame to make sense of people's experience, members of Casa Sobre la Roca engage in a hermeneutical exercise to make religious sense of their migration experience. The brand of Christianity of Casa Sobre la Roca, with its emphasis on being flexible and contextualized while remaining true to its roots and avoiding syncretism, lends itself to religious adaptation. In its mission statement, Casa Sobre

la Roca explains that today "the emphasis [of the church] must be in the necessities of thepostmodern man (el hombre postmoderno), which are different from those of the 20th century."

For Colombian evangelicals living in Madrid and Miami, these necessities include making sense of their experiences as double outsiders, as immigrants *and* evangelicals. As Colombians living in the United States and Spain, struggling with issues like legality, belonging, and acculturation.

Throughout this dissertation, I have emphasized the adaptive nature of Casa Sobre la Roca. By focusing on how the organization and its members change and adapt to new contexts, my aim objective has been to show how people and organizations creatively work with the cultural resources available to them to, not just make sense, but also act in the situations they find themselves in. As I argued in chapter 2, some of the problems of being an immigrant are relatively similar in both places. Alienation, loss of status, and separation from loved ones are fairly common elements of the migratory experience regardless of where people move to. Because of this, members of Casa Sobre la Roca in both Madrid and Miami rely on fairly similar religious narratives and meanings when talking about their experiences. While the Great Recession hit both the United States and Spain, and the factors that once attracted people to Miami and Madrid were threatened, arguably the crisis impacted people living in Madrid more dramatically. I showed that as a result of this situation, Colombian Evangelicals residing in Madrid came up with novel interpretations of religious stories, engaging in what Smith [cite Smith] called theologizing. I showed how theologizing is not merely what people do when they take religious stories and use them to make sense of their experiences, but also the process of making sense of religious stories through the lens of people's experiences. Theologizing

highlights the creative agency (Frederick 2003; Smilde 2007) of individuals as they find themselves in challenging situations. Religion itself might not always offer the best explanation for why some people migrate. But when people interpret their migratory experiences through a religious lens, most sociologists take these interpretations seriously.

In addition to this process of theologizing, members of Casa Sobre la Roca in Miami and Madrid must find ways to adapt their identities so that they remain relevant and meaningful in their new cities. Casa Sobre la Roca's original identity developed in a context in which religion and class were its most important differentiating elements. In a context where most churches were trying to attract lower middle and lower class followers, Casa Sobre la Roca stood apart from other organizations by trying to promote an upper-middle class identity. While the core of their identity as evangelical Christians remains intact, several aspects of their identities must change. In Miami and Madrid, the churches had to find ways to emphasize not just their religious and class identities, but also their immigrant identities. But how each church's identity developed was affected by context. The findings from chapter 3 support other recent research that examines the connection between place and collective identity (Brown-Saracino 2015). In this chapter, I show how members of Casa Sobre la Roca in each city? encounter different groups and must change accordingly to maintain the elements of their identity, while also adapting to accommodate the contact and presence of other relevant outgroups. In doing this, each church highlights different symbolic boundaries that would not be relevant in another context.

First, while the importance of Catholics as a reference group remains constant across sites, in Miami Jehovah's Witnesses become more prevalent for drawing religious and class-based boundaries, while in Madrid most of these boundaries are drawn about Pentecostal groups. Second, in each city, each community must find ways to "fit into" their new country through

group bonds. While in Colombia Casa Sobre la Roca developed as an Evangelical, middle-class church, with no reference to ethnic or national identity, this has changed as a result of migration.

In Miami and Madrid, the church must also develop an ethnic identity. In the United States, where pan-ethnic categories are relatively widespread (Mora 2014) Casa Sobre la Roca has developed an identity as a "Latino" church that aims to attract people from all Latin American nationalities, and not just Colombians. In Spain, on the other hand, where ethnic identities are not as prevalent as national and regional (Moreno, Arriba, and Serrano 1998), Casa Sobre la Roca has developed a bi-national identity that emphasizes the church as Colombian and Spanish.

In the final chapter, I have argued that differences at the local level (both the city and the nation) influence how members of each church engage in evangelism. I show that in Miami, where there is not only a high level of religious diversity but also a high level of tolerance for public displays of religion, members of Casa Sobre la Roca engage in what I call "public evangelism" by proselytizing to strangers in public spaces. In Madrid, on the other hand, where religious de-establishment is relatively recent, and there is a recent history of discrimination against Protestants, members of Casa Sobre la Roca find ways to do evangelism without going out of the church, but rather bring potential new members in - a practice I have labeled "private evangelism."

Furthermore, by arguing that evangelism is understood as a performance of people's religious identity (Avishai 2008; Brophy 2016), as opposed to a growth-oriented religious marketing strategy, I have tried to shift the focus away from market-centered approaches and towards an emphasis on how people do religion, regardless of the outcome.

When I first moved to Spain to do fieldwork, I was interested in examining whether or not Foner and Alba's idea that religion operated as a barrier for immigrants in Europe was true for evangelicals from Latin America. Early in my fieldwork, I realized that in my original framing of the research question, both religion and the host society were seen as rather static and unchanging. Early in my fieldwork, I began noticing how the people and the organizations I was studying were making small but significant changes to the way they talk about religion to adapt to their local contexts. I shifted my focus away from questions about whether or not religion was beneficial to immigrants in different contexts, and instead began exploring how the different migration experiences and the context of reception impacted the religious narratives, identities, and practices of people. While Casa Sobre la Roca is one small church and the experiences of its members are somewhat unique, there are important lessons for sociologists of religion and sociologists in general to consider:

First, religion (including identities, practices, beliefs) and the people who practice it are embedded within a complicated web of social relations. As such, religion is influenced and also influences other aspects of human life. As Smilde and May (2012) pointed out, sociology of religion has experienced the emergence of a "strong program" where religion is usually treated as an independent variable that operates autonomously from other variables. As Melissa Wilde (2017) points out, sociologists of religion have been trained to find the "independent effects" of religion after controlling for other variables. Instead, I have tried to incorporate insights from the lived perspective approach to understanding how religious narratives, identities, and practices are connected to other domains of life.[43] To understand the religious lives of Colombian evangelicals

[43] Wilde herself has recently started promoting what she calls “complex religion” to push scholars to see how religion is inseparable from race, class, and other social structures.I find that much of what Wilde proposes with her call for studying “complex religion” has already been proposed by promoters of the Lived Religion approach.

in the US and Spain one must not only pay attention to what it means to be an Evangelical, but also take into consideration what life is like for Colombians in each of these countries.

The findings in this dissertation challenge entirely strong or weak programs in the sociology of religion. Rather than seeing religion as entirely dependent or independent from other aspects of social life, my findings suggest that for Colombian Evangelicals, the existence of a strong religious core constrains the extent to which context influences cultural adaptation. Rather than seeing religion as entirely malleable or completely static, I would argue that the kind of Christianity practiced by members of Casa Sobre la Roca lends itself to adaptability while still being constrained from within. The kind of creative work done by the subjects of this study happens in tandem with a strong tendency to not move too far away from the religious fundamentals that define evangelical Christianity. This lesson has implications beyond the sociology of religion and contributes to larger debates within the sociology of culture (or cultural sociology) by moving away from debates between proponents of strong (Alexander and Smith 2001) and weak programs (Gartman 2007).

What my findings suggest is that in Casa of Casa Sobre la Roca, religious adaptation is the results of multiple factors. While field-specific factors, such as the presence of other religious organizations and the extent to which religion is allowed or not in the public space have a significant impact on how people identify and practice their religion, the identities and practices of the people I studied are also shaped by other factors, including the country-specific histories of race and ethnic relations, and the church's middle class identity. Rather than rejecting neo-institutionalism entirely, my approach highlights what can be gained by supplementing it with lived religion.

Second, and relatedly, scholars of religion must take into account how religious practices, identities, and beliefs are connected. Sociologists of religion, especially American sociologists of religion, have long been narrowly focused on religious identity and church attendance. Thus an overabundance of quantitative research examining trends like whether or not people continue to attend church or whether or not religious denominations are growing or declining. While this research is relevant and provided important insights into demographic and behavioral trends, sociologists of religion need to do the work necessary to show the rest of the discipline that religion is much more complex than simply an identity category or a once or twice a week behavior. Any robust understanding of religion must move beyond reductionist approaches that see religion as a stable category (Smith et al. 2013).

My findings on how Colombian evangelicals narratives, identities, and practices are shaped by context, contribute to a growing body of research that moved beyond these limited understanding of religious practice and considers how practice and belief are connected to action. My research on Colombian Evangelicals sheds light on how beliefs and practices are adapted as a result of migration. My argument about theologizing, for example, could be explored in non-migratory contexts: my research supports Smilde's (2007) findings of how people engage in the creative process and use religion to address concrete dilemmas in their daily lives. Sociologists of religion interested in religious change should examine when and where theologizing happens. Besides migration and economic stability, I speculate that similar kinds of meaning-making processes might be at play in many other social contexts.

Finally, my analysis and findings should challenge scholars to think beyond the bridge/barrier dichotomy. If we see religious tradition, with their practices, narratives, and identities, as living organisms that influence and are influenced by the world they live in, then we

can move beyond simple questions about compatibility and instead focus on understanding what social structures and processes affect religious change. While the subjects of this study live relatively marginal lives as immigrants and ethnic minorities, their position is relatively privileged compared to those of other immigrant and religious groups. Future research on immigrant religion should, for example, follow a similar approach to understand how the experience of other groups that are double outsiders (i.e., being an immigrant and Muslim, or being a religious and a sexual minority) shapes religious narratives, identities, and practices.

Methodological Appendix

When I started planning this dissertation project, I was interested in testing whether or not Alba and Foner's (Alba and Foner 2015; Foner and Alba 2008) "bridge and barrier" analogy applied to the case of Colombian evangelicals in the United States and Europe. I began by looking for churches with branches in both the United States and Europe. I hoped that a comparative ethnography of the same church in two different contexts would allow me to "control" for as many factors as possible and thus, avoid some of the common limitations of comparative research of immigrant religion in the US and Europe.

While trying to decide among a handful of organizations to study, I found out that Casa Sobre la Roca, a church with which I was already familiar, had expanded internationally and opened branches in southern Florida and Spain. I quickly became interested in learning more and I began listening to online sermons from some of its different branches, paying particular attention to those in Miami and Madrid. It was in this preliminary stage of my research that I began to notice differences in the way the two churches talked about what it meant to be an evangelical and what it meant to be migrant in each context.

If sermons in each church spoke differently about these two issues, what else was different about them? Furthermore, how could I make sense of this variation? I was also influenced by what I had recently learned about the concept of Lived Religion and I felt like this approach was highly compatible with my thinking about the kind of ethnography of religion I wanted to conduct. I began shifting my attention away from questions about whether or not churches help immigrants integrate, and instead started thinking about how churches, and religious organizations in general, adapt to different environments.

In December of 2012, while on a personal trip in Colombia, I got in touch with a family acquaintance who was an active member of Casa Sobre la Roca in Bogotá. Through him, I met and spoke to Arturo Rojas, one of the church's pastors and the person in charge of CSR's educational initiatives. When I explained to Mr. Rojas what I was trying to accomplish, he agreed to put me in touch with the pastors of the churches in Madrid and Miami. Rojas was going to spend the holidays in Madrid, where he would visit the church, and he said he would talk to Pastor Peñaloza about my project. A few weeks later, I received an email from Rojas introducing me to Pastor Peñaloza. The following summer, I moved to Madrid, where I began collecting the majority of the ethnographic and interview data used in this project.

Ethnographic Data

When I arrived in Madrid in July of 2013, Pastor Peñaloza helped me by not only sitting down with me multiple times to talk about the history of the Madrid church, but also by introducing me to church members, many of whom I would later interview. He was particularly interested that I meet people whose story or testimony I would find compelling. It was pretty clear that he wanted me to meet and talk to people whose life had been positively impacted by the church. Thus, early in my research I met and talked to people who had quit drinking, fixed failing marriages, or reconnected with their families, to name a few, all thanks to Christ and the church. I quickly became known as "the journalist," and people joked about my role observing and taking notes on what was going on in the church, comparing me to an undercover journalist in the Christian movie, *Flywheel.*

While I initially wanted to "follow" church members in their day-to-day activities during the week. I quickly realized that following people would be more complicated than I anticipated. Instead, I spent most of my time observing and participating in church life. In Madrid, most of

my time was spent participating in as many official church events as possible. I attended weekend services, sometimes twice in the same day. I also attended the mid-week services on Wednesday nights, group meetings held on Tuesday and Thursday nights, and several fasts held on the first Saturday of every month.

Before I was able to volunteer in any of the church's activities, I was required to take the *Vida Nueva* (New Life) class, required for any new member of the church. I completed in September of 2013. Following this, I volunteered taking photos during the church's special events. In addition to the *Vida Nueva* class, I also completed the first in a series of four semester-long courses known in the church as "IBLI" or Bible Institute. The only thing I did not do was get baptized (because I did not believe, and I felt it would have been deceitful to the people I was studying), or attend the women's and couples' group meetings.

I believe I quickly became a member of the community. Besides being invited to volunteer at church events, I started attending non-religious, social events hosted by church members, including birthday celebrations, going-away parties, and regular get-togethers.

In February of 2014, I moved to Miami. While I arrived in Miami with a better sense of how to get involved in the church, as well as the confidence I lacked when I first began doing fieldwork in Madrid, I also found myself in a much bigger church, where it was easy to go unnoticed. I was lucky enough to be invited to the young adults' group, where I quickly became active and found a gateway or proxy through which I could learn more about the church-at-large.

Like in Madrid, I spent most of my time in Miami participating in as many church activities (official and unofficial) as possible. In addition to the weekly sermons on Sundays and Wednesdays, I attended several of the church's monthly fasts; I participated in the 24-hour long

fast held in April (no similar event was held in Madrid), and I attended many of the Men's group meetings, which were held every other week Thursday nights.

Additionally, I re-took the "Vida Nueva" class (twice) and attended evangelism seminars organized by the church leadership, especially in the days before the Colombian independence event described in Chapter 4. As Chapter 4 demonstrates, the church in Miami is much more "outgoing" in the sense that it often organizes activities that are held outside the church. This meant that my fieldwork included several picnics, cookouts, evangelism events, and two baptism ceremonies held outside.

Finally, like in Madrid, I also participated extensively in social events organized by church members. Unlike the church events I attended in Madrid, which were attended by members from all groups and ages, most of the social events I observed in Miami were organized by young adults.

Throughout my fieldwork, I kept detailed fieldnotes about my observations, my conversations, and my reactions to what I was observing and hearing. Using qualitative analysis software (MaxQDA), I analyzed my fieldnotes using an iterative combination of open and focused coding. (Emerson 1995). While my initial reading of my notes was guided in part by my research questions and hypotheses (such the variation in religious narratives by city), I remained open to any themes and patterns that emerged (such as how people mixed religious and class boundaries when differentiating between themselves and other groups).

Interview Data

In addition to the ethnographic data that I collected during my time in Madrid and Miami, I conducted interviews with church members. I initially recruited these members through word-of-mouth. Both pastor Peñaloza and Pastor Jalube were instrumental in getting the first couple of

interviews. After this, I began recruiting through snowball sampling and by relying on the church's WhatsApp (a social media/texting application) groups to recruit people.

In Madrid, I interviewed twenty people (eleven men, nine women) ranging from ages 18 to 60. I recorded seventeen of these interviews: three of the people in Madrid asked me not to record them, so I had to take notes. In Miami, I interviewed nineteen people (ten men and nine women). Of these, only fifteen allowed me to record the interviews. While I tried to interview people of all ages in Miami, the fact that I was heavily involved in the young adults' groups resulted in a slight over-sampling of young people (12) in my interviews.

Additionally, I interviewed both head pastors of the respective church branches and four church leaders (one in Madrid, three in Madrid). In Madrid, I sat with pastor Peñaloza for three interviews, which lasted an average of one hour. During these three interviews, we discussed the church's history, their current initiatives, and plans for the future, as well as his biography and his experiences as a migrant. Additionally, I interviewed his wife, who is in charge of counseling and the church's charitable initiatives (MAS, or "Ministerio Amor y Servicio"). In Miami, I interviewed Pastor Jalube twice (each session lasted about an hour), to talk about his time as the pastor of the church in Miami and his personal experiences with Casa Sobre la Roca. In Miami, I also interviewed Pastor Silvano Espindola, who was in charge of the church when it first opened, as well as the person in charge of young adults group and the person in charge of evangelism ministry. Finally, in the spring of 2015, I returned to Madrid for one week, during which time I was able to show some of my early analyses to church members and check the validity of my findings with them.[44]

[44] When I shared my insights about the different approaches to evangelism, Pastor Peñaloza seemed unsurprised, telling me that CSR Madrid tried to evangelize in the streets of Madrid they would receive a lot of backlash.

For all interviews, I used interview guides (included below, in their English translations). I developed the interview guide borrowing from the work of Carolyn Chen (2008) and Margarita Mooney (2009), both of whom have conducted comparative studies of immigrant religion. Throughout my interviews, I used the questions in my guide as a conversation starter, but the conversations would change course in different ways, and so in most interviews, I deviated from my guide to keep the discussions flowing naturally. Furthermore, I approached portions of my interviews sequentially (Small 2009). Rather than simply trying to replicate the interview questions each time, I used each sequential interview as an opportunity to further develop or modify my understanding of certain subjects; the more interviews I conducted, the more I deviated from some parts of my initial interview guide.

All interviews, except for two, were conducted in Spanish. In Miami, I conducted two interviews in "Spanglish," with members who had arrived in the United States as children and thus were comfortable switching back and forth. With the help of an assistant, I transcribed the recordings of my interviews and entered them, along with the notes I took during interviews with subjects who did not want to be recorded, into qualitative analysis software, which I used for coding. While I did some open coding of the interviews, most of the coding of this data happened after I had already gone through my fieldnotes at least once. Thus, my coding of the interviews was significantly more focused from the beginning. All translations from the interviews are my own.

Additional Data

In addition to my fieldwork and interview data, I relied two supplemental interviews with church leaders in Colombia,[45] archival material, such as newspaper articles (including the church's magazine), and web and social media posts, including Facebook posts and WhatsApp group chats. While these sources rarely appear as data points in the dissertation, they were fundamental in guiding my thinking and my fieldwork because they provided me with a broader sense of the relevant discourses and understandings that constituted the social worlds of the two churches.

A final reflection on my position as a researcher

From the earliest stages of this process, I benefited greatly from the interaction between the social dynamics of my field site and my personal background. Having grown up in a middle-class family in Bogotá and just blocks from the Casa Sobre la Roca's headquarters helped me to both connect with people who assisted me in gaining access to the church as a site and build relationships once I started doing fieldwork. Being Colombian, middle-class, and an immigrant meant I was exactly the kind of person the churches were trying to recruit. While I am sure that the churches would have still opened their doors to me if my background had been different, I think church leaders and members opened up to me especially quickly due to my background and my status.

My participation, observation, and analysis were also influenced by my own (lack of) religious beliefs. While my choice to identify as religiously agnostic might have put some distance between myself and the people I studied, I worked very hard to not just observe but also

[45] I tried interviewing the Casa Sobre al Roca's founder and president Dario Silva Silva in July of 2015. After weeks of trying to reach him through several channels (including mutual acquaintances, social media, and multiple phone calls) I was finally able to get an appointment with him, he made me wait for an hour outside his office and eventually asked me to send him my interview questions through his secretary. I never received a reply.

participate in what I was studying. I prayed, sang, and danced during services (had I known how to play an instrument or sign, I would have probably joined the churches' bands) and I shared my own stories and dramas in small group gatherings. My approach to conducting ethnographic research in a religious setting was inspired by Omar McRoberts' (2004) proposal for an aesthetic approach to the study of religion. In this proposal McRoberts suggests that the ethnographer should "seek conversion" and attempt to understand the aesthetic elements of religious experience from the point of view of the believer. I took McRoberts' approach to also mean that an ethnographer should be open to the literal possibility of religious conversion, a door I tried to keep open throughout my research. For me, being open to the possibility of conversion was not just a methodological choice, but also an ethical one. When I first asked Pastor Peñaloza if I could study his community, he told me he would open the doors to the church on the condition that I come with an open mind and an open heart not just to the church, but to God and the Bible. I agreed this condition and I tried my best to keep my word., despite the fact that I never converted. I believe my efforts, as well as my status as a former Catholic who had yet to accept Jesus Christ as his savior, made people more eager to share their testimonies and stories with me. Throughout my fieldwork, it was evident that the communities I studied saw me, more than anything else, as someone who needed to be saved.

General Member Interview Guide

A. General Background

1. Lets begin by talking a little bit about your background. When and where were you born?
2. What is your marital status?
3. Do you have any children? How many and how old are they?
4. Are you currently employed?
   If yes: What is your current profession?
   If no: how long have you been unemployed? What was your last job?
5. What is your educational background?

B. Background in Colombia

1. You told me you were born _____. Is that where you lived when were in Colombia? Where else in Colombia did you live? What city? What neighborhood?
2. Have you lived in any other countries? Where?
3. Now lets talk about your parents… tell me about them… Where were they from? What did they do for a living?
4. And do you have any siblings? If so, tell me a little bit about them… What do they do? Where do they live?
5. What did you do in Colombia?

C. Migration to Spain/US

1. Lets talk about your move to Spain/the US….
2. When did you move here?
3. Why did you decide to come to Spain/The US?
4. Did you move to Madrid/Miami? Did you consider any other cities?
5. Before moving, did you have any family members in Spain/the US?
6. Did you move here with your family?
7. If not, when did they move here?

D. Religious Background

1. Tell me a bit about your religious upbringing. Did you grow up in a religious family?
2. Did you go to church when you were growing up?
3. What about your school? Was it a religious school?
4. Tell me about how you found Casa Sobre La Roca… Had you heard about it in Colombia? Had you visited?
5. Did you go to any other churches before coming to Casa Sobre la Roca? Do you ever go to any other churches?
6. How does your immediate family, your wife/husband and children, feel about you coming to this church?
7. Do they come to church with you?
8. What about your extended family? How religious are they?

E. Religious practices

1. How often do you come to Casa Sobre la Roca?
2. What are the things you like the most about CSR?
3. What are the things you like the least?
4. How would you describe the church to someone who has never been here?
5. Do you every invite friends? What did they think?
6. How often do you talk to your pastor about your personal issues? What issues do you talk to your pastor about?
7. Do you have a lot of friends in the church? Do you ever talk to them about personal issues? What issues do you talk to them about?
    a. Do you talk to them about religion?
8. Tell me about how you practice religion outside the church.
    a. I've heard a lot of people say that one does not go to church, but one is the church. Tell me what this statement means to you.
9. How often do you pray? How do you pray? What are some of the things you pray about?
10. Do you read the bible? How often? Tell me about how you read it.

F. **Family in other countries**

1. do you still have family in Colombia? What about other countries?
2. Do you talk to them about religion?
3. If yes, tell me a little bit about the things you discuss with them.
4. Do you send or receive money from Colombia or any other country?

G. Intentions to move to Colombia or to a different country.

1. A lot of people have been returning to Colombia in the past couple of years, especially as a result of the economic crisis in Spain/the US. Have you ever considered this an option?
2. Have you considered the option of moving somewhere else?
3. What are some of the deciding factors that would make you move somewhere else?
4. What are some of the deciding factors that would make you stay here?

Religious Leader Interview Guide

A. General Background

1. Lets begin talking about your job/role at the church. What exactly is your title and what do you do at Casa Sobre la Roca?
2. How long have you been doing it?
3. Have you worked or served in any other positions?
4. What about other churches? Have you worked or served in any other churches?

B. Now tell me a little bit about the church's history.

1. How long has the church been around?
2. Where you around when it started? If yes, tell me what you remember…
3. Where did people meet?
4. How many people were present?
5. When did it move to its current building?
6. How many people do you think attend church on a regular basis?
7. How is the church organized? What are the different committees, ministries, working groups?

C. Imagine I have never visited this church…

1. How would you describe it?
2. What do you think makes this an attractive church?
3. How would you describe the people who come to the church?

D. Thinking about the church and its future….

1. What do you think are some of the challenges the church is currently facing?
2. Where do you see the church in 5 years?
3. In 10?

E. For Pastors only:

1. What is the church's relationship with the Casa Sobre La Roca headquarters in Bogota?
2. What about the relationship with other CSR churches in Colombia, the US, and Spain?
3. Is the church a member of any national or international organization?
4. How would you describe the church's relationship with the neighborhood?
5. Has the church ever collaborated with any other religions groups in organizing events? If yes, can you tell me a little what you did and how it happened?
6. As a pastor, what do you think is the most common issue or problem that members of the congregation face? What do you think the church does to help them?

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