

## **Terry Rey**

### **Civic Social Capital and Immigrant Religion: Lessons from Miami and Their Potential Relevance for European Religious Fields**

At the beginning of the twenty-first century a team of social scientists at Florida International University embarked on a major study of the relationship between religious institutions and the civic engagement or disengagement of immigrants in Miami, one of North America's most ethnically diverse cities, whose population is more than half foreign-born. Toward sharpening their theoretical orientation, the team extended and refined the sociological notion of social capital, developing a specified version of this popular "thinking tool," civic social capital, toward deepening our understanding of how religion facilitates or impedes the civic education/engagement of newly arriving immigrants in an American urban milieu. This paper provides an intellectual history of the ideas of social, religious, and civic social capital and surveys the findings from the Miami study. It also reviews recent research that employs the notion of civic social capital in European religious fields, namely in Finland and Switzerland, offering suggestions for the advancement of future research agenda on these and related questions. The paper ultimately is intended to contribute to an emergent broader conversation about immigration and religion between scholars in Europe and in North America, who have much to learn from one another.

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Editor with Alex Stepick and Sarah J. Mahler of *Churches and Charity in the Immigrant City: Religion, Immigration, and Civic Engagement in Miami* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009).