Many Americans closely identified with their Protestant roots, and viewed foreign religions as a potential attack on the nation. Though Catholic immigrants were embraced by Catholic churches under the national parish model, and the immigrants and the churches shared a reciprocal relationship of strengthened identity, the influx of Catholic immigrants in the 1800s posed a considerable threat to the nation's Protestant identity.

Many Americans expressed this identity crisis through anti-Catholic literature, violence, and politics. Particularly, political responses, such as the birth of the nativist Know Nothing party, shed light on the nation's Protestant religious identity. The reaction to Catholic complaints of Protestantism in public schools, which resulted in secularization and the establishment of parochial schools, along with twentieth century concerns over Catholic presidential nominees, indicate the long-term effects nineteenth century Catholic immigrants had on America's religious identity. Understanding how significantly Catholic immigrants impacted this identity provides the context necessary to combat emotivism in the ongoing debate of religion's role in politics. Recognizing that moral or value-based statements are often rooted in one's personal emotion forces careful reconsideration of clichéd statements used in political discourse that assume shared understanding of terms, such as "Christian."

References

Abramson, P.R., Aldrich, J. H., & Rohde, D.W. (2005). The 2004 presidential election: The emergence of a permanent majority? *Political Science Quarterly*, *120*(1), 33-57.

Anbinder, T. (1997). Ulysses S. Grant, nativist. *Civil War History*, *43*(2), 119-141.

Bailey, L. E. (2011). Fair Protestant maidens and menacing nuns. *American Educational History Journal*, *38*(2), 459-477.

Crews, C. F. (1994). American & Catholics: A popular history of Catholicism in the United States. In *An immigrant church* (pp. 72-85). Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press.

Farnham, W. D. (1961). The "religious issue" in American politics: An historical commentary. *Queen's Quarterly 68*(1), 47-65.

Holscher, K. (2012). Contesting the veil in America: Catholic habits and the controversy over religious clothing in the United States. *Journal of Church and State*, *54*(1), 57-81.

Holt, M. F. (1973). The politics of impatience: The origins of Know Nothingism. *The Journal of American History 60*(2), 309-331.

Lannie, V. P. (1970). Alienation in America: The immigrant Catholic and public education in pre-civil war America. *The Review of Politics*, *32*(4), 503-521.

MacIntyre, A. (2007). *After Virtue* (2nd ed.). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2010). Identity and intercultural communication. In *Intercultural communication in contexts* (pp. 153-209). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

Morris, C. (1997). American Catholic. In P. Allitt (Ed.), *Major problems in American religious history*, 2013 (186-191). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Putnam R. D., & Campbell D.E. (2010). Religious polarization and pluralism in America. In *American grace* (pp. 1-37). New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Putnam R. D., & Campbell D.E. (2010). Religiosity in America: The historical backdrop. In *American grace* (pp. 70-91). New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Robinson, B.A. (2010). *History of Catholic presidential and vice-presidential nominees in the U.S.* Retrieved from http://www.eligioustolerance.org/rcc_poli1.htm

Wenski, T. G. (1998). The new immigrants: tensions and opportunities for the Church in America. *Migration World Magazine 26*(4), 33-42.