

ANALYZING THE GROWTH OF PROTESTANTISM:

A CASE STUDY OF MEXICO

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

The Wilkes Honors College

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences

with a Concentration in International Studies

Wilkes Honors College of

Florida Atlantic University

Jupiter, Florida

April 2009

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This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor, Dr. Timothy Steigenga, and has been approved by the members of her supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of The Honors College and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Timothy Steigenga for his patience, advice and for showing me I could work harder than I ever thought possible and for Dr. Rachel Corr for providing her insightful feedback and spurring comments. I would also like to thank my roommates for showing me there was a world outside of thesis and my best friends for their endless support. I would like to thank my parents for believing in me and being a constant encouragement. Finally, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength and knowledge to complete this task.

ABSTRACT

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A Case Study of Mexico
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Thesis Advisor: Dr. Timothy Steigenga
Degree: Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences
Concentration: International Studies
Year: 2009

There are several competing theoretical explanations for why Pentecostal Protestantism is growing rapidly in Latin America including affinities with the indigenous religions of the region, a recent increase in the supply of Pentecostalism due to missionary movements, a reduction in government regulation of religion, social anomie theory, and the pull of economic upward mobility through conversion. This study analyses the growth of Pentecostal Protestantism in the case of Mexico, utilizing state by state comparative data measuring these variables. While higher percentages of indigenous residents are correlated significantly with Pentecostal growth, government regulation and supply are less so. Social anomie and economic upward mobility are not conducive to studying in minute detail but on a larger scale seem to serve as broad explanations for Pentecostal growth. Theories explaining Pentecostal growth should be revised to reflect these convergent factors and focus on the reasons for the divergent growth patterns.

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INTRODUCTION

The growth of Pentecostal Protestantism in the developing world has drawn the attention of numerous pastors, sociologists, and political scientists. Pentecostal Protestantism is a branch of Christianity that focuses on “an oral liturgy, a narrative style in preaching and witness, maximum participation in the levels of prayer, reflection, and decision making, inclusive of dreams and visions in worship, and an...understanding of the body-mind relationship applied in...healing by prayer.”¹ Pentecostalism has been growing rapidly, particularly in Latin America. Pentecostal Protestantism has not been growing as rapidly in Mexico as other countries but, because of its size Mexico has one of the larger numbers of Pentecostal totals.² Mexico also has a large diversity of people ranging from the indigenous Maya to the wealthy elite. Because of the wide range, Mexico provides a good testing ground for the theories that academics have studied for why Pentecostal Protestantism is growing rapidly in Latin America.

One of the reasons it is important to look at the growth of Pentecostalism is that a religion, especially one that has rapid growth, changes the political and social spectrum of the country. As Timothy Steigenga and Edward Cleary point out, “the most important political effects of religious change in Latin America have to do with the manner in which new religiously held values enter the public sphere, inform public discourse, and

¹ Samuel Escobar, “The Promise and Precariousness of Latin America.” Chap. 1 in *Coming of Age: Protestantism in Contemporary Latin America*, edited by Daniel R. Miller, 3-29. (New York: University Press of America, 1994), 7.

² James Dow, “The Growth of Protestant Religions in Mexico and Central America.” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Annual Meeting (Norfolk, 2003),4.

combine to resolve or exacerbate local cultural, social, or familial tensions.”³ As Steigenga and Cleary also mention, “a more fruitful research agenda [would focus] on the specific religious beliefs and practices associated with the religious groups experiencing rapid growth in the region, and how those beliefs and practices interact with local and national context.”⁴ Therefore, it is important to study the phenomenon that is occurring in Mexico concerning the growth of Pentecostalism. The purpose of this thesis is to take the theories that have been presented for the growth of Pentecostal Protestantism and test them within the country of Mexico using the three states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, and the Federal District (see Appendix I for a map of locations) as examples of the effects of the theories in a state by state basis. The theories examined include; how indigenous people and relational ability to old customs affect the growth of Protestantism, supply theory, government regulation theory, social anomie theory, and economic upward mobility theory. I test these theories by looking at the growth rates of Protestantism in the individual states in relation to the percentage of indigenous people, government regulation, the number of pastors and priests within the states, the correlation between poverty and the growth rate of Protestantism, and whether or not converts are gaining a higher social or economic status. My findings indicate that the indigenous, supply, and government regulation theories do appear to impact the growth of Protestantism. Findings on social anomie and economic upward mobility theory were less conclusive, pointing to

³ Timothy J Steigenga and Edward L. Cleary, "Understanding Conversion in the Americas." Chap. 1 in *Conversion of a Continent: Contemporary Religious Change in Latin America*, edited by Timothy J Steigenga and Edward I Cleary, Chapter 1. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 25.

⁴ Steigenga and Cleary, *Conversion of a Continent*, 25.

the need for further research. Before discussing these theories, a brief overview of Mexican history and Pentecostal Protestantism will be discussed.

MEXICAN HISTORY AND THE PENTECOST

Mexico is the largest country in Latin America. Originally inhabited by the Maya and Aztec Indians, Mexico has proven to be a nation of conflict. With the arrival of the Spanish in 1492, Mexico would become a breeding ground for wars and revolutions. Thrown into the mix was the coming of Roman Catholicism. The following centuries were a mix of bloody battles and the growth of Catholicism. During this time the Conquest was thought to be successfully eradicating the autochthonous customs and cultures, when in reality, the indigenous were simply combining their customs with the newer Catholic belief system to form their own syncretistic customs. This created a new type of Catholicism titled Folk Catholicism which, as Toomas Gross defines, “comprises the system of religious *cargos* and festivals for patron saints.”⁵ One of these syncretistic customs is *costumbre*. James Dow defines *costumbre* as a ritual that is organized by shamans and uses a hallucinogen to enable participants to see visions.⁶ As Dow states, “within a *costumbre*, the faithful cross a frontier between the normal and the extra normal.”⁷ The changing of the Catholic religion and the introduction of a new type of Catholicism was just the beginning of conflicts for the Catholic Church in Mexico.

⁵ Toomas Gross, "Protestantism and Modernity: The Implications of Religious Change in Contemporary Rural Oaxaca." *Sociology of Religion* 64, no. 4 (2003):485

⁶ Dow, "The Growth of Protestant Religions", 14

⁷ *Ibid*, 14

Protestantism arrived in Mexico in the mid 1800s.⁸ The Catholic Church's power was curbed and the government under the Liberals was looking to establish an independent national church to move away from the Spanish Catholicism. According to Kurt Bowen, "The new institution they envisaged would retain Catholic doctrine and ritual but would acquiesce to liberal reforms and would no longer be subject to the authority of Rome or the former Catholic hierarchy."⁹ However, "faced with the failure to create an autonomous Mexican Church, the liberal government opened its doors to American Protestant missionary agencies as the only available means of creating a viable alternative to the Catholic Church."¹⁰ Disputes arose constantly between the two religions. These disputes have continued through the present. However, there were several additions to both sides that gave boosts to the religions respective arguments. These were the proceedings of the Vatican II and Medellin conferences and the introduction of Pentecostalism to Mexico.

In the mid to late 1900s the Catholic Church saw the need to reform their traditions and in conjunction with the Liberation Theology movement, set up new standards for the Catholic Mass ritual. Mass was no longer conducted exclusively in Latin and the Church adopted a "preferential option for the poor."¹¹ This idea is that the Catholic Church spends a portion of its resources to focus on the ministry to the poor and to change the Catholic's worship and outreach to create a better environment for the

⁸ Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa, and Latin America*, (New York Cambridge University Press, 2001), 201

⁹ Kurt Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy: The Evolution and Impact of Evangelicals in Modern Mexico*, (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996),25

¹⁰ Ibid, 25

¹¹ Escobar, "Promise and Precariousness",15

poor.¹² Along with this, the church set up Ecclesial Base Communities (CEB's). CEB's are formed from a small group of people who have a common interest who get together to interpret scripture and help the lower class have more of an involvement with the church.¹³ This boosted the attendance of the Catholic Church for a time, but the main opponent of the Church was just being introduced: Pentecostal Protestantism.

Pentecostalism made its debut in Azusa Street, a rundown section of Los Angeles, in the United States of America.¹⁴ *The Economist* discusses the meaning behind Pentecostal: "Pentecostals take their name from the biblical feast of the Pentecost. Early followers of Jesus who had gathered for [this] feast were 'filled with the Holy Spirit' and able to 'speak in tongues'."¹⁵ This practice of speaking in tongues and the emphasis on the filling of an individual with the Holy Spirit continues today with the modern Pentecostals. According to Paul Freston "there were Mexicans present at ...Azusa Street, Los Angeles, in 1906[and that] the founders of most Pentecostal denominations [in Mexico] were Mexicans converted in the United States."¹⁶ Because the predominant carriers of Pentecostalism were migrant or lower class Mexicans, Pentecostalism started out with sermons in Spanish or a native language. Gill states that for Latin America "Pentecostalism is an umbrella term used to describe Evangelical Protestants sharing certain theological and organizational features."¹⁷ Escobar states that "the Latin American experience thus far demonstrates that a good number of Pentecostal churches

¹² Anthony Gill, *Rendering Unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and The State in Latin America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 36-37.

¹³ Gill, *Rendering*, 37-38

¹⁴ *The Economist*. "Christianity Reborn; Pentecostals." December 23, 2006: 84

¹⁵ *The Economist*, 84

¹⁶ Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics*, 200

¹⁷ Anthony Gill, *Rendering*, 83.

and denominations consider themselves Evangelical.”¹⁸ For the purpose of this paper these terms will be used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

The different aspects of the two religions have affected the relationship between Protestants and Catholics. Because of the disputes and differences, the government of Mexico stepped in and started instituting new laws and altering the constitution regarding the regulation of religion. Freston talks about the 1850s where the government openly gave freedom of worship to the people; this however, incited a religious revolution.¹⁹ Under the Carranza government in 1917, a new constitution was issued and it “contained anti-clerical clauses, which potentially affected Protestants as well.”²⁰ This continued to impact the religious scope until the 1950s, by way of persecutions within the churches ranging from attacks on Protestants to difficulty registering church buildings.²¹ During the 1950s however, the government lifted the hold that had been placed on the registering of Evangelical churches.²² Freston shows that, “Protestantism settled down to a comfortable relationship with the state” because of the halt of strong persecution.²³ In 1992, after NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) was instituted, there was a reform of the constitution agreements and religious holds were lifted, and the Mexican Catholic Church established contact again with the Vatican.²⁴ These constitutional changes and reforms are a key part of the religious regulation argument that will be

¹⁸ Escobar, “Promise and Precariousness”, 10

¹⁹ Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics*, 201.

²⁰ Ibid, 202.

²¹ Ibid, 203.

²² Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*, 45

²³ Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics*, 203

²⁴ Ibid, 203.

presented later on. The previous brief history of Mexico and Protestantism sets up the foundation of the theories that will be presented in the next section.

THEORIES OF PROTESTANT GROWTH

Indigenous Populations/ Relational Ability to Old Customs

The indigenous population theory argues that Pentecostal Protestantism is growing because Pentecostals use native languages, local people, and because the indigenous find Pentecostal Protestantism relatable to their old customs. Within the Indigenous population theory, the more indigenous people a country or state has, the more likely it will be for Pentecostal Protestantism to grow and be prevalent in large quantities. Protestants specifically focus on using the native languages more than other religions as well as including traditional practices and because of this, I posit that indigenous will be more attracted to Protestantism. Catholics have managed to bring in the common language to their sermons but the Pentecostals have been able to provide teachings and sermons in Spanish and/or an indigenous language since first entering Latin America. This is partly due to the fact that Pentecostalism came from the United States through migrants but also due to the missionary nature of the movement.

Along with the common language comes the idea of the relational ability between the old customs and Pentecostal Protestant worship ceremonies. Gross shows that “Pentecostal churches are particularly adaptable to the conditions of the indigenous communities, which could actually explain their success and appeal.”²⁵ The attraction

²⁵ Gross, “Protestantism and Modernity”, 491

between Pentecostalism and indigenous can be seen particularly in the custom of the *costumbre*. As Dow states “the Pentecostal ecstatic experience has parallels in native culture.”²⁶ Dow uses this argument as a basis for his theory of why Pentecostalism is growing. The focus of the argument is centered on the ritual of the *costumbre*. In the *costumbre* the participant will enter into an alternate state of mind with the aid of a hallucinogen where they begin to have visions and speak intelligibly while in a trance state.²⁷ The trance like state and unique communication is seen to be related to the Pentecostal practice of speaking in tongues or glossolalia where the worshiper begins to dance erratically and speak in an unknown language. This parallel, though not fully identical, draws the indigenous population into Pentecostal Protestantism.

Within the indigenous theory, not only does Pentecostal Protestantism have similarities to some traditional customs, it also keeps others alive. Steigenga and Cleary state that “Pentecostalism preserves local religious ontologies in the process of simultaneously demonizing them.”²⁸ The idea of preservation can be seen as Pentecostalism does not support the participation in the old customs because they are of the devil. They in fact keep the old religions alive by saying that they are wrong and that they are not to be trusted. They never say they do not exist. Because of this, the ideas of the old religions stay alive because the ideas are demonized and therefore thought about by the convert but in a different manner. Not only does Pentecostalism demonize the local religions but offers something as an alternative. In the article “Christianity Reborn:

²⁶ Dow, "The Growth of Protestant Religions", 14.

²⁷ Ibid, 14

²⁸ Steigenga and Cleary, *Conversion of a Continent*, 26

Pentecostals,” published by *The Economist*, it is mentioned that, “they [converts] are reluctant to return to traditional churches. Pentecostalism offers something different- -a religion that is about excitement and emotion, not hierarchy and dogma.”²⁹ Thus the indigenous affinity argument posits that Protestants should grow fastest in indigenous areas, where missionaries work in indigenous areas and there are specific religious affinities between traditional religious practices and Pentecostals.

Supply

The supply theory argues that the greater the supply of a particular religious institution in an area the greater the attendance of that religion will be. In other words, the easier an individual can access a given religion, the more participation the religion will have. The Catholic Church has dominated Latin America since the Conquest, giving them a near monopoly of religious supply in the region. Gill explains that, “Protestantism only gained attention after progressive Catholicism...failed to live up to expectations.”³⁰ With the Catholic Church being overcommitted and Mexico being such a large country, it became difficult for the Church to keep their monopolistic religious status under control. As Gill notes “the success of indigenous Protestantism clearly [demonstrates] that the church never paid sufficient attention to its parishioners.”³¹ Bowen states that the “combination of institutional Catholic neglect of the popular classes and their openness to supernatural solutions to their problems thus created a receptive vacuum for Evangelical

²⁹ *The Economist*, 84

³⁰ Gill, "Government Regulation, Social Anomie, and Protestant Growth." *Rationality and Society*, (August 1999: 287-316), 288

³¹Gill, *Rendering*, 96

advance.”³² Bowen looked at the ratio of laity (attendees) to pastoral clergy in 1993 and showed a ratio of 17,112:1.³³ Within the more rural areas, this ratio was higher, meaning that there were more attendees to each priest.³⁴

Andrew Chesnut discusses religious monopoly using the market approach. Chesnut states that “with a market guaranteed by the state, the religious monopolist, like its commercial counterpart, is under no pressure to supply a quality product.”³⁵ Because the monopolist is under no pressure it becomes in a sense, lazy. This is where the Catholic Church stood in its relation with the state and the people in Mexico. This “lazy” monopoly theory suggests that because the monopoly religion (the Catholic Church) does not take the time to invest and produce and supply a religion that is desirable to the masses, that the masses will be less likely to attend and/or be as devout to that religion.³⁶ With this lack of Catholic influence, people, especially the indigenous, were free to explore new religions.

One of these new religions was a form of Catholicism called ‘Folk Catholicism’, which became popular because it “often incorporated indigenous religious beliefs.”³⁷ However, this form of Catholicism was only practiced several times a year and was not consistent. Because of this, “the lack of [priests] presented Protestants with a tremendous

³² Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*, 220

³³ Bowen, 57

³⁴ Bowen, 57-58

³⁵ Andrew Chesnut, “Specialized Spirits: Conversion and the products of Pneumacentric Religion in Latin Americas Free Market of Faith”, chap. 4 in *Conversion of a Continent: Contemporary Religious Change in Latin America*, edited by Timothy J Steigenga and Edward I Cleary (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 77

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Gill, “Government Regulation”, 296

opportunity to expand.”³⁸ The supply theory which is analyzed by both Gill and Bowen, states that there is a larger growth of Protestantism because Protestant pastors and churches are in greater supply than priests. Also, not only are pastors in greater supply, but they are supplied more consistently than Catholic priests. In summary, this theory posits that faced with an unresponsive religious monopoly, religious consumers are likely to choose other religious options such as Pentecostal Protestantism.

Government Regulation

The government regulation theory coincides with the supply theory. The idea of the government regulation theory is that the less religious regulation there is, the more new religions will grow, especially Pentecostal Protestantism. Gill is one of the main authors who argue that government regulation of religious supply explains why Pentecostal Protestantism is growing. Gill argues that “countries with fewer legal barriers of entry into the religious market will show the greatest amounts of religious diversity and participation.”³⁹ As discussed in the previous section, the more diverse religion is and more options people have, the more Pentecostal Protestantism can prosper.

Bowen looks at the government’s involvement in 1917, under the Carranza Era and finds an extreme case of religious regulation, not only for the Protestant branch but also for Catholicism.⁴⁰ The regulation was enhanced by a new constitution issued by Carranza stating that the government now held control over the Church and how the church was run. Again, this regulation on religion continued throughout Mexico until the

³⁸ Gill, *Rendering*, 85 & Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*

³⁹ Gill, “Government Regulation”, 294

⁴⁰ Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*, 32-33

1950 when “under the presidencies of Ruiz Cortines (1952-58) and his successor Lopez Mateos (1958-64), the hold on registration of Evangelical churches was removed.”⁴¹ However, the largest change did not come until the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) Era⁴² in 1992.⁴³ In 1992 most of the laws were revoked and churches had a substantial amount of liberty bestowed on them compared to the previous decades. This should, as the theory suggests, cause the growth of Pentecostal Protestantism to develop quickly after 1992, so long as there are no other actors involved with prohibiting the establishment of a church.

Social Anomie

Social anomie theory focuses on the individuals themselves. It looks to see if there is a correlation with a traumatic event, social upheaval, or migration. Gills theory is that “people will seek out new religions to cope with socioeconomic and /or cultural dislocation.”⁴⁴ The dislocation and/or social anomie can come in different forms. However, Bowen’s and Gill’s research both suggest that a percentage of converts have a defining experience in their lives that instigates the decision of turning to Pentecostal Protestantism. Gill says that “people become alienated as they lose access to their former social support networks... [so] many people turn to new religious movements to replace lost community support.”⁴⁵ With the people turning towards new religious movements

⁴¹Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*, 45

⁴² The North America Free Trade Agreement was initiated in 1994 and allowed for free trade between Canada, The United States, and Mexico. Mexico requested entrance into the agreement around 1992.

⁴³ Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics*, 203

⁴⁴ Gill, “Government Regulation”, 289

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 290

because of social upheaval, it is theorized that regions where there is a large quantity of social upheaval or regions that have been affected by war will have a larger percentage of Protestant growth.

Economic Upward Mobility

The economic upward mobility theory argues that Pentecostal Protestantism is growing because it provides economic upward mobility to the convert. Economic upward mobility can be viewed in different ways. One way is to look at how far the individual advances within their job. Another way is to analyze the extent to which living conditions are better after conversion. Data is hard to find on the specifics needed to calculate just how much upward mobility a convert will receive upon converting to Pentecostal Protestantism. However, more than just monetary wealth can be viewed within upward mobility. Pentecostalism is a very strict form of religion that requires the individual to abstain from all drinking, immorality, dancing, smoking, and anything else that will hinder a commitment to God. Pentecostalism requires that the individual attend services 2 to 5 times a week and that they participate in them. These strict practices and expectations are used to explain how Protestants receive economic upward mobility after their conversion.

Dow uses this information in relation to the still popular cargo system in indigenous communities. The cargo system requires families to sponsor city wide celebrations in honor of local deities, or other religious figures. “A family can spend over a year’s income on a celebration” and “they [religious obligations] are normally taken on

for a year or two years at a time.”⁴⁶ However, in joining Pentecostalism, the individual is no longer able to participate in the festivities (drinking, dancing, immorality, celebration of false gods). If allowed, the individual will now have the wealth normally given to the cargo system to spend on family, household needs, or improving their appearance and status through receiving a better job. Bowen gives numerous examples throughout his book about what this means in the longer run for the convert. However, it needs to be taken into account that most Catholic religious leaders do not agree or accept the justification from the Pentecostals that they cannot participate in any way with the festivities and many are forced under persecution to continue to sponsor the festivities in some way.⁴⁷

Another aspect of economic upward mobility that is commonly looked at is the effect conversion has on the economic appearance of the convert. Dow comments that “Protestantism is seen as an ethic that morally legitimized new wealth by giving the hardworking middle-class businessman a feeling he is following a holy calling” and that “work should be a holy calling.”⁴⁸ With the strict rules of Pentecostalism, the convert, especially the male, gains new ideas of the work ethic and must learn to conduct himself in a Godly manner. A large portion of Pentecostals now associate with the idea of the “health and wealth gospel”. They make up their own following called the Neo-Pentecostals. They focus more on the “results (economic fruits) of their faith instead of

⁴⁶ Dow, “Growth of Protestant Religions”, 21

⁴⁷ Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*

⁴⁸ Dow, “Growth of Protestant Religions”, 17

the methods (frugality).”⁴⁹ They believe that as long as you are obeying the Lord’s commands and staying free from all sin and temptation that you will be “healthy and wealthy”. This attracts the lower classes because they see it as a means to attain wealth. Because the convert is no longer drinking and is viewing work as a gift from God than the manner in which they conduct work changes. The convert show a higher level of trustworthiness and discipline. As Martin points out, “employers appreciate this discipline and trustworthiness, which has obvious advantages.”⁵⁰ These manners that are instilled into the convert enable him/her to be seen as someone of reputable status. He/she can therefore attain a job easier and move up in the job to higher positions and/or move up socially within society as a whole. However, the economic upward mobility theory does not take into account the effect the time needed to attend services has on the employer and the desire to hire a Pentecostal.

TESTING

Mexico is a country that contains 32 individual states and according to the 2000 Mexican Census, Mexico had a total of 97,483,412 people.⁵¹ The social demographics of these states vary to the extremes and therefore provide a suitable testing ground for many of the theories for the growth of Protestantism. Up to this point, I have not connected the theories with the numbers, events, and ideas within Mexico. For each theory then, I give a description of how the individual theory is perceived in relation to the Mexican case.

⁴⁹ Eric Patterson, *Latin America's Neo Reformation: Religion's Influence on Contemporary Politics*, (New York: Routledge, 2005) 167

⁵⁰ David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 87.

⁵¹ INEGI. Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía. *XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2000*. www.inegi.gob.mx/ (accessed February 27, 2008).

Using data from researchers and from the Mexican census, I attempt to plug in the data that has been collected into the theories and models presented to see, if in fact, the theories hold true. The indigenous population theory will be examined first.

Indigenous Populations/ Relation Ability to Old Customs

Mexico, as is the case in the majority of Central American countries, has a large population of indigenous people comprised of many different social groups. Mexico, in the year 2000, had a total of 6,044,547 people 5 years and older who spoke an indigenous language representing 7.2 percent of the population.⁵² The indigenous population theory states that the more indigenous a country has the greater the chance that it will have more Protestants. According to the Mexican Census, Mexico had 4,408,159 Protestants and Evangelicals in the year 2000 which comprised 7.3 percent of the population.⁵³ Using the figures presented in the Mexican Census for the percent of indigenous in each state and the number of Protestants in each state, I was able to look at the correlation across the country. I found that the number of indigenous to the number of Protestants was highly correlated. The correlation was $r = .498$ (correlation significant at the .004 level (2 tailed)). Two of the states that this correlation can be seen in are Chiapas and Oaxaca.

Though not the two states with the highest percentage of indigenous and Protestants, Chiapas and Oaxaca are both known for their high indigenous population and Protestant level. Chiapas had an indigenous population of 26 % in 1990; Oaxaca borders

⁵² INEGI

⁵³ Dow, "The Growth of Protestant Religions", 13

Chiapas and had an indigenous population of 39% in 1990.⁵⁴ According to the Mexican census in 2000, Chiapas had an indigenous population of 24.7% and Oaxaca had a population of 37.2%.⁵⁵ According to Dow's data, Chiapas was 21.9% Protestant and Oaxaca was 10.1% Protestant.⁵⁶ Dow shows between 1970 and 1990, Chiapas had an annual growth rate of 9.23% and that from 1990-2000 it declined to an annual growth of 5.03%.⁵⁷ In Oaxaca, from 1970-1990, Protestants had an annual growth rate of 9.65% and from 1990-2000 an annual growth rate of 4.78%.⁵⁸ (See Appendix III for table comparing all states). Thus, between 1970 and 1990 there was a strong correlation with the percentage of indigenous and the growth rate of Protestantism in Mexico. However, the correlations changed between the years of 1990 and 2000. The indigenous sector does not seem to have had as large of an impact as it did when Pentecostalism was first being introduced. The shift of the correlation can be shown by examining some of the states that have a low percentage of indigenous. The Federal District (a.k.a. Mexico City) is a good example. According to the Mexican census, Federal District in 2000 was only 1.8 percent indigenous.⁵⁹ Dow found that in 1990, Federal District was 3.1% Protestant and that in 2000, Protestants had grown to 4.9%.⁶⁰ Dow found that "the growth slowed in the states with large Indian populations [and that] the correlation between Indianness and percentage Protestants in 1970 was + .473, [and in] 1990 this rose to +.564, but in 2000 it

⁵⁴ Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*, 65

⁵⁵ INEGI, *XII Censo General*

⁵⁶ Dow, "The Growth of Protestant Religions", 13

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 13

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 13

⁵⁹ INEGI, *XII Censo General*

⁶⁰ Dow, "The Growth of Protestant Religions", 13

fell to +.498.”⁶¹ States with a large growth rate have tended to be less indigenous than in previous years and Protestantism is now growing at faster rates in non- Indian states.⁶²

This finding suggests that when Protestantism was first introduced it had a particular affinity to the indigenous peoples. Protestantism was more prominent in the more indigenous sectors. Over the past 10 years the correlation between Protestants and indigenous fell as did the growth rate of Protestants. At this point Protestantism is still growing in the indigenous sectors but it is not growing as rapidly. One of the reasons for this may be due to migration of the indigenous people and converts to other states. A problem with this idea is that the number of indigenous is based upon the population that speaks an indigenous language and the census does not place migrants into a religious classification making it impossible at the moment to completely test this idea. However, there are still factors that make this idea plausible.

Gross states that, “it is not surprising that Oaxaca, the most indigenous Mexican state and one of the poorest, is also experiencing faster than average growth of the Protestant population.”⁶³ Gross looks at the religious fragmentation and compares it to the decline of communal events. She looks at how traditionally, identity has been centered around communal events, but “most collective communal events have disappeared and social life...is centered almost entirely in religious congregations.”⁶⁴ These congregations are predominantly Protestant and are a good example that in indigenous sectors there is more likely cause for growth. The fact that there is no longer a

⁶¹ Dow, “The Growth of Protestant Religions”, 10

⁶² Ibid, 10

⁶³ Gross, “Protestantism and Modernity”, 482

⁶⁴ Gross, “Protestantism and Modernity”, 483

desire to participate in communal events like *costumbre* and based on the high growth rates, the indigenous sector does have an effect on the growth of Protestantism.

The point of this section was to examine the indigenous populations/ relational ability to old customs theory. The percentage of indigenous people across Mexico was highly correlated to the percentage of Protestants. One area where this can be seen is the lack of participation in the communal events like *costumbre*. These events are significant in the indigenous sectors and it is predominantly only the Protestant beliefs that prohibit the convert to associate and participate with the communal event. However the data also shows that the correlation between the two factors is lessening. The correlation between indigenous and Protestantism and growth of Protestantism shows that the percentage of indigenous people does affect the growth of Protestantism but not as much as it started out. This means that though you will still find more Protestants in the more indigenous states of Mexico, focus needs to be turned elsewhere to determine why it is that the numbers are shifting toward urban areas. I speculate that the process of state to state migration may have an affect or simply that the number of “indigenous” (as the census records only those who speak an indigenous language) is lessening due to more indigenous preferring to speak Spanish and change their social status from an “Indian” to a mestizo identity . However, Dow theorizes that it may be due to an “expanding market economy” which will be discussed in the economic upward mobility section.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Dow, “The Growth of Protestant Religions”, 10,15

Supply/Government Regulation

Government Regulation

The supply theory and government regulation theory depend on each other and are affected by each other; therefore, the two theories will be looked at together. With the constitutional reforms in the early 1900s against all religions, Protestantism was not given as much of an opportunity as Catholicism to grow. However, in the 1950s this changed with the lifting of the hold on the registration of Evangelical churches. The final stage in the lifting of the all the laws against Evangelicals was in 1992. Based on the growth rates within the country, there was a higher growth rate of Protestants after the lifting of the hold in the 1950s. However after the lifting of the remaining laws in 1992, though still growing, the growth slowed down. Gill collected data on the religious regulation of Mexico and the growth of Pentecostalism. Gill uses the Herfindahl index⁶⁶ because it measures growth in non-Catholic religions, as well as being sensitive to religious plurality. For the data collected, Gill explains that “less than 2% of the growth in non-Catholic religions... was attributed to non-Christian religions, this measure is equivalent to measuring the growth rate of Protestantism for all practical purposes.”⁶⁷

⁶⁶ *Herfindahl index represents a measure of religious concentration, where 1 = perfect monopolization and 0 indicates that there is a complete open market.

⁶⁷ Gill, “Government Regulation”, 299

Table 1

Change in Religious pluralism in Latin America, 1970-1980⁶⁸

	Herfindahl Index *	Herfindahl Index	% Increase in Pluralism	Regulation Index
	1970	1980	1970-1980	
Mexico	0.924	0.898	2.81	8

Note. “Source for Herfindahl data, Barret (1982). Source for regulation index (Barret 1982; Moreno 1996; US Army, various years).”

What Table 1 demonstrates, is the shift of religious pluralism and how much regulation of religion was taking place in Mexico from 1970-1980. For the regulation index, Gill created his own model where a numerical increase represents a more regulated situation (within his model his number went as high as 12 throughout the Latin American countries he studied).⁶⁹ Gill shows that the regulation index for Mexico was 8. The data showed that “countries with the least amount of government regulation of the religious marketplace are the most likely to see substantial growth in religious pluralism.”⁷⁰ Though Mexico’s religious regulation fell from 0.924 to 0.898, meaning pluralism rose, from the years 1970-1980, it still was at a relatively high level of regulation.

According to the 2008 United States International Religious Freedom Report, the Mexican Constitution:

⁶⁸ Gill, “Government Regulation”, 300

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibid, 303

Provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion. The law at all levels protects this right in full against abuse, either by government or private actors. The Government generally respected religious freedom in practice; however, there were some restrictions at the local level.⁷¹

The United States International Religious Freedom Report of 2008 also showed that, “State and municipal governments generally protected this right; however, local community leaders and authorities, particularly in the south, allegedly used religious affiliation as a pretext for conflicts related to political, ethnic, or land disputes.”⁷² Also, according to the report “if a religious community wishes to take on a legal personality, which is necessary for it to enter into contracts and purchase or rent land, it must register with the GDAR (General Director for Religious Associations of the Federal Secretariat of Government) as a religious association.”⁷³ Though there is supposed to be freedom of religion, there still seems to be some restrictions in Mexico.

Raul González Schmal, who is a professor of law, looks at the political legislation of religious freedom in Mexico in his paper “Mexican Legislation on Religion and the 1981 Declaration on Intolerance and Discrimination”.⁷⁴ Schmal states that “there are still some areas of Mexican law that unnecessarily restrict religious freedom.”⁷⁵ In 1992, several amendments were made to the constitution, regarding religious freedom as well as the Ley de Asociaciones Religiosas y Culto Público (LARCP)[the Law of Religious

⁷¹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. "International Religious Freedom Report 2008." *U.S. Department of State*. September 19, 2008. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108532.htm> (accessed September 23, 2008)

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Raúl Schmal, “Mexican Legislation on Religion and the 1981 Declaration on Intolerance and Discrimination”, translated by Daryl Hague, 689-718. <

<http://www.law2.byu.edu/lawreview/archives/2007/3/5SCHMAL.FIN.pdf>. > accessed April 27, 2009

⁷⁵ Ibid, 689

Associations and Public Worship].⁷⁶ However, these amendments still left restrictions in place that were based on religion. For instance

Article 130 and LARCP create an exception for ministers of religion in terms of their status as citizens. Specifically, ministers have no right to a passive vote, nor can they hold high public office, unless they definitively abandon their ministry for a specific period of time beforehand.⁷⁷

“Consequently”, Schmal states, “Mexico not only unjustifiably violated its international obligations but violated its own constitutional law when it restricted ministers from exercising those rights.”⁷⁸ With the information from Schmal it is seen that there is still a degree of religious regulation within Mexico. This helps to explain why the number of Protestants in Mexico is not growing as much as in other countries in Latin America.

Religious regulation theory posits that the lessening of religious regulation caused Protestantism to grow and expand in Mexico. The hold on Evangelical churches was lifted in the 1950s. The remaining laws implementing regulation were mostly lifted in the early 1990s. Bowen's research found the number of Evangelicals in Mexico in 1940 was 177,954 and in 1950 jumped to 330,111, by 1960 Evangelicals had grown to 578, 515.⁷⁹ Gill shows that religious pluralism increased between 1970 and 1980 (he remarked that there is no data available for the government regulation before 1970).⁸⁰ Dow's data helps to show how this affected Protestantism. His data shows that in 1970, the nation of Mexico was 2.2% Protestant where as in 1990 it was 4.9 and in 2000 7.3% Protestant.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Schmal, “Mexican Legislation”

⁷⁷ Ibid, 703-704

⁷⁸ Ibid 707

⁷⁹ Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*, 38

⁸⁰ Gill, “Government Regulation”, 299-300

⁸¹ Dow, “The Growth of Protestant Religions”, 13

This would mean that there was an annual growth rate of 7.08% between the years of 1970 and 1990. However, the following decade there was an annual growth rate of only 5.98%.⁸² This shows that the lifting of the hold changed the growth pattern of the Protestants but that the complete lifting of the laws did not have as much of an effect as theorized. Though still growing between the years of 1990-2000, Protestantism was not growing as fast. One interpretation is that the level of regulation shown by Schmal still affected the growth, yet my research finds there is a problem with this. The amount of persecution is minimal compared to the persecution that can be found in the southern states. It seems that though there is ongoing religious persecution in the southern states they still have a greater growth in Protestantism than the rest of states (though this is disputable with regard to the indigenous theory). One theory could be that though regulation inhibited the growth of Protestantism, a small dose of persecution might in fact spur growth. This idea is not completely foreign and there can be many instances where this is the case, one being that they would receive greater support from missionary groups. Regardless of the fact, the government regulation theory posited that with less government interference than the more pluralistic the country would be and Protestants growth would accelerate. My research suggests that this is not the case. Though the lack of government interference did change the growth rates of Protestantism between the years of 1950-1990, in 1992, after the complete lifting of the laws, there seems to be no significant change in the growth patterns. This shift makes this theory necessary but not sufficient to fully explain the growth of Protestantism. However, the degree of pluralism that is in place now, sets up the spring board for the supply theory.

⁸²Dow, "The Growth of Protestant Religions", 13

Supply

The supply theory states that if there is greater religious pluralism then there will be a greater supply of religions to the masses. A greater number of Protestants would be generated by more pastors and ministers within the country. With a greater supply it increases the chances of growth within any given religion that can produce more churches and leaders. Mexico has predominately been Catholic, yet their hold and monopoly on society has been decreasing over the past several decades. According to the *Dirección General de Asociaciones Religiosas* (Directorate General of Religious Associations), the total Catholic priests for January 2009 was 20, 249 while the number of Christian Evangelical ministers (basically Pentecostal Protestants) was 36, 840.⁸³ Though not an extremely large difference, it is significant in a country that was predominantly Catholic. This change and increase in the number of Evangelical ministers was in large part due to the change in religious regulation and the “lazy monopoly” theory. As stated in the description of supply theory, the “lazy monopoly” theory argues that because a monopolistic religion, such as Catholicism, is based on state support and is the predominant provider available to the people, the institution will become lazy and not develop or supply a good product.⁸⁴ Using Chiapas, Oaxaca, and the Federal District, a general idea of the effect of the change on the state level can be made.

The “lazy monopoly” theory and supply theory argues that the less the Catholic Church is a dominant presence in a sector and the less the Church is working at keeping

⁸³Dirección General de Asociaciones Religiosas, “Numeralia Enero 2009” February 2009, <<http://www.asociacionesreligiosas.gob.mx/Portal/PtMain> > accessed March 3, 2009

⁸⁴ Chesnut, “Analyzing Conversion”, 77

their faithful in a sector, the more Protestants will grow. This idea can be used with the number of Evangelical/Protestant ministers and associations in an area as well. If the Catholic Church does not have a strong influence in an area or has become “lazy”, than the number of ministers should be small, relative to the size of the state. Garma states that, “Chiapas state shows the lowest number of Catholic faithful in Mexico.”⁸⁵

According to the Directorate General “Ministros de Culto Registrados al 13 de Marzo de 2009” (Registered Ministers of Worship for 13 of March 2009)⁸⁶, Chiapas had a total of 1,768 Evangelical Ministers and 155 religious associations.⁸⁷ Bowen states that the Oaxaca Catholic Church had “29 parishes and approximately 40 priests in pastoral work [who were] responsible for some 500,000 souls.”⁸⁸ Using the *One Sunday Visitor's...Catholic Almanac*⁸⁹ we can see where in Mexico there is a high ratio of laity to priests. The almanac divided Mexico into 14 provinces (there are 32 states). Using an estimated idea of what states are included within each province, based on where the archdiocese is located, we can create an idea of what sections have the highest ratio. These numbers are demonstrated in the following table.

⁸⁵ Carlos Garma, "Religious Affiliation and Conflict in the Indian Municipalities of Chiapas." *Social Compass*, 2002: 34

⁸⁶This document give the number of registered ministers for most of the states of Mexico. It does not count Catholic ministers and is therefore a close enough representation of the number of Protestant ministers.

⁸⁷ Dirección General de Asociaciones Religiosas, “Ministros de culto registrados al 13 de Marzo de 2009” < http://www.asociacionesreligiosas.gob.mx/SDGAR05-Docs/Ministros_de_culto_edo.pdf > accessed February 27, 2009

⁸⁸Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*, 57

⁸⁹ Foy, Felician A, & Matthew Bunson, Roas M. Avato, *One Sunday Visitor's....Catholic Almanac*, p.453-454.(Our Sunday Visitor Publishing , 2004)

Table II

Ratio of Catholic Laity to Priest, Within the Provinces of Mexico⁹⁰

Archdiocese	Total Catholics	Total Priest	Laity per Priest
Acapulco (located in state of Guerrero)	5,479,700	384	14,270
Chihuahua (located in the state of Chihuahua)	4,574,690	467	9,796
Durango (located in the state of Durango)	6,445,433	620	10,396
Guadalajara (located in the state of Jalisco)	12,197,052	2,696	4,524
Hermasillo (located in the state of Sonora)	5,994,022	712	8,418
Mexico (located in the state of Mexico)	15,621	2,560	6,102
Monterrey (located in the state of Nuevo Leone)	11,812,344	1,132	10,435
Morelia (located in the state of Michoacan)	5,421,623	1,033	5,248
Oaxaca (located in the state of Oaxaca)	6,766,497	628	10,775
Puebla de Los Angeles	7,100,288	960	7,396
San Luis Potosi (located in the state San Luis Potosi)	9,480,510	1,402	6,762
Tlalnepantla (located in the state Mexico)	19,316,783	1,009	19,144
Xalapa (located in the state Veracruz)	8,702,127	709	12,274
Yucatan (located in the state of Yucatan)	4,082,406	447	9,133

Using these numbers in comparison to those of the number of Protestants within the states in 2000, we can see some similarities. For instance the province of Guadalajara has the lowest ratio of laity to priest and it is also located in a state, Jalisco, that is only 2.9%

⁹⁰ Foy, *Catholic Almanac*, 453-454

Protestant. Whereas the province of Acapulco has one of the highest ratios and equally has a higher percentage of Protestants (6.4%). Yet, when looked at, based on the growth rate within these sections, using 2000 data, there does not seem to be any significant parallels. However, the figures for the ratio are based upon 2004 information. Along with this there is also the problem that the provinces do not separate the numbers by state so it makes it impossible to know exactly what the ratio of laity to priest is within individual states.

However, these large numbers still do not enable the people to have personal connections with a priest or to even have a priest available for weekly meetings. With Protestants, members of the congregations have more of a likelihood of having a pastor visit their house in cases of emergency.⁹¹ Gill notes that the “ministers do not have to undergo rigorous theological training beyond what they have received in their parent denomination.”⁹² All of these aspects affect the supply of Protestantism particularly in areas like Chiapas and Oaxaca, where there is less Catholic influence.

The idea of a “lazy” monopolistic religion is shown through the fact that even in areas like Federal District where the Catholic Church has been prominent since the Conquest, there is still a large number of Protestants. Also with this data comes the fact that the southern areas such as Oaxaca do have higher ratios of laity to priest and also a high percentage of Protestants but this is only based on the percentage of Protestants. This means that there is a strong possibility the Catholic Church is losing or has lost its

⁹¹Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*, 135

⁹²Gill, *Rendering*, 83

monopoly hold on the country. It is no longer the most sought after religion in Mexico. The number of Protestants and the growth of the religion over the past decade would not be plausible if there was still a monopolistic religion in place.

Social Anomie

Social anomie is difficult to classify. Examples of elements posited as creating social anomie include: a war, migration, economic depression, persecution, political upheavals. There are many factors that can contribute to the basis of the theory. Poverty is a strong determinative for social anomie. When a family or individual is poor it is more likely that they are experiencing social upheaval. Money is tight so there is not a lot of food, health care diminishes causing more illness, and causes tense family situations which can lead to divorce, and alcoholism. Chesnut, in his book, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty*, shows how poverty levels affect the growth of Pentecostalism. Chesnut looks at the relation between the poor and the health of individuals. He states that “the poor are infected by a pathogenic society that denies them the means to sustenance and then restricts their access to health care.”⁹³ His conception of health is not limited to physical but also social well being.⁹⁴ Chesnut says that “ in a situation where secular society provides adequate health care only for those with the means to purchase it, the economically disenfranchised frequently turn to the

⁹³ Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 51

⁹⁴Ibid, 52

only available source of healing: the divine.”⁹⁵ This means that indigenous and poor are two main factors contributing to the growth of Protestantism.

Using the numbers within the Mexican census, I was able to create a percent of poverty for each state within Mexico (these statistics can be found in Appendix II). I used the number of people earning minimum wage or less in each state and divided this by the number of people. Dow, using the same derivation of poverty, found that the percentage of Protestants in the year 2000 was correlated + 0.462.⁹⁶ Dow discovered that “the change in percent of Protestants from 1970 to 1990 and poverty in 1990 was +0.626.”⁹⁷ However, Dow’s data showed that between the years of 1990 and 2000 there was a negative correlation between the percent of Protestants and poverty, the correlation being -0.541.⁹⁸ Upon further investigation, I found that the percentage of indigenous and the percent of those living in the poverty level for 2000 was also highly correlated, the correlation being $r = .747$ (correlation significant at the .000 level (2 tailed)). What these figures suggest is that the percentage of Protestantism and the growth of Protestantism were correlated with poverty in 1990 but this changed in 2000. The percent of Protestantism was still correlated with poverty but the growth was not correlated. This means that something shifted causing Protestantism to grow more where there was less poverty. Another factor to consider is that the percentage of indigenous and poverty are correlated. This also shows that Protestantism is not growing in the more indigenous areas. These correlations provide an interesting circumstance. I posit that this may be due

⁹⁵Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil*, 52

⁹⁶ Dow, “The Growth of Protestant Religions”, 8

⁹⁷Ibid, 8

⁹⁸Ibid, 9

to the expanding market model used by Dow⁹⁹ and the emergence of Neo-Pentecostalism, which will be further discussed in the economic upward mobility section below.

Economic Upward Mobility

The economic upward mobility theory is hard to quantify because improvement can be seen by the convert as simply having a better home life or as an upward movement within society. Bowen conducted a survey in Mexico to look at whether conversion made a difference economically. Out of the sample of 184 Evangelical converts, 40 % showed that their living standard had improved and 21% stated that their income had grown.¹⁰⁰ The problem with this survey however, is that Bowen does not compare the findings with a Catholic control group. Taking into consideration that it is likely that Catholics' income also went up, I still believe that the Protestants' income would change. This could be explained with the fact that "religious fragmentation has favored the separation of civil and religious *cargos*." ¹⁰¹ With the separation of religious cargos it would be more likely that the economic status of the Protestant would improve. This is all based on whether or not those in the seat of local power, generally associated with the Catholic Church, would approve of the lack of funds the Protestant provides for the religious festivities. Bowen states however, that "almost half of the overall improvement had nothing to do with an increase in economic resources but rather with a better use of them."¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Dow, "Growth of Protestant Religions"

¹⁰⁰ Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*, 121

¹⁰¹ Gross, "Protestant and Modernity", 485

¹⁰² Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy*, 121

The economic theory does have assumptions about what effect Protestantism is having on the convert's economic status. However, the issue arises of how reliable this information is. As has already been seen, many of the surveys that have been taken have been subjective and do not account for all the acting variables. According to the previous section poverty is no longer correlated with the growth of Pentecostal Protestantism and according to the indigenous section, the growth of Protestantism is slowing down within the more indigenous states. These two discrepancies go hand in hand. I have mentioned throughout this paper two theories that may account for some of the discrepancies in the data, these are the expanding market economy by Dow¹⁰³ and the Neo-Pentecostals.

The expanding market theory is used by Dow to help explain why individuals may be converting to Protestantism. Dow uses the term market economy as “an economy in which the social mechanisms necessary to maintain the flow of goods are dominated by market exchange.”¹⁰⁴ In order to acquire valuable products the poor need to participate in the market and “the rural people...do this through wage labor migration.”¹⁰⁵ Dow says that “in the rural and poor areas...Protestantism is prying loose economic and religious traditionalism and sending it downstream into the river of history.”¹⁰⁶ Because the ideas of Protestantism are so divergent from the traditional Catholic ideals, Protestants are more suited to step into the economic system.¹⁰⁷ As mentioned previously, Pentecostals view work as a holy calling and therefore are more prone to work harder and longer thereby amassing more wealth. Dow says that this gives the middle class businessman an

¹⁰³ Dow, “The Growth of Protestant Religions”

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 15

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 16

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 16

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 16-17

objective and reassurance that he is in the right.¹⁰⁸ This idea goes along with the Neo-Pentecostals “health and wealth gospel” or prosperity theology.

Prosperity theology is adopted predominantly by the Neo-Pentecostals. These churches are different from the normal Pentecostal church. The more common restrictions to Pentecostals, like woman not wearing makeup, do not apply to Neo-Pentecostals as much. As David Smilde puts it, “the discourse is optimistic, emphasizing triumph, blessings, and salvation more than condemnations of ‘the world’ or predictions of Armageddon.”¹⁰⁹ Neo-Pentecostalism is a new form of Pentecostalism and is growing within Pentecostalism. Neo-Pentecostalism is now one of the more dominant forms of Protestantism. This is where Neo-Pentecostalism is affecting the theories presented in this thesis. Pentecostalism, when it was first introduced, targeted the poor areas and indigenous sectors. Yet, since the laws have been lifted and Pentecostalism is able to move freer within society I posit that this is affecting who is now being drawn into the practices of Pentecostalism or more specifically Neo-Pentecostalism. Neo-Pentecostalism targets the middle class. Therefore, the middle class is becoming more Protestant through Neo-Pentecostalism. This would explain why the growth rates of Protestantism are shifting from the largest growth in the rural areas to the urban areas. This would also explain why there is no longer a strong correlation with the growth rate of Protestantism with poverty but that it is still correlated. I posit that the problems and changes with the data is less to do with a change in where Protestantism is growing but who Protestantism

¹⁰⁸ Dow, “Growth of Protestant Religions”, 17

¹⁰⁹ David Smilde, *Reason to Believe: Cultural Agency in Latin American Evangelicalism*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 115

and more specifically Neo-Pentecostalism is targeting. It seems that the reason for the shift in the growth of Protestantism is because of the shift in the ideas presented by Pentecostalism.

Within the economic theory, there are so many different contributors and variables, it is hard to quantify and determine which variable is having the larger affect and which are the variables that have to be looked at in relation to a bigger model. For instance, are the converts receiving economic mobility because of the lack of a cargo system, because of the strict rules within Pentecostal Protestantism, the new theology of Neo-Pentecostalism, or is it due to the ability to migrate and stay connected with a similar group. The theory has so many variables that it cannot be used as a significant determinant of why Pentecostal Protestantism is growing.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

What the Models Do Not Show

Within each of these theories mentioned there have been some areas where more research could be done and other factors taken into account. However, there are three factors that play across all of these theories that need to be kept in mind or reconfigured. First, the growth rates of the models are not measured in a unanimous way. Each author uses a different form to calculate the number of Pentecostals in Mexico and how you define the growth of Pentecostalism. A second factor that is not taken into account, except by Bowen, is the rate of apostasy and schism within the branch as a whole. Apostasy is the measurement of the amount of people leaving the Pentecostal church

after having been a member. This level of people leaving affects the estimated growth rates by reducing the absolute number of Protestants.

A third aspect that needs further research is the extent of inter country migration. As mentioned already, the effect of apostasy needs to be looked at, but within this, there is the question of how many of the converts are simply moving to another city or state. Martin states that “the overall unity of Pentecostalism enables migrants to move easily into the atmosphere of urban churches and is a major factor in Pentecostal success.”¹¹⁰ The social ties that are established within Protestantism help the convert become established within the society and the ties also provide a network for the convert to move around in and outside of their state. Carlos Navarro states that

The presence of Pentecostalism in intermediate urban sectors demonstrates that the behavioral patterns that permit social mobility in rural areas may be useful in the context of a more complex society, allowing the individual to situate himself in an acceptable position within the social stratification of the city.¹¹¹

Because there are patterns within Pentecostalism itself, it makes it easier for the convert to associate with other Pentecostals outside of their own society. This provides an incentive and an easier process for migrants. Gill says “Protestant churches provided a community for recent migrants as well as a new world view and value system congruent with a rapidly changing social reality.”¹¹² Josué Tinoco researched the “social relationships that are created and structured based on individual and group

¹¹⁰ Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 125

¹¹¹ Carlos Navarro and Miguel C. Leatham, “Pentecostal Adaptations in Rural and Urban Mexico: An Anthropological Assessment”, *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, vol. 20 (2004) 145-166 (pg 155)

¹¹² Gill, “Government Regulation”, 291

interactions.”¹¹³ He conducted a survey of two hundred people belonging to the Baptist Church, the Catholic Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and the Pentecostal Church. On a scale of 1(nothing) to 4 (a lot), he found that the Pentecostal Church’s willingness to participate with people from other churches was “2.60 for Baptist, 2.44 for Catholics, 2.02 for Mormons, and 3.52 for other Pentecostals.”¹¹⁴ Baptists and Pentecostals had the highest willingness to participate with each other, compared to the other churches.¹¹⁵ Because of the high participation with other Pentecostals, it is easier for the convert to move to a new location and interact with the same religious group that they had been a part of in their previous location; thus allowing the convert to easily move and migrate throughout their country or state. The Mexican Census does not specify what the religious affiliations of the migrants are. I believe that it is significant and affects the distribution of Protestants within the country but the data is currently not available to properly test this.

Finally, within the testing of the indigenous theory, the data is not fully accurate and with each passing year there are more inconsistencies. The Mexican Census categorizes indigenous as those persons speaking an indigenous language. Yet, with modern thought and ideas, this number is declining. In many states there is a decrease of indigenous populations (or those speaking an indigenous language). How much of this shift is due to the children of indigenous not learning the language and/or individuals not

¹¹³ Josué Tinoco, “Effect of Intergroup Differentiations on Participation With Religious Young People”, *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* , vol. 8 (1998) 197-204 (197)

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 200

¹¹⁵ Tinoco, “Effect of Intergroup”

explaining they are indigenous due to the social pressures and discriminations of their race is not known.

Conclusion

Mexico is the largest country in Latin America. Pentecostal Protestantism continues to grow at accelerated rates both in Mexico and throughout Latin America. The questions of why has continued to enthrall scholars and generate controversy. This thesis looks at the current arguments for why Pentecostal Protestantism is growing in Mexico. I evaluated the most prominent theories using the data from the 2000 Mexican Census. I also used the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Federal District to give support and state by state results and effects of the different theories. Within the theories, I found that the percentage of indigenous people in a state is correlated with the growth of Protestantism. However this has shifted within the past decade. The growth of Protestantism is no longer as strongly correlated with the indigenous population. I found that government regulation plays a role across the various sectors of the country yet this role is not as prominent as the theory suggested. There was clear growth of Protestantism once the hold for the Evangelical churches was lifted but there was not a significant change in growth after the most recent and complete lifting of the laws.

The supply theory posited that the fewer priests in an area the more likely Protestantism would grow in that area. Within the supply theory it was discovered that there are now a larger number of Pentecostal Protestant ministers than Catholic ministers within the country of Mexico. There was shown to be more pastors and congregations

available and so an increase in the supply of Protestantism took place in certain states. This was related in a small part to the growth in religious freedom and less government regulation. As seen by the actions of the Catholic Church, it would seem the “lazy monopoly theory”, as stated by Chesnut, shows that the Catholic Church was in control of a “lazy monopoly” that did not strive to produce and supply their religion within the sectors that had the greatest demand. Yet, this could not be fully tested due to the lack of complete data available. I found that due to the actions of the Catholic Church and the missionary style of the Protestant movement that it is possible that these factors enabled Pentecostal Protestantism to grow in Mexico but that it cannot be fully verified at this time due to the lack of data and information available.

The theory of social anomie has caused some dispute. I used poverty as one way to examine this theory. Dow found that the poverty levels across the Mexican states were correlated with Protestantism in the 1990s but it, as of 2000, has shown to be correlated with Protestantism but negatively correlated with the growth of Protestantism. I ran a correlation and found that poverty and indigenous were correlated. I suggest that this may have been caused by the expanding market model theory and the action of Neo-Pentecostalism. Though these correlations do provide strong evidence for the social anomie theory it still shows that there is an underlying problem in that there are very limited tests that can be done to distinguish between which variable is having an effect on the growth of Protestantism.

The economic upward mobility theory is still weak. Many authors argue as to what extent this theory affects the growth of Protestantism. Using Smilde and Dow, I

examined the effect of the practices of Neo-Pentecostalism and the expanding market model to attempt to come to a conclusion of why poverty was no longer correlated with the growth of Protestantism. I posit that because of the ability for Protestants to enter into the market and the idea of the “health and wealth gospel” put out by the Neo-Pentecostals that the ideas of Pentecostal Protestantism are moving away from the rural areas and problems and are now focusing on the middle class. This could cause the growth to shift from the indigenous/poor areas to the more urban.

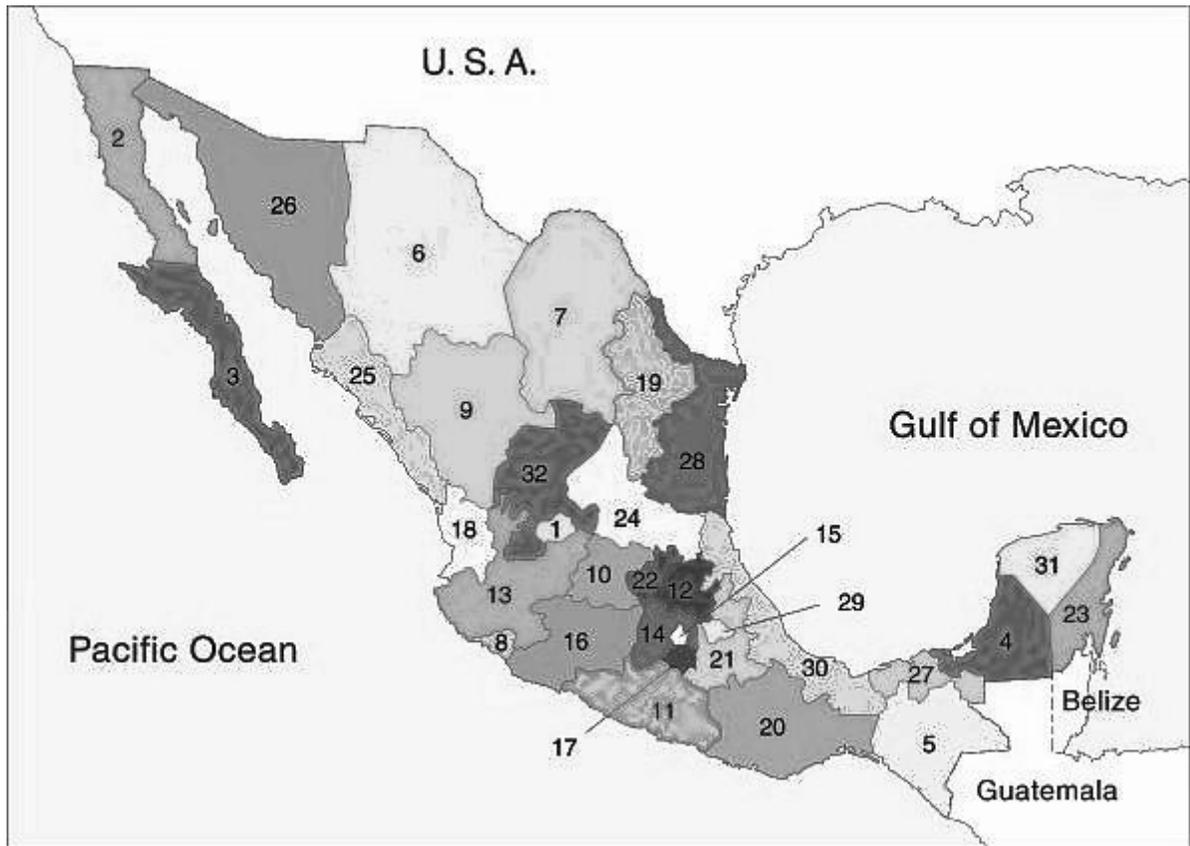
Significance

Scholars have been searching for the reasons of Pentecostal growth. Dow looked at the effect of the indigenous population, Gill looked at the government regulation and supply theory, Chesnut examined the effect of poverty and the lower class, Dow also looked at the economics of Pentecostal growth. These authors and countless others, many of which I use in this thesis, have made significant contributions to the study of the Pentecostal Protestantism growth phenomena. Each of these authors I have mentioned say that their particular studies are correct and based upon my examination are true, though some need further research.

I posit that the indigenous/ relational ability to old customs theory does have a large effect on the growth of Pentecostal Protestantism. The government regulation theory also has an effect but it is not as strong of a determinative for growth as the theory suggests. Supply theory does affect the growth but it relies on the government regulation theory and so cannot be used exclusively on its own data. As well as, there is not enough

data to fully test this theory. The ideas of social anomie and economic upward mobility are not conducive to studying in minute detail but on a larger scale seem to serve as broad explanations for Pentecostal growth. I would theorize that the first three theories I examined are the predominant factors in determining why Pentecostal Protestantism is growing. However, I posit that the ideas of Neo-Pentecostalism must be researched further in order to obtain a more complete model for testing the growth of Pentecostal Protestantism in Mexico. The study of the growth of Pentecostalism is not an issue that has been solved and more research can be done in the field to enhance the knowledge of the social and political factors of rapid religious growth. This study is important because the rapid growth of a religion determines the structure and ideas, both social and political, within a country. A large growth of a religion can dramatically change the political climate of a country. The growth of Pentecostal Protestantism is a worldwide phenomenon. Scholars and government officials need to understand the reason behind the growth of this religion in order to predict the change that could take place within a country. However, due to the inconsistencies within the data, more data needs to be gathered and more studies completed with this data before any firm conclusions can be made.

Appendix I: Map of Individual States in Mexico¹¹⁶



- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. AGUASCALIENTES | 12. HIDALGO | 23. QUINTANA ROO |
| 2. BAJA CALIFORNIA | 13. JALISCO | 24. SAN LUIS POTOSÍ |
| 3. BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR | 14. MÉXICO (State of) | 25. SINALOA |
| 4. CAMPECHE | 15. MÉXICO CITY, D.F. | 26. SONORA |
| 5. CHIAPAS | 16. MICHOACÁN | 27. TABASCO |
| 6. CHIHUAHUA | 17. MORELOS | 28. TAMAULIPAS |
| 7. COAHUILA | 18. NAYARIT | 29. TLAXCALA |
| 8. COLIMA | 19. NUEVO LEÓN | 30. VERACRUZ |
| 9. DURANGO | 20. OAXACA | 31. YUCATAN |
| 10. GUANAJUATO | 21. PUEBLA | 32. ZACATECAS |
| 11. GUERRERO | 22. QUERETARO | |

¹¹⁶ Connect, Mexico. *Areas of Mexico- Index of State and City Information, Maps, and Articles.* 1996-2007. http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_/areas.html (accessed November 13, 2008).

Appendix II: Figures for Percent of Protestant, Indigenous, and Poor State by State¹¹⁷

	Population	Percent of Protestant ¹¹⁸	Percent of Poor	Percent of Indigenous
Mexico(Nation)	97,483,412	7.3	7.15	7.2
States				
Aguascalientes	944,285	2.7	3.92	0.2
Baja California	2,487,367	10.6	1.53	1.9
Baja California Sur	424,041	6.0	3.61	1.4
Campeche	690,689	17.9	12.52	15.5
Coahuila de Zaragoza	2,298,070	8.6	2.67	0.2
Colima	542,627	4.3	5.94	0.6
Chiapas	3,920,892	21.9	17.1	24.7
Chihuahua	3,052,907	9.1	3.08	3.2
Distrito Federal	8,605,239	4.9	4.41	1.8
Durango	1,448,661	5.7	5.35	2.0
Guanajuato	4,663,032	2.0	5.14	0.3
Guerrero	3,079,649	6.4	10.36	13.9
Hidalgo	2,235,591	6.5	10.96	17.3
Jalisco	6,322,002	2.9	5.14	0.7
Mexico	13,096,686	5.4	4.68	3.3
Michoacan de Ocampo	3,985,667	2.9	7.92	3.5
Morelos	1,555,296	10.4	6.86	2.3
Nayarit	920,185	4.3	8.45	4.6
Nuevo Leon	3,834,141	8.2	2.30	0.5
Oaxaca	3,438,765	10.1	14.88	37.2
Puebla	5,076,686	5.8	10.82	13.1
Queretaro Arteaga	1,404,306	2.8	4.26	2.1
Quintana Roo	874,963	15.7	6.38	23.1
San Luis Potosi	2,299,360	5.6	9.04	11.7
Sinaloa	2,536,844	4.9	4.09	2.2
Sonora	2,216,969	6.6	3.29	2.9
Tabasco	1,891,829	18.6	11.92	3.7
Tamaulipas	2,753,222	11.0	4.48	0.7
Tlaxcala	962,646	4.3	9.35	3.2
Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave	6,908,975	10.2	12.37	10.4

¹¹⁷ INEGI

¹¹⁸ Dow, "The Growth of Protestant Religions", 13

Yucatan	1,658,210	11.4	12.25	37.4
Zacatecas	1,353,610	2.9	6.95	0.2

Appendix III Change in Percentage of Protestants in Case Studies¹¹⁹

State Name	Percentage of Protestants			Annual Growth Rate	
	1970	1990	2000	1970-1990	1990-2000
Chiapas	5.8	16.3	21.9	9.23%	5.03%
Oaxaca	1.8	7.3	10.1	9.65%	4.78%
Federal District	1.9	3.1	4.9	3.58%	5.35%

¹¹⁹ Dow, "The Growth of Protestant Religions", 13

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