

THE ACTIVISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS IN
THE UNITED STATES: TESTING THE RELIGIOUS ECONOMY MODEL

by

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ABSTRACT

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This paper tests the religious economy model for predicting Church behavior which predicts that religious firms will become more politically active on behalf of potential members in areas where competition for those members is most fierce. An analysis of data from a survey of 106 U.S. Catholic dioceses and archdioceses on outreach to Hispanic immigrants does not support this hypothesis. Religious competition and Church activism on immigration issues did not correlate. Rather, demand for services (measured as Hispanic presence within each diocese) was a better predictor of Church activism on immigration issues. This finding suggests that the “inelastic demand” assumption of the religious economy model must be dropped, re-opening demand side explanations for Church behavior across national and local contexts.

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The Activism of the Catholic Church on Immigrants' Rights in the United States:
Testing the Religious Economy Model

Introduction

Every day the United States receives immigrants from all over the world; the largest group comes from Latin America. The influx of Latin American immigrants into the United States has increasingly become an important issue for sending communities, receiving communities and the religious institutions that serve immigrant communities. When immigrants arrive in the United States, many do so without the proper documentation. The Pew Hispanic Center reports that three fourths of undocumented immigrants who arrive in the United States every year come from Latin America. According to the same report, in 2008 alone “9.6 million unauthorized immigrants from Latin America were living in the United States” (Pew Hispanic Center: Trends in Unauthorized Immigration 2008, p.iii). For many recently arrived immigrants from Latin America, the Catholic Church provides a source of knowledge, comfort, and some social services which are not provided by the government of the United States (Menjívar 2001). The Catholic Church has become an outspoken critic of U.S. immigration policy which includes enforcement and punishment, but no realistic path to legalization for undocumented immigrants. While the religious push for immigration reform that provides a path for legalization for undocumented migrants currently in the country has been ecumenical, the Catholic Church has been at the forefront of the religious movement in favor of migrants and continues to be the most active church in the push for immigrants' rights in the United States.

Immigration is not the first major issue on which the Catholic Church has clashed with government policy. In Latin America from the 1960s until the 1980s the Catholic

Church clashed with many governments on the basis of the “preferential option for the poor” proposed by Liberation Theology. While Anthony Gill (1998) and other proponents of a religious economy approach argued that market pressures and competition with Protestantism is what drove the Catholic Church to become active in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, many of those involved in the movement at the grassroots level would say that the movement was motivated by a quest for social justice based on biblical teachings (Gutierrez 1973). The religious economy model may be applied to the activism of the Catholic Church on the immigration issue in the United States, but as was the case with Catholic activism in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, those involved in the Catholic movement to support immigrants also point to Catholic Social teaching as their motivation. Liberation theologians and especially those involved at the grassroots level based their actions on biblical teachings and their interpretations of the resolutions that the Bishops arrived at during several meetings (Vatican II and Medellín) in the 1960s and 1970s. This paper contributes to the debate between those advocating a theological explanation for the Catholic Church’s activism, and those advocating for a religious economy model.

The religious economy model explains the changes that the Church went through in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to competition. In the religious economy framework, religious institutions compete for souls and are therefore encouraged to innovate when they face competition from other religious providers (Gill 1998, Fetzer 1998, Finke and Iannacone 1993, Iannacone 1998, Stark 1998). Church activists and liberation theologians themselves, however, favor a theological argument, in which the

Church's actions are a reflection of biblical teachings of solidarity and justice (Boff 1978, Bravo 1993, da Silva Gorglho 1993, Gutierrez 1971, Moreno Rejon 1993, Richard 1993).

We will begin with a short discussion about Liberation Theology in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s to provide a foundation from which the religious economy model and the theological arguments can be better understood. These same concepts can be applied to the immigration-related activism of the Catholic Church in the United States. We will then move on to explore the theological basis for the involvement of the Catholic Church on immigration issues, followed by a discussion of how the religious economy model explains the Church's involvement, applying the market analogy to immigration in the United States. These sections lay out the current debate in the field of religious studies regarding Church involvement on multiple social issues. The following section contains a brief summary of some of the services the Church is providing for immigrants in the United States, which provides tangible evidence that the Catholic Church is in fact acting in a favorable manner toward immigrants. The last section is an empirical study in which we test the religious economy model by correlating both demand and supply at the diocese level (a diocese is the relatively small administrative jurisdiction of a Catholic Bishop), with immigration related services that the Church provides.

Liberation Theology

In the 1960s and 1970s the Catholic Church began to take a more proactive stance in defense of the poor in Latin America. Liberation Theology represented a change in Church practice and doctrine with respect to the poor in Latin America. In 1962 the Vatican held the Second Vatican Council, in which Pope John XXIII called for "the

Church to become the Church of all, in particular the Church of the poor” (Gutierrez 1999, p. 25). This represented a drastic change for the Church in Latin America because the Church and the economic elite of the region had long, historic ties (Gill 1998, p. 3; Berryman 1994, p. 13).

Liberation theology concerned itself with the poor and their struggle. The Church defined poverty as the lack of the “goods required to satisfy the most basic needs of human beings” and this kind of poverty was viewed by the Church as “wholly contrary to the will of God” (Gutierrez 1999, p. 25). Poverty was seen as a result of social injustice, and social injustice was conceived of as structural sin; it became the work of the Church and religious people to fight against this sin. Poverty and its effect on the lives of the people who bear its burden became an important concern for the Church; as Phillip Berryman put it: “To baptize a child who is dying an easily preventable disease is heart-wrenching, to do so repeatedly is radicalizing” (Berryman 1994, p.13).

Aside from poverty, the Church also concerned itself with the issue of liberation. Gustavo Gutierrez explains that political and social liberation “points towards the elimination of the immediate causes of poverty and injustice, especially with regard to socio-economic structures” (Gutierrez 1999, p. 26). In September of 1968 bishops from every country in Latin America met in Medellín, Colombia. From this meeting came several documents and declarations which solidified the commitment of the Catholic Church with the poor in Latin America. The Medellín document on poverty states that “[t]he Latin American Bishops cannot remain indifferent in the face of the tremendous social injustices existent in Latin America, which kept the majority of our people in dismal poverty...” (Smith 1991, p.18).

This kind of awareness of the social problems of Latin America led the Catholic Church as well as lay leaders within it to form Base Ecclesial Communities (BECs). These communities are “essentially Catholic neighborhood groups that meet in homes... [and] emphasize participation, equality, small group Bible study, lay leadership, consciousness raising and sociopolitical activism” (Smith 1991, p. 106). These communities provided not only a temporary solution to the lack of local clergy in certain areas, but they also provided a place where Liberation Theology could spread (Smith 1999, p. 106-7). Through these BECs, and the implementation of Liberation Theology as it was addressed in the Second Vatican Council and the meeting in Medellín, the Catholic Church had become very active in social issues in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s.

Anthony Gill’s book *Rendering Unto Caesar* explores a religious economy model as an explanation for the Catholic Church’s anti-regime activism in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. Gill writes that while Bishops in some Latin American countries denounced authoritarian regimes, Bishops in other countries in Latin America supported the same kind of regimes. He uses the religious economy model to explain the different Church-State relationships. Gill argues that while the Church was not under threat there was no need to innovate, but when the Church’s status was threatened by competition from Protestant groups the Church advocated for the rights of the poor and oppressed, thereby betraying its historical ties to the conservative state (Gill 1998, p. 35-40).

Gill’s central argument is that “where competition for the souls of the popular classes was fierce, a pastoral strategy of a preferential option for the poor was adopted... [but] where competition was minimal, bishops downplayed the preferential option for the poor and sought to maintain cordial relations with military rulers so as to preserve

traditional perquisites.” In order to test this hypothesis, Anthony Gill correlated Protestant growth with Catholic Church opposition to authoritarian regimes in twelve countries (Gill 1998, p.11-14). Through statistical analysis and case studies, Gill was able to establish a significant positive correlation between Protestant growth and Catholic opposition to authoritarian regimes, mostly in the shape of the growth of Liberation Theology. In other words, Gill argues that the Church endorsed a preferential option for the poor in the countries where it faced the steepest competition from Protestant growth. In countries where the Church did not experience competition from Protestants, it remained relatively silent in the face of similarly oppressive regimes. The Church, Gill argues, was acting as a rational actor, investing and changing in areas where it faced competition, but leaving areas where its practical monopoly was left relatively undisturbed.

There are two main problems with Gill’s (1998) religious economy model as applied to this particular study. First, Gill assumes that in a supply-and-demand model for religious markets, demand is inelastic and supply is the true force that drives market behavior. Gill assumes that “there has always been a relatively high demand for both social justice and religion in Latin America” (Gill 1998, p. 48); assuming that demand is inelastic is not easily justifiable (Steigenga 1999). By assuming that demand is inelastic, Gill focuses his research on the issue of supply, which translates to competition. Gill hypothesized and found that an increased number of religious suppliers (and thus increased competition) was positively correlated with Church activism. . The problem is that in any market, both supply and demand are important, therefore by focusing entirely on supply, the effects of demand on the market are neglected.

The second problem with Gill's study is the size of his case studies. By looking at whole countries as units of analysis, local differences are easily overlooked. Gill assumes that the Church within each country acts as a unitary actor, thus diminishing the importance of individual actors and local differences (Steigenga 1999). Gill selectively relaxes the unitary actor assumption in some cases, naming the actions of individual priests and bishops (Gill 1998, p.22, 24), nevertheless, he ultimately assumes that the Church is a unitary actor at the national level. This assumption seems unwarranted and can easily overlook differences of both demand and supply at the local level.

As Anthony Gill argues in the case of the Church in certain Latin American countries, the Church responds to competition with innovation. This basic argument can be applied to different scenarios of Church innovation and intervention on behalf of marginalized groups. In the United States for example, the Church may chose to intervene on behalf of a marginalized group, such as immigrants, as a strategy to counteract Protestant competition.

The religious economy model can also be applied as a possible explanation for the Church's activism in the immigration issue in the United States. In the United States, Catholics are a religious minority, but not amongst the incoming Latin American immigrants (American Religious Identification Survey 2001, Catholic Information Project 2006, Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2006). The predominant Catholicism of immigrants to the United States, however, is declining especially amongst the second generation (the children of Latin American immigrants). We can therefore assume that the Catholic Church is facing increased competition in the religious market for Latin American immigrants in the United States. According to the religious economy

model, the Catholic Church should then provide people with a “competitive service.” It should in theory become more responsive in issues related to immigrants, and it has.

The religious economy model predicts an activist church in a competitive religious market, such as the one in the United States or that of Latin America in the 1960s to the 1980s (in which Protestantism was making advances). The theological argument accounts for the Church fulfilling its mission and following the teachings of the Bible, regardless of what the Church as an institution stands to gain or lose from advocating immigrants’ rights. Joel Fetzer (1998) found increased Catholic Church support for immigration in countries in which the Catholic Church was a minority and lower Catholic support for immigration when the Church was a majority. In other words, the Church supported immigrants more in countries where it faced greater competition than in countries in which the competition was not very high.

Another important variable affecting the activism of the Catholic Church in the United States on immigrants’ issues is Catholic social teaching. From papal statements to the Bible, Catholic social teaching commands believers to love their neighbor and to feel compassionate for those less fortunate. In the United States undocumented immigrants are amongst the least fortunate and most in need of compassion and it is therefore the duty of the Church to advocate for their interests. The Catholic Church in the United States uses Catholic social teaching to justify a stance against enforcement-only immigration policy and to call upon Catholics to support immigration reform favorable to the millions of undocumented immigrants currently in the country.

Anthony Gill (1998) argued that the changes that came about in Latin America after the meetings of Vatican II and Medellín were a response to a competitive threat

from the Protestant churches. Gill's argument, however, upset many who worked with the Church on behalf of the poor, who saw their actions as guided by theology and biblical teachings. Both explanations for Church involvement have been critiqued. The religious economy explanation reduces matters of faith to utility-maximizing strategies. In other words, this approach downplays the responsibility that many local clergy feel towards their congregations. The theological approach, on the other hand, overpredicts Church involvement. There have been many occasions in which the Catholic Church has not responded to great tragedies and injustices. Because the Church has remained silent about some injustices and taken up the cause of the oppressed in others, a purely theological explanation cannot encompass all of the Church's history of involvement. This debate between theology and market-based explanations is central to the argument presented in this paper. Here, we aim to contribute to this debate by focusing on the issue of Church activism on immigration in the United States. The market explanation would be that the Church is responding to the growth of Protestantism among Latin American immigrants in the United States, and thus it is becoming more responsive to immigrants as a way to provide a competitive service and to entice immigrants to remain Catholic. The theological explanation would be that the Church is basing its immigration-related activism on the Bible, which contains several passages that can be easily interpreted in favor of immigrants.

Social Teaching and the Bible: Theological Explanation

There is a clear biblical basis for the Catholic Church's activism on the issue of immigration. The Church may choose to focus on certain biblical passages in order to justify its activism. Catholic social teaching may be "activated" either by market

pressures, as defined by Anthony Gill (1998), Joel Fetzer (1998), Rodney Stark (1998), Laurence Innaccone (1998), Roger Finke (1993) and other defenders of the religious economy model, by an increased Hispanic presence (therefore an increased need for services), or by a combination of both.

Bishop statements, papal statements, sermons and official documents released by the Catholic Church point directly to biblical passages to justify the involvement of the Church on the issue of immigration. In a controversial and now famous sermon given by Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles on Ash Wednesday of 2006, he called for other bishops to not abide by House Resolution 4437, which had it passed would have made it illegal to provide social services to people whose immigration status was not confirmed (Mahony, 2006). In this homily Mahony referenced not only biblical passages (Matthew 8:20), but also a papal letter in order to rally his followers against H.R. 4437.

Under the leadership of Cardinal Mahony, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) launched the *Justice for Immigrants Campaign*, which aims at informing Catholics about immigration issues and showing them how several biblical passages can be interpreted in favor of immigrants (Justice for Immigrants Campaign, 2007). The Justice for Immigrants Campaign summarized (2007) Catholic Social Teaching on the issue of immigration in five main points:

1. People have the right to find opportunities in their homeland.
2. People have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families.
3. Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders.
4. Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.

5. The human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected.

In the Justice for Immigrants Campaign publications, the USCCB further elaborates, that while sovereign nations have the right to control their borders, “more powerful economic nations, which have the ability to protect and feed their residents, have a stronger obligation to accommodate migration flows” (Justice for Immigrants Campaign, 2007).

Also, the Justice for Immigrants Campaign asserts that

the Church recognizes that all the goods of the earth belong to all people. When persons cannot find employment in their country of origin to support themselves and their families, they have the right to find work elsewhere in order to survive. Sovereign nations should provide a way to accommodate this right (Justice for Immigrants Campaign, 2007).

Along with informational packets about the Social Teaching of the Catholic

Church in regards to migration, the USCCB also provides priests and local churches with packets suggesting biblical passages for homilies in favor of immigration as part of the Justice for Immigrant Campaign. The USCCB also publishes a full action handbook titled “Implementing Justice for Immigrants Campaign in the Parish” as part of the Justice for Immigrants Campaign. This packet includes suggested steps to get the parishioners educated on immigration issues, and it also includes a “Public Policy Advocacy” section, which advocates political mobilization with and on behalf of the immigrant community (Justice for Immigrants Campaign 2007).

Individual Bishops have also responded to this call for political action. The Bishops of Salt Lake City and Sacramento wrote a joint letter to Michael Chertoff from the Department of Homeland Security and Julie Myers from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to intervene on behalf of the immigrant community to “express concern regarding Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE’s) intensified

enforcement activities and protocols for such actions” (Wester and Soto, 2008). Cardinal Roger Mahony wrote a letter to President Bush in 2005 specifically addressing H.R. 4437, in which he cites scripture (Matthew 25:31-46) to call upon the president to “speak out clearly and forcefully in opposition to... repressive and impossible aspects of any immigration reform efforts” (Mahony, 2005).

Like people in Base Ecclesial Communities in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s pointed to the Bible as their motivation, we can see that Catholic activists on the issue of immigration in the United States also have used the Bible. Like many bishops have pointed out, the Bible can be read in the context of the current reality of immigrants in the United States. The Bible asks of its readers to love their neighbors, as seen in Mark 12: 28-33:

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"
‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.'
‘Well’ said, teacher, the man replied. ‘You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.’(New International Version, Mark 12.28).

When these verses are read in the context of the immigration crisis, the immigrant becomes the neighbor, whom Catholics are urged to love as themselves. To provide help for neighbors is to love them as oneself, and immigrants in the United States are a vulnerable neighbor in the eyes of the Catholic Church.

The idea that our neighbors are not just those whom we know and are like us, but rather those that are most in need can be found in the parable of the Good Samaritan. In this famous story, Jesus asserts that a neighbor is one who has mercy on the one who needs it and undocumented immigrants in the United States are certainly one of the groups most in need of help. Without the support of part of the non-immigrant population, it would be nearly impossible to arrive at immigration reform favorable to undocumented immigrants. The Catholic Church could be therefore fulfilling its mission to be a good neighbor in their efforts to push forward immigration reform and provide social services to immigrants in the United States.

Perhaps the Bible passage which most directly applies to the immigration issue in the United States is found in Leviticus 19:33-34:

When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the LORD your God (New International Version, Lev 19:33)

In this passage, the Bible directly instructs its readers to treat non-natives as “one of [the] native born.” Immigration reform favorable to undocumented immigrants is the most direct way to fulfill this request and therefore it may be argued that it is the duty of Christians to strive for fair and equal rights and treatment of currently undocumented immigrants. This passage is especially applicable in the United States, since its current Anglo majority is descended from European immigrants. The Bible calls for a historical conscience, to which the Catholic Church responds. The biblical call for fair treatment of immigrants is repeated in Exodus 22:21, Exodus 23:9, Deuteronomy 1:16, and Deuteronomy 10:19. In these passages, the Bible condemns oppression, and mistreatment, and commands equality and fairness before the law for foreigners. These

passages appeal to the historical conscience of the Israelites, and today to the historical conscience of non-immigrant Americans.

The Church has issued a number of written and oral statements in which it shows its support for the immigrants in the United States using these Bible passages. In the much-publicized statement that Cardinal Roger Mahony made urging Catholics to ignore H.R. 4437, as well as in documents released by the United States Conference of Bishops (*One Family Under God* (1995), *Unity in Diversity* (2000), *Strangers No Longer* (2006)), the Catholic Church uses Catholic Social teaching to support its stance against enforcement-only immigration policy and calls upon Catholics to support immigration reform favorable to the millions of undocumented immigrants currently in the country.

The Religious Economy Model

While it is clear that the Catholic Church has enough motivation for its pro-immigrant stance in the Bible, proponents of a religious economy theory would argue that competition is the variable that compels the Church to focus and act on the immigration-related passages. Fetzer (1998) tested the religious economy hypothesis on the issue of immigration; he found that the Catholic Church was more actively involved and responsive on the issue of immigration in countries where it was a religious minority, which then meant that it faced stronger competition. Fetzer's (1998) study provides evidence that religious competition correlated with religious activism across the cases of Germany, France and the United States.

The religious economy model explains behavior as an effort to minimize cost and maximize returns for investments (Finke and Iannacone 1993, Gill 1994, Iannacone 1998). The religious economy model asserts that people are rational actors and it

“explains how people make choices to obtain their various objectives in the most efficient, or optimal manner” (Gill 1998, pp.194-5). While the religious economy model is a theory of economics, it has been applied to a “religious market” to an increasing degree (Finke and Iannacone 1993, Gill 1994, Iannacone 1998, Fetzer 1998). The religious economy model was the theory that Anthony Gill (1994) studied in the case of Latin America and the preferential option for the poor. In this theory, the Church is viewed as a rational actor, responding to market pressures. Anthony Gill (1994) argues that in the case of Latin America the Church responded to Protestant growth by opposing authoritarian regimes. In countries where the Church did not face significant competition from Protestant growth, it did not oppose authoritarian regimes. The Church acted in its own self interest; therefore Gill argued that it acted as a rational actor. In the case of Latin American immigrants in the United States and the Catholic Church, both the immigrants themselves and the Church can be construed as rational actors.

Immigrants, as individuals, make an investment in religion. Being part of any religious organization requires the individual to invest something, be it time, money or emotional and cognitive capital. Within the religious economy model, individuals evaluate the worthiness of their investments based on the returns they get from their religious affiliation. The ultimate return is of course intangible and delayed in the form of salvation (Gill 1998, p. 201). There are however, more tangible returns to be obtained from personal religious investment. Any one individual should, all other things being equal, invest in the religion which provides the greatest returns.

Latin American immigrants in the United States stand to gain tangible returns from a level of assimilation to the host (majority) culture. Along with mastery of the

English language, conversion to Protestantism is one of the major indicators of assimilation among immigrants in the United States (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). Among Hispanics in the United States, religious affiliation is correlated with household income. In *Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion*, the Pew Hispanic Center reports that while 46 percent of households of Hispanic Catholics in the United States have an income of under \$30,000 (the largest group in this income bracket), only 29 percent of Mainline Protestants fall in the same income bracket (the smallest group). Of the Hispanic immigrants in the United States with a Household income of \$50,000 or higher, the largest groups in this bracket are Mainline Protestants (24 percent) and Seculars (25 percent), while the smallest groups are Catholics (14 percent) and “Other Christians” (11 percent) (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2007, pp.12). In other words, the data shows that Protestant conversion may have several tangible returns for “religious investors.” Statistically, Latin American immigrants in the United States who become Protestant have a higher income, thus they can see a tangible benefit to conversion.

English dominance is also correlated with Protestantism, with 45 percent of Hispanic immigrants who identify themselves as Mainline Protestants being English-dominant, and 32 percent being bilingual, while only 16 percent of Catholics are English-dominant, 29 percent are bilingual, and a majority of 55 percent are monolingual Spanish speakers. Because Latin Americans stand to gain more tangible returns from Protestantism than they do from Catholicism, the religious economy model predicts that there should be a relatively low rate of Catholic faith retention among immigrants. The data confirms this trend, as first generation immigrants are 68 percent Catholic, while

only 12 percent of the third generation remains Catholic (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2007). So many Catholics leaving the Church, especially on the second generation, increases competition for the Catholic Church. Immigrants are a large constituency of the Church and losing them in such a scale presents a great competitive threat.

On the other side of the market (if the individual immigrants are the consumers) are the churches, which are providers. Following the religious economy model, churches work a lot like firms (Iannaccone 1998). Iannaccone explains that “just as [self-interest motivates] secular producers [and] market forces constrain churches just as they constrain secular firms, and ... the benefits of competition, the burdens of monopoly and the hazards of government regulation are as real for religion as for any other sector of the economy” (Iannaccone 1998, pp.1478). Gill asserts that “the main objective of Catholic bishops is to maximize parishioners since their faith demands that all souls be redeemed” (195). In the religious economy model, the Catholic Church, like the individual immigrant, is also a utility-maximizing rational actor.

The United States has an open religious market. Because of the sheer number of different denominations, no single religion has a monopoly on the religious market (American Religious Identification Survey 2001). Estimates of the percentage of people in the United States who consider themselves Catholic vary little, from 22 percent to 24 percent (American Religious Identification Survey 2001, Catholic Information Project 2006, The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2007), but while a majority of Americans are Protestant they are divided into many denominations, therefore none

dominates. Because the religious market is so competitive in the United States, the Catholic Church is freed from the burden of monopoly and is at liberty to innovate.

The Catholic Church in the United States has an advantage over a large majority of a “sub-market,” that of incoming Latin American immigrants, with estimates of about 70 percent or slightly more (Perl, Greely, and Gray 2004, p.1), but is “losing souls” in the second generation. The Church then has to provide some tangible returns to its adherents in order to retain them, if the Church does not provide a tangible return, then it will no longer be competitive.

In the case of immigration in the United States, the religious market approach would predict that the competitive nature of the market, combined with increased losses of Catholicism in the second generation should generate an outspoken and active Church in the area of immigration. Immigration reform favorable to immigrants as compared to enforcement-only programs would be a very attractive tangible return for religious investment. The Catholic Church has indeed taken up the immigration cause. When polled about Church activism in immigration protests within the last 12 months, the largest group whose church had been involved was Catholics, with 26 percent while Protestants reported 16 percent (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2007, p.62). Forty-nine percent of Hispanic Catholics reported that the clergy at their place of worship spoke out on immigration, compared with 37 percent of Mainline Protestants, and 35 percent of Evangelicals (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2007, p.61). While most American churches have shown some degree of support for immigration reform favorable to undocumented immigrants, the Catholic Church continues to be the most outspoken. The religious economy model accredits this quality to the increased competition since the

Catholic Church has the most to lose amongst incoming Latin American immigrants to the United States, it must also make the biggest commitment to change.

Another important study applying the religious economy model to the Catholic Church was conducted by Rodney Stark in 1998. Stark (1998) found that the Catholic Church was more willing to change and innovate in dioceses where it faced the highest competition and that Catholics living in areas of high competition displayed more commitment to their Church than did Catholics living in a less competitive context. In an empirical study of 171 Catholic dioceses in the United States Stark correlated competition and Catholic Church innovation and commitment. He hypothesized that in dioceses where a significant portion of the population was Catholic the Church would face lower levels of competition and would therefore innovate less. He also hypothesized that Catholics living in high competition dioceses would display more commitment to their faith. Both of these hypotheses should be supported according to the religious economy model that says that “religious competition” has a positive effect on “religious vitality” (Stark 1998, p. 197).

Stark (1998, p. 199) used “Catholic context” as a measure of competition for this study. “Catholic context” refers to the percentage of the population living within the physical jurisdiction of each diocese that is Catholic, according to the Official Catholic Directory. This score was his independent variable measuring competition. The two large areas that Stark expected were dependent on competition were commitment and innovation. In order to measure commitment, Stark (1998, p. 199-200) used four separate measures:

1. Ordination rate, which is the rate at which people are becoming officially appointed priests, because “the higher the rate of ordination, the higher the rate of rank-and-file commitment.”
2. The seminarian rate, which is a measure of people studying to become priests, for the same reason as the ordination rate.
3. The priest rate, “measured as the number of diocesan priests active in serving the diocese per 10,000 Catholic,” and
4. The conversion rate, because “given the primary role played by the laity in bringing others into their churches, a high rate of conversion to Catholicism ought to reflect high levels of rank-and-file enthusiasm.

Stark used several measures of innovation, including “unordained rate” (the likelihood that the church would allow unordained lay people to hold leadership positions in their Parishes), and “female religious leader rate,” or women “classified as professional ministry personnel, or who are administering a parish” (Stark 1998, 201). The religious economy model would predict that the Church should be more willing to innovate in areas where it faces stronger competition, thus providing a novel service to its clients.

Stark found that the Church innovated more in dioceses where Catholic numbers were lowest, therefore finding that competition encouraged the Church to innovate (Stark 1998, p. 201-203). Stark found that Catholics living in areas of high competition were also more committed to the Church than were those who lived in areas of low competition (Stark 1998, p.199-200). The present study will use the same unit of analysis (the Catholic diocese) and the same measure of competition (Catholic population per

diocese) to assess whether competition and support for immigration reform correlate in the United States, as the religious economy model would predict.

The Church in Action on the Issue of Immigration

The Catholic Church is facing intense market pressures in the United States. Hispanics are converting to Protestantism in large numbers by the second generation, in other words, the rate of Catholic faith retention for Latin American immigrants is very low in the United States. The Catholic Church has become active and responsive on issues regarding its Latin American “clients.” Under the supervision of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Church is providing help and support for Latin American immigrants through several organizations.

One such Catholic organization is Catholic Charities, which in 2003, “provided immigration services to 313,140 people” (Catholic Information Project 2006, p.14). These services included “assistance to individuals and families with immigration issues, such as legal status and citizenship” (Catholic Information Project 2006, p.14). Catholic Charities also provided “refugee settlement services to 76,864 people...[including] resettlement and placement, on the job development, English as a Second Language classes, life skills education, job readiness training, and cultural adaptation of refugees” (14). These forms of aid were specifically targeted to migrants and refugees, but Catholic Charities also offered several other types of assistance, that while not targeted specifically to immigrants, could also be used by this group. These included food services, basic needs assistance, temporary shelter, disaster response, transitional housing, socialization and neighborhood services, and housing assistance.

Another Catholic organization providing aid for the immigrant community is the Migration and Refugee Services (MRS). The MRS was established by the USCCB in the 1960s, and over the past 26 years, it has “resettled 912,160,740 refugees or 33 percent of the total number of refugees admitted to the United States” (Catholic Information Project 2006, p.17). The Migration and Refugee Services “carries out the commitment of the bishops to serve and advocate for immigrants, refugees, migrants, and people on the move” (Catholic Information Project 2006, p.17). In 2003, the MRS had a budget of \$36.2 million, of which \$29.4 million were used directly to help resettle refugees. Aside from helping immigrants and refugees directly, the MRS also serves an informative mission. MRS staff “uses information gained from... ground-level groups to inform the bishops’ public statements on immigrants and refugee issues” (Mooney 2006, p. 1461) and it issued three calls to Catholics. The first was the call to conversion “because Catholics may sometimes forget their own immigrant heritage” (Mooney 2006, p. 1462). The second call was to communion, which “lays out the Church’s belief in cultural pluralism of America and rejects nativism in American society” (Mooney, p.1462). The third was the call to solidarity, which “emphasizes the Church’s role in advocating for justice, such as due process for immigrants, legalization opportunities, social services, and medical attention” (Mooney 2006, p.1462). Also, it is part of the MRS policy to work not only to help immigrants who are currently in the United States but also to prevent further immigration by promoting development measures in the sending communities and to encourage highly skilled potential immigrants to remain in their countries, so as to alleviate brain drain which has the potential to dampen development further (Mooney 2006).

Like the MRS, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc is specifically meant to help immigrants. The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) was created in 1988 by the USCCB. CLINIC's mission is "to enhance and expand delivery of legal services to indigent and low-income immigrants,... and to meet the immigration needs identified by the Catholic Church in the United States" (Catholic Information Project 2006, p.19). Much like in the parable of the Good Samaritan, CLINIC serves the most vulnerable newcomers, such as detainees of the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services and victims of human trafficking. Furthermore, "more than 40,000 elderly, low-income, disabled and persecuted newcomers have achieved citizenship through CLINIC's projects" (Catholic Information Project 2006, p.18).

Echoing Archbishop Romero's call to the Salvadoran army, the USCCB "express[es] a prophetic voice... by reminding the Catholic faithful that their duties as Christians may often go beyond their duties as citizens and that all members of society are ultimately responsible to an authority higher than the state" (Mooney 2006, p.1463). This kind of language was made very clear with the Catholic Church's strong opposition to HR 4437, which would have criminalized aiding undocumented immigrants. The Catholic Church asked of its followers to disregard the law if it had been passed, essentially calling for civil disobedience, asking U.S. citizens to obey God's authority, before the State's. The USCCB also argues that "even those members of society who are outside the political state, such as undocumented immigrants, have certain rights as human beings" (Mooney 2006, p. 1463) such as the right to pastoral care, education and social services.

The Present Study: Testing the Religious Economy Model in the United States

While it is clear that the Catholic Church is providing significant support and services to the Latin American immigrant community, the question of the reason for this type of action remains. Proponents of a religious economy model would say that the Church is providing this service in response to the increased competition the Church is facing from Protestant groups (the low rates of Catholicism in the second and third generations). Studies conducted at both the national level (Fetzer 1998, Gill 1998) and at the diocese level (Stark 1998) provide evidence for this interpretation, but no study has specifically addressed the issue of Catholic Church activism on immigration at the diocese level. This study tests the religious economy approach by correlating the level of competition and level of Catholic Church involvement on issues of immigration at the diocese level.

Methods

In order to test the religious economy model as it applies to the role of the Catholic Church in supporting immigrant rights and providing them with immigration-related services in the United States, we correlate competition scores with measures of Catholic Church outreach and activism in the dioceses of the United States. This method is the same that was used by Stark (1998) to test the religious market approach on issues of Church innovation and commitment.

As noted above, Fetzer (1998) has tested the religious economy model with relation to the Catholic Church and immigration at a national level. In his study of France, Germany and the United States he found that the Catholic Church was most active on the issue of immigration where it faced the steepest competition and least active

where it faced the least competition. Fetzer's test cases, however, present problems of size and scope. Gill (1998), like Fetzer (1998), used countries as his test cases, but Robert MacKin (2003) argued that by looking at the entire country, Gill missed regional differences that may in fact have affected the Catholic Church's activism more. MacKin (2003) found that when countries are broken down into regions, the activism of the Church can be more accurately explained by variables outside the religious economy model. MacKin found that the bishop of Cuernavaca became an ardent proponent of Liberation Theology not because of Protestant competition, but rather that the Bishop's "radicalization" as well as his "acceptance of competing faiths" (MacKin 2003, p. 505) paved the way for the growth of Protestantism. In other words, Protestant growth did not cause the Bishop to become more active, instead the Bishop's embrace of Liberation Theology pushed the diocese to become more Protestant. MacKin argues that the Bishop of Cuernavaca became an active proponent of Liberation Theology not because of Protestant competition, rather several localized factors such as the radical workers' movement, encouraged the Bishop's transformation. MacKin argues that Gill's analysis may show correlation, but fails to show causation. MacKin argues that "Gill's analysis provides a view of change at the national level. The argument would be considerably strengthened by providing discussion of change at the diocesan level" (MacKin 2003, p. 503).

MacKin's criticism of the size of the test case employed by Gill also applies then to Fetzer's study, because he too used countries as test cases. The unit of analysis for this study is the Catholic Diocese. Because a diocese is much smaller than the country, it addresses MacKin's critique of Gill (and vicariously, Fetzer). Also borrowing from the

methods Stark used, competition is be measured by the percentage of people living within the physical territory of each diocese who are not Catholic. These people represent the number of people who are still an “open market,” in the language of religious economy these non-Catholics remain “unsold customers,” an open section of the market. Like Stark and Fetzer, we will determine that an area that is highly Catholic is also less competitive. The Church would have less of a need to become active on immigrant rights issues if it already controlled a large share of the religious market. Data on the percentage of Catholics per diocese was collected from the *Official Catholic Directory* (OCD). The OCD is published annually and contains contact information and data about each diocese in the United States, including the total population living within the physical boundaries of the diocese and the total *catholic* population living within these same boundaries.

From these data, each diocese in the United States was given a “competition” score. Following Fetzer’s and Stark’s findings about the activism of the Catholic Church when faced with high competition, these competition scores should correlate with Catholic Church activism on the issue of immigration. A high competition score for any one diocese means that a high percentage of people living within the diocese’s territory are not Catholic and therefore the Church faces high competition. According to the religious economy model, a high competition score then should yield a more active Church.

In order to measure the Church’s activism on the issue of immigration, we used data from a 2002 survey carried out by the Center for the Applied Research of the Apostolate (CARA).¹ The survey asked questions about the Hispanic ministry in general,

¹ In 2002 CARA sent out a mail survey about the Hispanic/Latino ministry to all 176 dioceses and archdioceses in the United States. Of these 176, 106 responses were received by CARA, and of those “seven respondents indicated that the

and had several questions that were specific to the issue of immigration, including a question about the diocese's collaboration with MRS, and a question asking whether the diocese offered immigration and naturalization assistance. Following the religious economy model, these measures of Catholic activism should be highest in the dioceses that have the most competition. The items from the questionnaire that were used for the present study are the following:

To what extent does your office collaborate with the following diocesan offices or organizations? (The answers for these questions were provided on a Likert scale:

“Not at all,” “Only a little,” “Somewhat” and “Very much.”)

- Migrant/Refugee Services
- Local Hispanic/Latino service agencies

How much does your office provide these types of support to Parish-level pastoral ministers? (The answers for these questions were provided on a likert scale: “Not

at all,” “Only a little,” “Somewhat” and “Very much.”)

- Leadership training for Hispanic/Latino ministries.
- Language training.
- Diocesan conferences for Hispanic/Latino ministries.
- Presentations on Hispanic/Latino culture.

How many Parishes in your diocese provide the following to the Hispanic/Latino community? (The possible answers were: None (0%), A Few (1-25%), Some (26-

50%),Most (51-75%), All or Nearly All (76-100%))

- Bilingual education.

diocese did not have an office of Hispanic/Latino ministry...therefore 99 questionnaires were judged suitable for analysis (by CARA), for a response rate of 57 percent” (Ministry in a Church of Increasing Diversity 2002).

- Bilingual religious education for children.
- Bilingual religious education for adults.
- Sacramental preparation.
- Food or clothing.
- Health services.
- Legal advocacy.
- Naturalization assistance.
- Financial assistance.
- Social gatherings/events.

These items measure different types of assistance that the Catholic Church is providing for the immigrant population. Some items are specifically about immigration services, such as the item about collaboration with the MRS, and the items about the number of Parishes providing naturalization assistance. Other items ask more general questions about services that while not specifically targeted for “immigration needs” still measure a level of Catholic involvement with the immigrant community. For example, the question about language training at the Parish level is not directly about immigration, but it still shows a concern of the Catholic Church to tend to the recently arrived Latin American immigrants, who may not speak English yet.

The number of Hispanics per diocese was included for analysis because it is possible that the Church is responding to demand for services instead of competition. The larger the Hispanic population is within any one diocese, the larger the demand will be for immigration-related services and activism on the part of the Church. While not all Hispanics are immigrants, when Latin American immigrant arrive to the United States,

they tend to prefer areas which already have a Hispanic population (and hopefully an already established social network to receive the migrants), thus the number of Hispanics in an area and the number of Latin American immigrants in an area should correlate.² MacKin (2003) argued that the Bishop of Cuernavaca was responding to a regional demand for church social activism against a government that oppressed the poor. MacKin argues that the bishop “became red” not because of competition, but instead because the social conditions of his parishioners encouraged it. In a highly Hispanic diocese, demands for immigration support and services should be higher. It is not surprising, for example, that Cardinal Roger Mahony has been at the forefront of the immigration issue. Mahony is the Archbishop of Los Angeles, which is one of the most Hispanic areas of the country and a traditional destination for many immigrants. Data on the number of Hispanics per diocese were obtained from the USCCB website on Hispanic Affairs and Demographics, which bases its numbers from Census data.³

The competition scores for each diocese were correlated with items from the questionnaire about Church activism in areas related to immigration and outreach to the Latin American immigrant community to test the religious economy approach.

Findings

Competition did not correlate with several services the Catholic Church offers to the Hispanic community, including immigration-related services (table 1).

² See the appendix for maps showing the Hispanic population per county, and the Foreign-born population per county. These maps show that in general, counties with more Hispanics also have more Foreign-born residents.

³ The data available on the number of Hispanics per diocese was from 1996; ideally, more recent data would be used for this analysis, since certain areas have experienced rapid and significant growth of their Hispanic population since 1996 however, updated data were inaccessible at the present time. Future research should use data from more recent years.

Table 1: Correlations Between Questionnaire Items, Competition Scores at the Diocese Level and Number of Hispanics at the Diocese Level

	DIOCESE COMPETITION	NUMBER OF HISPANICS
Diocese competition	1.00	-.236*
Number of Hispanics	-.236*	1.00
Collaboration with MRS	-.207*	.226*
Legal advocacy	.081	-.089
Naturalization assistance	.174	-.138
Bilingual education	.045	.260*
Bilingual religious education for children	-.139	.311**
Bilingual religious education for adults	-.150	.196
Collaboration with local Latino service agencies	-.088	.134
Leadership training for Hispanics	-.100	.212*
Language training	.099	-.153
Diocesan conferences for Hispanic ministries	-.130	.257*
Presentations on Hispanic culture	-.156	.280**
Sacramental preparation	-.049	.355**
Food or clothing	-.066	.198
Health services	.162	.297**
Financial assistance	.117	.109
Social gatherings	-.079	.394**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

There was in fact a significant negative correlation between competition and one of the measures of outreach and activism (collaboration with the MRS). Hispanic presence in each diocese was used as a proxy for demand, because the more Hispanics are present within each diocese the greater demand for immigration-related services each diocese will face. There was a positive correlation between our measure of demand (Hispanic presence) and these same measures of outreach and activism. There was a negative correlation between number of Hispanics and competition (see appendix for a complete correlations table). Because Hispanics are predominantly Catholic, Hispanic presence in any one diocese decreases competition. The religious economy model would predict increased activism in areas of high competition. Consequently, because Hispanic

presence is negatively correlated with competition this theory would predict decreased outreach and activism in areas with fewer Hispanics (and therefore lower competition). This relationship was not found; on the contrary competition was negatively correlated with collaboration with the MRS ($r = -.207$; $p < .05$) and was not significantly positively correlated to any measure of outreach or activism.

Instead, demand for services, measured as the number of Hispanics per diocese, was more correlated with several measures of outreach to the Hispanic community. The demand for services targeting the immigrant community is greatest in areas where those in need concentrate, and the data shows that the services the Church provides for the immigrant community are also higher in areas where Hispanics concentrate (table 1). The number of Hispanics per diocese is positively correlated with collaboration with the MRS ($r=.226$; $p<.05$), percentage of Parishes within a diocese offering bilingual education ($r=.260$; $p<.05$), percentage offering bilingual religious education for children ($r=.311$; $p<.01$), the extent to which leadership training is offered to Hispanic ministers ($r=.212$; $p<.05$), diocesan conferences for Hispanic ministers ($r=.257$; $p<.05$), presentations on Hispanic culture ($r=.280$; $p<.01$), sacramental preparation offered to Hispanics ($r=.355$; $p<.01$), health services offered for Hispanics ($r=.297$; $p<.01$) and social gatherings and events for Hispanics ($r=.394$; $p<.01$). There were also many questionnaire items that correlated positively with Hispanic presence, but did not achieve sufficient significance, but rather were approaching significance (see the appendix for a more complete table with all the p-values). Hispanic presence (the proxy measure for demand) was more correlated with outreach than was competition. It becomes increasingly hard to argue that the Catholic Church in the United States is motivated primarily by competition. Rather, it

appears as though the Church is meeting a demand for services where they are most needed. This particular finding calls into question a basic assumption of the religious economy model. Gill (1998, p. 48), claims that in the supply-and-demand model of a religious economy demand is inelastic. This study, however, found that a measure of demand for services, Hispanic presence, varies from diocese to diocese. Looking at a smaller unit of study (the diocese instead of the country) allows for these localized differences in demand and their effects on religious suppliers to become visible.

Correction for the Competition Measurement

Mark Chaves and Philip Gorski (2001) argue against Rodney Stark and other proponents of the religious economy model. Chaves and Gorski argue that methodologically Gill and Stark were flawed. In the present study we used market share held by the Catholic Church as a measurement of competition, which was the same measurement used by Stark (1998) but was critiqued by Gorski and Chaves (2001). Gorski and Chaves (2001) argue that “the market share held by a particular religion in a given area is not equivalent to the extent to which that area is religiously pluralistic” because “the fact that a religion is a minority group in a particular region says little about how much religious diversity that area contains” (p.263). Conversely the minority status of a religion also says little about the amount of pressure to convert under which people are. In essence, Gorski and Chaves (2001) argue that not all religious competition is created equal. For example, if a particular area is only 10 percent Catholic, then that area would receive a high competition score in the present study, however, it is the case that if the remaining 90 percent of the population in the area is Jewish or Buddhist the area is much less competitive than if the remaining 90 percent were Pentecostal. The Pew

Hispanic Research Center reports that Hispanics in the United States are mainly converting to Protestantism, particularly charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Thus the context of competition may be more important than the quantity.

In order to address this concern, a second set of correlations were calculated, using a different measure for competition. Instead of giving each area a competition score based on how many people living within the diocese were not Catholic, the new competition scores reflected the fact that not all religions represent an equal competitor for the Catholic Church. Data on the specific religious make up per diocese was unavailable, so states were used as the new units of analysis instead of Catholic dioceses. Data on the specific religious make up of each state was obtained from the 2001 American Religious Identification Survey.

A new competition score of each state was calculated by subtracting non-competitors from the total (100 percent). The following categories were considered non-competitors and therefore subtracted: *Catholic, No Religion, Jewish, Muslim/Islamic, Buddhist*. Based on the widely held tenet that the major competition to the Catholic Church comes from Protestant denominations, the religious groups that remained qualified as competitors were: *Baptist, Christian, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Protestant, Pentecostal, Episcopalian/Anglican, Mormon/LDS, Church of Christ, Non Denominational, Congregation/United Church of Christ, Jehova's Witness, Assembly of God, Evangelical, Church of God, Seventh Day Adventist and Other*. These groups reflect the religious groups that the Pew Hispanic Research Center reports are attracting Hispanic converts. By taking into consideration that not all competition is created equal when calculating a competition score, the final score reflects a more honest picture of the

religious market for Hispanics in the United States. We called these final scores “State religious plurality” (see appendix for individual state scores).

The State plurality scores were then correlated with the data from the survey on Catholic activism and outreach in the Latin American immigrant community. The state plurality scores were correlated with diocese-level data. For example, the scores for each of the questionnaire items from all the dioceses in California were correlated with the state religious plurality score (45). Once again we found no significant positive correlation between competition and Church activism (table 2).

Table 2: Correlations Between Questionnaire Items and State Religious Plurality.

	STATE RELIGIOUS PLURALITY
Collaboration with MRS	-.248*
Legal advocacy	.007
Naturalization assistance	.156
Bilingual education	-.081
Bilingual religious education for children	-.178
Bilingual religious education for adults	-.196
Collaboration with local Latino service agencies	-.034
Leadership training for Hispanics	.029
Language training	.114
Diocesan conferences for Hispanic ministries	-.051
Presentations on Hispanic culture	-.100
Sacramental preparation	-.099
Food or clothing	-.136
Health services	.022
Financial assistance	.123
Social gatherings	.021

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The only significant correlation found in this case is a negative correlation between collaboration with the MRS and State religious plurality. The rest of the correlations remain statistically insignificant, and the general trend continues to be negative (see appendix for a complete correlation table). Thus, taking into account the religious context of competition for the Catholic Church there is still no evidence that supports the

primordial importance of competition as a driving force in the religious economy as Fetzer (1998), Gill (1998) and Stark (1998) argued.

Conclusions

Findings from the present analysis do not support a religious economy approach as it has been proposed by Stark (1998), Gill (1998), Fetzer (1998) and others. While their previous studies found positive correlations between competition and Catholic activism, the present study found either no correlation or a negative correlation between these variables.

There were three principal findings in the present study:

First, competition from other religious suppliers is not a good explanatory variable for Church activism on immigration in the United States. In the case of immigration and the activism of the Catholic Church, it is possible that the Church is responding to the needs of its followers, which is increasingly growing because of immigration. The Catholic Church has collaborated extensively with other faiths and Christian denominations on the issue of immigration. Considering the Church has actively worked with other religious groups on the issue of immigration, we may conclude that that competition for souls is not the defining factor pushing the Church to action.

Furthermore, we should also consider the non-immigrant Catholics in the United States and how they might view the activism of the Church on the issue of immigration. Future research should look into the question of whether the Catholic Church in the United States is losing native members because of its pro-immigrant stance. The American South has recently become a more popular destination for immigrants and in

many ways the South is also more politically conservative than the progressive northwestern region of the country. How does the Catholic Church in the South negotiate its pro-immigrant stance in a place where many members are likely to view it as an issue outside the scope of the Church? If non-immigrant Catholics, especially in the South are becoming disenchanted with the Church and leaving it as a result of the issue of immigration, then one could say that the Church is pursuing this agenda at the risk of losing some members. Pushing for immigration reform in an area that is not receptive to the issue is an unfavorable strategy for the Church if its established members leave.

Anthony Gill and other proponents of a religious economy tend to reduce religion to pure economy in a way that leaves out the moral component of religion. While the purely theological approach may over predict Church involvement in issues such as immigration, a strict religious economy approach swings too far in the other direction. The religious economy approach views religion as a commodity. Religious providers are seen as willing brokers in a regulated market (in the case of the United States). This approach severely downplays the moral and spiritual motivations that religious providers may have when they intervene against social injustice in favor of the needy. Claiming that religious actors are motivated to intervene in favor of their Parishes because of pressures from a religious market contradicts the very meaning of religion for many believers. In the case of Liberation Theology, Church activists and clergy directly involved in the movement would say they based their actions on their interpretations of the Bible. Similarly, clergy involved in the pro-immigrant movement, led by the Catholic Church in the United States, use the Bible and Catholic social teaching to inspire and guide their work. Reducing the efforts of Catholic clergy to the pressures of a religious

market brings us too close to denying the good will of individual Church actors.

Second, these findings suggest that the Catholic Church may be responding to demand instead of supply. It follows that the “static demand” assumption of the religious economy model needs to be relaxed. The present study found that competition from other religious suppliers is a poor predictor of services for immigrants provided by the Church; rather demand for services measured by Hispanic presence in the area is a better predictor of services provided for immigrants. In the demand-and-supply equation, the Church appears to be responding more to demand than competition. Demand for Church activism on the issue of immigration is different in every part of the country. Gill assumed an inelastic demand for social justice in Latin America (Gill 1998, p.48), but demand for social services (or social justice for that matter) is in fact not the same everywhere. The findings of the present study suggest the need for a relaxation of the belief that the demand for religious services and social services provided by the Church is equal and unchanging in all places. Not all people require the same amount or quality of attention and services provided by the Church.

The finding that competition or increased religious suppliers is not a good predictor of Church services provided for the immigrant population does not necessarily contradict the religious economy model as a whole. It does, however, call into question the assumption that demand is always high and always the same. In theory, the Church still stands to gain more by investing resources in areas where demand is higher. In other words, the Church may be investing a lot of resources in areas where the stimulus is the conservation of the Catholicism of the incoming immigrant population. The Church may in fact be investing more resources in areas where it stands to gain the most, not because

of competition, but because the demand for its services is higher. Investing resources and providing immigration-related services may increase retention rates among the Hispanic population and there is no better place to offer these increased services than in areas where there is a large Hispanic population.

Third, the present study also highlights the importance of measuring competition and activism at the local level. Gill and others have been critiqued for using a whole country as a unit of measure (MacKin 2003). Looking at the country as a whole makes it easy to overlook the local context. Liberation theology, for example, was more involved with the local context than anything else; it is not surprising that the main organizational structure of the movement was the Base Ecclesial Community. These base communities were born in and met at the local level, addressing local concerns. Evaluating the Church's activism at the country level overlooks factors that may easily overshadow competition. MacKin (2003) found that at the local level competition from Protestant growth did not predict the growth of Liberation Theology, rather the actions of one local bishop and the local context of his Parish were better predictors of the growth of Liberation Theology in that area.

Fetzer (1998), like Gill (1998) used whole countries as his units of measure; therefore it is likely that his research overlooked local differences, both in activism and competition. Competition is not felt the same way all across the country, for example, while the United States may have a very open religious market as a country, the market is definitely not the same in Rhode Island, (which is a very Catholic region) and in Alabama (a very Protestant region). In this study, by looking at the diocese level, we were able to determine that competition was not the definitive variable affecting Church activism on

the issue of immigration in the United States.

Furthermore, Gill (1998) also assumed that the Church acted as a unitary actor. In other words, he assumed that the Church in a country acted together on the issue of Liberation Theology. These assumptions overlook the individual actions of local priests, nuns, bishops and lay workers. In the case of immigration in the United States there are also several important outspoken bishops on the issue of immigration. Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles, for example, has been at the forefront of the Church's support for immigrants. His commitment towards the cause of immigration is not surprising considering Los Angeles has long been an important destination city for many immigrants.

The present study does not refute the religious economy model, but it does suggest that strict claims, treating the Church as a unitary actor must be met with suspicion. Our findings suggest that the Church is less unitary than is often assumed and responds to demand as much as or more than competition. These findings open a fruitful middle ground in the debate between those who embrace theological explanations of Church behavior and proponents of the religious economy model. The present study not only highlights the importance of including the supply side of the equation in a religious economy model, but it also points to new methodology for testing the religious economy model in other contexts, measuring and analyzing the effects of both demand and supply at the local level.

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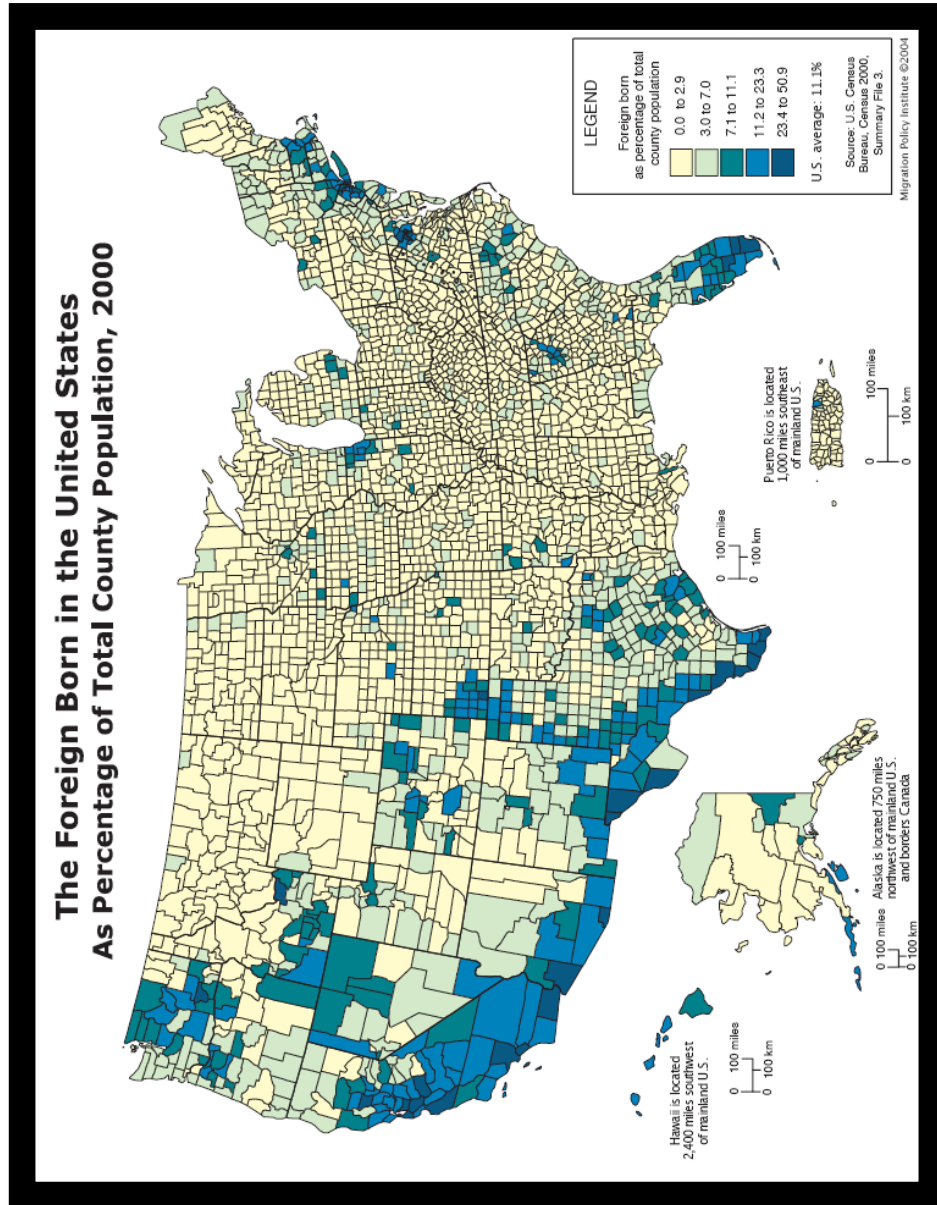
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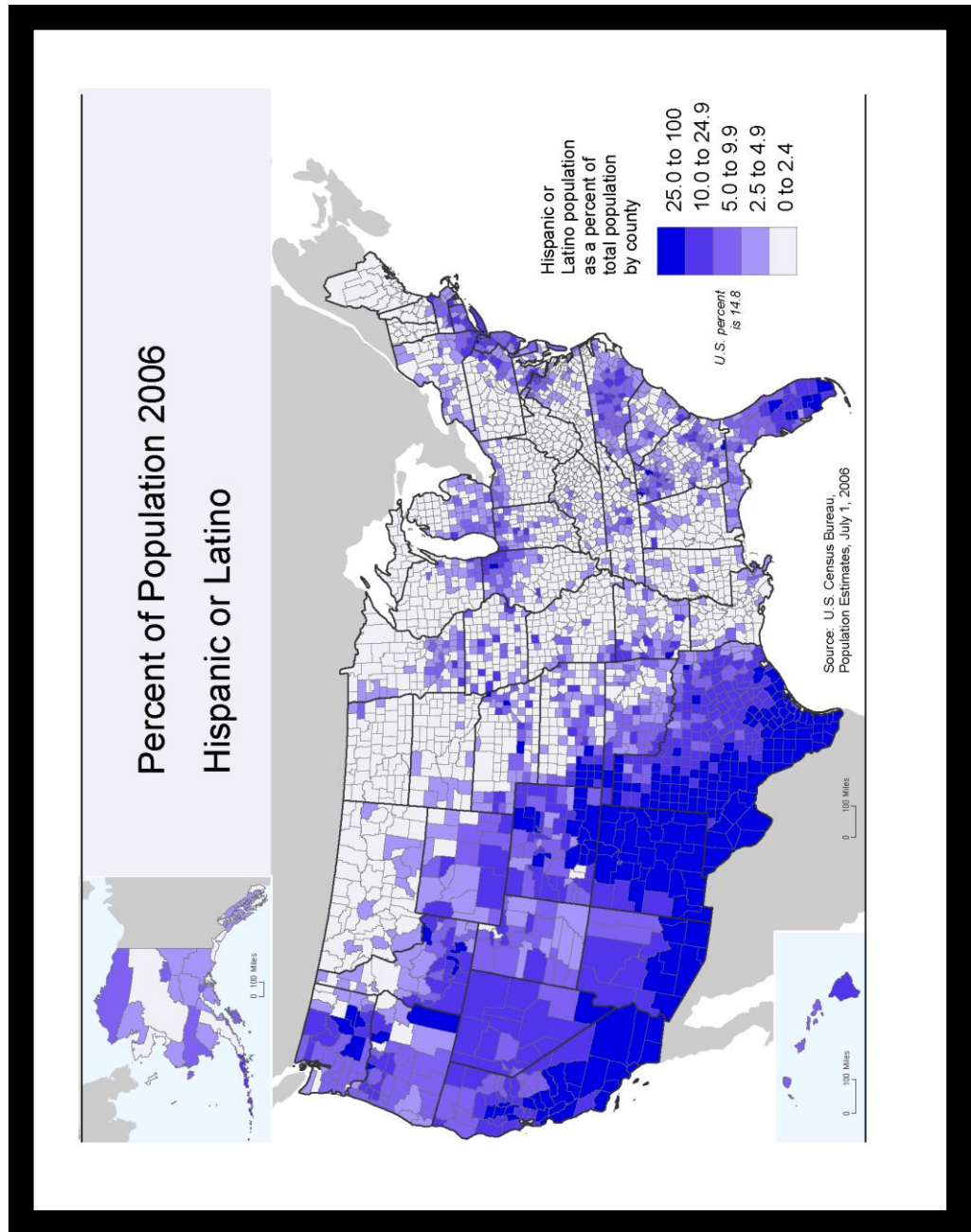
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Appendix I: Foreign-born population in the United States



Appendix II: Hispanic or Latino population in the United States



Appendix III: Diocese level correlation table

		Competition scores from the OCD	State-level plurality scores	number of Hispanics per diocese 1996
Competition scores from the OCD	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.613**	-.236*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.017
	N	104	102	102
State-level plurality scores	Pearson Correlation	.613**	1.000	-.293**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.003
	N	102	102	100
number of Hispanics per diocese 1996	Pearson Correlation	-.236*	-.293**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.003	
	N	102	100	102
collaboration with MRS	Pearson Correlation	-.207*	-.248*	.226*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.015	.028
	N	97	95	95
percentage of Parishes offering legal advocacy	Pearson Correlation	.081	.007	-.089
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.453	.950	.413
	N	88	86	86
percentage of Parishes offering naturalization assistance	Pearson Correlation	.174	.156	-.138
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.104	.152	.205
	N	88	86	86
percentage of Parishes offering bilingual education	Pearson Correlation	.045	-.081	.260*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.665	.448	.013
	N	93	91	91
percentage of Parishes offering bilingual religious education for children	Pearson Correlation	-.139	-.178	.311**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.176	.085	.002
	N	96	94	94
percentage of Parishes offering bilingual religious education for adults	Pearson Correlation	-.150	-.196	.196
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.152	.063	.063
	N	93	91	91
extent to which your diocese collaborates with local Hispanic/Latino service agencies	Pearson Correlation	-.088	-.034	.134
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.394	.746	.200
	N	95	93	93
leadership training for Hispanic/Latino ministries	Pearson Correlation	-.100	.029	.212*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.327	.783	.038
	N	98	96	96
language training	Pearson Correlation	.099	.114	-.153
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.351	.291	.156
	N	90	88	88

Diocesan conferences for Hispanic/Latino ministers	Pearson Correlation	-.130	-.051	.257*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.208	.623	.012
	N	96	94	94
Presentations on Hispanic/Latino culture	Pearson Correlation	-.156	-.100	.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.130	.340	.006
	N	96	94	94
Sacramental preparation for Hispanics	Pearson Correlation	-.049	-.099	.355**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.635	.346	.000
	N	95	93	93
Food or clothing for Hispanics	Pearson Correlation	-.066	-.136	.198
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.524	.193	.058
	N	95	93	93
Health services for Hispanics	Pearson Correlation	.162	.022	.297**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.132	.842	.006
	N	88	86	86
Financial assistance for Hispanics	Pearson Correlation	.117	.123	.109
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.265	.250	.307
	N	92	90	90
Social gatherings/events for Hispanics	Pearson Correlation	-.079	.021	.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.442	.843	.000
	N	96	94	94

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix IV: Calculation of state plurality scores

	AL	AR	AZ	CA	CO	CT	DC
TOTAL	100	100	99	100	100	100	99
CATHOLIC	13	7	29	32	23	32	27
NO RELIGION	6	13	17	19	21	12	13
JEWISH	1	0	1	2	1	1	1
MUSLIM	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
BUDDHIST	0	0	0	2	1	0	4
PLURALITY	80	80	52	45	54	54	52

	DE	FL	GA	IA	ID	IL	IN
TOTAL	100	100	100	99	100	100	100
CATHOLIC	9	26	8	23	15	29	20
NO RELIGION	17	12	12	13	19	15	16
JEWISH	1	3	0	0	0	1	1
MUSLIM	2	0	1	0	0	1	0
BUDDHIST	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
PLURALITY	71	58	78	63	66	53	63

	KS	KY	LA	MA	MD	ME	MI
TOTAL	100	100	98	100	100	100	99
CATHOLIC	20	14	28	44	22	24	23
NO RELIGION	15	13	9	16	13	16	15
JEWISH	1	0	0	2	3	1	1
MUSLIM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BUDDHIST	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
PLURALITY	64	73	61	37	61	59	59

	MN	MO	MS	MT	NC	ND	NE
TOTAL	99	100	100	100	100	99	99
CATHOLIC	25	19	5	22	10	30	27
NO RELIGION	14	15	7	17	10	3	9
JEWISH	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
MUSLIM	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
BUDDHIST	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
PLURALITY	59	66	88	61	79	63	63

	NH	NJ	NM	NV	NY	OH	OK
TOTAL	99	99	99	100	99	100	100
CATHOLIC	35	37	40	24	38	19	7
NO RELIGION	17	15	18	20	13	15	14
JEWISH	1	4	0	2	5	0	0
MUSLIM	0	1	0	0	2	1	0
BUDDHIST	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
PLURALITY	46	42	41	54	40	65	79

	PR	PA	RI	SC	SD	TN	TX
TOTAL	100	100	100	99	100	99	99
CATHOLIC	14	27	51	7	25	6	28
NO RELIGION	21	12	15	7	8	9	11
JEWISH	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
MUSLIM	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
BUDDHIST	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PLURALITY	64	60	34	85	67	84	59

	UT	VA	VT	WA	WI	WV	WY
TOTAL	100	99	99	99	100	98	100
CATHOLIC	6	14	38	20	28	8	18
NO RELIGION	17	12	22	25	14	13	20
JEWISH	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
MUSLIM	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
BUDDHIST	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
PLURALITY	76	71	39	52	58	77	61

Appendix V: State-level correlation table, dioceses aggregated per state

		Competition
Competition	Pearson Correlation	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	41
collaboration with MRS	Pearson Correlation	-.310
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.058
	N	38
percentage of Parishes offering legal advocacy	Pearson Correlation	.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.964
	N	38
percentage of Parishes offering naturalization assistance	Pearson Correlation	.179
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.276
	N	39
percentage of Parishes offering bilingual education	Pearson Correlation	-.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.790
	N	36
percentage of Parishes offering bilingual religious education for children	Pearson Correlation	-.224
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.182
	N	37
percentage of Parishes offering bilingual religious education for adults	Pearson Correlation	-.224
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.170
	N	39
extent to which your diocese collaborates with local Hispanic/Latino service agencies	Pearson Correlation	-.113
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.504
	N	37
leadership training for Hispanic/Latino ministries	Pearson Correlation	.138
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.401
	N	39
language training	Pearson Correlation	-.089
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.607
	N	36

Diocesan conferences for Hispanic/Latino ministers	Pearson Correlation	-0.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.963
	N	39
Presentations on Hispanic/Latino culture	Pearson Correlation	-.302
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062
	N	39
Sacramental preparation for Hispanics	Pearson Correlation	-.055
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.748
	N	37
Food or clothing for Hispanics	Pearson Correlation	-.017
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.921
	N	38
Health services for Hispanics	Pearson Correlation	.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.730
	N	35
Financial assistance for Hispanics	Pearson Correlation	.294
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.073
	N	38
Social gatherings/events for Hispanics	Pearson Correlation	.277
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.092
	N	38

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).