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¿Es Su Casa Mi Casa?  
Latinos, Socialization, and the Catholic Church

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**Abstract**

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The American Catholic Church is in crisis with the highest rate of believers leaving the faith of any denomination (for every one convert, six others leave the Church). The steady growth of the Latino population is the only thing that has kept the Church from near collapse: Latinos are responsible for 76% of Catholic growth in this country since 1975 and now constitute 40% of the American Catholic population. However Latinos are also leaving Catholicism in high numbers - one in four Latinos are former Catholics. At the same time Latinos are part of a community with some of the lowest educational achievement levels, socio-economic status, and voter turn out rates of any racial group. These problems have an enduring impact on Latinos' ability to participate in and benefit from the American political process. The American Catholic Church, with its long history of socializing and promoting the political ascendance of European immigrants, should be willing and ready to perform the same role in facilitating

Latinos' upward mobility. Doing so would encourage Latinos to remain Catholic, thereby securing the future of the Church itself.

Given this context, my project asks: To what extent is the American Catholic Church serves as a socializing institution for Latinos? In order to answer this question, I first examine the experience of Irish, German, and Italian Catholics from 1850-1920 to validate the Church's storied role in immigrant socialization, and also to look for other patterns of response that could explain the Church's pattern of response to Latinos today. The Church in this historical period operated under a non-centralized, confederated structure that facilitated immigrant self-determination and localized service provision, resulting in the successful advancement of immigrant groups. However the less-storied aspect of the Church was its reluctance to respond equally to the unique needs and desires of congregants who did not share a similar ethnic background. As European immigrants gradually assimilated into a "white American" population, ethnic parishes faded and mixed parishes became more common. However power struggles within churches remained, though their basis shifted from ethnicity to race with whites dominating positions of power. This is the necessary context for understanding how the contemporary Catholic Church responds to Latinos who remain a minority both in congregations and in Church leadership positions.

My project produces the most comprehensive analysis of Church service provision to Latinos to date. I examine the rate of Spanish mass and other culturally specific services in parishes according to Latino population density and descriptive representation in order to measure the contemporary state of Church socialization efforts. Further, the Church currently has a federal system of organization led by the United

States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The USCCB is perhaps most influential as an agenda-setting organization, and so I examine how well Latinos are represented on the national church's agenda. Elite interviews corroborate my empirical findings, and also reveal an important condition within the Catholic Church today: a striking disjunction between the intent of leaders to serve Latinos, and the reality of the Church's failure to develop an intentional strategy of response. I conclude that the Church's historical success in socializing European immigrant groups created an institution that is now unprepared to respond to contemporary immigrant and minority groups in an equally supportive manner.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Figures.....	vi
List of Tables.....	vii
Acknowledgments.....	viii
Chapters	
I. Introduction: Es Su Casa Mi Casa? .....	1
II. How Institutions Determine Responsiveness: Organizational Structure, Representation, and the Church.....	11
III. From Ethnic to Mixed Parishes: The Ongoing Role of Power and Representation in Church Socialization.....	49
IV. Constituency Responsiveness and Representation: Quantifying Parish- Level Service and Response to Latinos.....	80
V. Does the USCCB Prioritize Latino Catholics? Examining the Institutional Effect of Unification on Church Response to Diversity.....	105
VI. Intent, Impact, and Church Leaders.....	122
VII. From Su Casa to Mi Casa: Is Increasing Latino Inclusion and Ownership Within the American Catholic Church Possible? .....	154
Appendices	
A. Regression Results Predicting Spanish Mass and Cultural Service Provision.....	172
B. List of Interviewees.....	173
C. Interview Questions.....	174
Bibliography.....	176

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Relationship of Influence and Authority Under a Confederated System of Organization.....	18
Figure 2: Relationship of Influence and Authority Under a Federal System of Organization.....	26
Figure 3: Expected Patterns of Service According to Theories of Descriptive Representation.....	33
Figure 4: Expected Patterns of Service According to Theories of Substantive Representation.....	35
Figure 5: Simplified Depiction of the American Church Hierarchy.....	44
Figure 6: Flows of Influence Within the American Catholic Church.....	46
Figure 7: Observed Rate of Spanish Mass, Cultural Services, and Descriptive Representation.....	93
Figure 8: Predicted Probability of Spanish Mass and Cultural Services as the Latino Population Increases.....	95
Figure 9: Comparing the Predicted Probability of Spanish Mass as the Latino Population Increases With and Without Descriptive Representation.....	96
Figure 10: Comparing the Predicted Probability of Cultural Services as the Latino Population Increases With and Without Descriptive Representation.....	96
Figure 11: Predicted Probability of Having a Latino Minister as the Latino Population Increases.....	97

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Frequency of Primary Descriptive Categories.....	111
Table 2: Frequency of Social Values Issue Categories.....	113
Table 3: Frequency of Family Values Issue Categories.....	113

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To my Mom: thank you for teaching me to be a good person. As I say to everyone I meet, I hope I’m half as cool as you are when I grow up.

Last but not least, to my Jimbo: thank you for feeding me. I love you.

*For my father,  
Herbert A. Huckle*

## Introduction

**¿Es su casa mi casa?  
Latinos, Socialization, and the Catholic Church.**

*The influence of school and church on immigrant adjustment to the new culture of the city was decisive. In addition to providing means for dealing with the disruption and pathology induced by the city, the educational systems, both formal and informal, permitted the maintenance of ethnic tradition and the alignment of immigrant aspirations. –Dennis Clark, *The Irish in Philadelphia**

*If the church wants to keep calling the Spanish-speaking ‘her children’ then the church must change attitudes and structures. Church officials have too often chosen to ‘remain neutral’ while Hispanics suffered oppression, discrimination, and attempts to dispossess them of their lands, their language, their cultures, and their faith expressions. – Bishop Flores, *The Church: Diocesan and National**

To what extent is the American Catholic Church an effective socializing institution for Latinos today? I ask this question within the context of a Church in crisis. Catholics are leaving the Church at a higher rate than for any other denomination; for every one convert, six Catholics leave the Church, resulting in Catholics’ lowest share of the American population (20%) in over a century (Pew Research Center 2015). The one bright spot in these reports is the growing Latino population that constitutes 41% of American Catholic population (up from 35% in 2007, Pew Research Center 2015). Some leaders hypothesize that the Latino Catholic population is even larger but is currently underreported because of Latinos’ reluctance to participate in surveys on account of immigration fears (O’Loughlin 2015). Given this context, one would anticipate that the Church would be highly responsive to the needs of Latino Catholics, if for no other reason than self-preservation.

Also contributing to this expectation is the long history of research demonstrating churches are primary socializing institutions of immigrants (Lader 1987, Alba et. Al. 2009, Djupe 2009) and the key to immigrant social and economic advancement (Burns 1969, Dolan 1977 & 1992, Ignatiev 1995), a relationship that is particularly important for Catholics (Gordon 1964, Haddad, Smith, & Esposito 2003, Putnam & Campbell 2010). There is also a dominant narrative that recounts the historical experience of Irish, German, and Italian Catholic immigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries who led parish-centered lives, relying upon their local church for religious support as well as community, education, work opportunities, and political connections. Socialization can be seen as the result of these myriad types of services provided by churches.

Such socialization has direct implications on the process of political incorporation, when a group comes to regard the United States as their home and US politics as the place where key decisions shaping lives and opportunities are made (Bowler 2012). Per Bowler and Segura, there are three signs that a group has been incorporated. First, a significant share of that community feels they belong to the American polity, and that politics is effective vehicle for achieving life goals. Second, most members of the group have sufficient educational, social, and economic resources to pursue their preferences through political action. Lastly, incorporation has occurred when attitudes are not uniformly hostile to the group's political engagement (Bowler 2012). Significantly, the first two indicators of political incorporation can be directly linked to the services immigrant and immigrant-derived communities have historically received from churches. Churches have long provided a place of belonging, particularly for immigrants as well as other marginalized populations. This community building at a local

level logically precedes the development of a sense of belonging to a larger, more abstract “American” polity. Second, churches have historically provided a variety of educational and other material resources that made the social advancement of their members possible.

One would expect that given the historical precedent of churches – particularly Catholic churches – playing a key role in the socialization and subsequent political incorporation of immigrant groups, the Catholic Church today would play a similar role for Latinos as the largest immigrant community both within the Church as well as the US. Yet there is widespread anecdotal evidence that the Church is struggling to respond to Latinos with the same dedication and level of service that it did for past immigrant groups. There are few national parishes devoted to or serving Latino congregations, Spanish masses are not available at levels needed to adequately serve Latino populations, less than 10% of priests are Latino, and there is no data on the number of priests who speak Spanish proficiently enough to serve mass or listen to confessions, regardless of their ethnicity. A very small percentage of Latinos attend parochial schools, one of the primary mechanisms of social advancement provided for European immigrants of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Further, political machines no longer attend to immigrant needs; instead contemporary political parties and organizations pay sporadic attention to Latinos, and then mostly only in election years. The Church does little to correct this oversight on a large or meaningful scale, leaving unaffected the gross underrepresentation of Latinos in the US political system.

What happened? How and why does the American Catholic Church, once the largest institution at the heart of the social advancement of millions of impoverished and

discriminated-against immigrants with diverse cultures and traditions, struggle so greatly with providing the same level of service and support for Latino and immigrant Catholics today?

Latinos and Latino immigrants constitute a large portion of the American Catholic population (40%) though they are still a minority. Their status as a racial minority in the Church as well as the US is accompanied by lower levels of educational achievement, socio-economic status, and political representation – by all means indicating Latinos are a marginalized population that is in need of the historically offered services of the Catholic Church. Perhaps the most parsimonious – and most cynical - explanation as to why the Catholic Church fails to respond to Latinos is that the majority of Church leadership is of European, rather than Latin-American, descent.

There is no reason to assume that an Anglo leadership cannot adequately serve the needs of Latino communities. Yet numerous studies have shown that having a non-representative leader has a detrimental effect on the quality of service and response given to constituent groups, particularly racial minorities (Pitkin 1972; Thompson 1976; Meier et al. 2006). This is because leaders are “still members of other non-governmental social groups and classes,” (Lipset 2003, 82) which then influences their view of who needs help, what kind, and their willingness to provide it. While research has established positive trends in the quality of service given a co-ethnic leader, studies of the Catholic Church have yet to analyze the frequency or result of co-ethnic leadership, or examine how often services are provided to immigrant populations when no co-ethnic priest or bishop is available.

Is it that simple? That even the behavior of the Church – an organization dedicated to serving whomever is in need – can be explained by in-group bias? If so, this presentation of discrimination in service provision – whether intentional or not - is difficult to reconcile the historical narrative of immigrant welcoming and socialization. Unless, that is, an unrecognized truth in the history of immigrant socialization is that church leaders have *always* been discriminatory towards out-groups.

The Irish, German, and Italian immigrants are perhaps the most well-known Catholic communities in 19<sup>th</sup> century America. Many are familiar with their history of establishing ethnic parishes – church communities dedicated to serving a particular nation group. Not surprisingly, the majority of these communities had a co-ethnic priest to run the parish. It was important to have a priest who not only spoke the congregants' language, but also understood their culture and traditions, and was able to bring the congregation together. The less-storied aspect of these communities was their reluctance to respond equally to the unique needs and desires of congregants who did not share a similar ethnic background. These secondary populations were expected to adapt to the worship styles and cultural protocols instituted within the ethnic parishes, and to respect the authority of the established leaders; leaders and established congregations were *not* expected to adapt to accommodate the unique needs of a diverse congregant body. From this point of view, the reluctance of the contemporary Catholic Church to respond to the Latino minority is not only understandable, but expected.

The constant power struggle within churches between new and established populations left marginalized populations with few options other than carving out their own their own space for worship and community, which was facilitated by the

confederated structure of the Church in the historical era. As European immigrants gradually assimilated into a “white American” population, mixed parishes became more common. It is imperative to note that Catholic ethnic assimilation did not end the power struggles in churches. It merely shifted the basis of difference from ethnicity to race. This is the necessary context for understanding how the contemporary Catholic Church responds to Latino congregations that – while growing in number and influence with the Church, still remain a minority population both in congregations and in Church leadership positions.

My dissertation works to unpack this complicated relationship between power, influence, and response by examining the Church as an institution with a congregant body and leadership that is equally subject to patterns of bias and discrimination found in the larger society. This institutional approach also facilitates an analysis of Church behavior and development over time since it is not restricted by context, culture, or circumstance.

I create two time periods in order to compare the relationship between church response to congregant need (socialization services) and the Church’s organizational structure. In the historical era, which I define as 1850-1920, the Church had a confederated structure; there was no centralized national authority and the bishops had little control or influence over the parishes. In the contemporary period, 1970-2014, the Church is defined by a federal structure, headed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) – a national organization that has the authority to speak to and for all American Catholics.

I argue that the evolution of the federalized Church weakened its ability to serve and incorporate Latinos because the centralized structure augments exclusionary tendencies that directly impede Latino access to services necessary for incorporation. Marginalizing behavior also existed within the Church in the historical period, but was easier for perceived out groups to overcome because of the autonomy and independence the local parishes experienced under a confederated Church structure.

My dissertation seeks to provide greater understanding of the mechanisms that allow for, facilitate, or complicate immigrant incorporation through service provision, understanding that the mere presence or absence of the services I have identified does not guarantee the successful incorporation of immigrants. Ultimately, answering whether the Church incorporates Latino immigrants on a national scale requires knowing what happens at the archdiocesan and parish levels. Because this is an institutional analysis of the Church, I will conduct interviews with those in charge of deciding how to serve Latino congregants – Hispanic ministers, pastors, and bishops. The intent of these interviews is to uncover trends in service provision that are obscured by the data-driven models of analysis described above, as well as address the intent of Church leaders in responding to Latino Catholics.

All told, this project seeks to identify the underlying mechanisms of immigrant incorporation through the American Catholic Church with the purpose of finding ways to improve services to that end. This is an important task for several reasons: researchers continue to find that churches are the primary socializing institutions of immigrants, this role is taken on more successfully by Catholic churches than Protestant ones, and the majority of the largest immigrant group today – Latinos – are Catholic. It is fair to expect

that Church failure to fulfill its storied role in serving immigrants will have significant negative consequences for Latino political incorporation and advancement. It is possible this result is already in play given Latinos' low socio-economic standing, high school drop out rate, and low levels of voter turnout as compared to other racial groups.

Parallel to this discussion is the rising rate of Latino conversion out of Catholicism to either Pentecostal churches or no religious affiliation at all. It is possible to argue that the failure of the Catholic Church to provide services is irrelevant to Pentecostal and other Protestant Latinos since they can find needed support in their own congregations. Yet even less work has been done on how well these other denominations provide socializing support for immigrant groups than has been conducted on the Catholic Church. As such it remains imperative to establish a framework of analysis to identify the underlying mechanisms that influence service provision for Latinos today. This is particularly important given that research continues to find that the locus for incorporation and political mobilization has shifted away from political parties to community and faith based organizations, including churches (Wong 2006).

### *Dissertation Outline*

My dissertation argues that a federalized church structure combined with a lack of descriptive representation negatively affects churches' ability to serve Latino communities, which thereby decreases the Catholic Church's ability to successfully incorporate immigrants as it did in the past.

Chapter 2 explains the theoretical foundation of my work, focusing on how I combine theories of representative bureaucracy and organizational structure to develop an

institutional analysis of the American Catholic Church. Such examination cannot be conducted without understanding how the Church, as an institution, is operated. To that end I explain the laws that guide Church operations and organization, including the extent and limits placed on power and authority within the Church. Chapter 2 also lays out why Church leaders should care if they are not serving Latinos to the best of their ability. The Church is not a business institution created for the purpose of making money. Nor is it a governmental institution with democratic foundations, offering all members an equal say. Instead the Church is a religious institution implicitly and explicitly guided by theological beliefs about the responsibility of each member to improve the lives of others, particularly those with fewer economic and political resources.

Chapter 3 provides an in-depth historical review of the Irish, German, and Italian Catholic experience in the Church's era of confederated organization. I focus on immigrant experience in the cities, where their populations were densest, with a particular emphasis on New York City. I use primary documents from the Church as well as historical narratives to give a comprehensive picture of Catholic immigrant experience within the Church. This chapter seeks to untangle the idyllic and generalized stories of Church support for immigrant groups from the facts of their everyday challenges, including nativist discrimination, inter-ethnic conflict, and the development of mixed parishes and a white national identity.

I address the ability of the Church to serve under a federal structure in chapter 4. I identify three areas to use as case studies: the cities of Seattle, WA and San Antonio, TX, and the diocese of Yakima, WA. I gather data on the number of Latino specific services provided by churches in order to analyze the correlation between Latino leadership,

Latino population density, and likelihood of local service provision. This chapter tests how well theories of descriptive representation and constituency response apply to the Catholic Church.

Another facet of having a federal Church structure is the level of service that is possible from the national body itself. To that end in chapter 5 I examine how well the USCCB serves immigrant and Latino concerns, particularly since the national church has the greatest ability to affect the national political arena. I examine the Presidential Address and agendas of recent USCCB General Assemblies in addition to select years of the USCCB news releases to identify the issues this national body deems most important to the Church.

As stated before, it is not possible to make any concrete or reliable conclusions about the ability of the Church to serve Latino Catholics without speaking with those who are providing the services. Chapter 6 contains the findings from my interviews with Church leaders on the Church responsibility, struggles, and success in serving Latino Catholics today.

Lastly, my conclusion not only summarizes the findings of the effect of institutional factors on Latino service provision, but also provides concrete recommendations for making improvements. This is important not only because of the Church's theological mandate to serve, but also because of the ongoing role of the Church in incorporating immigrants groups into mainstream society, helping them advance socially, and become effective political actors.

## Chapter 2

### **How Institutions Determine Responsiveness: Organizational Structure, Representation, and the Church**

*Irish bishops and priests who nurtured the Catholic Church in the US into the largest, most powerful, and wealthiest religious body in the country did so with more political genius than spiritual fervor.* (McCaffrey et al. 1987, 12)

In spite of the fact that the American Catholic Church is one of the largest institutions in the United States, political scientists understand relatively little about its political impact on American society. This is surprising given that the Church<sup>1</sup> has long been found to be a primary socializing institution for immigrant groups and their descendants (Alba and Nee 1997; Lader 1987), and such socialization is a necessary precondition for political incorporation (Bowler and Segura 2012). Although the Church has great potential for political mobilization (Hanna 1979) its power in that regard appears to be waning as more practicing Catholics become former believers and leave the Church.

How much of the waning political influence of the Catholic Church has to do with the increase of the Latino population? Much is made of the US Census prediction that Latinos will surpass 30% of the American population by the year 2050, but few people – political science and scholars of Catholicism alike – have noted that Latinos already constitute 36-40% of the American *Catholic* population, and are responsible for 76% of Catholic growth in this country since 1975 (Funk and Martinez 2014; USCCB 2012). Is it

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<sup>1</sup> References to “the Church” (with a capitalized C) indicate the Catholic Church as an institution and all of her members, whereas any references to a “church” (without capitalization) indicate an individual church building or local congregation (Catechism 751 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*). Also, the Church is traditionally referred to as a “she” because of the Biblical reference to the Church as the bride of Christ (Catechism 756).

a coincidence that the Church becomes less of a socializing institution and less of a political mobilizer precisely at the time she becomes less “white”?

Something as complicated as changing demographics, religious authority, and shifting political outcomes cannot be easily reduced to a single explanatory variable. Nor can a full understanding of these changing patterns in behavior be provided by examinations of individual priests, bishops, or other Church officials alone. Rather an institutional perspective is required so that we can identify larger contextual factors that influence individual patterns of behavior and track those changes over time (Sanders 2006).

To that end, a major contribution of this study is understanding how institutional factors affect the behavior of the Catholic Church and Church officials – a perspective that has been systematically overlooked in political science research even though churches are key intermediary institutions in American society. Such approach gives us the tools with which to identify the underlying structural mechanisms that influence patterns of service and incorporation. This does not diminish the fact that individual-level factors are often the primary determinants of whether or not Latino and immigrant groups are supported by their parish community. Instead an institutional analysis works to understand how institutional structure influences that individual level behavior, either by constraining or exacerbating individual tendencies to welcome or neglect– depending on the goals of the institution itself.

I am interested in determining patterns of Church responsiveness because of the role such service plays in immigrant socialization. Socialization can be broadly defined as the process by which a group of people or individuals become familiar with the norms

and operations of society, and also learn how to participate in that society (Arnett 1995; Jennings and Niemi 1974, 1981). Socialization is key to economic and social advancement, and is also a precursor to political incorporation - when a group comes to regard the United States as their home, and US politics as the place where key decisions shaping lives and opportunities are made (Bowler and Segura 2012). The exact process of socialization through churches has not firmly been established, though histories and past research on the topic indicate socialization happens through the provision of services that respond to the material and social needs of church congregants (Hirschman 2004; Matovina 2011; Menjivar 2003).

I posit that there are two primary factors that can heavily influence service provision: institutional organization and levels of descriptive representation. The Catholic Church had a decentralized – or confederated - system of organization throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (see chapter 3). This gradually shifted to a more nationally centralized, federal system of organization from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century on (see chapters 4 and 5). Further, the demographics of the Church hierarchy reflect the long history of European immigration to the United States, which is distinct from the increasing Latino and Asian immigration that are rapidly changing the faces of those in the pews of the American Catholic Church.

I also use theories of organizational bureaucracy to understand how institutional operations interplay with organizational structure and representation to affect service provision. I use the resulting analytical framework to analyze whether the institutional and demographic changes over the past century have affected the Catholic Church's ability to socialize Latinos, the largest ethnic and immigrant group in the Church today.

Federalism helps to understand the impact of the increasing significance of the national church body (the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB) on the likelihood of priests and bishops recognizing and responding to the needs of Latinos in their community, as well as the effect of decreased autonomy and ability for self-determination at the local, parish level. Organizational bureaucracy sheds light on the way institutional goals affect both member and leaders' behavior. Representation helps establish expectations for service given that the demographic composition of Church leadership is significantly different from that of the Catholic population.

While political science theories can help us to understand patterns of behavior as influenced by institutional structure, such insights will be limited without an understanding of how the Church is structured, and the laws that govern not only its organization, but also define the roles of its members and delineate the extent of their authority. As such, here I also provide an in-depth explanation of the structure of the Church itself as defined by Canon Law.

### **Political Socialization and Incorporation**

The Catholic Church's patterns of response are, theoretically speaking, of little political concern. Given the separation of Church and state the government should have little interest in how and why a Church offers services to its members so long as they are not causing harm or encouraging civic problems. Yet the ability of the Church to serve – and incorporate – immigrants and racial minority groups is of great concern to larger society and political scientists, alike.

Churches provide more than religious services to both congregants and community members. Researchers continue to find that churches are the primary socializing institution of immigrants, which is short hand for: churches can help integrate immigrants and their communities into mainstream society by helping them become participants in the social, economic, and political mainstream (Dolan 1977; Lader 1987; Matovina 2011). A clearer definition of incorporation is when immigrants “come to regard the United States as their long-term home and U.S. politics as the place in which the decisions most key in shaping their lives and opportunities are made” (Bowler and Segura 2012, 249). Per Bowler and Segura, there are three signs that a group has been incorporated. First, a significant share of that community feels they belong to the American polity, and that politics is an effective vehicle for achieving life goals. Second, most members of the group have sufficient educational, social, and economic resources to pursue their preferences through political action. Lastly, incorporation has occurred when attitudes are not uniformly hostile to the group’s political engagement (Bowler and Segura 2012).

Significantly, the first two indicators of political incorporation can be directly linked to the services immigrant and immigrant-derived communities receive from community based organizations (Wong 2006) and churches (Dolan 1992; Matovina 2011). A sense of belonging to a local church community logically precedes the development of a sense of belonging to a larger, more abstract “American” polity. Indeed, the importance of social capital to political incorporation and engagement is not limited to immigrant groups but applies to all sectors of American society and their memberships in community organizations – including churches (Putnam 1995; 2001).

Bowler and Segura also highlight the necessity of resources to political incorporation, a concept well established in Verba, Scholzman, and Brady's resource model of engagement that posits low-resources lead to low-engagement, regardless of one's immigrant or ethnic status (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995). However the resource model is particularly important to understanding churches' role in immigrant socialization and incorporation because many immigrants are low-resource, and often have lower English-proficiency skills, further complicating their ability to participate (Kim 1999; Ngai 2004). Churches have historically challenged that dynamic. Churches can increase the social capital of immigrants and their descendants through the creation and provision of community (Djupe and Neiheisel 2012; Haddad, Smith, and Esposito 2003). Churches also have a history of providing the necessary material resources, such as job training and opportunities, housing assistance, and education, to help members overcome what would otherwise be insurmountable barriers to immigrant incorporation (Brady, Verba, and Scholzman 1995; Dolan 1992; Matovina 2011; McAvoy 1969).

This is particularly true for those immigrants who come from cultures with strong religious traditions. Milton Gordon (1964) found that religion is "ethnically bound" and serves as a "common social-psychological referent" which influences beliefs and behaviors. Haddad et al. (2003) wrote that religion structures immigrant subcultures within the mainstream, and Putnam and Campbell observed that this is true for Catholics more than any other denomination (2010). The extensive network of charities and social service institutions (from parochial schools to hospitals and homeless shelters), as well as the services offered in and through parishes places the Catholic Church in a prime position to incorporate immigrant communities. Further, churches are such an integral

part of Latino communities that having an “attachment to a church ... helps the member to tap into community networks” (Djupe and Neiheisel 2012) which also links immigrants to service providers and other sources of community support.

### **Federalism in the Church**

#### *The Confederated Church*

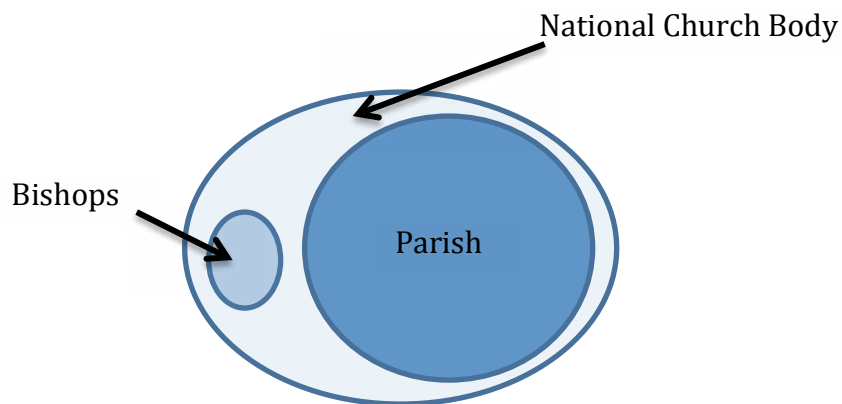
Federalism is a useful theory for examining the United States’ Catholic Church because it references a multi-level system of governance with varying degrees of authority between the upper and lower levels (Kollman 2013; Riker 1975). The Church today can be said to have a federal system of organization – the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is a centralized organization consisting of all bishops in the U.S. with the authority to speak to and for all American Catholics. This lies in stark contrast to the Church of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century when there was no identifiable national Catholic body.

Bishops had little involvement in the liturgical and community affairs of parishes unless there were complaints or problems of misconduct, leaving ultimate authority to the pastors and priests who directly attended to the congregants (Cogley 1973). With this *confederated* system of organization the parishes operated more or less independently of each other, and were the locus of community, identity, and service for the Catholic Church (Barrett 2012; Bayor 1978; Clark 1977; McCaffrey et al. 1987; Nelli 1970; O'Donovan Rossa 1969; Orsi 1985; Sterne 2003).

In Figure 1, below, size and color saturation graphically demonstrates the size of influence and authority in daily Church life under a confederated system of organization. While all parishes belonged to the national entity of the “American Catholic Church,” there was no official national organization that could make decisions or in any way lead

“the Church,” (demonstrated by the almost transparent color), except for elements of formal Church doctrine that delineate formal structures and levels of authority (see below). The bishops, represented by a slightly darker but small oval, had their role that remained mostly peripheral to the every day happenings of parish life. In contrast, the parishes themselves, led by (most often) co-ethnic priests were the center of daily life for 19<sup>th</sup> century Catholics and were, for the most part, autonomous from one another and from the bishops.

*Figure 1: Relationship of Influence and Authority Under a Confederated System of Organization*



To compare, a federal structure indicates that the subunits have sovereignty and “independent authority over designated areas of policy” (Kollman 2013), while the centralized government has the authority to alter or abolish those spheres of authority. Yet in a confederation, ultimate authority remains with the subunits, whose compliance is almost completely voluntary. A confederated system also allows for greater autonomy, which can complicate collective action for the common good, whereas a federal system facilitates organizing and implementing policies for the larger organization, though the rights and desires of each unique subunit are less likely to be upheld (Kollman 2013, 69).

The distinction is important, in part to understand that the Catholic Church has never been monolithic in its organization or ability to unify and organize as a political force. Internal conflict was rife in the Church in the 19th century (Hanna 1979, 238, footnote). Inter-ethnic conflict was normal, as evidenced by the plethora of ethnic churches – parish communities formed around and for individual ethnic groups. The needs of the parishioners determined the actions of the church community; there was not a top-down leadership that established issues or determined where to focus church energy. Such absence of centralized authority is what made the pattern of establishing ethnic parishes possible. It was equally possible for ethnic groups to build their own worship space and then petition for a priest to serve them, as it was for a bishop to request a parish be built for an emerging ethnic population (Cogley 1973, , see chapter 3 for a more extensive history of ethnic churches). Yet the common pattern in the confederated period is one where parishes were almost completely independent of each other, and also free from substantial influence of bishops and archbishops in regards to their operations and proceedings.

The shift to a federal system of organization is significant, not because it created a monolithic Catholic culture, but because it centralized the public position of the Church, and created a locus of authority for the Catholic position on political issues. This does not diminish the importance of the role of local authority and the right of parishioners to ask for certain needs to be met through the church. Yet “policy and pastoral pronouncements are made by bishops, not laymen,” (Hanna 1979, 32) leaving them with the last word in establishing official Catholic positions and directing the manner and extent of response to church community members.

### *The Creation of the Federal Catholic Church*

The shift to a unified, Catholic Church did not happen over night and required the exogenous shock of the World Wars in order to unite the previously fractured ethnic factions together. The long process of unification was facilitated by the dramatic decline in European ethnic enclaves in the post- WWII era of suburbanization, the augmentation of bishop authority through Vatican II, and the growing importance of national policies, both for the nation and for the Catholic Church.

The first notable step in the shift towards a Federal organization was the creation of the national body itself. The first national Church organization in the US was the National Catholic War Council (NWC), created in 1917 to serve two purposes: serve the religious needs of Catholic servicemen, and propagate the idea that Catholics were also good Americans (Cogley 1973; McAvoy 1969; Warner 1995).<sup>2</sup>

The advent of World War I spelled danger for Catholics because their patriotism and loyalty was already in question from long periods of nativist, anti-Catholic sentiment. “Nativists, charged with the Protestant evangelical fervor of the day, considered the [Catholic] immigrants minions of the Roman despot, dispatched here to subvert American institutions” (Higham 1955, 6). Ironically Protestants were quick to lump all Catholics together on account of their religion, even though Catholics themselves were very aware of the inter-ethnic differences that prevented them from building a true “Catholic” alliance during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This meant that the reputation of Germans, many of whom were Catholic, affected American Protestant perception of *all* Catholics,

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<sup>2</sup> The history of the American Catholic Church will be addressed in more detail in chapter 3, where I examine the experience of Irish, German, and Italian Catholics in New York City and Philadelphia, specifically. The creation and history of the USCCB is addressed in greater detail in chapter 5, where I examine how descriptive representation and institutional goals influence the policy priorities of the USCCB in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

regardless of their ethnic background. Therefore, because Germans were looked on with suspicion as the US entered WWI against Germany, so too were all other Catholics. As a result, Catholics knew they needed to “be better Americans than other Americans because other Americans thought that Catholics did not belong here” (Orsi 2012, 31). What kept ethnic parishes separate before became secondary, facilitating the creation of a centralized body and authority to lead all *American* Catholics. In the post WWI era, Catholics “made their peace with nationalism once thought too ready to substitute the nation-state for religious loyalties” (Appleby and Sprows Cummings 2012, 4). The NWC was founded “to coordinate Church-sponsored service and relief activities” (Warner 1995, 26), proving Catholic patriotism and dedication to America during WWI.

Following the end of WWI and "some lively controversy about its tendency to centralize authority in the American Church, [the NWC was] transformed into the National Catholic Welfare Council and became a more or less official spokesman for the Catholic bishops of the US" (Cogley 1973, 85). While the Welfare Council was formed in order to “preserve the gains in organization and access to policymakers achieved by the War Council” (Warner 1995, 28), a minority of bishops “[feared] the council would usurp the authority of local bishops in violation of canon law” (Warner 1995, 29). Pope Benedict XV threatened to ban the organization if the bishops could not clarify its purpose and intentions, but he died in 1922, before the controversy was resolved. The next pope, Pope Pius XI, signed a decree dissolving the council, believing it to be Pope Benedict’s as-of-yet un-acted upon decision. More than two-thirds of American bishops signed a petition requesting the Council be reinstated in order to both continue its work with the American public, and also to avoid feeding Catholics’ continued reputation as

papists followers. Pius agreed to reinstate the NCWC on the condition that all membership was voluntary, that it could not impose itself upon any bishop or diocese without invitation, that the organization had no legal authority over the American Catholic Church body, and that their name be changed to reflect that lack of authoritative status. As such, the National Catholic Welfare Council became the National Catholic Welfare *Conference* in order to emphasize its legal standing, and the organization itself remained small, completing work on the issues requested by individual bishops and dioceses “who were more its customers than its members” (Warner 1995, 30).

While the bishops made “clear that it was primarily a service organization with no authorization to speak for all the hierarchy ... until the 1960s the NCWC was as close to an official spokesman as could be found in a church where every bishop was supreme in his own diocese” (Cogley 1973, 85). Though limited, the NCWC solidified the creation of a national Catholic Church body representing all American Catholics.

Vatican II<sup>3</sup> heralded a major shift in the Catholic Church’s theoretical approach to theology, resulting in a more politicized role for bishops in the United States, as well as an increase in their authority and the authority of the US national Church organization. First, Vatican II promoted a “Political Theology” based upon the belief that “men can be known only by their mutual dealings,” therefore, “salvation must be social” (Cogley 1973, 117). This was interpreted as a mandate to create a just society *now* rather than focusing on salvation in the afterlife, which necessarily required political involvement

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<sup>3</sup> Vatican Councils are an assembly of Roman Catholic religious leaders with the intention of settling doctrinal issues (“doctrine” here refers to the principles or rules of the Roman Catholic faith). They can only be called by the Pope, and address Church practices and teachings that may need to be adjusted in order to better apply to changing times and cultures. Vatican II was called to discuss the future of the Roman Catholic Church in the modern world, and its proceedings ran from 1962-1965.

and coalition building with those of other faiths – or no faith at all – in order to achieve the political end of improving the common good.

Vatican II also emphasized the role of the laity (Catholic believers) in the Church. The Council made fundamental changes to the mass (Catholics' weekly worship service): it turned the altar around to face the congregation<sup>4</sup> and said mass in the language native to a given place (the vernacular) rather than Latin in order to facilitate attendees' understanding. Vatican II also emphasized the importance of individuals deciding how to apply Catholic theology to their every day lives (Curran 2001; Dolan 1992; Leege and Welch 1989; Prendergast 1999). In spite of this increased attention on the moral mandate and inclusion of the individual, Vatican II also helped to solidify the federal structure of the American Catholic Church by emphasizing the authority of national conferences.

Vatican II produced an official recommendation that all countries establish national episcopal conferences (an assembly of all the bishops in a given territory, here the nation) that have some measure of juridical authority. The goal was to assist bishops in teaching “the ways by which are to be solved the very grave questions concerning the ownership, increase, and just distribution of material goods, peace and war, and brotherly relations among all peoples” (Warner 1995, 70). Many took this to mean that the US must create a formal conference that could “assist bishops in forming and promulgating Catholic social policy” (Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, 1965, in Warner 1995, 76). As such in 1966 the NCWC was restructured into the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the United States Catholic Conference

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<sup>4</sup> The priest used to say mass facing the apse, or the back wall of the church. This is referred to as *ad orientem*, meaning “towards the East” where the Sun rises and the direction from which some say Christ will return. Many altars were built to face the east for this reason. The priest faced the same way as the congregation in order to lead them in worship as a member of the congregation himself. Vatican II encouraged priests to turn to face the congregation in order

(USCC). The NCCB was the official religious body with juridical authority under Canon Law; the USCC was the civil organization that could comment on public policy. The same bishops made up both organizations, only changing names according to the topic upon which they commented. All dioceses were mandated to both membership and supplying financial support. This was a drastic departure from the voluntary nature of the NCWC that catered to the needs of the bishops, placing greater emphasis on the authority and opinions of the NCCB-USCC. This also solidified the authority of a federal church organization, in stark contrast to the confederated system in which bishops' authority was limited to authorizing priest assignments (a responsibility that was often a formality as many congregations sought out their own priests to serve them). The contemporary focus of official "Catholic Social Policy" as delineated by the USCCB is addressed in Chapter 5.

As the goals of the national conference changed, so did its structure – the NCWC had 24 offices that were transformed into 5 offices of the NSCC-USCC: Communications, Christian Formation, Health Affairs, International Affairs, and Social Development. This structural reorganization and accompanying increase in power and authority solidified the federal nature of the American Church, and also created a number of complications for the national organization.

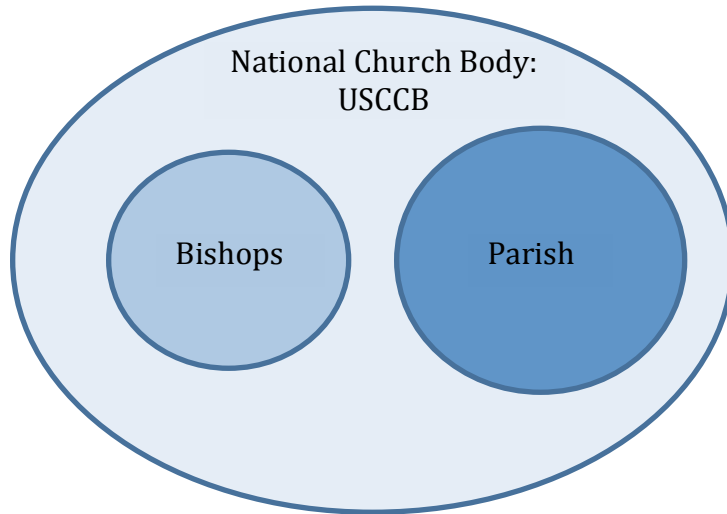
The bishops came under increasing fire for their outspokenness on a number of controversial issues, from civil rights to the Vietnam War to contraception. While the bishops were targeted for advocating positions unpopular with the general public, lay Catholics who were given moral authority under Vatican II to decide for themselves the correct "Catholic" position on social issues had cause to question the bishops' authority.

Making matters worse, many bishops and priests often held opposing views, creating even more contention and dissent within the Church (Warner 1995, 76). This also normalized a culture of disagreement on social issues and made it easier for lay people to disregard the bishops' positions on Church and other larger social issues (Warner 1995). How much disagreement there is between the leadership and laity on political and religious issues, and what the effect of that disagreement is on the authority of the bishops is an important consideration that runs parallel, though beyond the purview of this project. What is important to understand is that Vatican II established the authority of the national conference to speak out and present an "American Catholic" perspective on both political and social issues. This also means the USCCB holds the national stage for setting the agenda of the American Catholic Church – to identify which areas of policy and which social conditions are most needing of a Catholic response. No Catholic organization had that responsibility or potential for influence before 1965. This project examines whether or not the USCCB chooses to use its national platform to draw attention to Latinos as the largest ethnic congregant group, and motivate parishes to respond to their needs (see Ch. 5).

Figure 2, below, shows the growing level of influence and authority for the bishops even though the parish level remains the locus of community and the priests maintain a fair amount of autonomy (a more detailed explanation of the organization of the Church structure itself follows below). Note the change from Figure 1: the National Church Body has both increased in size and color density, indicating its increase in presence and authority. In the confederated era, "National Church Body" simply indicated that the presence of bishops and churches in the US. Here the National Church

Body is represented by the USCCB, an actual organization with national presence and authority.

*Figure 2: Relationship of Influence and Authority Under a Federal System of Organization*



*The Creation of “White Catholics”*

The emphasis on a unified Catholic church body is also important. In the confederated era inter-ethnic differences dictated how churches were established and run. In a direct way, ethnic cultural differences were valued and validated in the practice of Catholicism in the U.S. In the post war era, ethnicity as it was known in the 19<sup>th</sup> century ceased to be a focus of practice or dictate service provision. Instead “the real split within American Catholicism both in demographics and often in attitude, seems to lie between majority white and majority black and Spanish-speaking Catholics and not between Catholics of different European derivations” (Hanna 1979, 102).

This loss of European ethnic identity was the result of the creation of “American Catholics” in response to the World Wars described above (Hanna 1979; Orsi 2012). This process required the creation of a Catholic identity that was “American” to both themselves as well as to non-Catholics (Orsi 2012). In other words, it was not enough that non-Catholics saw Catholics as “American”, but Catholics also had to perceive themselves that way. This required making “American” their primary identity, rather than their ethnic or national heritage that defined their identity as well as their community in the confederated era.

This happened alongside an increased religious commitment of American Catholics. There was an increase in church attendance as well as seminary enrollment, and the GI Bill led to a flooding of Catholic colleges with many first generation college students (Cogley 1973). WWII also preceded a mass exodus to the suburbs. The result was a decay of inner city, ethnic parishes with the corollary development of new parishes and parochial schools led by young priests and a new “sense of community” based on suburban residency rather than ethnic heritage (Cogley 1973).

This loss of European ethnic identity was so successful that in 1953 an Italian-American priest wrote in *The American Ecclesiastical Review* about Italians in the U.S. noting “their marked growth in Catholic living is becoming more and more impressive .... [Now they are] more like Irish Americans and ... in only a little while the transition [will] be complete” (Orsi 1985). That an *Italian* priest writes so favorably about the Italians becoming more like the Irish is a sign of the extent of Italian assimilation given the animosity demonstrated between the two groups at the turn of the century (McAvoy 1969; Monaghan 1904; Orsi 1985; Vecoli 1977). This quote is noteworthy, not because it

references Italians becoming more “Irish,” but because both the Irish and the Italian were becoming indistinguishable from each other in that they were both “American Catholics.”

Rarely today are there discussions of ethnic divisions between these “American Catholics” of European descent; instead the primary divide in the Catholic Church is between *white* and Latino Catholics (Hanna 1979). The creation of white American Catholics is further addressed in Chapter 3. What is important to note for this section is that part of the creation of a federal church structure with a centralized body wielding national authority rested on the ability of Catholic laity to forgo their European ethnic identities in favor of an *American* Catholic identity. This unified identity simplified the acceptance of a “national” church authority that could speak to and for all *American* Catholics in a way that would not have been possible if they were still divided by national heritage. Importantly, today that American identity is synonymous with being “white.”

### **Institutions Theory**

Regardless of whether the Church is operating under a confederated or a federal structure, one must remember that the Church has always been an *institution* with goals that influence its members’ patterns of behavior (March and Olsen 1984). The definition of an institution is an entity with “rules and organized practices” that provides specific roles and behavioral expectations for members, is the source of identity and belonging, and creates a common purpose that can bind communities together. Further, these rules, meanings, and expectations are resilient and lasting through time, almost regardless of the individuals who make up the congregations or the leadership (Wilson 1995).

Institutions can also be thought of as *systems*, which are defined as “a set of elements or parts that is coherently organized and interconnected in a pattern or structure that produces a characteristic set of behaviors, often classified as its ‘function’ or ‘purpose’” (Meadows 2008, 14). Though developed as a scientific term to understand biological and environmental phenomena, systems theory has also been used for understanding the behavior of human systems and organizations.

Both institutions and systems theories hold that an individual’s behavior is heavily influenced by his or her role in an organization; the requirements of that role are defined by what the organization needs in order to both achieve its goals and also to survive (March and Olsen 1984; Meadows 2008). Put another way, institutions define the norms that subsequently determine appropriate behavior for individuals, meaning that individuals are both influenced and constrained in their behavioral choices by the institution to which they belong (Meadows 2008; Wilson 1995). So then when looking at behaviors of priests and bishops, one needs to know how the Church *expects* them to behave, and how the Church *needs* them to behave in order to achieve the Church’s goals as they are currently defined.

Goals also dictate institutional rules and routines, which directly impact member behavior. Rules are “the carriers of accumulated knowledge and generally reflect a broader and a longer experience than the experience that informs any individual actor” (March and Olsen 2008, 13). This description is particularly fitting for the Catholic Church, where tradition and history has as much authority as Canon Law (the law that dictates Catholic Church organization and authority) in determining right from wrong and correct behavior. To reiterate, institutional goals structure rules and routines that then

directly influence member behavior. As such we can expect that members who act in a manner contrary to the institutional expectations will not succeed at their task because they are working directly against the organizational mechanisms of which they are a part.

An additional analytical perspective for understanding institutions regards the difference between stated and *de facto* goal. Stated goals are precisely that: what an institution states it wishes to accomplish. De facto goals are the things an institution actually brings to fruition. It is entirely possible that the stated and de facto goals are at odds with one another. First, institutional rules and routines can quickly become inadequate, outdated, and insufficient, hampering the institution's effectiveness. Second, the actions of an institution's leaders and members are what determine the outcomes of institutional behavior, and individuals are entirely capable of deciding to act against the rules of their institution. If a majority of leaders and/or members choose to not follow the rules, they will effectively produce de facto goals that are not reflected by the stated goals of an institution. This very human aspect makes it imperative to analyze both individual behavior *and* institutional rules and stated goals in order to understand institutional impact.

Institutions theories differentiate between the behavioral expectations of leaders and members. Members must be incentivized to join, particularly for voluntary organizations, such as the Church (in contrast to a membership like citizenship which, for the native born, is not optional). Once a part of an institution or organization, their behavior is expected to fall in line with the values of the organization or the members may be chastised or asked to leave. The amount of influence and control institutional

expectations have over member behaviors is significantly less than for leaders, whose job it is to further the interests of the organization.

In that vein, one of the primary responsibilities of leaders is to maintain membership levels so the organization can continue. This can be a difficult task since their “authority is uncertain and leadership is precarious” on account of the voluntary nature of membership, meaning “its chief officer has neither the effective power nor the acknowledged right to coerce the members” (March and Olsen 2008, 13). As such leaders must be both instrumental, in defining and advancing the objectives of the organization, and effective, in order to maintain group and relationships between members (Wilson 1995). This is particularly important in the contemporary period for the Church in a time of record attrition. This is a large reason why one should expect Church leaders to pay particular attention to meeting the needs of Latinos – as the primary (and only significant) source of membership and growth, the Church needs for Latinos to remain Catholic if the Church wants to continue as a viable organization in the United States.

In addition to maintaining membership, leaders are also expected to motivate action amongst the membership to further the goals of the institution. This expectation – and the resources associated with their position – make it possible for leaders to be more effective in advancing an organization’s goals than other members.

My study asks whether the American Catholic Church is an effective socializing institution for Latinos. Institutions theory leads me to ask first, is socializing and serving Latinos one of the stated or de facto *goals* of the American Catholic Church?

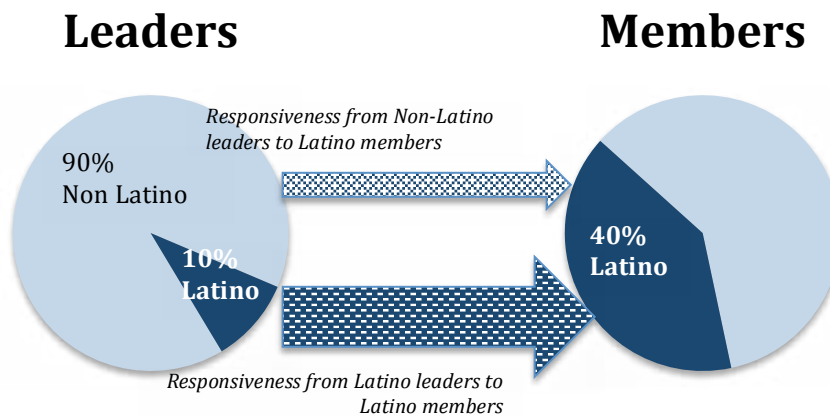
### **Representation theory**

Multiple researchers emphasize the importance of understanding the effect of representation on service and response to minority populations because institutions have the ability to codify the patterns of bias and discrimination exhibited by their members (Lipset 2003; Wilson 1995). This happens as prejudice becomes “a matter of established policy” (Kingsley 2003, 12) when leaders make decisions that protect their own position and worldview, and take advice from those looking to do the same (Lipset 2003, 82). These theories generally reference the behaviors of individuals and institutions belonging to the white majority, which then has a negative impact on the wellbeing of minority communities. Yet if pursuing self-interest is a general, human condition exhibited by all leaders, then one way to use this impulse for the benefit of minority populations is through descriptive representation.

Descriptive (also known as passive) representation occurs when leaders and members share a common background or ethnicity (Lipset 2003). Higher levels of descriptive representation have been tied to higher quality of service provision within public and civic organizations, particularly when examining minority communities. Support for this theory have been found in studies on filing discrimination claims with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (Mosher 2003), minority student performance (Hindera 1993), Congress (Pantoja and Segura 2003), and police departments (Meier and Nicholson-Crotty 2006; Smith and Holmes 2003). The idea of descriptive representation is significant to a study of the Catholic Church because of the distinct *lack* of descriptive representation between the priests, bishops, and Latino congregants.

Figure 3, below, graphically presents the flow of service and response according to theories of descriptive representation. Using the proportions of Latinos in the Catholic Church, the pie on the left shows that 10% of leaders are Latino (an approximation that roughly fits the levels of both priests and bishops who are Latino). The pie on the right represents the American Catholic population, 40% of whom are Latino. Descriptive representation theories anticipate a greater level of responsiveness from Latino leaders than from non-Latino leaders. Here responsiveness is indicated by both the size of the arrow as well as the density of its color.

*Figure 3: Expected Patterns of Service According to Theories of Descriptive Representation*



Descriptive representation has always been an issue for the Catholic Church in the United States. The Irish distrusted the all-French church hierarchy as a sign of the “royalist domination of the Church,” and despised the “English Jesuit and French

Sulpician<sup>5</sup> patterns of genteel behavior” that governed the Church (Cogley 1973). Adding insult to injury, the Irish also complained that the French priests could not speak or understand English and so could not serve them; their solution was to request a separate bishopric specifically to serve the Irish (the request was denied, Cogley 1973). Similarly, the Italians, upon arriving to the US towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, found only Irish or German houses of worship to join. Again, a common complaint was the lack of priests who could speak their language (Bayor 1978; Vecoli 1977).

Yet the significance of a co-ethnic priest went beyond basic communication. While a priest must share a common language with his congregants to serve his priestly functions, such as hearing confession, officiating weddings, baptisms, and funerals, he must also attend to their *culture* given that national, culturally distinct groups have particular ways of worshipping and interacting with religious tradition (hence the Irish rejection of the French Sulpicians), and unique ethnic celebrations that are an integral component of their faith (Linkh 1975).<sup>6</sup> The focus on culturally specific norms and worship practices was one of the primary functions of the ethnic churches in the confederated era discussed earlier.

Today Latinos constitute somewhere between 30-40% of the American Catholic population, in large part due to the steady immigration of Latinos to the United States (Brown and Patten 2014; CARA 2014; Fry 2014; Reese 2014). However, only 8% of priests and 11% of bishops are Latino (USCCB 2012). As such, it is incredibly important to understand whether or not descriptive representation – or lack thereof – has the same

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<sup>5</sup> The Jesuits and Sulpicians are two distinct orders of priests. An order is easily thought of as an enduring religious community dedicated to promoting a particular aspect of faith. For instance the Jesuits emphasize education and learning; Sulpicians focus on the formation of priests.

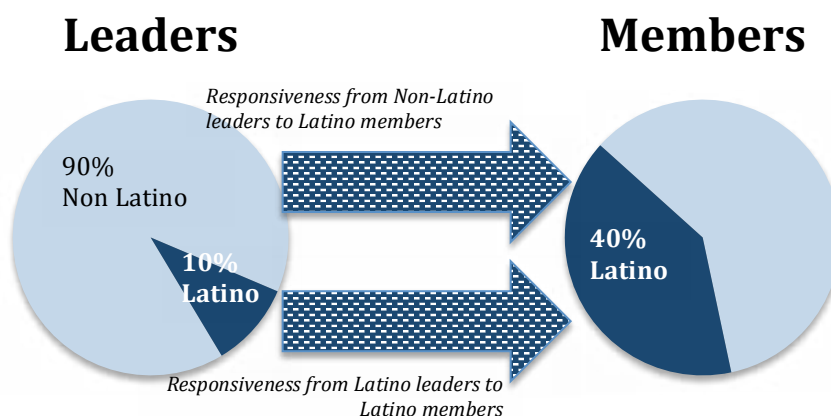
<sup>6</sup> The issue of inter-ethnic conflict in the historical Church is addressed in Chapter three.

impact on service and outcomes for the Latino population in the Catholic Church as it does in other service-oriented institutions.

In some ways, however, the Catholic Church should not be concerned with demographic representativeness since its mission is to serve all in need without concern for the background of those receiving service nor those providing it. This approach is also studied in representative bureaucracy theories and is called *substantive, active, or responsible* representation (Meier 1975). This is when an individual or administrator pushes for the “interests and desires of those whom he is presumed to represent” (Hindera 1993, 203). Generally speaking, this “requires some degree of answerability for decisions made and actions taken to those who are being represented” (Mosher 2003). Answerability is most easily understood in elected positions – elected government officials will lose their seat in the subsequent election if a responsive electorate is not well-served.

Figure 4, below, graphically presents the flow of service and response according to theories of *substantive* representation. Changed from figure 3, the arrows indicating responsiveness from both the Latino and non-Latino leaders are equal in size and density, indicating a parity of response according to member need rather than leaders’ demographic characteristics.

*Figure 4: Expected Patterns of Service According to Theories of Substantive Representation*



One difficulty in analyzing either descriptive or substantive representation is ascertaining what “good” representation is. One possibility is to define active representation as behavior that “increases the wealth, prestige, or other advantages associated with belonging to that race” (Mosher 2003). At first blush this seems an odd rubric against which to test the level of service towards Latinos in the Catholic Church, however there is strong historical precedence for such an approach. The Church has always been the primary source of immigrant groups’ social and political advancement, and it was most successful when immigrant groups had their own ethnic or basement church that served their nation-group almost exclusively. This was because parishes offered community support, jobs, and education through parochial schools in addition to religious services. Pastors and priests who facilitated these types of services are examples of “good representation” and in the past such representation tended to most often come from a co-ethnic priest.

Researchers continue to find that churches are the primary socializing institution of immigrants, as stated earlier (Alba et al. 2009; Alba and Orsi 2009; Bayor 1978; Orsi 1985). As such, how does the lack of Latino priests and bishops affect the Church’s ability to serve Latinos as it served European immigrants in the past?

As idealistically as we like to consider the willingness of priests to serve everyone equally, the benefit of studying representation is understanding that bureaucrats and civil servants – and priests – are “still members of other non-governmental social groups and classes” (Lipset 2003), which means that the policy measures they support and services they are willing to provide will tend to be ones that best support people like them. “The behavior of an individual or group in a given situation cannot be considered as if the

individual or group members had no life outside the given situation one is analyzing” (Lipset 2003). Though money and political success do not motivate service to the church community in the same way traditional occupations do, pastoring and ministering are none-the-less vocations that determine occupational expectations. Because priests’ acts of service are theologically motivated does not necessarily mean they are uninfluenced by social norms or the priests’ own background. Studies have found that “different child raising practices, experiences, and socialization patterns” (Lipset 2003) have a strong effect on political attitudes that directly influence behavior and decision-making. In other words, people have different political attitudes and responses to policy problems according to how they were raised and by whom. In the context of the Church, this means that priests and bishops can perceive areas of need and conceptualize service and solutions for various populations differently from how those same problems and solutions are perceived by the populations (congregants) themselves.

An important question to ask, then, is does descriptive representation lead to substantive representation within the Church? Earlier studies focused on the probability of passive representation turning in to active representation, and which conditions must be present in order for it to do so. Thompson stated five conditions increase the likelihood of active representation: when the organization itself, or surrounding organizations, “press for the advancement of minority interests” (Thompson 1976, 213); when representatives deal with issues directly related to their racial group’s well being; when there is a minority employee association within the organization; when minorities hold discretionary jobs, particularly at the lower levels of authority; and when minority group members work in close proximity to each other.

It is possible that descriptive representation will not result in active representation because the longer an individual is in an organization the more they are exposed to “homogenizing influences of work socialization,” (Thompson 1976, 216) which means the increased likelihood of losing their racially distinct perspective on account of increased exposure to a different dominant ideology. Further, in order to advance, minorities must also *reflect* that non-minority dominant ideology; as such administrators at higher levels of the organization are less likely to sympathize with and share the same values and perspectives as members of their racial group (Thompson 1976). This is an especially relevant point to consider in examining the functioning of the USCCB and the bishops, the majority of whom are of European descent.

This adds nuance to the belief that descriptive representation is a proxy for substantive representation. However Meier and Bhote argue that the “white washing” of minority representatives should not happen in organizations designed to actively represent member needs (a description that aptly describes the Catholic Church). This is because “procedures can be established that enhance representation [of a minority population]” (Thompson 1976). The extent to which those procedures are put in place in the Church, and subsequently followed, has not been established.

There is the further problem of tokenism, whereby the mere presence of a minority co-ethnic leader is seen as a sign of success and inclusion, even though few or none of the benefits associated with representation may come to fruition (Guinier 1991). By examining the role of black electoral representation in single member districts, Guinier questions the extent to which a few minority leaders who represent isolated communities can influence the operations and subsequent policies of the larger

government organization that continues to be dominated by whites. Further, there is no guarantee that a black elected official will actively represent and pursue the interests of the black community (Guinier 1991).

The Catholic Church is made up of many *parishes*, referring to the community surrounding any given church building. The parish is a territorially designated entity, meaning that its boundaries are defined by region. Parishes can be thought of as neighborhood organizations that, by canon law (the law that dictates Catholic Church organization and authority) are responsible for the needs of all parish residents, regardless of their affiliation with the Catholic Church. The pastor is the priest who is in charge of the parish – making him akin to an elected official in charge of a single-member district. My study questions whether parishes with a high-density Latino population are better served by a Latino priest, a proposition that is legitimately questioned by Guinier’s findings on the limitations of such descriptive representation due to tokenism and an enduring legacy of majority representation in the governing structure overall.

While the goals of the Church as an institution may not explicitly advocate for increased service to minorities, particularly Latinos, given the large amount of discretion priests and bishops have in running and ministering to their parishes and dioceses, one can expect descriptive representation to demonstrate continued positive effects on Church service to minority groups – at least at the local level. In other words, we can expect that the parishes and archdiocese with Latino priests and Archbishops are much more inclusive of and responsive to Latino congregations than those without a Latino representative (see Chapter four). Yet, particularly in large organizations, simple

descriptive representation and discretion is not sufficient for predicting high levels of service provision (or substantive representation).

### **Church Structure via Canon Law**

Analyzing the Catholic Church as an institution requires understanding how the Church institution is organized as well as the extent and limitations of institutional authority over member behaviors. Such details are laid out by Canon Law, which is a body of ecclesiastical laws (canons) spanning back to the 1200s that were codified into one index for the first time in 1917 under Pope Pius X. Canon law creates statutes that are universally applied, meaning that all who exist under canon law (all Catholics) are expected to uphold the law.

The United States, prior to 1917, was ruled under Common Law, which is based on precedence and case law (how the Church had historically been run in a given area) as opposed to the objective, universality of canon law. Even though Canon Law is based on universality, it follows Common Law in allowing for *custom* to prevail even if it contradicts other Church laws. Custom is considered the unique way of creating order in the community; it is not statutory but is recognized by the Church as authoritative. This means that religious expressions and traditions unique to a particular culture or region are allowed to continue and exert the same – if not more – authority than the universal law governing the Church. This is particularly significant for a study of the incorporation of diverse immigrant groups into a larger church community because there is no legal precedence for minimizing or devaluing another culture group's religious perspective.

The valuation of immigrant culture within churches is a key component to the process of socialization discussed above, and historically bishops have linked culture and language to the retention of religious values and beliefs (Appleby and Sprows Cummings 2012; Gallup and Castelli 1987).

Beyond regulating cultural expression through liturgy and worship practice, Canon Law outlines the organization of the church and its governance. Parishes are the primary locus of worship and community within the Catholic Church and are determined territorially – only so many parishes are allowed within a certain region or space to prevent competition between parishes. Exceptions can be made for “personal” parishes, allowing for more than one parish in a given territory in order to serve followers of a different “rite, language, or nationality” (Canon 518). This should theoretically allow for Latinos today to establish new ethnic parishes akin to those established within blocks of each other by immigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (when the Church was governed by Common rather than Canon Law). Yet saturation today prohibits a similar practice,<sup>7</sup> along with a general disapproval of separated parish communities that developed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In place of ethnic or national parishes are *shared* parishes, made up of two or more ethnic groups worshipping in the same parish, though often separately (the topic of shared parishes is discussed at greater length in Chapter four).

Parishes are run by presbyters or pastors (Canon 374) whose responsibility it is to care for the entire parish community through teaching, carrying out liturgical functions, and taking care of the day-to-day operations of the parish. In order to accomplish this

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<sup>7</sup> There are already a number of established parishes within close proximity, and many have dwindling populations. Combined with a growing shortage of priests it is increasingly unfeasible to justify the creation of new parishes.

task, Canon Law dictates that the pastor must “strive to know the faithful entrusted to his care” (Canon 529). He is to work to build community amongst the congregation and also to raise their awareness that they are members of a larger diocesan (regional) community, and worldwide Church congregation. Other priests, deacons, and lay ministers can assist the pastor in carrying out these duties, but the responsibility – and ultimate power of decision making – rests with the pastor alone (Canon 519).

Dioceses are regionally determined areas that encompass multiple parishes. Parishes can only belong to one diocese, and diocesan boundaries do not overlap. As with parishes, dioceses include all believers who live within their boundary regardless of where or whether those believers attend services (Canon 372). Once erected the dioceses become “juridic personalities,”<sup>8</sup> legal entities constructed for a certain purpose, led by individuals, and without a finite existence (Canon 373). Bishops are charged with leading the diocese much in the same way a pastor leads his parish, though the particularities of each one’s responsibility vary according to their position. Archdioceses are simply dioceses that serve a larger and denser population which are then, logically, headed by archbishops (who can still be referred to correctly as “bishops”). Canon law dictates that bishops must “show [themselves] concerned for all the Christian faithful entrusted to his care, of whatever age, condition, or nationality they are, whether living in the territory or

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<sup>8</sup> *Juridic persons*, unlike moral persons, are creations of the law; they enable people to come together to perform a work or carry out a mission they would be unable to do on their own. Although juridic persons are represented by individuals (board members, for example), they have perpetual existence. The entity that most resembles them in our secular society is the *corporation*.

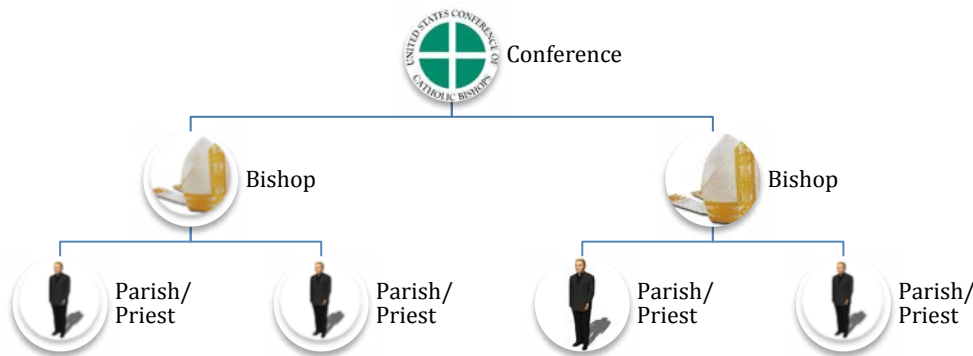
Religious congregations and dioceses, among other entities, are juridic persons by virtue of the canon law itself. Other juridic persons are established by a decree of the Holy See or a diocesan bishop and governed by statutes that are approved at the time juridic personality is conferred.  
<https://www.chausa.org/publications/health-progress/article/july-august-2001/toward-juridic-personality>

staying there temporarily; [they are] also to extend an apostolic spirit to those who are not able to make sufficient use of ordinary pastoral care because of the condition of their life and to those who no longer practice their religion” (Canon 383). The role of the bishop is to lead the people within his territory in such a way that “the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative (Canon 369),” which means it is his responsibility to help pastors facilitate congregants’ worship practices and religious commitment.

Above the Dioceses exists the Conference, a permanent institution made up of a group of bishops within a given territory, often covering a national territory (see discussion of Vatican II establishing national conferences, above). Today the US has the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). This organization is expected to “jointly exercise certain pastoral functions for the Christian faithful of their territory in order to promote the greater good which the Church offers to humanity, especially through forms and programs of the apostolate fittingly adapted to the circumstances of time and place, according to the norm of law” (Canon 447). Though technically above bishops in the Church hierarchy, conferences lack the authority to direct bishops or priests in how they lead their dioceses and parishes. Instead the USCCB has authority to issue decrees in regards to issues covered by canon law – such as church structure and liturgy – rather than in regards to the managerial and ministerial decisions required of bishops on a daily basis. This is because bishops are themselves considered “sources

of law for their common or particular territory” (Boudinhon 1910) which cannot be superseded to the conference.<sup>9</sup>

*Figure 5: Simplified Depiction of the American Church Hierarchy*



Canon Law lacks mention of enforceable authority of the national conference over the bishops, or bishops over priests beyond the limited means just described. Further the bishops’ charge to serve all members within their diocese neither overrides nor diminishes the pastors’ same charge. This means they must work in conjunction with each other to ensure that all believers in their district can worship in a manner appropriate to their circumstance. A major component of one’s “circumstance” is one’s culture, as evidenced by Vatican II’s promotion of language to increase individuals’ connection to the Church and canon law’s preference for custom over universality. This sets up a strong theoretical foundation for the argument that all levels of the Church hierarchy must promote the culturally specific worship practices of diverse culture groups in order to

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<sup>9</sup> While the compulsory authority of the USCCB is limited, its ability to speak out on social issues for the Church is not. To the contrary, as stated previously, Vatican II established that such agenda setting is one of the primary responsibilities of the USCCB.

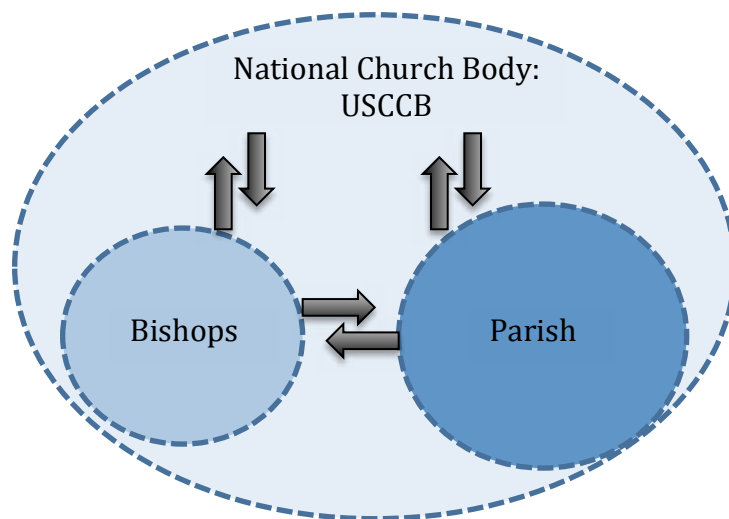
facilitate the presence and operation of “the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ” (Canon 369).

The lack of direct authority, however, does not diminish the potential for influence wielded by each level of church authority. Beyond ecclesial functioning and worship practices, canon law charges all Church leaders with promoting the common good. As such priests and bishops must work to draw attention to larger social problems to which they believe Catholics should attend. The way in which bishops versus the pastors conduct this responsibility varies with the scope of their regional authority. Because the pastor is the closest church leader to congregants, it makes sense that he would be the one most concerned with attending to their immediate and material needs, and also organize culturally-specific religious celebrations. Bishops can work to publicize issues facing the larger region, including demographic change, legislative issues, or economic problems. Bishops can also help connect parishes within their dioceses so that they can share resources in serving their respective congregations.

In contrast, the authority and responsibilities of the USCCB as a national conference are not delineated by canon law, but rather come from Vatican II (see earlier discussion on this topic). The USCCB is unique because the conference was established with the express purpose of leading Catholics with a national perspective. This makes the USCCB the de facto source of the American Catholic agenda for social and political issues, and grants them the authority to present “the Catholic position” on what the conference deems to be relevant topics. To that end, the USCCB works for political and social change on a national scale, through both raising awareness of problems with all citizens (not just Catholics) and lobbying politicians for policy change.

The limitations of Church authority described by Canon Law do not contradict the potential for authority and outcome described by institutional theories. Rather the history of the Church as a growing federal body with centralized authority to draw attention to and frame political issues complements the Canonical mandate for priests, bishops, and conferences to lead and direct Catholic response in a changing society. Influence is exerted from the top-down, an understanding exemplified by the traditional understanding of Church hierarchy (Figure 5, above). However influence can also flow from the bottom-up. While it is the responsibility of Church leaders to *lead*, systems theories uphold that institutions can also be directed by the membership, and that successful leaders are able to respond to their members' needs. Canon Law upholds this more nuanced understanding of institutional influence, and so the Church can be more accurately represented as below.

*Figure 6: Flows of Influence Within the American Catholic Church*



Canon Law mandates that church leaders be responsive to people's culture and context, which explains why the graph above shows the laity influencing leaders as much as the reverse. Church members must be able to make their own needs and experiences known to those dedicated to serving them. However the hierarchical *structure* of the Church as an organization (see Figure 5) can make it easy to obstruct the bottom-up functioning of Church influence – both to outside observers as well as Catholics. Does the addition of a national conference, an entity not discussed in canon law, add to the likelihood that the voice and influence of lay Catholics are ignored by the leaders?

### **Understanding Representation and Service Within a Federal Church Institution**

The question at this point is not whether one can see influence passing through these arrows, or if one level of the institution is more effective at influence than others. Rather, I ask whether the presence of an official federal structure and the growing influence of bishops negatively affects the likelihood that they will respond to Latino Catholics, because in spite of Latinos representation amongst Catholics overall, their share of the Church leadership is significantly smaller.

Institutional theory argues that institutional actions are shaped by its goals. The amount of autonomy granted to its local offices (here, parishes) determines the extent to which those offices must share and pursue the same goals as its umbrella institution. Representation theories hold that the goals (at any institutional level) are influenced by the demographic characteristics of the leadership. In other words: whether or not members' needs are prioritized by an institution is highly dependent upon whether or not their demographic features match those of the leadership. Federalism helps us to

understand two types of organizational structure that allows for greater and lesser autonomy at the local level.

I use these theories to shape my investigation of how institutional factors influence the American Catholic Church's pattern of responsiveness to immigrant congregations. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the Church responded to influxes of Irish, German, and Italian immigrants (amongst others). There was no centralized Church body, and parishes remained autonomous and independent of each other. In contrast, the contemporary Church has federal structure with a prominent national body (the USCCB), and is working to respond to a growing population of Latino Catholics. The Irish are the only immigrant group to *not* suffer from a lack of co-ethnic representation amongst the bishops. However co-ethnic priests were the norm rather than the exception in the historical church, whereas such representation is unheard of today for Latinos.

How do these factors converge to either complicate or facilitate Church leaders' ability to respond to Catholic laity in a culturally appropriate manner? For one, did the Church *ever* respond well to immigrant populations' needs, even when the organizational structure and local representation favored the immigrants? This is addressed in chapter 3. I also examine the extent to which Church leaders are responsive to Latino Catholics under today's federal organizational structure with little Latino representation. Chapter 4 serves as the contemporary counterpart to Chapter 3, emphasizing service and attention originating from local parishes.

The federal structure of the Church implicates two levels of service, the local (addressed in chapters 3 and 4) and the national. This structure also increases the importance of the USCCB as the spokesperson for Catholics because of its high visibility

and prominence in the news. If one is curious about “the Catholic position” on a contemporary American issue, one will often turn to or quote the USCCB. This is precisely the purpose that the USCCB was created for.

I ask if the national church body works to encourage service and response to the growing Latino congregation, and is that work affected by the fact that less than 11% of bishops are also Latino (see chapter 5)? The USCCB has the power to set the agenda for the American Catholic Church; does that mean it can also raise awareness about the need to shift cultural practices within local churches to not only accommodate but also value and promote Latino culture and perspectives? In other words does the USCCB work to improve Latinos’ treatment within the Church?

I unpack how multiple institutional factors work together to determine the level of responsiveness and the quality of service provided to Latinos as a significant – though still minority – ethnic group within the American Catholic Church. The effect of organizational structure cannot be understood without understanding the way the structure was formed in the first place (here, via canon law). The actions of the Church as an institution cannot be understood without knowing what the Church’s *goals* are, and goals cannot be understood without looking first at the demographic composition of the leaders who set them. Lastly, because the Catholic Church is ultimately a voluntary service organization, the members have the right to self-determination and defining their own needs. I examine whether the structure, goals, and background of Church leaders facilitate that self-determination, or make it more difficult for Latinos’ voices to be heard.



## Chapter 3

**From Ethnic to Mixed Parishes:  
The Ongoing Role of Power and Representation in Church Socialization**

An important first step in answering whether the Catholic Church is a socializing institution for Latinos in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is determining what one can reasonably expect from the Church given its goals and mission, as an institution (see Ch. 2). Second, one must also examine its past behavior to determine the precedent the institution has set for itself in its pattern of responsiveness.<sup>10</sup> To that end, this chapter examines the historical Church's response to past (European) immigrant groups to establish a baseline against which to compare the Church's actions today. An historical perspective also allows me to identify behavioral patterns of response that can help us anticipate whether or not one should expect the Church to positively respond to Latinos today.

My initial findings suggest it is reasonable to set high expectations for Church response to Latinos. I found little to contradict the dominant historical narrative that tells us Catholic churches provided a level of social and material support that made it possible for past immigrant groups to not only survive but excel in the United States (Gordon 1964; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Cogley 1973). This success is particularly notable because in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Catholic immigrants were not just poor, they were also ostracized on account of their national origin and their religion (McAvoy 1969; Cogley 1973; Dolan 1977). Nativists believed that Catholics were incapable of being true Americans because devotion to the pope precluded Catholic loyalty to the United States

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<sup>10</sup> I would like to extend special gratitude to Rev. Michael P. Morris and Kate Feighery at the Archives of the Archdiocese of New York for all of their guidance and support in my research for this project.

and its government. Immigrants were also seen as criminals, drunkards, and rapists who lowered the standard of living and work conditions for the “true” Americans (Higham 1955; Nelli 1970). The Catholic Church became the stalwart of immigrants’ religious and cultural identities, facilitating the creation of community through parishes, providing the jobs and education that became the key to their social and political advancement (Burns 1969; Dolan 1977, 1992; Ignatiev 1995).

One might expect that Catholics, being so universally hated, would band together across lines of national origin, culture, and language, to work for their mutual success. They did not. Instead they relied on their ethnic parishes to survive – autonomous communities established to serve the needs of a population with a specific heritage (Cogley 1973; Dolan 1992; Gallup and Castelli 1987). The mutual exclusion of Catholic ethnic groups is not discussed as a problem so long as each group had their own space in which to worship. Italians, who did not begin immigrating to the US in large numbers until the 1880s, did not have the same opportunity or ability to establish their own parishes and instead were forced to share church space with the already established German and Irish Catholic communities.<sup>11</sup> The result was a contestation for place and belonging between the “new” and the “old” immigrant groups that was never fully resolved until after the unification of all Catholics under a “white American” identity following the world wars.

This chapter examines the role of churches in an historical era while the Church operated under a confederated organizational structure. I look to the histories of the three largest and most significant immigrant groups to the establishment of the American

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<sup>11</sup> Between 1880-1890 an estimated 1 million Italians immigrated to the US (Dolan 1992). By that point there were already an estimated 10 million Irish and 2 million German Catholics; both communities had roots going back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Dolan 1977; O’Gorman 1895).

Catholic Church: German, Irish, and Italian from the years 1850-1920 in order to cover each group's largest period of immigration.<sup>12</sup> This allows me to examine the ways in which each group worked to establish itself in relation to the Protestant American environment in which they lived, and to their fellow Catholic ethnic communities. I find that ethnic parishes were the source of both social and material support for immigrant congregations. Whether or not the church leadership also supported those efforts was in large part determined by ethnicity. What may be surprising to some is that these autonomous ethnic parishes did not join together in the face of strong nativist hostilities against them. This was because religious affiliation alone was not enough to bring together diverse ethnic groups, particularly when each group had unique ways of practicing the same religion. Only once the long process of assimilation to the American culture had begun to take place was the threat of anti-Catholic nativism a sufficient motivator for Catholic unification, a step that was solidified by Catholic dedication to both American war efforts and their ability to step into the newly constructed "white" racial categorization.

### **Setting The Nativist Context**

Catholicism was not a welcome religious tradition in the United States. The US "in 1877 could be regarded as yet a Protestant country in cultural tradition" in spite of 100 years of religious liberty (McAvoy 1969, 240). The 19<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the presence of

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<sup>12</sup> The largest wave of Irish immigration followed the potato famine in Ireland, with 1 million immigrants arriving between 1846-1851. Another 3.3 million came between 1851 and 1920 (Dolan 1992). German immigration jumped from 125,000 in 1830-39 to 385,000 in 1840-49, to almost 1 million in 1850-59. An estimated one-third of Germans were Catholic (Adams 1990; Dolan 1977). Large Italian immigration did not start until 1880; in their first two decades almost 1 million immigrants came to the US, and 3 million more arrived between 1900-1920. Unlike the Irish and Germans, many of those Italians (2.1 million) returned to their native country (Dolan 1992).

*nativism*, a movement that began in response to the 1790 Naturalization Act,<sup>13</sup> which many citizens found too general in its definition of “white,” thereby making it easy for less desirable groups to gain citizenship (Jacobson 1998). Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the movement came to focus on Protestantism as an essential component of citizenship and, later, “whiteness.” Catholicism, in contrast, was un-American and Catholics were a national threat, seen as “minions of the Roman despot, dispatched here to subvert the American institutions” (Higham 1955, 6).

Anti-Catholic sentiment grew stronger through the 1840s and 50s, during the largest wave of Irish immigration on account of the potato famine. While the Irish were also assigned negative racial descriptors,<sup>14</sup> their primary characteristic was their *Catholicism*. As explained by a Know-Nothing leader in New York, David Ullman, religious homogeneity for the majority of the population was a necessary component of American success, “or all else is in vain” (Jacobson 1998, 70). “Irish” was synonymous with “Catholic” because religion played a significant role in both Irish national identity and cultural expression. As such, nativists deemed Irish as inassimilable because “an Irishman’s loyalty to his priest was too firm for anxious Protestants to rest easy” (Higham 1955, 26). The Irish were seen as “pillars of an alien faith” (Higham 1955, 26). Further, “Irishism” was equated with “depravity and degradation” (Jacobson 1998), they were “rowdy, ne’er do-wells, impulsive, quarrelsome, drunken, and threadbare” (Higham 1955, 26). It was believed the Irish’ poverty was not on account of conditions outside

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<sup>13</sup> The 1790 Naturalization Act stated that any free white person residing in the United States for at least two years could request citizenship provided they were of good character. This Act also granted citizenship to children born abroad to two American citizens.

<sup>14</sup> The Irish were called the “nigger” or “savage Irish,” and their skin was noted for its “black tint” in an 1851 Harper’s Weekly article (Jacobson 1998; Higham 1955).

their control (such as the potato famine), but rather by their “poor stock,” resulting in the widespread belief by the mid 1800s that they were “constitutionally incapable of intelligent participation in the governance of the nation” (Jacobson 1998, 48).

One historian argues that the Germans did not experience the same level of anti-Catholic sentiment, though a majority of the first immigrants were Catholic.<sup>15</sup> Jacobson posits that their Saxon ascendants made the Germans less distinct from American Anglo-Saxons than were the Irish, reversing the primacy of religion over race in nativist thought. Also, German settlement patterns extended out west rather than within the major cities, which lessened their exposure to urban inter-ethnic conflict (Jacobson 1998). Further, a number of Germans left the Catholic faith, thereby removing the “Catholic” stigma from the Germans as a group, as compared to the Irish culture that was perceived as synonymous with Catholicism (Jacobson 1998; McAvoy 1969).<sup>16</sup>

The wave of “new immigrants” from Southern Italy and Eastern Europe starting in the 1880s brought on a fresh wave of anti-Catholic sentiment. Some charged that there was a national decline in patriotism on account of the increased number of immigrants (Higham 1955), and that these “new” immigrants were inassimilable because they were transient, unskilled laborers who only came to America to make money rather than a new

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<sup>15</sup> There is not consistent support for the treatment of Germans on account of their Catholicism. While they may have been less subject to Nativist hostilities than the Irish, it would be a stretch to claim that Germans were universally accepted into the mainstream (they were not). Highlighting this fact is the proliferation of German enclaves that opened their own churches and schools in German as a buffer to the rest of society (Bayor 1978; Dolan 1977). Further, US opposition to Germany in World War I was a major motivation for US Catholics to unite together – to avoid all Catholics being lumped together as traitors because a portion of them had German heritage (McAvoy 1969).

<sup>16</sup> The disassociation of “Catholicism” and “German” fell away with the advent of the US entrance into WWI against Germany and Austria. Catholics feared that the nativists tendency to associate all Catholics together would result in a resurgence in the belief that Catholics were incapable of being patriotic citizens. This is discussed in more detail below, and in Ch. 2.

home.<sup>17</sup> They were also attributed with radical sensibilities that threatened to destabilize the democratic nature of American governance and society (Linkh 1975). In 1914 the magazine *Current Opinion* printed that the immigrant presence “portends national decline and race extinction” (Current Opinion 1914). These immigrants were also criticized for being illiterate, lacking English skills, and having poor living standards, all of which had a negative effect on the wages, working and living conditions of American workers (Orsi 1985; Guglielmo 2003). New immigrants were also blamed for crime and any other variety of “social and political problems,” as explained by *The North American Review* in 1912 (Lanck). More specifically, the “new” immigrants were blamed for crimes against women and children, and these were views espoused not only by everyone from the general population to the New York police chief (New York Times 1907Blames Foreigners for Crime Wave: Attacks on Young Girls Show Need of Checking Immigration, says Bigham).

At the head of the nativist movement at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the American Protectionist Association (APA). Formerly one of the largest Nativist organizations in the US,<sup>18</sup> the APA re-emerged in the 1890s and successfully absorbed several other, smaller, nativist groups to create one prolific and influential organization that “dominated the gaudiest wave of religious nativism in 50 years” (Higham 1955). The APA focused on religion rather than immigration (though the connection between the two was undisputed) and many members took vows to never vote for a Catholic running for

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<sup>17</sup> In contrast, “old” immigrants from England, Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia were ostensibly painted as intelligent, industrious workers who shared the values of American democracy – an inaccurate rewriting of history that ignores the hatred and discrimination lobbed at these groups when they first immigrated decades earlier (see above).

<sup>18</sup> The American Protestant Association (APA) formed in 1842 to “further their Protestant interests” by educating Protestants of all denominations about the evils of the “Popery” and was later used to promote the political advancement of Protestants and the political disempowerment of Catholics.

office (Higham 1955).<sup>19</sup> The ongoing presence of the Nativist Movement, though it waxed and waned throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reflects the over-arching Protestant norm in the American mainstream. This Protestant sensibility consistently held Catholics as an untrustworthy “other,” a designation Catholics of all nationalities had to constantly fight against.

### **Nativism, Schools, And The Catholic Response**

Understanding the extent to which anti-Catholic sentiment pervaded the political sphere and American cultural mainstream, it is not surprising that it also affected how public schools were run. There was no public resistance to teaching prayer in schools as there is in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. To the contrary, in the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century

the teachers were almost exclusively Protestant, the Protestant Bible was read, some of the books used were sectarian in character, and the atmosphere of the school room was, generally speaking, such as to constitute a menace to the faith of Catholic children (Burns 1969, 361).

Catholics resisted the “Protestant” public education, and protested the anti-Catholic discrimination. Seeking to establish a good educational foundation for their children, in 1840 Catholic leaders in New York petitioned the state for money out of the

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<sup>19</sup> Higham’s representation of this time period states that the APA quickly fell out of power by the mid 1890s on account of infighting that led to organizational fracturing, as well as a decline in anti-Catholic sentiment. A New York Times article from 1894 presents another view where the APA itself was perceived negatively by the community writ large: “[the APA is] a secret order undertaking the control of politics [that] ... tends to arouse religious hate” which “seems full of danger to thoughtful and liberal men” (Prototypes of the APA: Protestant Associations and the Native American Party 1894). Whether such a negative view resulted from APA followers breaking ranks, or a general distaste for the organization is unclear.

Higham’s argument that anti-Catholic sentiment was on the decline is more problematic. While the Irish and Germans *had* gained acceptance from the Protestant-dominated American public (as compared to years past) the “new” immigrants who had only just begun to arrive in America had not yet had the time nor opportunity to be assimilated (let alone accepted) into the American mainstream.

common school fund to run their own schools, and were rejected. They issued a second petition, promising that the public funds would only be put towards the secular aspect of education, and religious principles would be taught after hours. Yet this petition and its advocates also highlighted the hypocrisy of the state's school system, given the overtly Protestant curriculum in the public schools. Catholic petitioners said to be fair the state must either remove religion entirely from the public curriculum (since Catholic education is what prevented their first petition from going through), or allow for each school to teach their children according to their own denominational norms (Burns 1969, 372).

Interestingly, the debate was postponed until after that year's election cycle because the candidates did not want to risk losing the Catholic vote (which was significant). This highlights the size of the Catholic presence and their success, even by 1840, to organize sufficiently to gain the attention of elected officials. However their vote size alone was not enough to sway the overall Protestant sensibility of the New York governance, and the second petition for public schooling was denied. "The only alternative for Catholics was to establish and develop a system of schools of their own independent of state support and control" (Burns 1969, 375).

Catholic schools had been established in various Catholic colonies in the US since the 1700s, but the "School Controversy" in New York signals the beginning of a larger scale, concerted effort to open parochial schools for Catholic children. The First Plenary Council (the first national meeting of all bishops in the U.S.) held in Baltimore in 1852, when it was officially decreed that every parish must have a Catholic school and the teachers paid by the parish (McAvoy 1969). Catholics focused attention on establishing a network of Catholic schools not only to protect their children from the nativist hostilities

present in Protestant-dominated schools, but also to ensure they receive the education necessary to “rise from their lowly status” (McAvoy 1969, 235). In this way, Catholics began to lay the foundation for a national network of support dedicated to encouraging and facilitating the American Catholics’ rise in social standing and political power.

### **Ethnic Parishes: The Source Of Social Mobility**

Parochial schools were significant, but only one aspect of the support for socialization offered by churches. Immigrant groups in the 19<sup>th</sup> century led parish-centered lives where most aspects of their community were run by or through their local church. Ethnic groups established their own parishes where they could worship in their traditional manner and in their own language as an act of both religious devotion and reinforcement of their cultural identity. “Within each nation, Catholicism was culturally quite homogenous, with the native culture clearly the dominant force in the church. In the US it would be quite different” (Dolan 1992, 127). Ethnic parishes and enclaves were the immigrants’ response to American diversity as immigrants worked to preserve their own culture (Linkh 1975).

These churches and communities were the source of material support that made immigrant groups’ survival - and eventual advancement - possible. Among their many offerings, churches provided clothing, language classes, sobriety assistance, night school for reading and writing, and even sewing classes to help women earn money (Franklin 1900; Prindiville 1903; Cogley 1973; Dolan 1992). The offerings were tailored to the needs of the population and the available resources, and the overwhelming trend was for these services to be organized by a parish priest and/or offered through the parish itself.

“Temporally as well as spiritually, sociologically as well a psychologically, the Catholic priest is the guardian angel of the immigrant” wrote one author at the turn of the century (Prindiville 1903). The result was that immigrants led parish-centered lives where every aspect of their community – from religion to education to jobs to friendships – were centered on or run through the local church (Cogley 1973; Lader 1987; McAvoy 1969; Menjivar 2003). Catholicism “pervaded daily life” (Barrett 2012, 7).

One cannot emphasize enough the separation between ethnic parishes and the amount of autonomy they experienced. Parishes were central to ethnic enclaves – voluntarily separated communities according to national and ethnic heritage. The territorial nature of parishes fed into a “parochial mentality” of establishing a “neighborhood turf” – regions that belonged to one particular group (Barrett 2012, 40). The Irish in particular were opposed to racially integrating their neighborhoods. “Their most common impulse was to exclude: to bar more recent immigrants, women, and people of color from jobs and unions; to discriminate against women and minorities; and to fight more radical groups in the labor movement” (Barrett 2012, 8).

The Irish recognized that they “had to succeed as a people” given the Nativist sentiment against them, and they did so by maintaining both their ethnic as well as religious identity (Barrett 2012, 5). “Bitter memories of British colonialism and the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland and confrontations with nativism in the US persuaded Irish America to build its own Catholic institutional structure of schools, hospitals, asylums, and orphanages” (McCaffrey et al. 1987, 4). In this way the Irish used the Church to attend to their secular needs (McCaffrey et al. 1987).

The Germans also formed national parishes to preserve their religion in a Protestant country, but they also used churches as way to maintain their culture in the Irish-dominated church.<sup>20</sup> Just as for the Irish, for the Germans “the national parish was the institutionalized attempt of an immigrant group to preserve the religious life of the old country” (Dolan 1977, 71). New immigrants were instructed to settle in German communities with German churches and schools, emphasizing the importance of language. “To settle in an English-speaking parish was ‘the greatest of all dangers’ since ‘experience teaches that even in places where there are English Catholic churches but no German-speaking priests, German Catholics will become indifferent to the Church within a short time and in due course will be even worse than Protestants and pagans’” (Dolan 1977, 72). In this way the “vitality of religion in the German community was directly connected with the availability of German-speaking parishes” (Dolan 1977, 72) though the parish was also the source of Germans’ social and material well-being. Germans commonly established clubs and other benefit associations through the parish that offered financial assistance and strong community ties.

Italians were also noted for living parish-centered lives, and depended greatly on their benefit societies for financial assistance as well as community support. The Italians referred to these associations as mutual aid societies, “regional organizations comprised of immigrants from the same Italian town who gathered together to provide some unemployment and burial benefits and to socialize” (Orsi 1985, 51). Material support was not the only function of the societies. “Protection, mutual support, faithfulness to the

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<sup>20</sup> While Germans were the largest non-English speaking Catholic group in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, their numbers were much smaller than the Irish. In 1840, Germans were only an estimated 10% of the American Catholic population, and less than 25% by 1870. The bulk of the Catholic population was constituted by the Irish (Dolan 1977, 1992).

values and history of the *paese* [countryman] are expressed in the most important function of the societies” (Orsi 1985, 51). By attending to their social needs, benefit groups “helped to develop a feeling of identity within the Italian colony for newly arrived immigrants, along with a sense of community pride and rapport” (Nelli 1970, 180).

One of the most visible and notable ways the parish served the unique cultural needs of the Italians was through the *feste*, or celebration of Mary, Italy’s patron saint. The *feste* challenged the “authority of official Catholicism over the religious lives of the immigrants” (Orsi 1985, 57) because it was a ceremony that could exist entirely outside of the church structure, and was unheard of in Irish and German traditions. It was also the “most obvious declaration of what was unique and different about Italian Catholics” (Orsi 1985, 55) and a sign of the way in which Italians worked to counteract Irish influence in their lives (Nelli 1970).

Though the tradition of establishing ethnic parishes was widespread, each immigrant group had a different process by which they obtained their parish. For example, in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Germans raised money, bought land, built the church – then told the bishop they needed a priest (Dolan 1977). Their efforts were community-led, and the bishop had little choice but to agree to authorize the parish. In contrast Irish communities would request a priest who could then lead the building effort for the church and subsequent parish (Dolan 1977; Clark 1977).

The experience of Italian Catholics was different because they came into cities that were densely populated and already saturated with Catholic churches. In this context it was more difficult for them to establish their own, independent enclaves as for past groups, and even less possible to build their own churches. As a result of Italians’ forced

proximity to both German and Irish Catholic communities, Italians had fewer options for escape. They were either relegated to the church basement, or chose to separate themselves there or to a separate building close to the church so that they could hold their own Italian services (Orsi 1985; Vecoli 1977). The forced proximity of ethnic groups that would otherwise choose to remain distinct caused a great deal of tension, and complicated the ability of churches to respond to Italian Catholic needs.

### **Clash Of Ethnicities**

One of the key components to establishing an ethnic parish that could respond to the social, material, as well as religious needs of its congregation was having a co-ethnic priest. The Irish dominated the Church hierarchy on account of their numbers - five million Irish immigrated to the US between 1840-1890, and a number of priests were included in that large number ensuring that the preservation of Irish worship practices (Barrett 2012). The Germans also depended upon co-ethnic priests, a necessity in light of their emphasis on preserving the German-language and their unique cultural traditions, particularly given the large presence of Irish Catholics. The ethnicity of bishops became an issue as the Irish took on a larger and larger role in the episcopate (collective body of bishops). “In 1869 only 11 percent of the bishops were German (6 of 56). In 1900 after more than a decade of debate on the issue the proportion had increased to only 14% (13 of 90). The Irish had gained control of the hierarchy, and by 1900 one out of 2 bishops was Irish” (Dolan 1977, 79). There were reports of Irish bishops ignoring or being ‘unfriendly’ to Germans. While the bishops had control over how a pastor ran his parish, they could make ecclesial decisions that could significantly hamper the functioning of a

parish. Such decisions included the altering of parish boundaries, changing rules for the administration of sacraments, and the decision regarding which priests to assign to run the parish. Having an unsympathetic bishop could have extremely negative consequences for the ability of a parish to respond to its German population.

Having an Irish-dominated hierarchy was also problematic for Italian Catholics who were pressured to assimilate to the *Irish* American way of life.<sup>21</sup> This led to clashes with Irish priests who viewed Italians as “bad Catholics” because they were anti-clerical (gave less authority to priests than did the Irish), had irregular mass attendance, tithed less money, and placed a greater emphasis on their popular religion than on ecumenical (or church based) practices (Orsi 1985). The Italian “local folk form” of religion was thought of as an “alien form of Catholicism” to the Irish, who looked on practices such as the *feste*<sup>22</sup> as a perversion of religion (Nelli 1970) that wasted money that would be “better spent building churches and orphanages” (Orsi 1985, 56).

The Irish opinion of Italians is reflected in this letter dated March 4, 1917, from the rector of Nativity Parish, an annex congregation that served Italians, to then Archbishop of New York, John Cardinal Farley.

*The trouble with the Italians is that they won't go to church. I deal with them individually in my parish, in my Sunday school, and through St. Vincent de Paul work and I know that they are about the poorest church serving people that ever*

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<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, the historical narratives also discuss the *German* disdain for Italians, but rarely refer to Germans attempting to assimilate Italian Catholics to their way of worship. This may be because of the Irish dominance of the hierarchy, meaning the Irish perspective had a larger platform from which to denounce Italian practices, and also a greater role in determining rules for sacraments and parish boundaries that would restrict Italian practices. Regardless, the Italians were widely disliked, by both Catholics and non-Catholics of all ethnicities, and they felt great pressure from all sides to assimilate to an “American” way of life as defined by each respective group.

<sup>22</sup> The *festa* was the Italian celebration of Mary that includes a procession of a statue of Mary through the streets and a days-long celebration in the neighborhood. The *festa*, though a religious celebration, could be – and often was – held entirely outside of the Church, with the statue often ending in someone’s backyard (Orsi 1985).

*came to this country. I understand that we must do everything to protect them from Protestant influence; at the same time it is going to be only by slow patient work that the Italians will be brought to go to church. The Italians are not a sensitive people like our own. When they are told that they are about the worst Catholics that ever came to this country they don't resent it or deny it. If they were a little more sensitive to such remarks they would improve faster. The Italians are callous as regards religion. There is ample provision made for them but they do not respond.*

This letter reflects the stark contrast between Irish and Italian religious priorities. Italians “went to church when they did only at those times did it make sense according to their religious values” (Orsi 1985, xviii), such as for baptisms, weddings, funerals, and *festes* (when they were held in the church). Irish Catholicism mandated weekly church attendance and a hefty amount of respect and adherence to the dictates of the clergy – Italian Catholicism did not. While the Irish did not want Italians to convert to Protestantism, and frequently made comments to that effect, “they did comparatively little for Catholic arrivals in the years before WWI” (Linkh 1975, 188).

One example of the questionable sincerity in Irish attempts to serve Italian Catholics can be seen through the establishment of Italian churches, an endeavor that was spearheaded by the Archdiocese (rather than the Italian community). For instance, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (est. 1884) was the first church to be established explicitly for Italians;<sup>23</sup> as such it was a cultural rather than territorial parish so that it could respond to the needs of Italians from anywhere in the city, rather than just those within its specific regional area. Because the Italians did not have enough money to pay for the parish, the Archdiocese allowed for Irish Catholics *within the territorial bounds* of Mt. Carmel to attend church and receive sacraments there. This allowed for the parish to be fiscally

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<sup>23</sup> There were other annex or basement congregations serving Italians, such as at St. Patrick, but Mt. Carmel was the first church established explicitly for the purpose of serving Italians.

solvent without violating the territorial obligations of other neighboring parishes, and also created a space dedicated to serving Italians (Correspondence, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel).

There were two major problems with this plan: first, because the Irish financed the parish, the priest gave them the upper church for worship and the Italians were, again, relegated to the basement – even though the church was built expressly for the purpose of serving Italians. Italians were extremely resentful of this, and noted that this second-tier status would remain a problem until they secured an Italian clergy. (Mt. Carmel was run by the Pallottine order, which had predominantly Irish and German priests, see Correspondence, Our Lady of Carmel).

The systematic discrimination of Italians by the Irish did not escape their notice. “Irish priests work among the Italians not to save them from sin but through fear of losing fruitful clients,” accused an Italian newspaper in 1905 (*La Tribuna Italiana Evening Schools and the Irish Priests' Activities*). Italians also were the only Catholic group consistently in favor of *public* rather than parochial education for their children because they so detested the Irish influence in schools.

*The 800 children in the Italian school on Erie Street are being taught in every manner to hate their country by means of such speeches as a certain priests made during the Jubilee of Leo XIII.*

*Italians, send your children to public schools. Religion should be taught in your home in the sanctuary of your family. – La Tribuna Italiana, 1906*

This conflict complicated the ability of churches to fulfill their role as socializing institutions for Italians because, for Italians, the churches themselves were often a place of hostility and discrimination. This did not change the importance of the parish or Catholic tradition in Italians' lives, rather it necessitated their fighting to carve out their own space for worship and belonging. In the end, the parish remained a locus of

community and support that helped the Italian immigrant survive and later succeed in American culture.

### **From Ethnic To Mixed Parishes**

The historical records and various histories written about Catholic immigration to the US uniformly highlight the importance of ethnic parishes to Catholic communities' social advancement. The correspondence between priests and bishops for the Archdiocese of New York reveal a unique phenomenon not discussed elsewhere: the evolution of mixed parishes. It is not possible to determine whether this development was specific only to New York, or if it also occurred elsewhere in the nation. What is clear is that the development of mixed parishes resulted from a variety of factors, and their presence complicated the ability of churches to respond to immigrant communities' needs.

The first condition contributing to mixed parishes was population density; as new immigrant groups arrived they had little choice but to live where other immigrant groups were already established (as with the Italians, discussed above). Cities were the targeted immigrant destinations because of the jobs and other services available there. This complicated the process of creating exclusive ethnic enclaves with parishes that served one single ethnic group. Second was the length of time that the "old" immigrants had already spent in the US, meaning that though their ethnic identification remained strong, their implementation of specific cultural practices was not as pronounced as for newer immigrant groups. This was perhaps most visible in the predominance of English masses even in so-called ethnic parishes. Perhaps one of the starkest changes was the effort of church leaders to deliberately combine different ethnic congregations under one roof.

Though not mentioned in a majority of historical narratives, letters between pastors and archbishops of New York around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century reveal concern with ethnic churches (dedicated to serving a specific population) poaching parishioners from neighboring parishes.

As explained in chapter two, with few exceptions (such as missions or ethnic parishes that were dedicated to serving pockets of culturally distinct Catholics) parishes are territorial entities whose boundaries are geographically defined. The parish is responsible for serving all people within that territorial boundary. This includes providing the sacraments (such as baptism, confirmation, marriage, and funerals) to all Catholics living within that territory. Many parishes mandate that a Catholic register in order to receive the sacraments. Registration often is accompanied by a weekly or monthly tithe, or monetary contribution that help cover parish expenses. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century tithing took the form of pew rentals. Parishioners also pay money for each sacrament, both to cover the costs associated with the sacrament itself as well as to help keep the parish financially solvent. In this way the community helps to maintain the church as a central institution in the immigrant life. A loss or decrease in that community presence makes it more difficult, if not impossible, for a church to remain open and functioning.

The increase in population density, the mobility of ethnic populations due to improved economic standing, and the growing “Americanization” of older immigrant groups complicated the territorial nature of parish life. Parishes that once catered to a large German population found themselves serving mostly Italians. Irish churches had increasingly large German populations as the Germans moved north in the city following new job opportunities. In other cases, German parishes started holding mass in English

for both the growing contingent of Germans who preferred English as well as for Irish in the neighborhood. The lack of a language barrier made it easier for Catholics to attend mass in a parish that was either more convenient, or where they liked the pastor better, rather than according to the territories as outlined by the Archdiocese. What all of this flux meant was that some parishes lost congregants, along with those congregants' financial support. This led to a number of complaints between pastors fielding accusations of 'poaching' parishioners – drawing in Catholics who lived in the territory of another parish to one's own in order to reap the monetary benefits of their pew rentals (the 19<sup>th</sup> century version of tithing) and sacramental ministrations.

The letters between pastors and bishops from this time period demonstrate a dubiousness regarding the continued validity of ethnic parishes, and a suspicion that the ethnic parishes were being built simply to pilfer parishioners from those parishes that were already established in the neighborhood. In an attempt to control the growing disorder, Archbishop Corrigan wrote a letter (published in the newspaper, *My Herald* in 1895) admonishing the pastors at Our Lady of Perpetual Help to refuse the sacraments to those Catholics who have not rented pews (registered) with that parish (Corrigan 1895). Our Lady was established as a Bohemian parish and so lacked the traditional territorial boundaries of other parishes; this meant that Bohemians living in any part of the city could attend and register. However many English-speaking Catholics were also known to go there, to the financial detriment of the parishes in the area that *were* territorially bound. The Archbishop emphasized that sacraments were a "parochial right" that can only be overturned by renting a pew in another parish, otherwise Catholics must attend mass and receive sacraments in the parish in which they live (Corrigan 1895). This was

meant to ensure the health and well-being of the parish community, foster a relationship between congregants and priests, and also serve as a check that parishioners were receiving the necessary religious education in advance of their sacraments. It is not clear from the letters written during this time that the affected pastors are most concerned with the spiritual well-being of their would-be parishioners as they are with the loss of the financial benefits.

Fr. M.J. Doherty, pastor of the Church of the Holy Innocents wrote to the Archbishop complaining about a nearby German parish drawing Irish and other English-speaking congregants that, territorially speaking, should be attending mass elsewhere – particularly at Holy Innocents.<sup>24</sup>

*I am convinced that a third part of our congregation attends these churches. Our church is not overcrowded, nor is it unreasonably far from any of the people given us in charge. Indeed the Germans draw to their 9 o'clock mass some, and not a few, who live within one square of this church [referencing Holy Innocents].*

Fr. Doherty goes on to give the names of Holy Innocent parishioners who have received sacraments from these “German churches” as well as what he calls “lesser offences” such as sick-calls, pew rentals, and the simple attendance of mass outside of Holy Innocents. He does not have names for these lesser offences, and says it may be possible to procure them but would only do so with great caution because such investigation might cause more “harm rather than any good” (Doherty 1886).

The normalization of “mixed” parishes prompted one rector, Mr. Larkin, also of Holy Innocent Parish, to write to the Archbishop describing the harm that comes from so-called German parishes taking over the spiritual care of non-German parishioners.

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<sup>24</sup> From the description of the churches’ location I believe he refers to St. John the Baptist, but the name of the German parish is not provided in this correspondence.

*The synod [an upcoming meeting of all the bishops in the US] would seem to furnish a favorable opportunity for full and final regulations for the government of priests, where Catholics of different nationalities are intermixed. Unless rules are made and upheld with a firm hand in this district, it will be impossible to administer either temporal or spiritual affairs with any degree of success. We have no control over the people or the children surrounding the German churches. Every artifice is employed to allure them into churches, where they never hear of anything that is being done for their benefit in the church to which they belong.” (Larkin 1886)*

Mr. Larkin accuses the German priests of luring away Holy Innocent parishioners for their own financial benefit, and states that the Germans are providing sacraments to non-members in direct defiance of the previous archbishop’s orders. “Under these circumstances, the authority of the priests of this church is a farce and a religious comedy; as the people cannot help seeing that there is a scramble for their money, with little regard for their spiritual interests.” To that end, Mr. Larkin suggests five rules to govern the running of inter-mixed parishes:

- 1<sup>st</sup>. NO English to be spoken at any service in any German Church [emphasis in original text].*
- 2<sup>nd</sup>. No Sacraments to be administer to Eng-speaking [sic] people outside the Church.*
- 3<sup>rd</sup>. No marriage nor baptisms of such people, anywhere.*
- 4<sup>th</sup>. No pews nor seats to be rented to persons who do not speak the German language.*
- 5<sup>th</sup>. Those having pews or seats to be ordered off to their own churches (Larkin 1886).*

In other words, Mr. Larkin wants to force the German ethnic parish to stay German so that his non-German parishioners would not be able to attend services (and tithe their money) there (Larkin 1886). This represents a significant shift in the way in which parishes were run. In earlier times the community was the source of the parish itself, and the parish was built with the express purpose of serving the needs of a

particular community. As the ties to place and parish weakened, the goal of the parishes shifted from serving Catholics as they wanted to be served, to survival.

What is clear from the above letters is that non-German parishioners preferred going to a German church, as non-Bohemians preferred a Bohemian church. The reasons for Catholics attending a parish of a different nationality are not clear, and this topic is not addressed by the majority of historical narratives on ethnic parishes. Further it is impossible to determine the extent of the cultural mixing from the available records. What is clear is that in some urban areas there was a transition from the community-based, ethnic-centric parishes to mixed congregations that had negative implications for some territorial parishes. Instead of making themselves more attractive to parishioners, the affected pastors turned to the Church hierarchy for the only assistance it had canonical authority to provide: rules regulating the territorial boundaries of parishes and the provision of sacraments to Catholics.

What is interesting is that the debate shifted from how to serve the various Catholic populations to how to keep the numerous Catholic Churches open, emphasizing a preference for *parish rights* over congregant needs. One letter highlights these conflicting goals, and gently questions how parishes are to return to their intended purpose: serving the needs of Catholics. The pastor of Mt. Carmel, John Dolan, wrote on Oct. 5, 1903 that former Archbishop Corrigan urged Mt. Carmel “as a duty to administer the sacraments to all Italians presenting themselves excepting only those from Fr. Cronin’s [neighboring territorial] parish has his full authority for doing so” (Dolan 1903). It appears that Archbishop Corrigan was trying to walk a fine line between allowing Mt. Carmel to fulfill its duty as an ethnic parish to serve the smaller and potentially more

spread out Italian community, with respecting the “sacramental rights” of the neighboring parish.

In the letter, Fr. Dolan remarked that Fr. Cronin had complained to the Archbishop that Mt. Carmel was poaching parishioners from him before, but dismissed those accusations as false. Further, “I am thankful to God and pleased beyond measure if I see an Italian go to mass at all,” referring to Italians’ reputation for consistently missing mass. At this point in his correspondence, Fr. Dolan highlights the difficult position in which he finds himself, trying to balance out the needs of Italian Catholics with the needs of a neighboring parish to survive, financially.

*Sometimes I am really at a loss to know how to act in cases where poor illiterate Italians come from other parishes to have me administer the sacraments. To argue with them seems loss of time, and to send them away I fear gives them [unreadable]. At least judging from the uncomplimentary remarks we frequently hear on such occasions. Perhaps your Grace would suggest some remedy to obviate this difficulty as we have no desire to infringe on the rights of our neighbors, much less to be the cause of scandal to these poor people.*

The evolution of mixed parishes complicated the role of parishes as the central socializing institution for immigrant groups because the parish was no longer solely dedicated to the survival and advancement of a particular group. Instead, pastors are more concerned with staying open and keeping “their” parishioners. Yet if these pastors were as favorably looked upon by all their congregants as they state they were, then they would not leave elsewhere.

Perhaps is also a sign of increased economic standing. All of the narratives discuss the growing economic prosperity of Irish and Germans by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the (mostly poor) wave of Italian immigration began. Perhaps the lack of need of material support is what facilitated the movement of Irish and German Catholics

to other non-ethnic or out-ethnic parishes- they were only going for religious reasons, and the lack of language barrier as more of them learned English made this possible. This would suggest a changing role for the Catholic Church – from that of a socializing institution to a solely religious institution in charge of guiding the faith of her followers.

### **The Creation Of ‘White’ Catholics**

To say that the Church ceased offering social and material support to later-generation immigrant groups in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century would be a stretch of the data available through archives and secondary sources. However it is difficult to ignore the changing role of the Church in immigrant life given the shift away from ethnic-centered parishes. In the last chapter I questioned whether the Catholic Church was becoming less of a socializing institution during a time in which it was becoming less *white*, specifically in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as the Church becomes more *Latino*. However the development of mixed parishes leads me to ask a different question: did the Church become less of a socializing institution precisely as it was *becoming* white? In order to consider this as a possibility, one must first understand how the American Catholic population became white in the first place.

“White” was simply a new way of categorizing who belonged in the American mainstream, functioning as religion did in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While there were racial intonations to the religious identification (the Irish were noted for the “black tint of their skin,” Jacobson 1998, 48) the basis for delineation was in fact, religion. Protestants were believed to be the true Americans, and Catholics were considered immigrants – literal “non-citizens” even well into their second, third, and fourth generations. Catholic

immigration all but ceased with the beginning of World War I (Nelli 1970), and with that decrease, ethnic enclaves – the mechanism of immigrants’ cultural maintenance and retention – weakened. The “ethnic colony and its institutions, especially the press and societies, could not survive the lack of newcomers” (Nelli 1970, 242). This coincided with the first wave of the Great Migration – the massive influx of blacks out of the South looking for jobs in the cities of the Northeast. This led to a shift in defining “American” by race rather than religion and immigration status (Jacobson 1998, 8).

Catholics were well-poised to reap the benefits of this new racial classification. Ethnic enclaves and ethnic parishes were already weakening (as noted by the increase in mixed parishes). Further the leadership engaged in a conscientious response to the resurgence of Nativist hostilities against Catholics accompanying the wave of “new” immigration, and in 1900 established four goals for the Church. They were: 1. ensure that the Church could “grow and prosper”; 2. ward off the nativist attacks that resurged with the arrival of new immigrants; 3. help immigrants Americanize as necessary to accomplish goal number 2; and 4. do all of the above while still preserving immigrant faith (Linkh 1975, 187-188).

This presaged the more direct effort at unification triggered by the United States’ entrance into World War I, as well as the shifting identity of Catholics away from their national heritage to that of an “American.” These efforts solidified in the post WWII era when, on account of the GI Bill, Catholic veterans were able to move outside of the cities, away from their ethnic enclave, to buy new homes in the suburbs. Notably, the suburbs were defined by their *whiteness*, a distinction created by the prohibition of blacks

buying property in the same neighborhoods as whites (Judd and Swanstrom 2012; Rae 2003).

Catholicism became a unifying force in the twentieth century, as the suburban parish helped accelerate community integration for an upwardly mobile middle class population (Skerrett 1987). Catholicism ceased being an ethnic identity as Catholics became increasingly white (McCaffrey et al. 1987).

Few historians comment on the process of the Irish becoming white, perhaps because as one of the oldest Catholic immigrant groups their “whiteness” or acceptability to the American mainstream was already well-established by the beginning of World War I. Such a conclusion can be imputed from discussions about the Irish fear of the negative effect Italian immigrants would have on their reputation and their relationship with American Protestants – comments the Irish could not have made were they not already more or less accepted by the mainstream. In the late 1800s and early 1900s newspapers commented on the goodness of the Irish as “old” immigrants who were industrious as compared to the “new” immigrants who were poor, illiterate criminals who decreased living conditions and suppressed wages (Lanck 1912). Such positive perceptions were based on the economic advancement of Irish who were noted to “have been assimilated and are now te [sic] employees of labor” rather than the poor laborers (Steffens 1911).

German assimilation was also aided by a drop off of immigration after 1900 that led to a significant decline in national parishes. While there were 705 official German national parishes in 1869, that number dropped to 206 by 1916. The advent of the First World War meant that language and culture were no longer beneficial for the German church’s preservation. In addition to the weakening of ethnic ties, Germans had a large

rate of out-marriage to the Irish, further facilitating the creation of a “white” Catholic identity with weak cultural associations and bonds (Dolan 1977).

The Italians who stayed in the US<sup>25</sup> also benefited from the creation of a white American identity. After World War II, Italians began conforming to the American version of Catholicism, in large part facilitated by their improved social and economic position brought on by their participation in the war effort, demonstrations of patriotism, and increased rates of out-marriage. Though Italians maintained some unique cultural customs, the Italian culture was no longer the center of their church experience such that the 1950s Italians attended churches with an annual *feste* rather than *festes* housed in churches (Orsi 1985, 69).

The creation of white Catholics did not eliminate the presence of ethnic or cultural distinctions within the American Catholic Church; the distinctions were simply shifted to account for race rather than nationality. In the present day the “real split within American Catholicism both in demographics and often in attitude, seems to lie between majority white and minority black and Spanish speaking Catholics and not between Catholics of different European derivations” (Hanna 1979, 102). To that end, the same preferential treatment for in-groups previously defined by ethnicity are now defined by race amongst priests and bishops as compared to their congregations.

### **Contemporary Implications Of Mixed Parishes**

Understanding the origins of the white racial identity, particularly as it is applied to the Catholic Church, is one key to defining expectations for Church response to Latino

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<sup>25</sup> Of the estimated 3.8 million Italians who immigrated to the US between 1880-1920, 2.1 million returned to Italy (Dolan 1992).

Catholics today. This is because the history of the Catholic Church as a socializing institution has depended upon the alignment between church membership and leadership along ethnic and national heritage lines. Churches in the historical era offered community support, job opportunities, and political connections – but only for members of the dominant congregation. This is because parishes were established to explicitly serve the needs of specific ethnic or national-heritage groups, a specificity that was necessary given the cultural variations in both social and religious practices. Secondary populations had to fight to carve out their own space for worship and support.

This contestation for place and belonging happened within the context of extreme nativist sentiment that was universally anti-Catholic. Such discrimination did not bring Catholics of different ethnicities together. While discrimination was based on religious denomination, self-identification and immigrant settlement patterns were based upon national origin and related ethnicity. Further, the external pressure led to greater divisions amongst Catholics in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century because the German and Irish Catholics, who were older and more established, resented the renewed negative attention the newer, poorer immigrant groups brought on Catholics as a whole. The additional layer of discrimination faced by new immigrant groups complicated the role of Church as socializing institution since such services and benefits could not be reaped until the ethnic groups had their own space for worship and belonging.

With a touch of irony, the advancement of Catholic immigrant groups through ethnic churches appears to be what brought about the demise of ethnic churches themselves. Correspondence found in the archives of New York demonstrates a weakened attachment to ethnic parishes as evidenced by the increase in mixed parishes,

leading to a change in pastors' concern from attending to a specific ethnic population to being able to keep one's church open. Further, the emphasis on sacraments as the primary means for retaining (or losing) congregants also suggests that churches were becoming a source of religious support, only, rather than for economic advancement or political connections as they were in years prior. The general reference to the increased social and economic and social standing of German and Irish groups at this time reinforce this: it would not make sense that a church would continue to offer such material resources to a population that no longer needs them.

It is entirely possible to maintain separate, ethnic parishes that only attend to religious needs of congregants given the strength of inter-cultural differences in worship practices. However this did not happen because the Irish and Germans were noted for their economic success as well as their degree of *assimilation* – whether that was to each other or to the American mainstream culture depends upon the sources read. Regardless, being assimilated indicates a loss of unique cultural practices that previously kept these two groups apart, making it easier for them to worship in the same parishes. So the increased economic and social mobility of older immigrant groups decreased the role of churches as socializing institutions, and theoretically minimized the role of the parish in immigrant life. Further, steps towards assimilation decreased the viability and necessity of ethnic-specific worship spaces, furthering weakening parish attachment. The resulting increased diversity in mixed parishes facilitated the later development of a non-ethnic, “white” racial identity amongst Catholics.

It is important to note that the loss of ethnic parishes did not also eliminate power struggles between dominant and non-dominant populations – only that the characteristics

delineating the “in” and “out” groups shifted from ethnicity to race. To that end, it appears that the socializing role of the Church also shifted. One author noted that in post World War II America, as Catholics left their inner city, ethnic enclaves for the white suburbs, parishes became the source of middle class behavior and morals in residential neighborhoods (Skerrett 1987). The Church no longer had to provide material resources to a financially established congregation, but it could offer resources for their cultural assimilation into a new racial group. In other words, it is possible that the Church became an institution that helped socialize Catholics into being “white.”

Given this more complicated historical narrative, is it reasonable to expect that a white-dominant Catholic Church act as a socializing institution for Latinos today? There is historical precedent for the Church to offer material resources to immigrant populations that needed it, facilitating their social and economic advancement. Latinos, with some of the lowest educational and economic achievement rates of all ethnoracial groups certainly qualify. Yet the Church as an institution has not been set up for this type of assistance for more than one hundred years, and Latinos lack the representation amongst Church leadership that made such service historically possible. How the Church has and has not adjusted to respond to the needs of a diverse congregation is the subject of the following two chapters.

## Chapter 4

**Constituency Responsiveness and Representation:  
Quantifying Parish-Level Service and Response to Latinos**

This chapter seeks to quantify the American Catholic Church's degree of response to Latinos today, particularly in regards to levels of descriptive representation and Latino population density. As demonstrated in the last chapter, one would be correct to anticipate a high level of support given the Church's historical role in facilitating immigrant groups' social and political mobility. However that success was made possible on account of the proliferation of ethnic parishes – church communities established for the express benefit of specific ethnic groups. There are few truly ethnic parishes serving Latinos today, and many de facto ethnic parishes lack the element of self-determination and Latino leadership seen in the ethnic parishes of times past.

Instead today there are *shared* parishes – the modern equivalent of mixed parishes in the historical times – where there are “two or more cultural groups, each with distinct masses and ministries, but who share the same parish facilities” (Hoover 2014). Sharing does not eliminate the dynamic of power differentials between a dominant and a secondary population, but tends to reinforce the distinction between the two communities. Further, having a shared parish often masks the disparity in how the two groups are treated because the Church does not collect information about the racial demographics of congregant members, nor analyze which subsections of the parish population are most benefiting from provided Church services.

Such gaps in data collection mean there are few sources of information to help answer the question of whether Churches are effectively socializing Latino populations

today.<sup>26</sup> To that end, this paper assembles an original dataset to more accurately measure and predict the presence of socializing services to Latinos, understanding the theoretical importance of such findings to the process of Latino political incorporation.

I rely on theories of constituency response and representation to structure my study, and so examine how the size of the Latino population and presence of a Latino priest or deacon affect the likelihood of Latinos' receiving socializing services through their local Catholic church institution. In accordance with past studies of Latino religious communities, this project calculates the likelihood of having either Spanish mass or any other type of service directed at the Latino community as an indicator of church socialization (Ospino 2014; Matovina 2011).

I focus on three regions with different types of Latino population and calculate the predicted probability of receiving either mass or any other service as the Latino population increases, and with the presence of a Latino priest or deacon. I find that churches are incredibly responsive to population size in regards to providing Spanish mass, but the likelihood of having any other service is quite low. Representation positively and significantly affects the likelihood of churches providing either service for Latino populations less than 60%, as predicted by representation theories. The overarching picture is that Catholic churches are not effectively responding to Latino populations as we would expect given the sheer size of the Latino population. This has extreme negative implications for the Church's ability to facilitate the not only the social advancement of Latino immigrants and their descendants, but also their political

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<sup>26</sup> The largest exception is the study, *Hispanic Ministry in Catholic Parishes*, by Hoffsman Ospino of Boston College. This benefits and limitations of this study are discussed further below.

incorporation and ability to positively affect their life conditions through the political process.

### **Constituency Response and Representation: Countervailing Influences in Determining Church Services**

Political science theories of constituency response and descriptive representation offer theories for predicting the extent to which the Church will respond to the needs of Latino Catholics. Constituency response predicts, simply, that because Latinos are part of the Catholic population, the Church can be expected to respond to their needs (Wilson 1995; Pitkin 1972; March and Olsen 1984). This expectation is bolstered by the fact that Latinos constitute 40% of the Catholic population and are growing in size (Ospino 2014; Ziegler 2011).

Representation theories, as explained in chapter 2, hold that the demographic characteristics of service providers are highly influential in the type and quality of service constituent and group members receive, especially in the cases of ethnic and economic minority populations (Pitkin 1972; Meier 1975; Hinderer 1993). Translated to the Catholic Church, this means that Latino congregants should expect higher levels of service (and socialization assistance) from a Latino pastor or priest, and lower levels from a non-Latino priest. This project is the first to analyze the frequency and effect of co-ethnic leadership on service provision.

Applying descriptive representation to a study of the Catholic Church is interesting because one of the mandates of the Catholic Church is to serve the spiritual, physical, social, and material needs of all people regardless of their demographic features

or background (Mathew 25:40).<sup>27</sup> While this idea is not uniquely Catholic (it is a concept espoused by all Christian denominations) it nevertheless significantly informs Catholic theology. As such it is reasonable to expect that the Catholic Church will attend to the needs of all its followers with no regard for their ethnic, racial, economic, educational, or any other background, cultivating a practice of *substantive* rather than descriptive representation.

There are signs that the American Catholic Church has exerted considerable effort to address the needs of Latino congregants. For example, between 1974-2000 the Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) held three *Encuentros* (national meetings amongst parish leaders ministering to Latino Catholics) in order to devise an action plan for improving service to the Latino community (Paulson 2014).<sup>28</sup> In 1987 the USCCB created a National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry that called for not only welcoming Latinos into the American Church as guests, but making Latinos' *at home* in their parishes (*de ser lugar a ser hogar*). Such homemaking occurs when parishes can provide Latinos with the services they most need and want (USCCB). Spanish masses and facilitating culturally unique religious celebrations, such as the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, are examples of culturally essential services. The Church consistently acknowledges that co-ethnic pastors, while

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<sup>27</sup> "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

<sup>28</sup> The Committee on Hispanic Affairs was relegated to a sub-committee underneath the newly formed Committee of Cultural Diversity as part of a restructuring in 2006. This action significantly detracts from the advancements previously made in serving Latino Catholics. I address this action in a later chapter where I investigate the role of representation amongst the Episcopate, leaving this chapter to a discussion of Latino leadership at the parish level.

preferred, are not *required* to ensure service to Latino congregants.<sup>29</sup> This highlights a fundamental operating belief of the Catholic Church: services provided should be based upon what people need, and not according to the characteristics of those who serve.

In spite of the Church's theological mandate to practice substantive representation, history demonstrates that the co-ethnic priests have indeed been more responsive to minority congregations. The ethnic parishes of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that established churches as socializing institutions focused on serving individual ethnic communities, and that service was predicated upon the community having a co-ethnic priest. It seems impossible for Latinos to achieve that same level of historical representation: while 40% of American Catholics are Latino, only 8% of American clergy are (Ziegler 2011; USCCB 2012).<sup>30</sup> This makes it increasingly important for churches to practice substantive representation, and this study tests whether that is the case.

The key to socialization through churches lays with the provision of a variety of social and material resources outside of the Catholic mass (CARA 2013; USCCB 2012). These resources include culturally relevant services such as a Guadalupe society, Spanish Bible Study, or *quinceñera* celebrations. Material resources include education, job training, and legal aide. Lay people are often the organizers and leaders of such

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<sup>29</sup> Increasing Latino access to leadership positions was one of the core recommendations that came out of the *Encuentro*. This topic will also be dealt with in a later chapter.

<sup>30</sup> One study from 2011 found that 80% of Latinos report having a Latino priest in their church, and that 74% say their congregation is mostly Latino (Ziegler 2011). These numbers seem dubious. It would be plausible to believe with the small number of Latino priests if the Latino population were centralized in a few key areas, making such representation possible. However the Latino population is widely dispersed across the country, making it almost impossible for a few priests to serve them all within their communities. If the numbers are correct, that implies that Latinos are traveling a great deal to find their co-ethnic parish and priest, which limits the effectiveness of the parish as a community center and socializing institution.

ministries, meaning that one can expect that more culturally relevant services will be available as the Latino population increases in size, and that a Latino priest is not necessary for their provision. The pastor must agree to allow such services to take place in the parish, but his presence is not required.

Unfortunately the mere presence of Hispanic ministries easily belies a lack of service and integration into the full parish community much in the way token candidates do not represent full political incorporation of minority groups. Many participants at the “Church and Immigration Conference” (held at the University of Notre Dame in March, 2014) noted that an Office of Hispanic Ministry is often left to handle all “Latino” affairs without support or involvement from the broader congregation, others have noted the feeling of forced separation between Latino and white congregations (Matovina 2011). Such sentiments have been widely acknowledged by a variety of leaders involved in serving the Latino population.

Yet separation between ethnic groups was arguably the foundation of European immigrants’ successful advancement in American society. As such, the voluntary cultural separation of parish communities today could be seen as a marker of improved service to Latino communities, given that national parishes do not exist as they did in the past. Instead there are *shared parishes*, where two or more distinct congregations utilize the same worship space but, for the most part, hold religious services and other events separately (Hoover 2014). Unfortunately the division between Latino and white congregants in shared parishes is not always voluntary as it was in the past, thereby aggravating Latinos’ exclusion and marginalization. As such, the presence of any

Hispanic ministry that exists as a means to facilitate the involuntary separation of two ethnic congregations indicates a level of disservice to Latinos.

Before it can be determined whether Hispanic ministries are being used to serve or separate a congregation, it must first be determined if services are being offered at all. To date, there is only one major and publically available study on Latinos and Hispanic Ministry in the United States: *Hispanic Ministry in Catholic Parishes* by Hoffsman Ospino at Boston College.<sup>31</sup> This survey examines the geographical distribution of parishes with Hispanic Ministry, frequency of Spanish mass compared to the Latino population size, and also creates a statistical portrait of the leaders serving Latino congregations. While invaluable as a resource, particularly given the dearth of national-level information on this topic, this survey is severely limited by two main factors: it only presents information on parishes that already provide Hispanic Ministry; and it defines “Hispanic Ministry” as a ministry provided in Spanish. In order to fully understand how well the Church is responding to Latinos as a major constituent group, we must understand the rate of service provided to Latinos amongst *all* parishes. Further, we cannot limit our examination to those services provided in Spanish. Only one-third of the Latino population is first generation, and while it is impossible to reliably estimate what percentage of the later generation groups prefer to practice their religious and cultural traditions in Spanish, it is impossible to believe that Spanish language ministry is appropriate for all Latinos (a fact acknowledged by Ospino).

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<sup>31</sup> The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) also conducted a study on the availability of Spanish mass as compared to the Latino population density. However it includes all parishes with one Spanish mass a month (Hoover 2014; USCCB 2012). Given the Catholic mandate to attend mass at least once weekly, it is a stretch to count only monthly service as being “responsive.”

To that end, mine is the first study to address the rate of service to Latinos given the universe of all Catholic churches. Further I am also the first to include as broad a spectrum of services as possible in order to fully account for any and all Church efforts.

### **Data and Methods**

Measuring the Catholic Church's capacity to serve her Latino population in spite of the lack of descriptive representation among the clergy requires a centralized data set that includes information about the number and ethnicity of ministers of a given parish, the number of masses, and quantity of culturally-specific ministries. Such information is sometimes collected by individual parishes, but there is no centralized dataset or nationally available information. The only exception to this is priest assignments, but the data do not include any demographic information or records in regards to the types of services the priests advocate or provide.

In response to the absence of data, I compiled a unique data set that includes all Catholic parishes within three regions (Seattle, Yakima, and San Antonio) and then searched online for each church's basic information: address, phone, website (if available), pastor name, other priests or deacons also serving the parish, mass times, and mass languages. I also collected information on any Latino-specific services offered in each parish, such as offices of Hispanic Ministry (there were surprisingly few), Guadalupana societies, offering of quinceñera or other cultural celebrations, social groups, or material resources including immigration assistance or translation services. For those parishes without a website or with incomplete information on the Arch/Diocesan website, I phoned their offices to verify any missing information. After four attempts

(including phones that were not answered or disconnected, and messages that were not returned) I accepted the information found on other sites (such as MassTimes.com) or entered in a “0” for the missing field. Only two parishes out of the final 156 have missing information; 10 have information that was only partially verified. Missing information most commonly concerned whether any deacons served in the parish. I did not include national parishes of other ethnicities (e.g. Polish, Korean, or Chinese) or the few Byzantine Rite churches that exist since they are already involved in dedicated service to a specific ethnic group and are not likely to have significant Latino congregant populations.

I used GIS software to join each church to Census data regarding the Latino population by zip code so that I could analyze the relationship between Latino population density and the likelihood of service provision. Zip code is a less sensitive measure than census tract (zip codes are larger in size), but provides a more realistic way of analyzing the “local community” to which any given parish belongs. In many Archdioceses there is one Catholic parish per zip code and, in decades past, households’ parish membership was determined by zip code rather than personal preference. Where parish boundaries are not determined by zip code, zip defines a reasonably sized area within which parishioners can attend church services without constraints in traffic, limits in transportation, or convenience.<sup>32</sup> As such the zip code provides a realistic approximation (if not definition) of parish boundaries, facilitating my calculation of neighborhood demographics.

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<sup>32</sup> There are many valid reasons for using census tract data instead of zip code data, most importantly that the tracts are defined by the government and include all areas in the U.S., while zip codes only include areas where postal mail is delivered. Also, census tracts are consistent in size and tend to have a more uniform distribution of population between them. As such, future studies that include a comparison of population demographics from different time periods will be conducted at the census tract level, given that multiple tracts can be associated with churches when necessary. For this

I focus this research on three regions: Seattle (WA), Yakima (WA), and San Antonio (TX). I focus on churches within the city limits of Seattle and San Antonio (versus including their entire Archdioceses) as a way to manage data collection because of their large size. In turn I include all counties within the Diocese of Yakima (rather than just examining Yakima city) in order to include the rural and agricultural populations that exist outside of the city. Doing so makes Yakima's sample size closer to that of San Antonio and Seattle, and increases the analytical leverage of the data.

The three chosen regions also present distinct cultural contexts to compare. San Antonio is a historically Latino dominant area. Representative bureaucracy theories presume that ethnic groups are in the minority, which is why having representation in positions of leadership is increasingly important. San Antonio is one of the few Latino-majority cities in the nation. Including it here for analysis allows me to juxtapose the responsiveness of the Catholic Church to Latinos who make up a majority - rather than minority - of their congregant and local population.

In contrast Seattle is a metropolitan city with a fairly small (6.6%) Latino population. Ten years ago Latinos knew to go to St. Mary's in South Seattle if they wished to attend a Spanish mass, regardless of where in (or outside of) the city they lived. Today there are more options, though not many (a total of four churches offer Spanish mass). The small size of the Latino population makes Seattle an excellent case study for Church responsiveness to the needs of a much smaller ethnic population, and is also representative of the majority of Latino congregations across the US where Latinos do not constitute a significant portion of the population.

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analysis that examines a single point in time, however, I contend that zip codes remain the most effective unit of analysis.

Lastly I chose to include the Diocese of Yakima, a largely rural area covering almost half of Eastern Washington, because its Latino population grew to a significant size (from approximately 6% in 1970 to 31% in 2010) only in the last few decades. As such this provides a natural experiment to measure how well the Catholic Church has responded to regional demographic change and the accompanying unique needs of a new population.

All population data comes from the 2010 Census; there are population estimates for cities in 2013, but those estimates were not provided at the county level (which is needed for my Yakima analysis). As such, I stayed with the 2010 data to remain consistent across the regions. I used the variables “Hispanic or Latino of any Race,” and “Total Population” to calculate the Latino population density in each zip code. Information on the demographic composition of parishes is not collected and so is not available for analysis. However, even with the declining rate of Latino Catholicism due to conversions and those who leave religion entirely more Latinos identify as Catholics than any other denomination (68%, Funk and Martinez 2014; O'Loughlin 2015). As such, it makes sense that a higher percentage of Latinos in the general population will correspond to a larger Latino congregation in the local church, particularly since parishes are historically attended by those who live within close proximity.

I measure descriptive representation by the presence of a Latino pastor, priest, or deacon. A Pastor is the priest who is in charge of the church and church community (or parish). When parish communities are particularly large, a second priest can also be assigned to serve, though the pastor retains full authority over decision making within the parish. A deacon is a minister who serves many of the same functions as a priest within a

parish, but does not have the full authority to perform the sacraments (sacred rituals) as priests do. Because there are so few Latino priests (and priests in general) I include the presence of Latino deacons as a marker of service in my analysis because the appointment of deacons when there are not sufficient priests to fulfill the pastoral duties of a parish demonstrates an effort to provide Latino ministerial support.

My dependent variables measure the presence of Spanish (or bilingual) mass, and any type of social, cultural, or material service directed at Latinos (referred to as *services* for simplicity). I also calculate the effect of Latino population density on the likelihood of having a Latino pastor, priest, or deacon given the importance of co-ethnic representation to the functioning of ethnic parishes as socializing institutions. I treat Latino minister,<sup>33</sup> Spanish mass, and Services as dichotomous variables where the simple presence of any Latino leader, mass, or service generates a one.

I use having a Latino minister<sup>34</sup> and density of Latino population within the parish's zip code as my key independent variables to regress on Spanish mass and Services. Future studies should include other demographic data, such as the education and income levels within the parish boundaries, household size, and language spoken at home. However this portion of my study focuses exclusively on the effect of ethnic demographics – amongst the population and Church leadership – on services received by Latino congregants in the Catholic Church because the other demographic information is

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<sup>33</sup> It would be more accurate to inquire about the ethnic make up of all leaders serving at the included parishes (not just pastors and deacons, but also youth minister, directors of religious education, etc.) however the most basic inquiries for parish and leadership information were met with a great deal of hesitation and suspicion. I doubt that asking by phone about the ethnic background of all parish leadership would be any better received, and the sheer number and location of the included parishes precludes making personal visits for face-to-face interviews and inquiries.

<sup>34</sup> I use the term "minister" as shorthand to include all pastors, priests, and deacons. I recognize that this term can also refer to those in charge of various offices of ministry, but do not use the term in that way in this research.

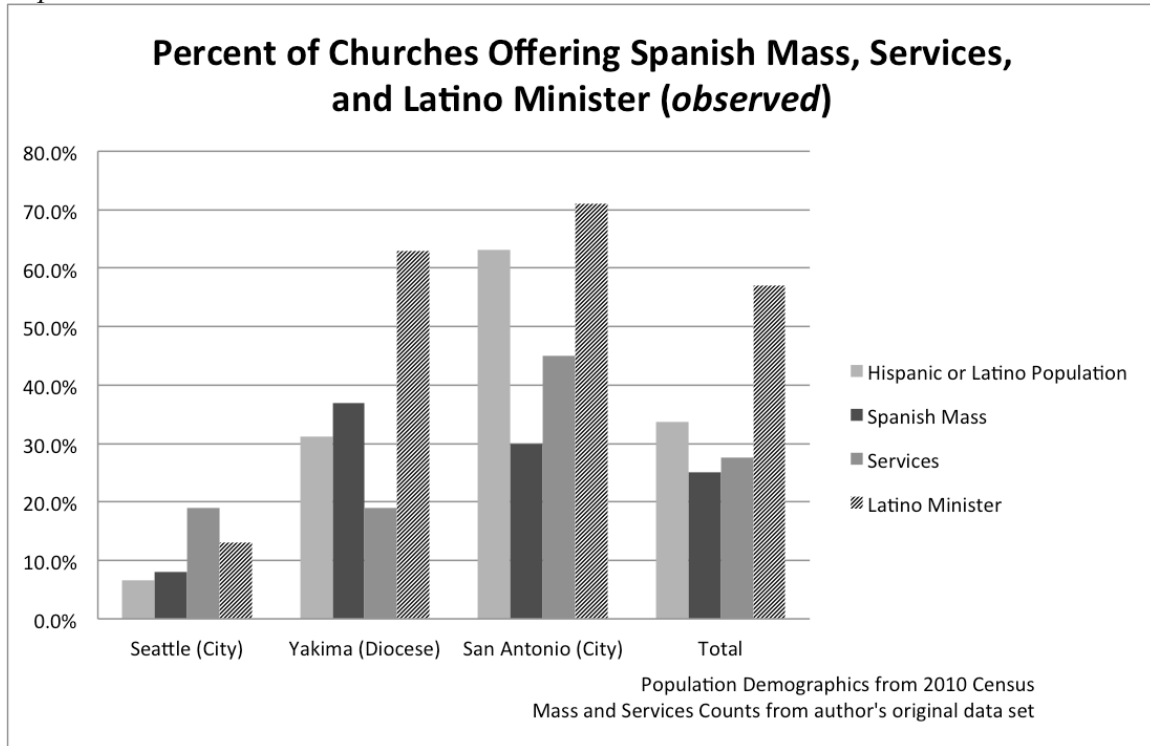
not available. Such information would have to be imputed, which would increase the statistical noise and decrease the validity of my findings. As such I have limited my analyses to the effect of descriptive representation and Latino population density on likelihood of Spanish mass and Service. I also control for city to make sure there are not any region-specific variations that skew my findings.

My initial analyses calculate the observed rates of service and representation using census data for population numbers for each city or region. I then use logistic regression to produce predicted probabilities of the outcome variables, making my findings generalizable to churches across the country with differing levels of Latino population density and descriptive representation. I interact the variables population density and Latino minister so that I can use the base terms to calculate the individual effect of each ministry on probability of Spanish Mass or Services. I also created a “region” term that holds “Seattle” as its base in order to control for any region-specific effects; the findings were not affected by controlling for another region instead of Seattle.

### **Findings: the Effect of Population and Representation on Service Provision**

My initial findings are that the Church does increase its socialization efforts as the Latino population increases, but the response is much more positive for smaller Latino populations if there is a Latino minister. In the aggregate, the observed data demonstrate a responsive Church. Overall, the Church responds with Spanish masses, Hispanic ministries, and Latino ministers at a rate close to that of the Latino population share (see Figure 7 below).

Figure 7: Observed Rate of Spanish Mass, Cultural Services, and Descriptive Representation



The first bar of each column represents the portion of that city or area's population that is Latino, based on the 2010 Census information. The second bar represents the percentage of all masses in the studied regions that are offered in Spanish (including bilingual services). Only weekend masses that fulfill the Sunday obligation are included. The third bar demonstrates the percentage of all churches that offer some form of Latino directed services, whether it is an office of Hispanic Ministry or translation services (as described above). The fourth bar shows the percentage of churches with a Latino pastor, parish priest, or deacon.

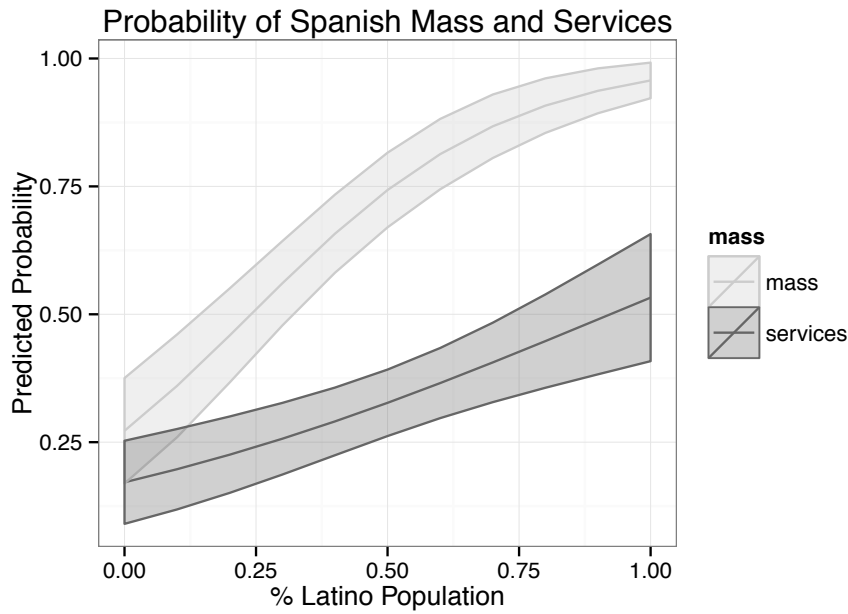
The total column shows that, in the aggregate, the rate of service provision is close to what would be expected given the size of the Latino population. Across my sample, on average 25% of churches have Spanish mass, 28% offer some form of Latino-specific services, and 30% have a Latino pastor, priest, or deacon. This first assessment

suggests that the Church is succeeding in attending to her Latino congregants' needs in spite of the shortage of Latino priests.

I then subject my findings to more rigorous analysis in order to test their generalizability after accounting for relevant covariates. The relatively small sample size makes maximum likelihood estimations of the dependent variables both useful and necessary, allowing me to calculate the probability of each event with a greater degree of certainty (regression findings are listed in Appendix A).

I first look at the effect of population size on the probability of Spanish mass and services. I find that as the probability of a church offering a Spanish mass increases at a greater rate than the size of the Latino population itself: an area with a Latino population density of 50% has a 75% chance of having a Spanish mass (see Figure 8, below). In contrast, the probability of services is extremely low as compared to the size of the Latino population. Churches surrounded by an E almost entirely Latino population have only a 50% likelihood of offering any type of service to the Latino community other than Spanish Mass. This has extremely negative implications for the ability of Catholic churches to serve as socializing institutions for Latinos.

*Figure 8: Predicted Probability of Spanish Mass and Cultural Services as the Latino Population Increases*



Yet I am also interested in the effect of having a Latino pastor, priest, or deacon on socialization within churches. I find that, as predicted by theories of descriptive representation, the presence of a co-ethnic minister positively and significantly increases the likelihood of having both Spanish Mass and Services when the Latino population is in the minority (see figures 9 and 10, below).

Figure 9: Comparing the Predicted Probability of Spanish Mass as the Latino Population Increases With and Without Descriptive Representation

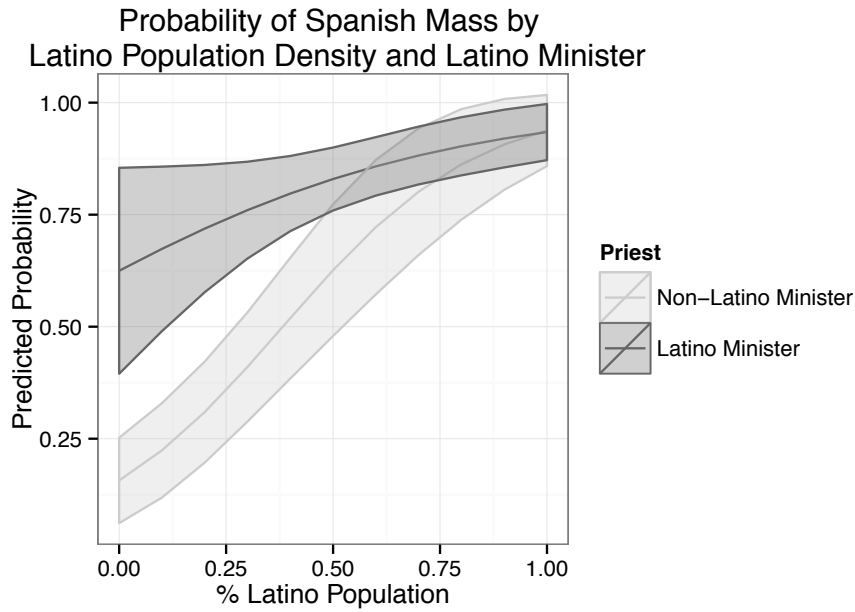
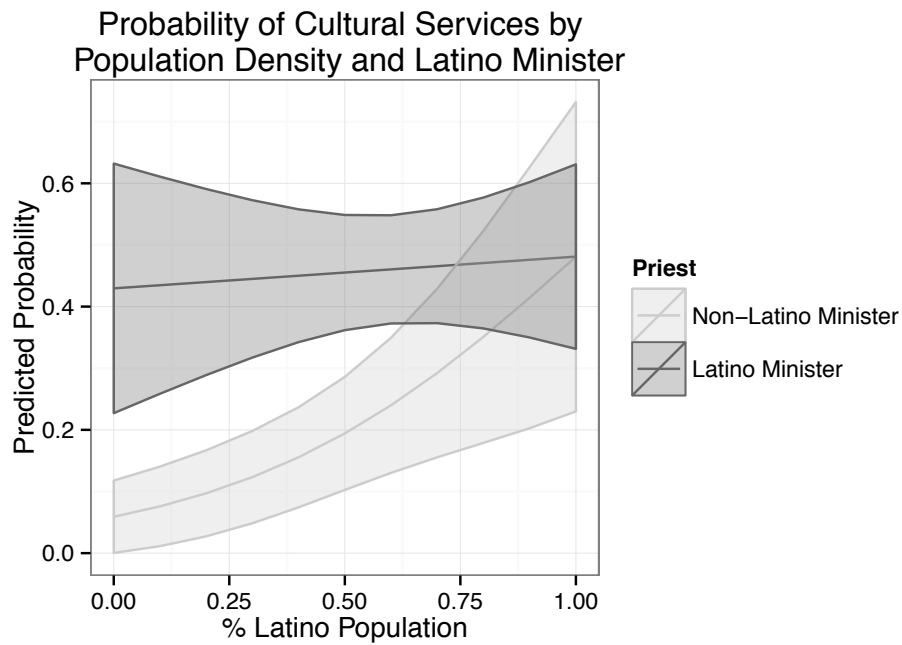
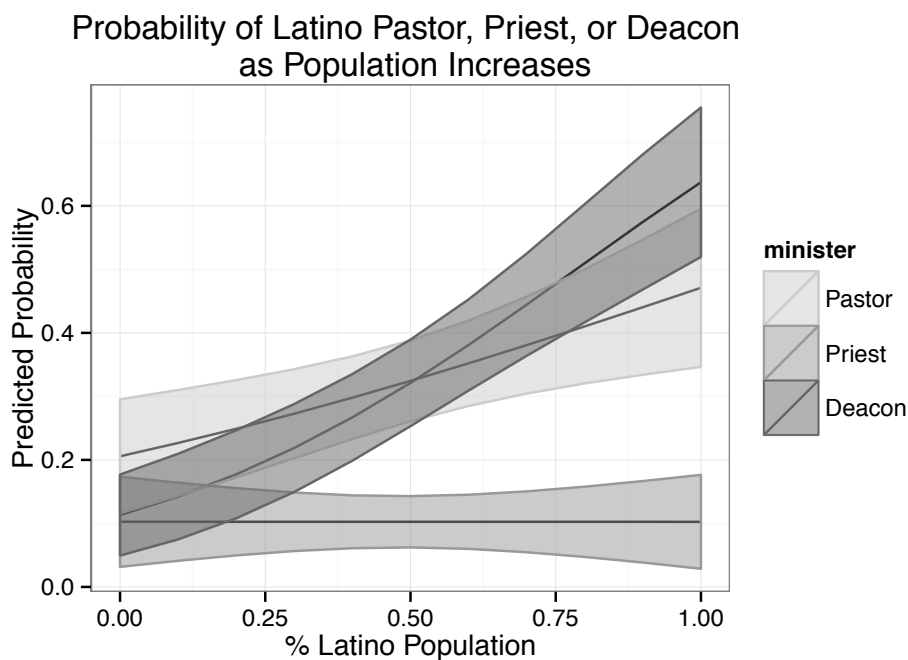


Figure 10: Comparing the Predicted Probability of Cultural Services as the Latino Population Increases With and Without Descriptive Representation



The clear and positive relationship between having a Latino minister and having Spanish Mass and Services provided by a parish makes providing co-ethnic priests and deacons in and of itself an act of service to the Latino community, as it was for past immigrant groups within the Catholic church. To that end, I analyze the probability of having a Latino minister as the Latino population around a parish increases.

*Figure 11: Predicted Probability of Having a Latino Minister as the Latino Population Increases*



Pastors – the lead priests in parishes – are the most important figure regarding service provision because they are the ones who makes decisions regarding whether or not to say mass in Spanish, to allow variations in celebrations to incorporate cultural traditions, and to bring in or allow other types of services to be provided to the congregation. I find that as the Latino population increases, so too does the likelihood that parishes will have a Latino pastor (see Figure 11, above), although even the largest Latino populations only have less than 50% probability of having a Pastor. The small number of Latino priests is most likely the reason for this low probability.

Latino Deacons are more likely than Latino Pastors once the Latino population is larger than 50%. Deacons are an important part of parish life, particularly when there is not a pastor available to serve, or when the congregation is too large to be served by only one person. Deacons are official ministers of the Church, but do not have the authority to perform many sacraments that are central to Catholic life<sup>35</sup>. Most notably deacons cannot bless the Eucharist for communion or hear confession, but are allowed to baptize and officiate weddings. They can also give the homily during mass and counsel congregant members. In this way deacons fill in an important pastoral function in a parish, but do not have the authority to fulfill all of the religious needs of a parish on their own. Once the population surpasses 50%, the probability of having a Latino deacon increases exponentially, which can be interpreted as an attempt at representation by church officials, particularly given the shortage of Latino priests.

In contrast, the probability of having a Latino priest (who does not serve as the pastor) remains relatively flat. Many parishes will have a second or third priest when the congregation is large enough to need more pastoral support – e.g. to say multiple masses on Sunday, hear confessions, perform weddings, etc. A second priest is historically an effective way of attending to the needs of an ethnically split congregation, such as when immigrants from a different country than that of the pre-existing congregation come into the parish (e.g. Italians to an Irish parish, Latinos to a “white” parish). Today having a second priest is increasingly rare because of the shortage of priests, generally speaking. Latino priests form a small subset of an already small population, as such it is not

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<sup>35</sup> There are seven sacraments, or signs of the sacred, in the Catholic faith: baptism, reconciliation (confession of sin), communion, confirmation, marriage, holy orders, and anointing of the sick.

surprising that the likelihood of a second Latino priest is unaffected by an increase in the Latino population.

### **Reaffirming the Importance of Representation Within the Church**

Theories of constituency response predict that the Catholic Church would be incredibly responsive to Latino Catholics today since Latinos constitute 40% of the American Catholic body and are the only numerically significant growing population of Catholics. This expectation is bolstered by the dominant historical narrative that tells us churches have historically been the primary socializing institution for immigrant groups and their descendants, effectively promoting their social, economic, and political advancement. I found evidence to support these expectations: Catholic churches respond to the needs of growing Latino populations both by providing mass in Spanish (the most basic form of welcome possible from a church) and appointing Latino pastors and deacons. However it is impossible to determine if the number of Spanish masses are sufficient for the congregation size. Further the positive rate of assigning Latino leadership must be considered within the larger context of a well-documented *lack* of Latino ministers; this means that available leadership may be concentrated in the areas with the largest Latino population. This is only logical, yet it also means that non-majority Latino populations who could potentially benefit even more from a Latino priest are going without representation.

Yet the likelihood of churches providing the other services necessary to the process of socialization are surprisingly unresponsive to increases in the Latino population. This is striking for a number of reasons, the first of which is that providing a

Spanish mass to a large Latino congregation is, quite literally, the least a parish can do in being responsive. Second, cultural services such as bible study or Guadalupe societies do not require pastoral involvement; these groups can be organized and run entirely by lay leadership. Given a large Latino population, there should, theoretically, be a number of people available to lead and contribute to the community. Failure to authorize or create leaders who can contribute to the parish negatively implicates the ability of the Church to provide both civics training as it did in the past, as well as socialization opportunities that can promote Latino security and advancement.

Descriptive representation offers a potentially more effective explanation for predicting when churches will respond to Latino needs in spite of the Catholic Church's theological mandate to serve all congregants equally, a position that also has historical precedent given the effectiveness of ethnic parishes in serving their dominant congregations. To that end, I did find that the presence of Latino ministers had a positive and significant effect on predicting the likelihood of both Spanish Mass and Services when Latinos constitute less than 50% of the general population. This demonstrates that levels of representation amongst church ministers does affect the quality of service received by Latinos, particularly when they are not the dominant ethnic group. This is an important finding because, even though the Latino population continues to grow, for the most part Latinos are still in the numerical minority in their region and church. Given that only 8% of priests and 15% of deacons are Latino, it becomes doubtful that it is possible to achieve the necessary levels of descriptive representation to ensure churches will provide sufficient socialization services to Latinos.

A more nuanced way of conducting this research considers the *rate* of representation and service provision. This involves calculating the percentage of priests and deacons who are Latino and the percentage of all masses that are said in Spanish versus another language. These numbers would then be compared to the demographics of the congregations – what percentage of attending parishioners are Latino – to produce a calculated rate of service. Unfortunately this level of analysis is unfeasible due to a lack of data.

Data regarding parish level demographics is not available for a number of reasons. First, parish registration data very rarely includes racial or ethnic profiles. Second, lists of registered parishioners are not accurate reflections of the attending population. Many populations (including Latinos, young adults, and retired adults) tend to not register, or attend mass at a different church than the one in which they are registered. Third, the Census does not ask for respondents' religious affiliation, making it difficult to cross-reference datasets in order to approximate congregational demographic characteristics. Lastly, data at the parish level is not considered public information; while some parishes publish statistics about their parishioners, not all do, making it an unreliable information source for large-scale analysis.

One alternative is mass counts. From my understanding, almost every Diocese and Archdiocese performs an annual or biannual mass count where the number of attendees at all services on a given (non-holiday) weekend are tallied. Some Archdioceses (such as Philadelphia) also ask their pastors to estimate the racial makeup of their congregation. The main problem with mass counts is that less than half of Catholics attend mass every week, meaning that, on average, anywhere from one quarter

to one half of the congregation will not be included in the official tally. Repeating the count over subsequent weeks is a potential solution to this problem, but counters would need to somehow issue unique identifiers to avoid double counting those sitting in the pews.<sup>36</sup> In spite of its limitations, mass counts are currently the most reliable means for estimating parish size, which is particularly useful when comparing rates of service between parishes.

I formally requested the mass count data for the parishes included in my analysis. The office of the Curia in the Archdiocese of San Antonio declined to release the information to me citing privacy issues. I do have the information on parish populations that was printed in San Antonio's Archdiocesan Directory, though those tabulations report household numbers rather than individual parishioners. The statistician for the Archdiocese of Seattle and the Archives Director at the Diocese of Yakima both agreed to provide information, but did not provide any information after repeated follow up requests.

Mass counts will help in calculating rates of service in regards to Spanish masses and ethnic representation among ministers, but rates are not a viable tool for analyzing the probability of parishes providing the Services key to the process of socialization. The presence of an Office of Hispanic Ministry or cultural association (such as the Guadalupana society) does not accurately communicate the number of services that are provided to the congregation. Rate might be viable approach if I could calculate the number of people served by a particular ministry, either as compared to membership in

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<sup>36</sup> 40% of Latino Catholics Attend weekly; 44% attend monthly or less; 15% attend seldom or never per Pew (Pew Project 2014). Regardless of race or ethnicity, approximately half of all American Catholics attend mass "at least once a month," whereas less than 24% attend weekly, per the CARA institute (Pew Project 2014).

other church ministries or to the parish population as a whole. Unfortunately, as discussed above, any calculation based on parish membership numbers quickly becomes complicated and generates problems with accuracy.

It will be impossible to complete a more complete analysis of the Catholic churches' patterns of socialization through service provision without a large scale change in the churches' own approach to data collection and data sharing. Future works, however, can focus on Latinos themselves in an attempt to discern which organizations – churches or otherwise – play the greatest role in their socialization patterns. Further, investigations should be completed into how socialization leads to political incorporation for Latinos. Completing these analyses will help develop a clearer picture of the importance of socializing institutions to political engagement of non-dominant groups.

The primary conclusion of this chapter, however, is that local churches are not adequately responding to Latinos as ethnic parishes did in historical times. Two significant conditions have changed between the historical era and now: the hierarchy of the church is now based on race rather than ethnicity, and the structure of the church is federal rather than confederated. As I demonstrated in chapter 3, the characteristics that determine an in-group's dominance do not matter as much as the fact of the dominance itself. To that end, it is no surprise that Latinos are not being well attended to in parishes that are dominated by an Anglo hierarchy. This was the same situation experienced by the Italians in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. So then, part of the story of church inattention to Latinos can be explained by a lack of descriptive representation.

Can the changed organizational structure also play a role in explaining the current level of disservice to Latinos? This seems an odd question given that there is nothing

inherent in a federal structure that precludes local service provision, particularly when the locus of canonical authority resides with priests and bishops. However if the USCCB itself does not prioritize a response to Latinos, this could have a negative impact on parish willingness to respond to Latinos given the USCCB's agenda-setting abilities.

## Chapter 5

**Does the USCCB Prioritize Latino Catholics?  
Examining the Institutional Effect of Unification  
on Church Response to Diversity**

In the last chapter I found that local parishes have an uneven response to Latino communities. While many churches appear ready to provide a Spanish mass, it is unclear whether the number of masses being offered are sufficient. Further, there is an incredibly low rate of culturally specific services that would contribute more directly to the well being of the Latino community, even though these services are traditionally organized and run by lay leaders. It is entirely possible that these findings are simply a continuation of the Church tradition to preference the dominant in-group to the detriment of secondary populations, particularly those lacking representation amongst the Church hierarchy. However it is difficult to dismiss the current level of inattention since almost 40% of American Catholics are Latino, and by all accounts represent the future of a viable American Catholic Church. In other words, given the national perspective afforded by a federal organization, the Church should recognize the importance of the Latino population, and do all it can to keep them within the faith. The efforts of the national church will not necessarily be reflected in the behaviors of local leaders since their realms of influence do not directly overlap. To that end, it is necessary to examine the national church body in its own right in order to understand the full extent of the American Catholic Church's response to Latinos under a federal system of organization.

I conduct a content analysis of USCCB news releases and General Assembly Meeting agendas in order to identify the priorities of the national church body. I logically

conclude that the issues and populations that the USCCB is most concerned about will be the ones they also talk about. Given Latinos large share of the Catholic congregation, one would expect that the Church be in the midst of great conversation regarding how to serve Latino Catholics today both at the local and the national level. I find that, surprisingly, the frequency with which Latino Catholics are mentioned is grossly disproportionate to the size of the Latino Catholic population in the US. This finding paints a picture of gross neglect and disservice of Latinos and immigrants by the USCCB that begs for explanation beyond the poor decision making of individual bishops.

I posit that one reason for USCCB inattention to Latino and immigrant Catholics is the structure and organization of the USCCB itself, which exacerbates the problems caused by a lack of Latino representation amongst the episcopate. The national organization was created in order to serve an *American* Catholic congregation, and to present a unified image of American Catholics to the rest of the United States (Warner 1995; Gleason 1979). The national organization has never explicitly deviated from that goal which, I posit, is the reason why it has never substantively addressed issues of diversity, a condition that contradicts the depiction of a unified Catholic body.

### **The Significance Of The National Church Body**

In discussing the socialization efforts of churches for immigrant groups, one automatically thinks of the local parishes. This is because the church within one's community can be the source of significant tangible and intangible benefits that directly contribute to the improvement of people's lives. Examples include education, job opportunities, friendship and community, spiritual direction, and political connections.

Because service is traditionally founded at the local level and because the USCCB's lacks canonical authority over the behaviors of local parishes, it is possible to argue that the Catholic Church can effectively respond to Latinos' needs without involving the national institution so long as service is provided at the local level. I disagree.

One of the basic signs of inequality is restricting certain groups' access to available resources at all levels. As such, in order to fully serve Latino Catholics, their needs and concerns must be acknowledged and addressed at the local *as well as* the national levels. Doing so has the power to set the agenda of the national Church body – drawing attention to the fact that Latinos are a growing population within the Church, normalizing acceptance of Latinos and their various cultural religious practices, and providing concrete resources to assist mixed or shared parishes in becoming unified congregations.

### **Data And Methods**

This paper runs content analysis on the agenda items of the USCCB general meeting, presidential addresses, and news releases in order to determine the priorities of the USCCB as an institution. I use descriptive coding to place each data piece into one of eight categories: Business, Church, Family Values, Social Values, Politics, International Relations, Ecumenism, and Sexual Abuse. I give items a secondary code to indicate which specific issues each item addresses within its general category.

The business category refers to anything that is necessary for the running of the church as an organization; this includes elections, appointments, financial reports, scheduled events, etc. The church category refers to matters of the liturgy (regulations

regarding the mass celebration), faith, or theology. Topics such as changing the wording of a prayer, observance of a holy day, descriptions of papal teachings – anything that has to do with worship or propagation of the faith that is centrally rooted in theology or Church tradition is placed in this category.

I delineate the topics included under Family Values and Social Values according to the commonly known political deviations. Family values, also known as moral values, have long been associated with the Religious Right and encompass the political issues concerning the family, life, and sexuality. This includes marriage (both promoting traditional marriage and protesting same-sex marriage), birth control, pornography, abortions, and stem cell research. I also include “religious liberty” and healthcare as family values because the USCCB has exclusively used these terms in reference to discussions of birth control and abortion. Social Values, in contrast, are traditionally associated with the political Left and include topics covering poverty and economics, immigration, social justice, diversity (including Latino concerns), agriculture and environment, and criminal justice. Although the main concern of this dissertation chapter is whether or not the USCCB draws attention to Latinos and immigrants, I left those issues as sub-categories because both have historically been covered under the umbrella of “social justice” issues. It will be obvious if the USCCB addresses Latinos in a substantive manner in the second wave, issue-coding.

Items are coded under “politics” if the intention of the post was explicitly political, in the American context, and did not concern the Family or Social Values issues. Examples of items under the “politics” category include bishops’ reference to political parties, specific politicians, or political elections. The IR category is used for any

item that refers to an international condition or event, including military events, foreign policy, foreign aid, or natural disasters (such as a typhoon or earthquake). The remaining two codes are Ecumenism – for when the item is focused on inter-denominational or inter-religious discussions, and Sexual Abuse, in reference to anything regarding the sexual abuse scandal. Table 1 (below) shows both the frequency and rate of each code. It is important to include all topics in this analysis (and not just political topics, or social value topics, for example) to assess the frequency with which bishops make statements on any topic. Paints a clearer picture of the variety of topics that the bishops discuss, and the frequency with which those topics are broached. This allows us to set a baseline expectation for how often the bishops will mention an issue that is important to them, rather than judging the bishops with an arbitrary ruler. This does not change our expectation that bishops will discuss issues most important to them more frequently, but rather provides a more objective expectation of what that level of frequency should be.

This analysis examines the General Assembly Meetings of the USCCB from 2011-2014, the Presidential Addresses of those meetings, and USCCB news releases on the USCCB news website. The General Assembly is a time for all bishops to come together to discuss the most important issues to the national church, and also in their dioceses. The meetings are also the time for the bishops to create agendas and action plans for the coming year. A total of 140 agenda items were identified and coded in this analysis.

Because the agendas of the meetings are fairly set (often filled with general business items, such as approval of budgets, election of officers, and reports from all committees) it may not be possible to use agenda items to determine which issues warrant

the most of the bishops' time and attention. Also, half of each annual meeting is closed to the public and so it is impossible to know which topics the bishops address. As such I also examine the Presidential Address of those General Assemblies in order to determine which issues the President of the USCCB chooses to highlight, or what message he sends to the public about the priorities of that meeting. Analyzing the speeches for content by paragraph would be tedious and unnecessary for this investigation since the tone remains constant and all paragraphs build to make one or two main points. As such the speeches are analyzed according to the content of their overall message.

Given the restricted nature of the General meetings and presidential addresses I also examined USCCB news releases between 2010 and 2014. The Office of Media Relations prepares the news releases as part of their duties representing the bishops to the public and external media groups (USCCB).

These web articles demonstrate which topics the Bishops feel are important enough to speak on and draw public attention to. The news releases are neither limited by space (since the site is electronic) or time since there are no publishing or reviewing processes to go through as with a print media. More importantly, the USCCB does not depend on sponsorship or paid subscriptions to keep running. This means the news content is exclusively driven by the bishops' priorities, rather than by the interests of a readership base, providing an honest assessment of the bishops' priorities.

I coded a total of 1038 news items published between 2010 (when this iteration of the USCCB website began<sup>37</sup>) and 2014. News releases from 1997-2010 are housed on the old USCCB website; unfortunately all links are broken and inaccessible. After several

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<sup>37</sup> The USCCB created a new website in 2010 and this is the only active site. It appears some news release data is missing from the earliest months: the site only has one article listed for February and none for March or April of 2010.

communication attempts with various USCCB offices I was informed that all information on the old website is not available electronically. Hard copies of all USCCB news releases are housed in the archives at Catholic University in Washington D.C. This also applies to meeting agendas and presidential addresses prior to 2011. Because of this limitation, I completed my analysis for the four years that were available online.

*Table 1: Frequency of Primary Descriptive Categories*

Category	Business	Church	Family Values	Social Values	Politics	IR	Ecumenism	Sexual Abuse
Percent (count)	29% (342)	13.4% (159)	15.1% (179)	16.5% (195)	3% (36)	15.5% (183)	4% (47)	1.2% (15)

Of the total 1182 items I coded (139 General Meeting items, 4 presidential addresses, 1039 news releases) I found that business items were the most frequent category by far (29%). Social Values, Family Values, and IR are mentioned with similar frequency (from 15.1 to 16.5%), closely followed by Church issues (13.4%). The least frequent codes were “Ecumenism” (only 4% of all items), politics (3%), and “sexual abuse” (1%).

It is not surprising that “business” is the most frequent category since it includes items such as appointments and retirements, which are a frequent occurrence in any agency as large as the Catholic Church. On the opposite end, the declining relevance of the sex abuse scandal is unexpected given the size of the problem, the continuation of allegations, and remaining fallout from previous lawsuits. The USCCB divides its attention evenly in regards to social and political *issues* as delineated by the codes “social values”, “family values”, and “international relations.” The second wave coding will reveal if such fairness continues in regards to specific issue topics.

I theorized that the goal of serving a singular, unified Church precluded the national body from addressing issues that highlight diversity and looked to the USCCB statements and actions in order to test that hypothesis. I found that Immigration, an increasingly salient national political topic that directly affects multiple national groups, is mentioned 5.5% of the time. While this sounds low, poverty issues (including economic equality) are mentioned at a similar rate: 5.2% (see Table 2). Diversity – referring to any topic relating directly to cultural incorporation and race relations - is mentioned significantly less (1.2%). Most importantly, my dissertation questions whether the Church serves Latinos as the largest non-white congregant population in the American Catholic Church. While immigration is a part of that service since fully two-thirds either are first generation or have parents who immigrated, immigration remains a distinct issue from how to serve all Latino Catholics. In comparison to Latinos' 33-40% portion of the American Catholic population, Latinos were specifically mentioned by the USCCB a total of six (6) times in the general meetings, presidential addresses, and news releases. That is too few mentions to constitute even 1% of all coded items.

In some ways calculating the rate of mention in relation to all issues occludes the true priorities of the bishops. Instead I need to calculate how frequently all social and political issues are mentioned in order to get a real sense of how frequently the bishops mention Latinos as compared to other American political and social issues. To that end I calculated the rate of each second-wave issue according to the total number of Social Values and Family Values mentions. Results are also listed in Table 2, below. I found that immigration and poverty issues are mentioned with similar frequency (15%). Latinos are still mentioned with a gross lack of frequency as compared to both other social values

issues and their portion of the population. What about in comparison to other political topics? I also calculated the rate with which family values issues are mentioned in order to determine if the low rate of Latino mentions is normal, and if the frequency of immigration and poverty mentions are abnormally high.

*Table 2: Frequency of Social Values Issues Categories*

Social Values Issues	Latinos	Immigration	Diversity	Poor
% of all coded items	0%	5.5%	1.2%	5.2%
% of political and social items	1.4%	15.8%	3.6%	15.1%
Count	(6)	(65)	(15)	(62)

Abortion – a topic the bishops are commonly known for addressing, particularly during election season, is only directly mentioned 2.9% of the time in comparison to all issues, and 8.3% of American political mentions (see Table 3, below). Marriage – including both the sanctity of marriage and anti-same-sex marriage exhortations constitute 4.9% of all items, and 14.1% of political/social mentions. The most frequent sub-category in the Moral Values code is religious liberty, which appears 6.0% of the time in all coded items, but constitutes 17.3% of the American political issue mentions.

*Table 3: Frequency of Family Values Issues Categories*

Family Values Issues	Religious Liberty	Marriage	Abortion
% of all coded items	6.0%	4.9%	2.9%
% of political and social items	17.3%	14.1%	8.3%
Count	(71)	(58)	(34)

This frequency analysis reveals that religious liberty is the most pressing Family Values issue to the bishops, that marriage is still a priority, and that abortion – though addressed – has lessened in saliency in comparison to other family issues. Further, it is

clear that the bishops do not care more about family values than social values issues, and that the most important family values issue (religious liberty) is mentioned with approximately the same frequency as both immigration and poverty issues. In other words – there is not a huge imbalance between social and family values issues – until we consider the topic of interest: Latinos.

Frankly, no comparative analysis is needed to see that Latinos are not one of the bishops' priorities with only six mentions in 5 years. There is no way to explain or understand why the bishops do not address Latinos, their needs, or service to them given 1) the size of the Latino population and 2) Catholic theology's insistence upon service to all.

It is worth mentioning that the USCCB does respond to diversity issues, generally, and the needs of Latinos and immigrants, specifically in another (perhaps more concrete) way. The many offices of the USCCB include ones specifically dedicated to Cultural Diversity, Migration and Refugee Services, and Migration Policy. In some respects it seems more important to have an office that actively works to address the needs of any given congregation than lip service to an issue in the media. I do not deny the quality or value of the work done by these offices. What I do question is the ability of these offices to affect change and work to improve needy congregants' living situations if they do not have the vocal and active support of their bishops. The USCCB was created to be a national voice for Catholics, drawing attention to issues of inequality on a national scale to such an extent as to be able to positively influence policy. Yet the USCCB does not exert any influence over political issues on which it does not produce a statement. I

posit that one explanation for this incredible neglect lies in the institutional organization of the USCCB itself.

### **The American Catholic Church As A Political Institutional System**

A *system* is defined as “a set of elements or parts that is coherently organized and interconnected in a pattern or structure that produces a characteristic set of behaviors, often classified as its ‘function’ or ‘purpose’” (Meadows 2008). Though developed as a scientific term to understand biological and environmental phenomena, systems theory is also used for understanding the behavior of human systems and organizations. People are the independent elements that become connected to each other through association or belonging in a common organization that works towards a set goal. This is an extremely useful analytical tool when trying to understand the behavior of institutions or groups – one must first understand the goal towards which the institution is working before one can understand the behavior of the organization’s members.

Political Organization Theory is highly compatible with systems theory, stating that an individual’s behavior is determined by his or her role in an organization; the requirements of that role are defined by what the organization needs in order to both achieve its goals and also to survive (Wilson 1995). March and Olsen (1984) explain that institutions define the norms that subsequently determine appropriate behavior for individuals. In other words, individual behaviors indicate the goals and priorities of an organization. Yet in order to fully understand the goals towards which individuals are working, one must also consider the historical context of that institution. Present behavior and expectations for behavior are implicitly affected by past experience. In other words,

institutions learn what types of behavior help and harm institutional goals, knowledge that can modify the expected behavior of individual members so that the original organizational goal can still be achieved (Sanders 2006).

This means that if we wish to fully understand the goals and priorities of the USCCB today we must examine the behavior of its members (the bishops) in order to identify the issues they prioritize and goals they work towards. We must also examine the purpose of the USCCB when it was created, because those goals determined the structure of the organization that continues to influence the behavior of the bishops through time. Without changing both the structure and the goals of the institution, it is logical to expect the organization to operate with the same end it had in mind at its founding.

The USCCB originated in 1917 as the National Catholic War Council within the context not only of war, but also a continued and pervasive nativist, anti-Catholic sentiment. Though the Irish succeeded in “passing” as American through their social and political advancement (which resulted from the organization and assistance provided by their Catholic parishes), nativist sentiment returned in response to the wave of “new” immigrants at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – including many Italian and Polish Catholics who were seen as dirty, uneducated, and criminal (Ignatiev 1995; Orsi 1985; Guglielmo 2003; Higham 1955). At that time it was important for all Catholics to prove that they were Americans in order to preserve themselves against nativist attacks, and also to allow for their social advancement.

Once war broke out in Europe it was doubly important, particularly for German and Italian Catholics, to prove that their loyalty was to the US and not their native countries. One of the things American Catholics did to demonstrate their patriotism was

to enlist in the military – something they did with such vigor that the percentage of Catholic servicemen was larger than the Catholic portion of the US population (Cogley 1973).<sup>38</sup> The American bishops created the National Catholic War Council to coordinate Catholic involvement in the War effort and ensure that Catholic servicemen had their religious needs met (Dolan 1992; Warner 1995; Cogley 1973). The Council thus served two purposes: responding to American Catholics’ spiritual needs, and also presenting American Catholics as a unified group to the rest of the US. Here, the stated goal of the new institution is a response to War; the implicit and underlying goal of the organization, however, is the creation of a unified *American* Catholic body that can be served as one, and that can be addressed as one. This also facilitated Catholic ethnic groups’ willingness to identify themselves as “American” Catholics since their allegiance was being given to an ethnically neutral organization, rather than to their disliked Irish/German/Italian Catholic neighbors.

The goal of treating American Catholics as a unified group continued when the War Council changed into the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC), a development with the express purpose of creating a national organization that could exert due influence both over the national Catholic population and public policy with an eye towards addressing inequality (Dolan 1992). The development of the NCWC also served to increase the authority of the Episcopate and (significantly) shift the focus of problem solving from the parish to the national level (Dolan 1992).

In 1966 the NCWC was restructured into two organizations: the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), the organization of bishops under canon law,

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<sup>38</sup> Catholics constituted 35% of the military, but were only approximately 25% of the general population.

and the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), the organization of the same bishops when they spoke about public policy. This confusing reorganization was a response to the call of Vatican II for bishops to be more vocal in advocating for theologically supported public policy measures that advanced the common good. In 2001 both conferences were combined to form the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) that we have today.

The stated mission of the USCCB is to “exercise certain pastoral functions on behalf of the Christian faithful of the United States [and] ... to promote the greater good which the Church offers humankind, especially through forms and programs of the apostolate fittingly adapted to the circumstances of time and place” (USCCB). The mission of the USCCB remains one of serving and responding to an American congregation (interestingly, with a focus on evangelization), though there is no clear mention of the need to respond to the Church’s internal diversity. This is not necessarily a bad thing, except that the Church is currently going through another period of significant demographic change resulting in an ethnically diverse congregation. This increased diversity makes it important to ask if the USCCB’s goal of representing and serving a unified American Catholic body negatively impact its ability to serve diverse congregations today, particularly Latino Catholics. Systems and Political Organizations theories would say, “yes.” Though might there be another (simpler) explanation?

### **An Alternative Explanation: Descriptive Representation**

Research in representative bureaucracy has established positive trends in the quality of service given a co-ethnic leader, but studies of the Catholic Church have yet to analyze

the frequency or result of co-ethnic leadership, or examine how often services are provided to immigrant populations when no co-ethnic priest or bishop is available (Meier and O'Toole Jr 2006; Meier 1975; Meier and Bohte 2001; Sears et al. 1997; Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Nicholson-Crotty 2009; Nettles and Patton 2000; Frymer 1999). This is an important question given that less than 11% of bishops are Latino, in comparison to the near 40% of Catholics who come from a Latino background. If theories based on descriptive representation hold true, we can presume that the lack of Latino bishops is the main driver of the USCCB's inattention to Latino and immigration issues. However the almost complete absence of Latinos from USCCB mention indicates a level of service much *lower* than that which would be expected from descriptive representation alone. Also problematic is that theories of representative bureaucracy tend to examine the individual level effect of demographics in the aggregate – in other words, what is the result of having a group of ethnically distinct individuals in positions of leadership. This ignores the influence and constraints imposed by institutional structures that can direct and, at times, override the intentions of individuals.

Thus, while it is impossible to say that the definite lack of descriptive representation is not part of the cause for the USCCB's "Latino problem" (to echo the Church's 19<sup>th</sup> century term for learning how to serve Italians) it is also impossible to say that is the only cause. That the Church's mission is one of *substantive* representation, where church leaders are theologically mandated to serve those in need regardless of both the congregants' and the leaders' background adds to this predicament. As such I conclude that institutional factors exacerbate the problems created by a lack of descriptive representation for Latinos, and preclude Church leaders at the national level

from providing a level of substantive representation commensurate with the need and size of the Latino Catholic population.

### **Can Unity Include Racial As Well As Moral Diversity?**

This chapter examined whether or not Latinos are a priority of the national Church body. I used content analysis to determine the priorities of the organization as reflected in the USCCB's general meetings and news releases and found almost no mention of Latinos, in spite of the size of the Latino population, and in spite of the fact that the USCCB has offices responsible for addressing migration issues and Hispanic affairs. It is extremely relevant to point out that the Committee on Hispanic Affairs was downgraded to a sub-committee underneath the Committee for Cultural Diversity a few years ago, signaling a distinct *lack* of care for Latinos by the USCCB that is now being reflected in the absence of Latino affairs in the bishops' statements.

I theorize that the reason for this omission is the basic structure of the USCCB; the organization was created with the express goal of unifying American Catholics, both to speak to and for them. As such system theory and theories of political organizations hold that it may not be possible for bishops to consistently address issues of diversity because they interfere with the goal of Church unity.

One problem with this theory is the bishops' consistent concern with what I referred to as "family values issues" above. The topics of same-sex marriage, abortion, and birth control are some of the most divisive political issues that could certainly threaten the unity of the Church. I would argue that the bishops' focus on these issues *has* eroded the Church, as evidenced by the growing rates of attrition from the faith. It would

be pure speculation to offer a reason as to why the bishops chose to address one set of divisive issues but not another, yet the theory holds that an organization premised upon a unified church body cannot sustain emphasis on division.

This is a very preliminary analysis, and future work will certainly include more years of both the USCCB news release and meeting agendas. One other aspect I wish to include in future work is a content analysis of public newspapers' coverage of the bishops and the USCCB. Preliminary scans of New York Times articles show a striking shift in topics covered from the 1970s to the present. In the 1970s topics were varied, from where to find Latin mass to discussions of women in the priesthood to abortion. By the 2000s coverage was almost exclusively of the sexual abuse scandal, abortion, and other family values issues. I believe that the comparison of the USCCB news release to the NYT coverage is important for uncovering whether or not the general public hears the same basic message from the bishops as what the bishops themselves put out. Particularly in the present day when parishes are not the primary community for the majority of congregants, Catholics are much more impressionable to what they read about the Church in the newspaper because their personal experience is that much less "personal" than it used to be. The return of many Catholics to the Church after the election of Pope Francis (a man the vast majority of Catholics will never meet nor hear preach) is one example of this.

Regardless of the public media's portrayal of the Bishops' statements and positions, it is significant that the USCCB as a whole simply does not talk about Latino Catholics. It is difficult to understand why the bishops would choose not to address such a large Catholic population, and would do so little to publicize the work that needs to be

done to incorporate Latinos as equal members into the Church as a whole. Further, it is impossible to determine if the lack of bishops' statements has any effect on the likelihood that local pastors will also overlook attending to the needs of Latinos within their congregations. There are no definitive answers to these questions, but it is possible to discover possible explanations that can help us more fully understand the behaviors of the national Church body. For that I turn to interviews with individuals from all levels of the Church hierarchy who have worked to serve Latino Catholics.

## Chapter 6

**Intent, Impact, and Church Leaders**

My study asks the question, to what extent is the American Catholic Church a socializing institution for Latinos? The answer appears to be, “not much” given my quantitative analysis of service provision at the local level and a content analysis of USCCB statements and meeting agendas that revealed a surprising degree of inattention to Latinos and their needs. I hypothesized that the lack of service response to Latinos is the product of a federal system of organization that hampered the ability of Latino communities to establish themselves, a condition that is exacerbated by the lack of Latino priests and bishops to serve them.

The purpose of this chapter is to see if the views and experiences of Church leaders align with my empirical findings, as well as to determine what are leaders’ *intended* outcomes in their work with Latinos. I also work to illuminate aspects of service provision that would only be seen by people on the ground. To that end I conduct elite interviews with Hispanic ministers, priests, and bishops who are active in directing ministries to Latino Catholics in order to obtain a richer and more robust understanding of both successes and struggles that the Church experiences in serving the growing Latino population. Having both the qualitative and quantitative data results in “a broader understanding of the phenomenon of interest” (Carter et al. 2014), here the patterns of service and response within the Church. This process of triangulation helps me to “elucidate complementary aspects of the same phenomenon” (Cohen and Crabree 2006) in order to see where the data points diverge and where they support one another.

In other words, conducting interviews with church leaders involved in serving Latinos allows me to test the validity of my quantitative findings as described in earlier chapters. While my empirical analysis can describe what is happening, the interviews offer a chance to more deeply understand *why* the Church responds to Latinos in a particular way. Further, interviews can help to distinguish between intent and consequence of institutional behaviors. While I find that one consequence of the Church's organizational structure is a lack of attention paid to Latino Catholics, it is not clear that such an outcome is intended goal of the Church as an institution (see Ch. 2).

I completed a total of 12 interviews with a variety of church leaders from across the nation. Respondents include bishops, priests, a retired Cardinal, Hispanic Ministers, and a Pastoral Associate (a lay person who takes on the responsibility of running a parish in absence of a priest).<sup>39</sup> The wide geographical range of my interviews allows me to address the question of whether or not the Church is or is not responding to Latinos on a national scale.

Further, the interviews add a new dimension of analysis to my previous findings regarding the relationship between the USCCB and local parishes (see Ch. 5), more specifically: what is the relationship of influence between the national and local levels of the Church hierarchy? This question is difficult to answer through an empirical analysis, but is a topic that any leader in the Church can speak to. Further people with different positions within the Church will perceive the USCCB influence differently because of

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<sup>39</sup> I originally planned to interview the bishops, directors of Hispanic Ministry, and select priests from my three case study areas (San Antonio, TX, Seattle and Yakima, WA, see Ch. 3) so that I could directly compare my qualitative and quantitative data. Unfortunately I could not secure enough interviews to make that tactic feasible, and so expanded my selection to include any Church leader directly involved in serving Latino populations in the US.

their various levels of authority and decision making ability. Such variety of perspectives will present a more complete view of the national Church, its relationship to local parishes, and their impact on Church responsiveness to Latinos.

The interviews were semi-structured in order to allow those interviewed to direct the conversation according to their own experiences, rather than asking them to limit their comments to the findings of my research thus far. I also gave each interviewee the option of remaining anonymous so that they could speak freely. Interviews were either conducted over the phone or in person as schedules allowed. There were three basic topics covered by the interviews: are Churches serving and socializing Latinos today; if not, why not; and the connection between inattention at the local and national levels (Specific questions are found in Appendix III).

Many respondents told me that the condition of Latinos in the Catholic Church has certainly improved, but there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in order to be able to describe the Church as inclusive or responsive to Latinos. The most common problem identified by respondents was Latinos' status as a "hidden" population within the Church, combined with the misconception that Latinos are a monolithic group. Such misunderstandings are complicated by *operational differences*, differences in the way Latinos and Anglos communicate on account of their distinct culture norms. Lacking awareness of these differences leads to miscommunication and divisions, not only between Latinos and Church leaders, but also between Latino and Anglo congregations. Further, these interviews highlight the complexity of the Church institutional structure by emphasizing the circular relationship of power and authority between the USCCB and local parishes.

These interviews present an invaluable, first hand portrayal of conditions that either complicate or facilitate the Church's role as a socializing institution for Latinos today. While the interviews support my quantitative findings that the Church is not as responsive as one would expect given the size of the Latino Catholic population, they also give voice to a perspective that is undetectable by a quantitative analysis: the intentions of the leaders who serve. What emerges is a picture of incredible good intentions that are sadly unmatched by the outcomes of Church service and response.

### **I. GAUGING IMPACT: HOW RESPONSIVE IS THE CHURCH TO LATINOS?**

I avoided asking each of my interviewees to comment on the number and types of services provided by churches, generally speaking. Their answers would be purely speculative because few parishes and dioceses collect this type of information, so their responses would not be able to validate the quantitative research I completed. Instead I asked about their personal experiences and the trends that they have witnessed through their years of service to allow respondents to see if their individual experiences matched up with the data that I had independently gathered. My interviews confirmed that the Church has a large problem in its inattention to Latinos. A few themes emerged to explain such neglect: church leaders are unaware of the presence and size of the Latino population; leaders are reluctant to take on more responsibility given their already full schedules; and leaders, even though they see the Latino population, do not understand their culture or needs and therefore cannot respond appropriately.

## Then and Now: Church Response to Latinos

### *The “Then”*

One element that has been missing from my study of Latinos and the Catholic Church is a presentation of how the Church responded to Latinos in the past. This is due to a lack of data – both published stories and information on past services provided. Yet many of my interviewees had stories about how poorly Latinos were treated in past decades. That history was a catalyst for the service and attitude some have towards their role in the Church today, or see it as important for creating a context for contemporary circumstances – demonstrating that for as much work still needs to be done, at least things have greatly improved.

The grandparents of Ms. Carmen Velasquez<sup>40</sup> were born in Mexico, immigrated to the US, to Chicago, IL where they had nine children. They eventually moved their family to Fort Madison, Iowa, looking for a safer environment in which to raise their children.<sup>41</sup> When Ms. Velasquez’ mother, Soledad, tried to register for school, the teacher changed her name to Shirley. Directing her comment to me, Ms. Velasquez said, “Can you imagine if I called you *Gladys*, and you’re what – seven years old? Five years old? Who the hell’s Gladys?!” She describes the effect of that involuntary name change: “In essence what they did was they tore her – they wanted to take her identity. The most

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<sup>40</sup> Ms. Velasquez, formerly a social worker and bilingual consultant, founded Alivio Medical Center in 1989 to serve the medical needs of Mexican Immigrants and Mexican Americans living in Pilsen, Little Village, and Back of the Yards neighborhoods in Chicago, IL. The Alivio Medical Center is “a bilingual, bicultural organization committed to providing quality, cost-effective healthcare to the Hispanic community, the uninsured and the underinsured, not to the exclusion of other cultures and races... in addition to advocacy, research, and evaluation activities completed to advance the health of these specific populations” (<http://aliviomedicalcenter.org/about/mission-vision-values>). Alivio has expanded into a network of three medical centers, three school-based clinics, and one urgent care clinic.

<sup>41</sup> Ms. Velasquez did not mention the years in which this occurred; my best estimate would be in the 1920s, given her age and other elements of her story.

important part of a human is their identity.” The ostracizing of Latinos in Iowa continued decades later, as Ms. Velasquez recalls going to visit her grandparents and at Sunday mass they were made to either sit at the very back of the church or up in the balcony. They were not allowed to sit at the front of the Church.

The Most Reverend Oscar Cantú, diocese of Las Cruces,<sup>42</sup> told me about his parents’ experience when they first moved to Houston, Texas (also moving from Chicago after arriving in the US from Mexico). He said they went to their local parish and were told at the door by an usher, “The parish for you people is on the other side of town.” So they went across town to where the one mass with a Spanish homily<sup>43</sup> was held. His parents became friends with that priest, Patrick Flores, who later went on to become the first Hispanic bishop in the US.

Bishop Cantú’s own experience with church as a child in the 1970s was also one of separation. His pastor did not want to disrupt the already established mass schedule, and so agreed to have a Spanish mass so long as it was held in the gymnasium. He described it as “a horrible experience;” the microphone system would pick up the local truckers’ CB conversations, which – while entertaining with its “colorful” language – was certainly distracting. The subsequent pastor was surprised at the situation; “We have this beautiful church – why in the world are you all in the gym?” They responded, “That’s where we were put,” adding that they were happy at that time to even have a

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<sup>42</sup> The Most Reverend Oscar Cantú is Bishop of the Diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico, where he has served since 2013. He also serves as the Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace for the USCCB, and is a member of the USCCB’s Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

<sup>43</sup> He believes this was pre-Vatican II, so the mass would have been said in Latin, but the homily would be given in the vernacular.

mass in Spanish. Their inclusion in the main church was met with some complaints and resistance, but Cantú described it as a “commonsensical move.”

Unfortunately the 1970s did not mark the beginning of Latinos’ inclusion in all parishes. A pastoral associate from Seattle<sup>44</sup> recounted the establishment of the Latino Catholic community in Seattle. The congregation started at St. Benedict’s Church in north Seattle in 1974 where they held one Spanish mass at 1:00 pm on Sundays. After losing their Spanish-speaking pastor, they moved to Blessed Sacrament, where Rev. Richard Garcia said mass in Spanish for them. Their population grew, in part due to outreach and work with the Latino youth and young adult community. This growth, she said, was “scary for the Blessed Sacrament parishioners.” Echoing the experience of Italian immigrant communities in the late 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Latino congregation at Blessed Sacrament had to celebrate important religious holidays, including all of Holy Week (the week of masses leading up to Easter, the largest and most important celebration in the Catholic Church) in the church basement because the Anglo population had their celebrations in the main church. There were also an increasing number of petty complaints as their population grew, things such as not locking a door, or leaving out garbage.

Because of the growing hostility, the Latino congregation looked for another parish, and eventually moved to St. James Cathedral. At St. James they were given no office or meeting space, and also suffered through the myriad complaints from the Anglo community about their presence. This interviewee noted that the Latino community in Seattle was small at that time, so mass was the one time a week when they could spend time together. They would stand after mass to talk and laugh, and she noted it was a time

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<sup>44</sup> Interviewee requested to remain anonymous.

filled with joy because they could be together. However they had to be together outside and on the steps in front of the church because the woman who locked up the church would rush them out so she could go home. The community only lasted at St. James for about a year. In 1983 the Latino congregation moved to St. Mary's, but as a *mission*. They had to pay rent, which afforded them space, but it also meant they were not integrated into the main church congregation.

This changed with the appointment of Fr. Patrick McDermott who said, "That's enough. This parish is for Christians, not for renters," and set about creating one congregation. My interviewee noted that the Latinos were disbelieving of how long this integration would last, and so worked to save their money so that they could afford to rent a place elsewhere should the priest or his successor change his mind about Latinos' place in the parish. Fr. McDermott left the parish only a few months after his decision to integrate the Latino mission with the larger parish, and thankfully his successor and the church leaders worked hard to maintain their unity. St. Mary's continues to have a strong Latino congregation and sense of need to integrate diverse communities today.

Reverend Patrick Murphy, Tijuana,<sup>45</sup> refused to hold mass in any basement. He said he would hold mass at 10:00 pm if need be, but never in the basement. Fr. Pat said he ended up holding two services in a basement but that he "fought it all the way." The irony of pushing Spanish-speakers into the basement is that Fr. Murphy would see a

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<sup>45</sup> Reverend Patrick Murphy is a Scalabrinian priest who currently runs La Casa del Migrante in Tijuana, Mexico. La Casa is a temporary housing facility for male migrants; it has capacity for up to 180 residents and offers a number of services from legal aid to counseling to job location assistance. The Scalabrini order was founded in 1887 by an Italian bishop with the mission of serving migrants and refugees. Before coming to Tijuana in 2013, Fr. Murphy spent 13 years as the Director of Hispanic Ministry and Outreach for the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas.

church have four or five masses in English with 80-100 people in attendance, and the one Spanish mass would have five hundred.

These examples of discrimination and forced segregation in churches highlight how *little* changed in the Church from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – there continued to be a contestation for place, resources, and authority between immigrant (or immigrant-derived) and established congregations (see Ch. 3). What did change was the background of the established and the immigrant groups. Ironically the Italians who hated being forced into basements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were often the ones to keep Latinos out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One respondent recounted the story of an Italian priest who was responsible for opening the doors of his parish to Latinos had his car burned by angry (Italian) congregants.

### *The “Now”*

Are basement churches and forced segregation of Latino congregations a thing of the past, or do they continue into the 21<sup>st</sup> century? All interviewees agreed that times have definitely changed, and conditions for Latino Catholics have improved. Yet all also indicated that there is a lot more work that still needs to be done to improve Church response to Latinos.

For instance, one interviewee recounted how in 2015 a new Archbishop<sup>46</sup> in southern California scheduled an all-day retreat to the Mexican side of town so that they could get to know and see the lives of a congregation that has historically been neglected by the Church. Half of those employees called in sick so they would not have to go.

Other slights are less blatant, though still significant. Another interviewee noted that an

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<sup>46</sup> Some details, such as names and places, have been kept anonymous in order to protect the privacy of both the interviewees as well as the people to whom they refer.

office for Immigrant Affairs had several pictures depicting various cultural representations of the Virgin Mary in the reception area, but the beautiful, framed image of La Virgen de Guadalupe<sup>47</sup> was leaning against the wall of the director's office, out of sight of the majority of Latinos and Mexicans who would enter that office. "It's those little things that make a difference, that communicates to me you really care about me, you really respect me, and want a true relationship." Instead of focusing on the relationship aspect, many found the Church overly concerned with sacraments and how to behave during mass, making it difficult for believers to see the relevance of their faith – and the Catholic Church – to their daily lives.

At the same time all note that things are better than they used to be. It is now acknowledged that official pronouncements and statements from the USCCB must also be released in Spanish (even if those translated releases lag weeks or months behind the original publication, per one bishop interviewed.) Even though bishops and pastors need to keep fighting to increase awareness of the Latino congregations' needs, "30 years ago it was a very different situation where the agenda had to be pushed in a more forceful way, and in a much more basic way," said Bishop Cantú. Cantú also noted that pastors are doing the best they can at the local level to respond to Latinos and provide them with the Sacraments, and that the bishops recognize "the utter importance of making Hispanic ministry a real priority for the Bishops conference."

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<sup>47</sup> *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, also known as Our Lady of Guadalupe, refers to the Virgin Mary who was said to have appeared to an indigenous boy, Juan Diego, in 1531. The Virgin is a central figure in Mexican Catholicism, and also plays a large role in Mexican culture and identity, generally speaking.

## **Which Latinos?**

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the diversity of the Latino population, and discusses the contexts in which that diversity is significant (Ramirez 2013; Pantoja 2014; Fry 2014; Fraga et al. 2011; Barreto 2007). As with any pan-ethnic population, points of divergence within the Latino population include country of origin, generation, political party affiliation, and religious denomination. Interviewees highlighted the importance of generation and country of origin as being particularly relevant to understanding Church response to Latinos.

### *By Generation*

The most significant generational delineation lies between the first generation, “Latino immigrants”, and later generations, who can be referred to simply as “Latinos”. This distinction is often overlooked in discussions about Church response to Latinos, where “Latino” and “immigrant” are often used interchangeably. This confusion of terms has historical precedent; the literature refers to Church response to Irish, German, and Italian immigrant groups even when they were well into their second, third, and even fourth or fifth generations. Such terminology reflects the larger American context in which whiteness represents citizenship, while non-whites (regardless of their actual citizenship status) are seen as “immigrants” (Jacobson 1998).<sup>48</sup>

On the one hand, including multiple generations in the term “immigrant” demonstrates the inclusive nature of Church response to Latinos without regard for their generational status. On the other hand, the lack of distinction between immigrant and non-immigrant Latino populations makes it more difficult to determine whether or not the

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<sup>48</sup> See Ch. 3 for a larger discussion about how Irish, German, and Italians shifted from “immigrant” to “white.”

Catholic Church is effectively responding to both groups given their needs are distinct from each other.

Per my interviewees, the bulk of services Catholic churches are providing for Latinos are actually directed at first generation, immigrant Latinos rather than those who are long established in the United States. Mr. Isaac Govea, Archdiocese of Seattle,<sup>49</sup> noted that Hispanic Ministry is geared to the Spanish speaker, often leaving second and third generation Latinos unattended. Yet he also noted that while 70% of the Latino community in the Seattle area speak English, and an estimated 70-80% of Latinos speak Spanish at home. As such, Spanish language ministry can be presumed to at least apply to, if not necessarily target, later generation Latinos. In contrast, Bishop Cantú, as a second generation Mexican, said he and his siblings preferred English while they grew up and so they did not want or need religious services in Spanish. Enid Roman-DeJesus, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend,<sup>50</sup> disagrees, explaining that Spanish is the “language of the heart”, particularly for children born to immigrant families. They are raised speaking Spanish until they were old enough to go to school, so even though they are English speakers, Spanish is their mother tongue and holds more meaning for them.

Lourdes Silva, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend,<sup>51</sup> described it as “things of the heart vs. Old McDonald.” She recounted the story of her three-year-old grand daughter who speaks English almost exclusively, would switch to Spanish when talking about her father, whom she missed greatly because he was on tour in the military.

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<sup>49</sup> Director of Hispanic Ministry for the Archdiocese of Seattle.

<sup>50</sup> Co-Director of Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

<sup>51</sup> Co-Director of Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

In spite of language use, the generational distinction is important when designing church outreach to Latino communities. Cardinal Roger Mahoney, Archdiocese of Los Angeles,<sup>52</sup> noted that one of the Church's great failures is that in her attention to serving newly arrived immigrant groups, she has not moved along *with* those groups into the second and third generations. Such movement is necessary because, as stated by Reverend Joseph Corpora, University of Notre Dame,<sup>53</sup> later generation Latinos are culturally distinct. He described second and third generation Latinos as being in between, almost lost – in each culture but not. The Most Reverend Gerald Barnes, Diocese of San Bernardino,<sup>54</sup> said that Mexicans and Mexican-Americans do not know each others' stories; their experiences have been distinct and unique from each other. As such, one cannot expect the same types of services and ministries to reach each generational group in the same way, and more often than not what happens is that later generation Latinos are simply left out.

This perspective begs one to ask how many Latinos the Church is missing when her focus is largely on the first generation. As I discussed in my analysis of contemporary service provision (see Ch. 4), this is almost an impossible question to answer because

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<sup>52</sup> Cardinal Roger Mahony served as Archbishop of Los Angeles from 1985 to 2011, when he retired; he was created a Cardinal in 1991 by Pope John Paul II. Cardinal Mahony is widely known for his service to Latino, immigrant, and refugee communities.

<sup>53</sup> Reverend Joseph Corpora is a priest in the Congregation of Holy Cross, currently serves as Director of the Catholic School Advantage Campaign, and oversees university-school partnerships in the Alliance for Catholic Education. He also is the Associate Director of Latino Student Ministry at the University of Notre Dame. This year he was also appointed a Missionary of Mercy, one of 800 priests appointed by Pope Francis to be "living signs" of God's forgiveness during the Holy Year of Mercy. Fr. Corpora has extensive experience serving the Latino community, having spent two years in Mexico and 19 in parishes with large Latino congregations.

<sup>54</sup> The Most Reverend Gerald Barnes was appointed auxiliary bishop of San Bernardino, CA in 1992, and as second bishop in 1996. He is also Chair of the USCCB Sub-Committee on Hispanic Affairs and a member of the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church.

there is no way to know how many Latino Catholics live in a given area, let alone their generational composition.

*By Country Of Origin*

As the Latino community continues to grow, another problem facing the Church is recognizing, understanding, and valuing that Latinos are not culturally monolithic. “When we talk about Hispanic Latinos, we are talking about more than twenty nationalities and twenty different ways of understanding church, twenty different ways of doing – that’s why it’s so unique to do ministry in the US,” said a Hispanic Minister in Chicago, IL.<sup>55</sup> Bishop Barnes echoed this sentiment, describing Latinos as a “broad community,” which sometimes leads to difficulties within the group.

Ms. Velasquez emphasizes the importance of recognizing one’s national heritage as central to their identity. She attended a luncheon for Cristo Rey School in Chicago; one student stood up for a presentation and introduced himself saying, “*Mi nombre es Jose Garcia (my name is Jose Garcia), I’m Latino ....*” Ms. Velasquez was very forceful in stating, “When that kid gets up, we need to mentor him and say to him, ‘I am Jose Garcia, *yo soy Mexicano. Yo soy Cubano. Yo soy ...*’ (*I am Mexican. I am Cuban. I am ...*) whatever he is. But by using the term Latino or Hispanic you take away my identity.” Ms. Velasquez is Mexican-American, and prefaced her first response to my interview questions with that statement. As a Mexican she says, “Esa Señora de Guadalupe is essential in my life. And what she does is she re-fortifies who we are as a people, *que somos indios, somos mexicanos, que tenemos el valor de familia (that we are Indians, we are Mexicans, that we value our family)*.” She directly connects her values with her

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<sup>55</sup> Interviewee requested to remain anonymous.

country-specific religious traditions with her identity. Latinos from other countries will not have the same connection to Our Lady of Guadalupe, who is a Mexican saint. As a Hispanic Minister explains it, “you may have a common denominator in our Lady of Guadalupe [meaning, in celebrating the Virgin Mary], but let me see if the Borriquas are really as excited on December the 12th as we Columbians are in July with the Chiquinquirá.”<sup>56</sup>

Complicating the provision of a more nuanced response to the Latino community is that many pastors and bishops do not know how many Latinos live within their boundaries, let alone how many are Catholic, how many are first, second, or third generation, and what country they come from. In many ways, Latinos are invisible to the Church institution; Fr. Corpora called Latinos the “shadow parish,” and Cardinal Mahony referred to them as a “hidden population.” It is not possible for a church to respond to the needs of population it does not know exists.

A Jesuit priest I interviewed noted the three populations of Latinos in the Church; though he was referencing Chicago, his description at the very least highlights the variance that exists within the Latino population. First are the immigrants whose primary experience of faith was developed in another country; it is important to note this national distinction when serving them. Then there are the second generation Americans who speak English but pray in Spanish. Lastly, his community had Latino gang members that one bishop noted, “I need to reach them by age 12 or the gangs will.” He noted that the

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<sup>56</sup> Our Lady of the Rosary of Chiquinquirá, or the Virgin of Chiquinquirá is how the Mary, the Mother of God is recognized in Columbia. Her feast day is July 9. Mexicans celebrate the Virgin Mary with the Virgin of Guadalupe, whose feast day is December 12. The different titles do not connote that there is more than one Mary, rather refer to different appearances or miracles attributed to the Virgin.

Church needs to address the unique issues within each of these communities, and asked, “Is the church not sophisticated enough to talk about these problems?”

## **II. WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?**

*“The Best thing about being retired is the stuff you no longer have to do.”*

– Cardinal Mahony

When I spoke with Cardinal Mahony, he was on a long road trip to attend to the needs of a parish community north of his home in southern California. He is the retired Archbishop of Los Angeles, though he is still incredibly active in the community. I asked him what he did with his time now, since I knew he is still a busy man. He replied, “The best thing about being retired is the stuff you no longer have to do,” and went on to talk about the time he now has to focus on immigration and refugee issues (long passions of his), visit different parishes every weekend, and also spend more time visiting the sick in hospitals. He described being retired as “absolutely tremendous” because he could get back to why he became a priest in the first place: ministry. I asked him if the administrative focus of being an active bishop gets in the way of their willingness and ability to minister. His unequivocal answer was, “YES. Active bishops have so many different responsibilities, things you have to take charge of – a huge panorama of tasks; it’s very, very time consuming.”

The response of “I’m too busy” came up frequently when people were asked to speculate why priests and bishops seem reluctant to implement Pastoral plans for Hispanic ministry, or be more active in responding to the needs of the Latino community, generally speaking. Mr. Govea noted that many priests are reluctant to add to their already “full plate,” and are not excited about including more strategies in pastoral life

because it adds to their work, though they will be supportive of initiatives for which they do not have to do a lot. Cardinal Mahony noted that many priests fear implementing a pastoral plan because they worry it means they have to have a comprehensive plan for all their ministries ready to go by a set date, and that task seems daunting to an already busy minister. This problem is exacerbated by the increasing shortage of priests, meaning there are fewer people to share the load of work and responsibility.

Fr. Corpora posited that churches are increasingly being run like businesses or corporations – also in part due to the priest shortage. To that end, Anglo churches are “efficient, not relational; Latinos cannot *not* be relational. That doesn’t mean they’re inefficient, but efficient in a different way.” From this perspective, Latinos are “a lot of work” for church leaders. For example, Latinos tend to want to deal with the pastor rather than another minister when they have a question or a problem. It takes multiple visits and conversations and *time* to build trust and relationship. Fr. Corpora used as an example the enrollment of children in parochial schools. To an Anglo family, “I can give you a sheet of paper and say, ‘fill out this form,’ and you’ll enroll your kid. But with Latinos there are 10 meetings before they’ll consider it.” From a business perspective, working with Latinos is expensive, which is an undesirable undertaking for an already overworked priest. It is much simpler to either hand off the work to another or ignore the reality of Latino needs altogether. The result is an unfortunate lack of service to growing Latino communities.

*“No hay espacio, y les ruego que no insistir (No vacancy; this is not up for negotiation).”*  
 – *hotel sign in Mexico*

Creating a responsive church that successfully socializes and incorporates Latinos requires more than time (which is limited) and the ability to speak Spanish (which is

often highlighted as a priority for Church leaders). Being able to socialize Latinos by responding to their needs requires getting to know their unique cultures (because there are many, as discussed above) and their patterns of communication. For example, a literal translation of the hotel sign above reads, “There is no space, and I beg you not to insist.” This phrase holds little meaning to the English-speaking American ear, though even a more relevant translation (“no vacancy ...”) is also somewhat confusing because the context of this sign is unfamiliar.

Fr. Corpora used this example to illustrate the importance of understanding the cultural differences between Latino and Anglo communities, often reflected in the ways we talk to one another. For one, it is not practical to simply translate English materials into Spanish and expect them to have the same effect. This applies to ministerial documents that have instructions for spiritual formation, as well as announcements for fundraising for the Church. Words communicate a particular cultural perspective. Whereas an appeal to raise money for a particular community center might be successful with an Anglo congregation, Fr. Corpora notes that the relational focus of Latinos means an appeal made in the name of the Archbishop, pastor, or even a saint would be more effective.

In other words: basic translation is not enough to create positive interactions between Anglos and Latinos. Fr. Corpora refers to the differing cultural patterns of communication as *operational differences* that, when misunderstood or unacknowledged, causes stress and distance between the pastor and Latino congregations. He used his personal experience as an example.

Fr. Corpora used to joke that he needed a sign on his desk that read, “What part of ‘no’ do you not understand?” The answer to a Latino is, “every part.” To illustrate what that means, he told the story of a family who came to ask for the church to loan them chairs for their daughter’s *quinceñera* celebration, and Fr. Corpora’s answer was, “no.” The response, “but our family is coming and there are so many people...” “No.” “But we need the chairs and the celebration is so important ...” What Fr. Corpora learned was that the chairs were not the point of the conversation – though obviously the family wanted to have them. The important outcome was being able to have a conversation because the need and desire to negotiate was a cultural tradition passed down for generations; to partake in that facilitated the building of trust and a relationship. Father Corpora learned that it was more effective to respond with something along the lines of, “We would love to loan you the chairs, but ...” and continue the conversation rather than end it with a simple denial. Again, these types of communication and cultural lessons are “operational” issues that Anglos often miss, contributing to the lack of response to Latinos in churches.

*Misunderstandings and What is “Mine”*

Church leaders are not the only ones responsible for the lack of Church attention to Latinos. Respondents also highlighted that Anglo congregations can be resistant to the inclusion of Latinos because they do not understand Latino culture and celebrations, and often feel a great deal of resentment that Latinos are “taking over.” If the priest does not work to disabuse the Anglo congregation of their negative perceptions, little can be done to unite the congregations, relegating Latinos to a second tier status that includes a lack of access to resources and services.

The resistance of non-Latino congregations to Latino inclusion, and the importance of leadership to correct it, was a common theme in all of my interviews. One respondent attributed some of Anglo congregants' resistance to the inclusion of Latino congregations to their difference in cultural expression, such as the *quinceñera* celebration. This Pastoral Associate from Seattle notes that it is meaningful celebration for Latinos – akin to a sacrament, even though it is not one. These celebrations are also *expensive*, and only made possible because every member of the celebrant's family and many friends help to organize and pay for it. Then there are the feast days for saints, and each Latin country has its own version of a veneration of Mary that must be honored. This was hard for Anglos to understand. This respondent observed that many thought, “Why are Latinos so poor but always celebrating?” and was a source of tension between the two communities.

Ms. Silva explained congregations' resistance to the inclusion of Latinos as an issue of *territorialism*: “I was here first. This is mine. Don't enter the sacristy and touch the chalice. That's ours and not yours.” Even though Latinos are no longer pushed into the basements (for the most part), the feelings that started that tradition still exist. The Most Reverend Jaime Soto<sup>57</sup> noted in a past interview (Soto 2007) that an anti-immigrant sentiment exists in this country; I asked him if he thought there was also an anti-Latino sentiment that came through into churches. He mused that there probably was on account of the large size of Latino immigration, its profound impact on the Church, and because

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<sup>57</sup> The Most Reverend Jaime Soto was installed as bishop for the Diocese of Sacramento in 2008. Bishop Soto is the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), the domestic anti-poverty program of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) since 2010. He also serves as chairman of the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, chairman of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), is a member of the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, and a consultant to the Committee on International Justice and Peace.

“Latinos are the poster children of immigration, some of that is just proximity – it does create a certain fear.” Bishop Cantú attributes this anti-Latino, anti-immigrant divide to the political climate:

*My observation is that our politics in the past 20 years has become much more sharply polarized, and that has helped to polarize the Church as well. And part of my concern, complaint, and observations that I share with people often is that rather than the people of faith allowing our faith to inform our politics, that we are judging our religion and our Church through the lens of our politics. And I believe that we have that backwards. And so – so we see this polarization within the Church.*

These insights reflect common themes discussed amongst Hispanic ministers. Many report a separation between the Latino and Anglo congregations, that the pastor leaves the Hispanic minister on his or her own to attend to all Latino needs. Mr. Govea, Archdiocese of Seattle, noted that Hispanic ministers often find themselves working in isolation. A respondent from Chicago refers to this as a “silo mentality” where “we do our own stuff but we don't mingle with the rest of the community.” This appears to contribute to the priests’ ignorance about the size and demographics of their Latino congregations since they are rarely in contact with or ministering to them.

Overcoming a congregations’ resistance to Latino inclusion is possible through great leadership. Leaders’ steadfast resolve was the primary reason St. Mary’s prevailed with integrating the Latino and Anglo congregations in the Seattle area. Another respondent noted that many successfully integrated, multi-cultural parishes are the result of strong leadership, which is a double-edged sword, “because if the pastor doesn't believe in being multicultural the community will not see that this is something good.”

As Michael Seifert, Rio Grande Valley,<sup>58</sup> explained, if the leadership is not leading, one cannot expect the parishioners to understand.

An interviewee from Seattle noted the attitude of the leadership community at St. Mary's could be described by the words of a nun who served during their time of integration: "Alright – it's like this (holding up her hands to form a circle). We are one bread, and what we have is for everyone. If you break it apart (drops hands to the side), there is less for everyone." Fr. Corpora echoed this experience; when he was pastor at an integrated church in Portland, OR, he received a great deal of push-back from his Anglo congregants, but had to be strong and do what was necessary to ensure that all his congregants – including Latinos – were served. This emphasizes the importance of leadership to creating churches responsive to the needs of Latino communities. On the other side, Ms. Roman-DeJesus said, "this might be controversial, but it has to come from the *pews*." The movement of the congregation will hopefully inspire the pastor, particularly since pastors are already overwhelmed with the amount of work they have to do.

### *A lack of leaders*

The easiest explanation for a lack of service provision is a lack of service *providers*.

Anyone familiar with the Catholic Church is aware of the growing priest shortage;<sup>59</sup> as

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<sup>58</sup> Michael Seifert is a network weaver for the Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network. The Equal Voice Network is comprised of ten community-based organizations that work together to foster the civic engagement of local residents towards the end of policy change. Mr. Seifert was formerly a Catholic priest serving the city of Cameron Park, TX. Cameron Park was one of the poorest areas in the US, had a population that was 80% Roman Catholic and majority Mexican heritage. Seifert organized a Get Out The Vote campaign that resulted in Cameron Park having one of the highest voting precincts in South Texas.

<sup>59</sup> One report shows that there were 58,632 priests in 1965; that number was down to 38,275 in 2014. This shortage leads to the closure of Catholic parishes, even when there are large Catholic populations, because there is no one to lead them (Lipka 2014).

fewer men decide to enter the priesthood and older priests reach retirement, it becomes increasingly difficult to find priests to serve and to lead existing congregations, regardless of their ethnic or racial background. This problem is greater for Latinos who, though constituting 40% of the American Catholic population are only 8% of the priesthood. One can anticipate this problem will only worsen; Bishop Cantú noted that Latinos produce the fewest number of vocations to the priesthood or religious life.<sup>60</sup> The lack of priests was mentioned by several interviewees, but also the lack of Latino leaders, more generally speaking.

A respondent from Chicago noted they are working on development (referring to the recruitment and training of lay leaders), but “there’s still a long way to go.” I posited in an earlier chapter that appointing Latino Deacons was a potential solution because Deacons can fill similar functions to a priest. I asked Bishop Cantú, and he said he thought deacons were a “stopgap, but not a terribly agile one” because of the length of time it takes to train a deacon (in the Diocese of Las Cruces Deacon’s formation takes 4-5 years). Further, because deacons are often married and have other jobs they have less time and energy to dedicate to leading a parish community.

The problem extends beyond the lack of Latino leadership into the lack of leaders who are open to knowing and actively serving Latino communities, a condition that does not require a particular ethnic heritage. All that is required, as Ms. Velasquez repeatedly pointed out, was a desire to build a real relationship. Fr. Corpora noted that once people have direct experience with Latinos, they change. “I spent two years in Mexico and 19

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<sup>60</sup> In 2016, only 14% of ordinands (men who were ordained as priests) were Latino, as compared to 40% of the American Catholic population that is Latino (Gautier and Gaunt S.J. 2016).

years with Latinos in parishes. It's not that everyone has to have my experiences, but if you've never had contact with Latinos you wouldn't know where to begin."

One would think that seminary – the academic and spiritual preparation where priests quite literally begin to learn how to serve– would be the place where priests learn how to serve Latinos as a distinct and important cultural Catholic community. Per Fr. Corpora, almost all seminaries have a weekly Spanish class, though another priest I interviewed noted that it was not uncommon for seminarians to either avoid this class, or deliberately perform poorly so as to preclude being placed in a Latino community. Yet a repeating point made through these interviews is that serving Latinos extends beyond the language barrier to learning about the Latino culture. Classes on cultural competencies are few and far between, even for seminaries. At Notre Dame, a Catholic institution at the forefront of research and response for the betterment of Latino communities, there are only three classes in the middle of the semester of a pass/fail class offered to third year Masters of Divinity students, which Fr. Corpora teaches. At their best, competency classes are well-intentioned but occur in a vacuum, leaving many priests with no idea of the Latino culture, let alone how to attend to the Latino community.<sup>61</sup>

A bright exception to this is the Diocese of San Bernardino, which has been running an intercultural competency program for its paid staff members. They have trained close to 1000 people so far, and are working to bring the program to volunteers as well. This training covers four main areas: why the Church sees building community as important; traits in different cultures that we do not understand or find aggravating;

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<sup>61</sup> Cultural competency classes, generally speaking, are meant to expose groups of individuals to the cultural norms and beliefs of various ethnic groups. Topics of discussion and learning are determined by the specific context of the organization using the classes. There is no national data about the availability of cultural competency classes for leaders within the Catholic Church, let alone their content, effectiveness, or how well they are attended.

discriminatory things we have either experienced or inflicted; and what are common things the parish can address to have an *integrated* rather than a separated parish. Bishop Barnes said the trainings have been well received and they are working on a more systematic way to evaluate their effectiveness.

Effective competency classes can be a key component in relationship building given how much cultural differences affect communication and interactions. I noted above Fr. Corpora talked about the difference in signing up Anglo vs. Latino children for parochial school. He describes the process as the building of *confianza*, which literally translates as “trust” but in reality goes way beyond trust to a deeply held relationship. He notes, “Latinos take forever to give you their *confianza*, but once you have it you have it for life.” The pastoral associate from Seattle noted the same phenomena, recounting stories of ownership and extreme generosity to contribute to the parish community by even the poorest and most time-strapped Latino parishioners.

So then, if priests and bishops, regardless of their ethnic background, could speak the language of Latinos in both the linguistic and cultural sense, it would be possible to create supportive communities that serve the socialization function of churches in times past. Yet it appears that many priests and bishops are not doing so, so their best attempts at responding to Latinos are falling short.

### **III. IS THERE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL?**

*“Statements are the least effective action one can take.” – Cardinal Mahony*

One of the main questions resulting from my analysis on the USCCB (Ch. 5) was, “does the inattention of the national Church body affect the level of attention local churches pay

to Latinos?”<sup>62</sup> The USCCB has the authority to speak to and for all American Catholics, and given the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church, one would assume that the bishops’ proclamations hold at least some sway over the behaviors of priests. Yet Church operations are not that simple. As discussed in Ch. 2, while the Church is organized hierarchically, ultimate authority resides *locally* in the parishes themselves. The ability of bishops to coerce or cajole priests into taking specific actions for the benefit of their local – or the larger, national – congregation waxes and wanes according to a number of factors.

Fr. Corpora noted that in this time of priest shortages and economic shortfalls, bishops hold less influence because they need the few priests they have and lack the resources with which to bargain for alternate outcomes. Further, many see bishops as bureaucrats – they are running the business of the Church, which decreases their sway on ministerial matters. This appears to be a common catch-22 in the Catholic Church today: because of the looming priest shortage and budget limitations, bishops are loaded with a growing amount of administrative tasks in order to keep the Church running as a whole. The increasingly administrative nature of the bishops’ position limits their ability to minister and serve, which means they know less and less about the people who constitute the Catholic Church. In such a context, it makes sense that those who are directly invested in ministry and service would pay little heed to the recommendations of bishops who, as administrators, are fundamentally out of touch with the lived reality of Catholics today.

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<sup>62</sup> Earlier in chapter 5 I conduct a content analysis of the USCCB news releases and General Assembly Meeting agendas from 2010-2015. I found that in five years the bishops mentioned Latinos a total of 4 times. This reflects a lack of prioritization of the Latino population, and I question whether or not this inattention has any influence on the operations of local parishes.

Regardless, one respondent from Chicago pointed out that it is the responsibility of the bishops to set precedent and give guidance. He speculates that the reason they have not paid more attention to the issue of serving Latinos is the lack of Latino bishops. Others thought that the bishops were afraid because welcoming Latinos into the Church is not a popular view. One of my interviewees noted that the only time a bishop (he would not name which one) received hate mail was when he made a pro-immigrant statement. To that point, Bishop Barnes said that speaking out costs a lot. “I mean some of the remarks of the presidential candidates today about Hispanics are shared by a lot of the people who attend our churches. So, you know, we’ve got a lot to do in catechizing our people.”

Further, there is a lack of awareness that is only beginning to recede. Bishop Barnes said that some other bishops will still occasionally say to him in reference to Latinos, “‘well, you know – *your* people.’ Well aren’t they all *our* people? They’re all our people. So we get frustrated at times.” Cardinal Mahoney had a slightly different perspective:

*We as bishops have failed miserably in addressing the 2nd, 3rd and 4th generations of Hispanics. Go to any of our documents and you see - we were in such an influx of newly arrived immigrants, that was our biggest challenge because they were coming in such big numbers. That has slowed drastically - even though Donald Trump doesn't realize that. We have not caught up to that [serving and recognizing the later generations]. We need major outreach.*

The question remains of whether or not more talk would lead to more action. Ms. Velasquez said it would absolutely make a difference, and references the effect of Pope Francis and his statements. Mr. Govea concedes that it makes sense that more talk from the bishops leads to a greater awareness on a given topic, yet seeing concrete change in

the behaviors of church leaders at the local level requires a plan as framework for action. In other words, words alone are not enough. Cardinal Mahony said precisely the same thing, “statements are the least effective action one can take.” Yet if the bishops are going to make a statement, then it has to be both understandable and doable for the general population, otherwise it’s just words. For instance, Cardinal Mahony wrote a pastoral letter in 1997 entitled “Gather Faithfully Together” talking about how to make Sunday mass more joyful and fulfilling so that it could become more central in Catholics’ lives. He told me, “People *still* come up to me from all over the country saying ‘Thank you for doing that pastoral letter on Sunday mass’. It’s only because of the language and images. It is that kind of style that makes things happen.”

My interviewees mainly focused on the power of bishops’ statements to effect concrete behavioral or policy changes. I would argue that the power of the bishops’ statements is located in their agenda setting ability. Latinos are the “hidden” or “shadow” population. Is it possible that Latinos would remain in the shadows if the bishops themselves consistently worked to turn the lights on? One Jesuit priest said that pastors are more responsible for underserving any group than bishops are. What comes through in these interviews is that such underserving is made possible by a lack of acknowledgement and recognition that Latinos are there and in need. As such, under this federal structure where the greatest amount of public attention is focused on the bishops, the bishops have an incredible opportunity to shed light on the condition of Latinos— as much on their needs as on their contributions to the American Catholic Church.

#### IV. INTENT AND IMPACT

*“[Others] will give you a different perspective than the one I am giving you today. Mine is mine. Mine is not the only one. You will find different opinions. But I believe that's the whole point of doing research.” – Respondent from Chicago*

To what extent is the American Catholic Church a socializing institution? This question concerns the outcome of human actions and decisions made within a specific institutional context. I need more than quantitative data analysis to fully answer this question because of the human aspect of my study: intent, influence, and relationship are key elements of successful socialization through institutions, but are difficult to measure. As such I interviewed Church leaders directly involved in serving Latino Catholics in order to learn about the factors that make their job easier or more complicated. The interviews supported my data-driven finding that the Catholic Church is not an effective socializing institution for Latinos on a large scale, though there are bright exceptions of Church community and responsiveness.

There are several striking parallels between how Latinos and Italians have been treated. Both groups share their status as a secondary congregation, meaning they were not entitled to the same resources as the primary or established congregation, were subject to petty complaints, and forced to worship in subpar conditions (such as basements or gymnasiums) in spite of their congregation's large size. The introduction of co-ethnic pastors was key to improving their treatment within the parish, demonstrating the importance of descriptive representation within church leadership. There were, both for the Italians as for the Latinos, non-co-ethnic leaders who recognized and valued the well-being of these minority congregations and worked to improve their standing within the parish by either bringing them out of the basements or establishing services and

programs especially for them. However such substantive representation is historically less common when there is not also a shared ethnic background between pastor and congregation.

The lack of shared ethnicity or cultural background can also explain a great deal of the problems the church has in responding to Latinos today. Cultural differences cause tensions as older, established congregant groups are reluctant to change their traditions or worship practices to accommodate those of a new ethnic group. Further there is a sentiment of territoriality where what is “mine” cannot be shared with someone new. This division between “us” and “them” is aggravated by the unique religious traditions brought in by Latinos that are either unknown or poorly understood by Anglo congregations. Examples include the quinceñera and Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations. Just like the *feste* of the Italians (see Ch. 3), these celebrations are bold expressions of what makes Latino Catholicism unique. Just like the *feste* these celebrations are also expensive and made possible only by the contributions of the entire Latino community – contributions that Anglos today (as the Irish and Germans of the past) think would be better spent in tithes to the Church or paying for Latino children to attend parochial school.

It is possible to overcome Anglo congregations’ reluctance to welcome Latino Catholics with strong leadership. Unfortunately, the leadership of the Church (being mostly Anglo) is also subject to the same cultural misunderstandings and sentiments of territoriality as the congregants. The resultant miscommunication and lack of *confianza*, logically, lead to churches being less responsive to the needs of Latinos. The easiest way to combat this is by having more Latino leadership. Given the small number of Latino

priests and bishops, a more plausible response is to increase the amount of substantive representation for Latinos through cultural competency training.

Such training would have to extend beyond language classes, and also needs to consist of more than a few sessions within a “Latino ministry module” in order to emphasize the fact that “the Latino community” is not monolithic. Within the Church today there is a great deal of confusion about which Latinos “Hispanic ministry” or Latino outreach programs are targeting. Available services tend to target first generation immigrants with an emphasis on increasing Spanish-language access to ministry; this has less impact on Latinos who are third generation and English dominant. Further, country-of-origin differences inherently affect which types of celebrations work towards inclusion: Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations do not hold the same meaning for a Columbian as for a Mexican population, a distinction that should not be forgotten or overlooked.

The necessity for education and awareness applies to leaders at the local level as well as the national level. While it is not possible to conclude that national behavior directly affects what happens in the parishes, the interviews made clear that leaders at all levels need to recognize the Latino population before the Church’s record of service can improve. It is also important to recognize the significance of bishops’ statements to agenda setting for the national Church as a whole. To that end, it will be interesting – and telling – to see how the national body promotes the upcoming Fifth *Encuentro*, and whether or not they proceed with the resulting recommendations for a national pastoral plan to respond to Latinos.

The most basic explanation for the Church's lack of responsiveness to Latinos that came through these interviews is a simple lack of awareness. In many ways, Latinos are invisible to the Church institution; Fr. Corpora called Latinos the "shadow parish," and Cardinal Mahony referred to them as a "hidden population." It is not possible for a church to respond to the needs of population it does not know exists. While Cardinal Mahony and Mr. Govea advocate for increasing the use of survey data and collecting more demographic information of registered parishioners, it must be noted that such practices are not the norm. Why parishes are reluctant or resistant to collecting data is unclear and not addressed by the interviewees. However the benefit to having such information is undeniable.

While the outcome of Church response to Latinos appears bleak, it is important to note that the lack of service is not an *intended outcome* of the Church leadership. Indeed, one of my greatest take-aways from this series of interviews is that the majority of Catholic Church leaders are incredibly well intentioned. It is difficult to reconcile the good intentions of leadership with their lack of response to Latino populations. Interviews reveal that such disparity is possible because many leaders have limited time, making it more difficult to work with a Latino population they do not understand, cannot fully communicate with, or simply are not aware exists. The following chapter offers suggestions for how to bring the intentions and impacts of church leaders more in line with one another, positively affecting church responsiveness to Latinos.

## Conclusion

**From Su Casa to Mi Casa:  
Is Increasing Latino Inclusion and Ownership  
Within the American Catholic Church Possible?**

*“If you love the people, you love what they love.”*

– Gary Willis March 17, 2015

The premise of this dissertation is that one would expect the Church to positively respond to the needs of Latinos as the largest immigrant and immigrant-derived population in the American Catholic Church, particularly given the historical precedent of socializing European immigrant groups. Further, the high rates of Catholics leaving the Church makes it even more probable – and essential – that the Church respond positively to the needs of their only growing population, Latinos. However, both the evidence reveals that this is not the case in regards to both culturally appropriate service provision at the local level, and agenda setting to bring attention to the needs of Latino Catholics, especially at the national level.

I created an analytical framework using theories of federalism, organizational bureaucracy, and representation to understand how institutional and demographic changes over the past century have affected the Catholic Church’s ability to socialize Latinos, the largest ethnic and immigrant group in the Church today. I constructed two time periods to facilitate my analysis of the impact of federalism: the historical period, from 1850-1920, when the Catholic Church had a decentralized – or confederated - system of organization. This time period was also dominated by large waves of European immigrants who established ethnic parishes to attend to their religious and material needs. The contemporary period is marked by a federal system of organization that has a

centralized, national church body (the USCCB) with the authority to speak to and for all American Catholics. I question how having a federal organization affects the likelihood of priests and bishops recognizing and responding to the needs of Latinos in their community, as well as the ability of Latinos for self-determination within their own parish communities.

Regardless of whether the Church is operating under a confederated or a federal structure, one must remember that the Church has always been an *institution* with goals that influence its members' patterns of behavior (March and Olsen 1984). An important distinction to this study lies between the stated and *de facto* goals of an organization. Stated goals are precisely that: what an institution states it wishes to accomplish. De facto goals are the things an institution actually brings to fruition. It is entirely possible that the stated and de facto goals are at odds with one another because either the institution's rules and routines are outdated, or because the actions of an institution's leaders and members work towards different ends. This very human aspect makes it imperative to analyze both individual behavior *and* institutional rules and stated goals in order to understand institutional impact. To that end, in my study I ask whether socializing and serving Latinos is one of the stated or de facto goals of the American Catholic Church.

Representation theories help establish expectations for service given that the demographic composition of Church leadership is significantly different from that of the Catholic population: while nearly 40% of American Catholics are Latino, only 8% of priests and 11% of bishops are (USCCB 2012; CARA 2014). However the mission of the Catholic Church is to serve all in need without concern for the background of those receiving services nor those providing it. Yet just because priests' acts of service are

theologically motivated does not necessarily mean they are uninfluenced by social norms or the priests' own background. People have different political attitudes and responses to policy problems according to how they were raised and by whom. In the context of the Church, this means that priests and bishops can perceive areas of need and conceptualize service and solutions for various populations differently from how those same problems and solutions are perceived by the populations (congregants) themselves. To that end, I question how the lack of Latino priests and bishops affect the Church's ability to serve Latinos as it served European immigrants in the past.

Complicating the discussion of representation is the insistence in Canon Law that church leaders be responsive to people's culture and context, which necessitates church members being able to make their own needs and experiences known to their leaders. However the hierarchical structure of the Church as an organization can make it easy to obstruct the bottom-up functioning of Church influence – both to outside observers as well as Catholics. All told, my analysis considers how institutional factors such as Church structure, goals, levels of representation, and the limits on leaders' authority affect the extent to which the Catholic Church is a socializing institution for Latinos today.

Another essential factor in determining expectations for the Church's responses to Latinos is understanding the precedent the institution has set for itself in its pattern of responsiveness. To that end, I examined the historical Church's response to past Irish, German, and Italian immigrant groups to establish a baseline against which to compare the Church's actions today. I found that the history of the Catholic Church as a socializing institution has depended upon the alignment between church membership and

leadership along ethnic and national heritage lines. As is commonly known, churches in the historical era offered community support, job opportunities, and political connections. Yet a factor often under-emphasized in the dominant historical narrative is that such services were only provided for members of the dominant congregation. This is because parishes were established to explicitly serve the needs of specific ethnic or national-heritage groups, a specificity that was necessary given the cultural variations in both social and religious practices. Secondary populations had to fight to carve out their own space for worship and support, and their success at doing this varied.

Ethnic churches were able to provide a wide array of support and services that facilitated each immigrant groups' survival, and in many cases, advancement in American society. With a touch of irony, the very advancement of brought about by ethnic churches appears to be what contributed to the demise of ethnic churches themselves. Correspondence found in the archives of New York demonstrates a weakened attachment to ethnic parishes as evidenced by the increase in mixed parishes, leading to a change in pastors' concerns from attending to a specific ethnic population to being able to keep one's church open. Further, the emphasis on sacraments as the primary means for retaining (or losing) congregants also suggests that churches were becoming a source of religious support, only, rather than for immigrant economic advancement or political connections as they were in years prior. A more significant change was that church leaders began to emphasize a preference for *parish rights* over congregant needs, dramatically altering the relationship between pastor and believer. Further, it is important to note that the loss of ethnic parishes did not also eliminate power struggles between dominant and non-dominant populations – only that the characteristics delineating the

“in” and “out” groups shifted from ethnicity to race. This modified ethnoraical hierarchy, combined with an increased focus on parish rights, set the context in which one must understand the struggle of the Catholic Church to respond to the needs of Latino Catholics today.

Determining how much of a barrier is placed between Latinos and church leadership because of an overemphasis on sacraments and rules will require significantly more data than is available at this time. Further it is incredibly difficult to prove a negative, such as the lack of sacramental provision. A more productive approach is quantifying the extent to which parishes respond to Latinos’ needs within churches, broadly speaking. This was the subject of chapter 4, where I calculated the probability of parishes offering Spanish mass or culturally appropriate services as the Latino population surrounding the parish increased. I also calculated the probability of having these services with and without a Latino minister being present, and then measured the likelihood of having a Latino minister at all, since such provision can be a marker of service in and of itself.

Descriptive representation remains a valuable predictor of whether churches will respond to Latinos, a position that also has historical precedent given the effectiveness of ethnic parishes in serving their dominant congregations. The presence of Latino ministers had a positive and significant effect on predicting the likelihood of both Spanish mass and services, particularly when Latinos constituted less than 50% of the general population. This is an important finding because, even though the Latino population continues to grow, for the most part Latinos are still in the numerical minority in their region and church. Given that only 8% of priests and 15% of deacons are Latino, it

becomes doubtful that it is possible to achieve the necessary levels of descriptive representation to ensure churches will provide sufficient socialization services to Latinos.

While Catholic churches appear ready to supply Spanish mass to growing Latino populations, the likelihood of churches providing the other services necessary to the process of socialization are surprisingly low. These findings are strong indications that the Church is not adequately responsive to Latinos because, first of all, providing a Spanish mass to a large Latino congregation is the least a parish can do in being responsive. Second, cultural services such as bible study or Guadalupana societies do not require pastoral involvement and are the keys to the development of community and support that make immigrant groups' advancement possible.

These findings are not necessarily surprising given the historical precedent of churches' non-responsiveness to secondary populations. What was significant to find was that the level of inattention and lack of prioritization also extended to the national level. The USCCB only mentioned Latinos four times in five years, a dismal record at best. I theorized that this omission could be explained by the goal of the USCCB – to form a unified, American Catholic body. Unfortunately that unified body continues to be led by white Catholics, to the exclusion of Latinos. It appears that descriptive representation affects institutional response at both the national and local level.

I turned to interviews seeking an invaluable, first hand portrayal of conditions that either complicate or facilitate the Church's role as a socializing institution for Latinos today. While the interviews supported my quantitative findings that the Church is not as responsive as one would expect given the size of the Latino Catholic population, they also give voice to a perspective that is undetectable by a quantitative analysis: the

intentions of the leaders who serve. What emerged was a picture of incredible good intentions that are sadly unmatched by the outcomes of Church service and response.

### **The Church Changes, The Church Stays the Same**

This project set out to answer the question, “to what extent is the American Catholic Church a socializing institution for Latinos?” The answer, by all accounts, is “not much,” although that is not the result intended by Church leaders. I initially believed that the Church’s success with socializing European immigrants would establish a positive precedent for Church treatment of Latinos. Instead through a closer examination of the historical narrative I found that the contemporary inattention towards Latinos fits into a long-standing pattern of power contestation between minority and established populations. As the Church evolved from a confederation of ethnic parishes to mixed parishes to a federation of white parishes, the patterns of power have remained the same: the dominant group maintains control over space, resources, and – importantly – leadership. This is significant because Latinos, even when they make up a large portion of the parish population, have yet to make up a majority of many church congregations, and still remain underrepresented in church leadership roles.

Latinos’ continued minority status in Church congregations is significant in the contemporary era of mixed, or *shared* parishes where there are “two or more cultural groups, each with distinct masses and ministries, but who share the same parish facilities” (Hoover 2014). Many shared parishes come about by accommodating secondary populations *without disrupting the established population*. This produces a distinct power differential that is often not acknowledged by the dominant group. As a

result, space is most often shared on European-American terms since Anglos, as the established population, are often “taught to think of their group as the norm” to which Latinos must adapt (Hoover 2014). This modernized analysis precisely describes the struggles of Italians entering Irish and German dominated parishes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An important distinction between the Italian and Latino experience is that the federal structure today makes it unfeasible for Latinos to erect new ethnic parishes, leaving “the politically stronger group [able] to impose its essentializing definition on others, a definition that disparages [the secondary group’s] inventiveness and historical agency” (Hoover 2014, 64).

Strong and supportive leadership can help correct such cultural imbalances and encourage both secondary and dominant populations to not only accommodate, but also to empower one another. As one of my interviewees said, successfully incorporated parishes “normally begins with the leadership of the pastor. This is like a good point but it’s also a weak point. Because if the pastor doesn’t believe in being multicultural the community will not see that this is something good” (anonymous 2016). My study has found that a Latino leader is more likely to see incorporation as “something good” than a non-Latino. This is problematic because, per the data available and per my interviews, even in congregations that are de facto “Latino ethnic parishes” where Latinos constitute the majority population, leadership positions – from the finance council to deacons to pastors – remain white. That means the majority of decision making capabilities rest with non-Latinos, often to the detriment of Latino Catholics – a point emphasized by this project’s empirical findings.

### Seeking Solutions

While it is possible to conclude that the current challenges in Church response to Latinos originate from the ethnoracial hierarchy of the US, such deduction only tells part of the story. This is because the Church, as a religious institution, can be described as a service oriented, volunteer organization whose mission is to serve all in need without concern for the background of those receiving service nor those providing it. A common theme to bridging the gap between descriptive and substantive representation in determining church responsiveness to Latinos is education. As stated above, those in power are often oblivious to or refuse to acknowledge their privilege, a perception that can only be bolstered by a lack of awareness regarding the size or presence of Latinos who share ones parish boundaries.

I found in my earlier chapters that information on Latinos and the Church is scarce and often unreliable. Given such a context, it is not clear why parishes do not actively seek out information regarding the demographic characteristics of the people living within their parish boundaries. To that end, Isaac Govea, Director of Hispanic Ministry for the Archdiocese of Seattle, promotes sending out demographic surveys to church parishioners so that the church can learn more about the make-up of their congregations. This type of information is imperative to any church determining its effectiveness in responding to the needs of those who presently belong to a church. Cardinal Mahony highlights the importance of seeing who lives in the area that *would* belong to a church should there be attractive options and outreach (versus only seeking information about registered members). This is a vital step when looking at Church response to Latinos because Latinos are the “hidden population” whose numbers are

often widely underestimated. Looking to census data allows churches to see who lives in the surrounding area, regardless of whether they belong to a parish community or not, so that it can tailor its programs and outreach accordingly. It bears noting that, outside of the California parishes using Census data (urged on by Cardinal Mahony) there are no known dioceses in the US that conduct demographic surveys of their congregants or neighboring populations. After talking with representatives from several dioceses, as well as numerous priests and ministers from parishes across the country I have heard of no Church entity (parish, diocese, or otherwise) that actively seeks out this type of information. I have, however, heard numerous stories of pastors and bishops blatantly refusing to do so.

Another solution is the development of community leaders, which is something that all my interviewees advocated. Some talked about promoting certification of ministry programs for Latinos, others mentioned the creation of ownership by giving many people a voice and a say in the way ministries and programs are developed and carried out. Care must be taken to ensure that leaders are not being groomed to focus on sacramental rites only. One key point that repeatedly emerged from my interviews and research is that parish life extends beyond the mass on Sunday, highlighting the Church's significance to the process of socialization and political incorporation. In order for a parish to help community members succeed in these broader realms, it must work to affect life beyond the church walls.

Increased outreach requires more leaders, and the easiest way to identify leaders is through getting to know the community. The fastest way to get to know the community is by making it easy for them to come to your church. This is the reason why Cardinal

Mahony advocates providing Spanish mass when there is a large Latino population in the parish neighborhood – because it brings Latinos in to the church so that he and the pastor can meet them, know them, and find out what it is they need from the church. It also helps them identify members who can be trained and encouraged to take on leadership roles so that the number of services to Latinos can expand without all of them having to originate from the pastor himself. These suggestions illustrate how doing something as simple as taking the time to learn more about the people within a parish can be an effective and fruitful first step to rectifying the imbalance of power and representation within churches.

Thanks to the multilateral flows of influence within the Church (as explained in Ch. 2) it is possible that parishioners can bring about change in the way the Church responds to Latinos. Indeed, one interviewee said, “This might be controversial, but it has to come from the *pews*.” Parishioners changing the culture of the parish will hopefully inspire the pastors to also change their approach and response to diverse communities. This bottom-up mentality was reflected in several of my interviews. Their advice was directed to the Latino community: do the inviting. Do not wait to be invited. This applied to leadership positions, organizing cultural (or inter-cultural) religious celebrations, group meetings, mass, choir – everything. A respondent from Chicago said, “We cannot expect that everybody accommodate around me. ... The bishop has to learn Spanish. Yeah, he can make the effort ... but at the same time you have to make the effort to speak English. And to really do our best and to find a way, even though it’s difficult.” Bishop Soto works to encourage Latinos to take up leadership positions in the church, and teach them how the parish operates so they would be more willing to do so. He also urged that they

not wait for others to make the first move since they are the soon-to-be dominant population.

*Don't wait to be invited. You're the one that needs to do the inviting. When was the last time you invited an African American to your event? Why is Our Lady of Guadalupe always wrapped in a Mexican flag? Why not one from Ecuador? Or the Philippines? You're in ascendancy. We'd be more Guadalupano in doing so.*

The hope is that change from the pews – when congregants make themselves known to the pastor, organize themselves, and take on leadership positions in the community – can not be ignored by local church leaders and would prompt subsequent recognition and support. This is an incredibly empowering solution as it recognizes the strengths and ability of the Latino population to create the community it wants and needs for itself. It also echoes church operations during the confederated era when communities were able to establish their own parishes. However this solution is severely limited by (ironically) a lack of leaders who can lead such a community movement, as well as time and resources within the community itself. Further, the effect of such action is, for the most part, limited to an individual parish, unless the wider community also has a large Latino population that can be mobilized. While growing, there are not many areas that fit this description in the nation.

Another option is a top-down approach that focuses on the power and influence of the national church body within a federal system of organization. This option is limited by the bishops' ability to put programs into place and affect the everyday happenings of the local parishes. However the true power of bishops, as I stated above, is in agenda setting. If bishops were consistently talking about Latinos, there would be greater awareness that they existed. As I discussed in chapter 5, the USCCB is the voice that

speaks to and for American Catholics, meaning they have the ability to raise awareness about any number of issues for both Catholics and non-Catholics alike, since their platform is on the national scale. Speaking about Latinos would bring them out of the shadows, so to speak, and would make it easier to convince pastors that they need to look at the demographics of their own neighborhood so that they might “discover” the Latinos who reside there.

A third option has already been alluded to: get the pastors to learn more about Latinos living in their parish, advocate for their rights with the dominant congregations, and push for an increased Church response to Latinos. Such a path is difficult for a number of reasons previously explained: being too busy (though Fr. Pat Murphy noted that people who are really busy are too busy to say so), language barriers, and (as explained by Fr. Joe) operational differences. There is also normally significant pushback from historically dominant populations that do not want to “give up” what they think is rightfully theirs. To that end, one priest I interviewed said that it was his job to step up to the plate, regardless of the pushback, and do what needs to be done. All of this requires humility. Almost every single one of those interviewed quoted Pope Francis and his emphasis on walking with the flock – taking the time to get to listen to, get to know, and be empathetic with the people you, as a minister, are supposed to be serving. A more direct suggestion for achieving this end was provided by Ms. Velasquez: “Don’t take yourself so seriously!” Be open to critique, do not seek constant praise and approval, and be ready to always recognize that even others whom you are critiquing can at the same time be doing “a damn good job.” A humble pastor is more likely to match his good

intentions with the work to achieve positive outcomes in response to the Latino community.

### **Unanswered Questions**

A number of issues touched upon in this project deserve more attention in future work. First and foremost – more data is needed about both Catholic congregations and their demographics, as well as the services that are presently being offered by parish communities. Also, future studies should collect more information from parishes and regions in which Latinos are decidedly in the minority so that the resulting analyses can be appropriately weighted to demonstrate the average national condition in which Latino Catholics find themselves. The overwhelming resistance of Church leaders to learning about their congregations is alarming, and severely hampers any attempt at improving service to all Catholics, but particularly Latinos.

Also, as I described in chapter 4, a more nuanced way of conducting this research considers the *rate* of representation and service provision. This involves calculating the percentage of priests and deacons who are Latino and the percentage of all masses that are said in Spanish versus another language. These numbers would then be compared to the demographics of the congregations – what percentage of attending parishioners are Latino – to produce a calculated rate of service and responsiveness. Again, this requires a significant effort at data collection.

Another important perspective that is all but missing from this analysis is that of Latino Catholics themselves. It is essential to understand what Latinos want from their parish communities, and what types of services they would take advantage of should they

have the opportunity before a judgment can be made about whether the Church's response is adequate. Such information could be gathered through widely dispersed climate surveys, as well as focus groups and individual interviews with targeted congregations. Talking with Latino laity will also reveal the role of the Church in their lives, and help us to understand how religious affiliation and practice shape cultural identity and community attachment.

One last major question concerns the ability of Churches to encourage *political* incorporation in the modern day, particularly given the absence of political party machines that historically took on that role. I have heard a number of political actors comment on the importance of Catholic churches to their Latino outreach since the Church is a trusted institution. An information meeting at the town hall will have only a handful of Latinos in attendance, whereas the same meeting will pack the church auditorium. How reliable are these adages, and do they only hold true for Latinos who are practicing Catholics? Understanding the potential of the Catholic Church to promote nonpartisan civic engagement within the Latino community can have a large and significant impact on the future of American politics. Not only are Latinos one of the largest and fastest growing populations in the country, but they also have some of the lowest rates of political participation. Numerous articles have been written on the importance of mobilizing this "sleeping giant" that has the potential to swing almost every major election in the US, and it is possible that the Catholic Church may be the alarm clock.

### **The Future of the American Catholic Church**

The American Catholic Church is on the brink of crisis: it is losing members at the highest rate of any other religion in the US. For every one convert, six Catholics leave the Church. The one bright spot in these reports is the growing Latino population that constitutes 41% of American Catholic population (up from 35% in 2007, Pew Research Center 2015). Some leaders hypothesize that the Latino Catholic population is even larger but is currently underreported because of Latinos' reluctance to participate in surveys on account of immigration fears (O'Loughlin 2015).

My research found a persistent lack of awareness coexists with the Church's acknowledgment of the growing presence of Latinos and their desire to be an active part of the Catholic community. This disjunction suggests either a genuine ignorance to the presence of Latinos within the Church, or a chosen resistance to learning more about this significant population. A third possible explanation is simple racism on the part of Anglos who simply do not want for their Church to change. History demonstrates that it is possible for all three conditions to exist simultaneously (consider how Irish and German Catholics treated Italian Catholics whose traditions did not match those of the established congregations). Regardless of the *intentions* of church leaders in regards to serving Latinos, the results of Church behavior in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century is a continued lack of action to understand the growing Latino population, and an unwillingness to develop wide-reaching and intentional strategies of inclusion that focus on more than the sacraments. The implications of this neglect extend beyond the viability of the American Catholic Church.

The Latino electorate in 2016 is an estimated 27.3 million, or approximately 12% of the eligible voting population (Krogstad 2016; Krogstad et al. 2016). This is a significant enough population to alter electoral outcomes at both the local and national levels – if they were to turn out. However only 11.2 million Latinos voted in 2012 – a dismal 48% turnout rate that pales in comparison to whites (64.1%) and blacks (66.6% , Krogstad et al. 2016). Further, low turnout rates negatively impact Latinos’ process of self-determination, political expression, and ability to have their needs met through policy development. Churches, particularly Catholic churches, are primary institutions of socialization with direct implications for political incorporation and mobilization. Understanding whether the Church today is fulfilling that role can lay the groundwork for understanding why the political socialization of Latinos appears to be lacking.

**APPENDIX A:***Regression Results Predicting Spanish Mass and Cultural Service Provision (Chapter 3)*

	<b>Spanish Mass</b>	<b>Cultural Services</b>
<b>Latino Population Density</b>	5.39*** (1.54)	2.48 (1.32)
<b>Latino Minister</b>	1.83* (0.81)	2.65* (0.91)
<b>Yakima</b>	1.77* (0.69)	-0.36 (0.82)
<b>San Antonio</b>	-0.19 (0.87)	0.13 (0.89)
<b>Population * Minister</b>	-1.84 (1.61)	-2.68 (1.37)
<b>(Intercept)</b>	-2.42*** (0.58)	-2.67*** (0.68)

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**APPENDIX B:***List of Interviewees (Chapter 6)*

- The Most Reverend Gerald R. Barnes**, Bishop of the Diocese of San Bernardino, Chair of USCCB Sub-Committee on Hispanic Affairs, Member of USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church; phone interview April 5, 2016
- The Most Reverend Oscar Cantu**, Bishop of the Diocese of Las Cruces, Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace, Member of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; phone interview April 18, 2016
- Reverend Joseph Corpora, C.S.C.**, director of university-school partnerships for the University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE), former co-chair of the Notre Dame Task Force on the Participation of Latino Families and Children in Catholic Schools; in-person interview Feb. 26, 2016
- Isaac E Govea**, Director for Hispanic Ministry for the Archdiocese of Seattle; phone interview Feb. 12, 2016
- Hispanic Minister** in Chicago, IL; phone interview April 6, 2016
- Jesuit priest**; formerly in Chicago, IL; phone interview June 23, 2015
- Cardinal Roger Mahoney**, Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles; phone interview Feb. 29, 2016
- Rev. Patrick Murphy, C.S.**, Director of La Casa del Migrante, Tijuana; in-person interview March 24, 2016
- Pastoral Associate** in Seattle, WA; in-person interview March 8, 2016
- Michael Seifert**, Rio Grande Valley Network Weaver for the Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network; phone interview Dec. 18, 2015
- The Most Reverend Jaime Soto**, Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento; phone interview March 23, 2016
- Carmen Velasquez**, founder of Alivio Medical Centers in Chicago, IL; in-person interview April 7, 2016

**APPENDIX C***Interview Questions (Chapter 6)*

1. How many people do you serve in your arch/diocese?
  - a. How many are Latino?
2. How many ministries and service-oriented programs are there?
  - a. How many programs in your arch/diocese offer services – such as social services?
  - b. Can you give a brief summary of the types of services that are provided and who they reach?
  - c. How many people do they reach?
3. How large is the Catholic School system?
  - a. How many children are from Catholic families?
4. What is your diocese's policy on sacraments? - e.g. must be registered and take classes? — Does this have any effect on who receives sacraments?
5. In addition to all appropriate religious ministry, e.g. receipt of sacraments, how much do you think the Church should focus on material needs? [a lot, a little, some]
6. How frequently do you comment on or encourage your priests to comment on political issues? e.g. immigration policy, advocate inclusion in parish of Latinos, voter registration drive, post cards to send to congress person.
  - a. How do you see the Church's role as a political actor? (comment on policy, affect policy, encourage political action, etc?)

More specific questions about your congregations:

7. What are the primary needs of your congregants?
  - a. Do you feel you are responding to those needs? If not, why not?
  - b. What difficulties do you encounter in serving?
  - c. When have you seen the church be most successful in serving?
8. How do you determine your congregants' needs? (surveys, phone calls, etc.)
9. Do you know whether non-congregants benefit from the services in your diocese?
  - a. [How many people/which services]
10. Who organizes and runs the various ministries and programs in your diocese? (e.g. bible study, quincenera, Hispanic ministry, youth groups, etc.)
  - a. Do you have any strategies for leadership formation or recruiting leaders?

LATINO-SPECIFIC

11. How do you respond to the Latino and Latino-immigrant community in your diocese?
12. How many masses are there in Spanish?
  - a. How is their attendance? How does that compare to attendance at English masses?
  - b. How many priests in your diocese speak Spanish?
  - c. Do you encourage priests to include Latino traditions in their non-Spanish masses? (e.g. songs in Spanish, Virgin de Guadalupe celebration)
13. Do you know what percentage of the ministries or programs in your arch/diocese is directed at Latinos?
  - a. Do you know how many people those ministries are reaching?
14. How many of the Latino-focused ministries are primarily or exclusively in Spanish?
  - a. What percentage of the Latinos in your archdiocese do those ministries reach?
15. How many of the Latinos in your diocese are first-generation immigrants?
16. Do you see a distinction between serving Latino immigrant and other immigrant communities?
17. What role do you believe the USCCB has in American Catholicism?
  - a. In what ways is the USCCB an effective organization? How can it make a difference?
18. The USCCB pays little attention to Latinos (news releases, general assembly meeting agendas, downgrading of the Committee on Hispanic Affairs).
  - a. How does this reflect the priorities of the Church?
  - b. How does that affect the way Latinos are treated and considered at the parish level?

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