

RELIGIOUS SWITCHING AMONG LATINOS:

THE CONGREGATIONAL CONTEXT

by

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DEDICATION

To my family

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the factors associated with religious switching among Latinos in Chicago churches. In the last few decades, some scholars have suggested that there is a growing trend among Latinos away from Catholicism and toward conservative Protestantism. Drawing on insights from previous literature on religious conversion more broadly, and from literature on ethnic and immigrant congregations, I examine the possibility that the way a church meets the various needs of congregants is associated with religious switching. More specifically, I explore whether having one's social, spiritual, and material needs met through one's congregation is associated with switching from participation in a Catholic church to participation in a Protestant church.

To explore these potential associations, I use data from the Chicago Latino Congregations Study (CLCS), a multilevel study of predominantly Latino congregations in Chicago and the churchgoers who attend them. Using multilevel modeling, I examine both individual congregant-level factors and congregation-level factors, including characteristics of church leaders, and their association with religious switching. The results of this analysis suggest the importance of examining whether or not congregations have formalized ways of incorporating new members into the church, and whether or not the church leader is directly involved with helping congregants meet material needs such as finding a job. Also, results demonstrate that these two factors are more commonly found in evangelical and Pentecostal Protestant churches in Chicago than in Catholic churches. I propose that when congregations employ methods of reaching out to potential new members in personal, individualized ways—such as a church leader directly helping

a potential new member with finding a job— affective ties are established and nurtured, setting the ground work for religious switching.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

While the Latino population in the United States has traditionally been majority Catholic, and continues to be to a large degree, some research in recent decades has suggested a shift toward Protestantism (Greeley 1988, Hernández et al. 2007, Stohlman 2007). There are several possible explanations for this shift, and likely many contributing factors. This research will explore the connection between the ways religious congregations meet the needs of Latino members and the possibility that certain congregations draw members from other religious traditions based on this characteristic.

I will draw on two broad bodies of literature to inform this study. First, the sociological literature on religious conversion offers some insights into how to begin examining the factors contributing to religious switching among Latinos in particular. For example, many studies of conversion have highlighted the importance of social connections between group members and potential recruits (Lofland and Stark 1965, Snow and Phillips 1980, Greil and Rudy 1984, Smilde 2005, 2007). A majority of previous studies of conversion, however, focus on people who have joined groups that are considered deviant or marginal in society (see Suchman 1992 for an exception) rather than more mainstream religious groups such as Protestants. Also, while previous studies of conversion have focused on the ideological and/or spiritual needs that may be met for recruits in congregations, as well as the importance of social ties, little attention has been paid to the more practical and/or material needs met by such organizations.

Second, a fairly large body of literature exists on the immigrant church and the ethnic church. Much of this work, based mainly on qualitative case studies of

congregations, describes the many ways that these churches provide benefits to their congregants beyond the spiritual and religious rewards that constitute most religious organizations' primary goals (Warner and Wittner 1998, Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000, Sullivan 2000a, Sullivan 2000b, Hagan and Ebaugh 2003, Menjívar 2003, Odem 2004, Cavalcanti and Schlee 2005, Mooney 2006). However, there are very few empirical studies that have examined whether or not, and in what ways, meeting various needs might contribute to religious switching.

This study will extend the existing research on religious switching by building on insights from the literature on the roles of religious congregations in the lives of Latinos in the U.S. and the literature on religious conversion. One of the most important findings from the literature on religious conversion is that social ties are crucial for recruiting members to a religious group (Lofland and Stark 1965, Snow and Phillips 1980, Stark and Bainbridge 1980, Snow and Machalek 1984, Sherkat and Wilson 1995, Smilde 2005, Gooren 2007). And the literature on ethnic and immigrant congregations tells us about the many ways that these social ties are initiated and nurtured in a congregational context (Warner and Wittner 1998, Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000). Additionally, I will examine not only the social and spiritual benefits of joining a new congregation, but also the material benefits that may encourage switching from one religious tradition to another through the affective ties that are developed between church members and potential recruits.

Using data from the Chicago Latino Congregations Study (CLCS), I will address the following broad research question: Why are some Latinos switching from Catholicism to Evangelical and Pentecostal faiths? More specifically, what is the role of

congregational context? What are the characteristics of congregations—including characteristics of congregational leaders—that attract (and/or retain) Latino members? What material, spiritual, and social needs do congregations meet for Latino members, and how might meeting such needs—and manner of meeting such needs—contribute to or be associated with religious switching?

Changes in Religious Affiliation Among Latinos in the U.S.: Establishing the Trend

A majority of Latinos identify as Catholic (Pew Research Center 2012). In the 2012 National Survey of Latinos, a nationally representative survey of Latinos conducted by the Pew Research Center, about six-in-ten (58%) Latinos identified as Catholic. About one-in-five (22%) identified as Protestant, with two-thirds among them identifying as evangelical or born-again (68% of Protestants, or 15% of all Latinos). Another 13 percent identified as having no religious affiliation (either atheist, agnostic, or nothing in particular), and three percent identify as some other religion (Mormon, Jewish, Muslim, etc.). This religious breakdown is more or less in line with many previous studies of religious affiliation among Latinos, which tend to find that a majority of this population is Catholic (Greeley 1988, Greeley 1994, Hunt 1998, Hunt 1999, Perl, Greely, and Gray 2006).

While it is well established that Latinos have been, and continue to be, largely Catholic in their religious identification, it is less clear whether or not and to what degree the religious profile of Latinos has changed over time, mainly because until recently there has been a lack of good quality data on Latinos and religious affiliation (Perl, Greely, and

Gray 2006). While Latinos make up a growing proportion of the U.S. population (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, and Albert 2011), at 15-16% of the population, most surveys of the general public have only small samples of Latino respondents.

When it comes to measuring religious affiliation in particular among Latinos, there are two challenges that many previous studies have faced. The first is how to ask about religious affiliation. There are many different approaches to measuring religious affiliation—ranging from an entirely open-ended question, to asking respondents to choose from a list, to a series of questions about tradition and denomination—and the approach is almost never consistent across surveys from different sources. So the percentage of respondents identifying as Catholic, for example, is likely to differ depending on how the question is asked (Pew Research Center 2008), making it impossible to be confident about a change from one survey to another.

A second challenge has to do with the sampling differences related to language options. Surveys of the Latino population that are not conducted by fully bilingual interviewers are missing a significant proportion of the Latino population that would not be able to, or would prefer not to, complete an interview in English. In fact, in a Pew Research Center analysis of the religious profile of Latinos yielded from fully bilingual survey designs compared with English-only and a modified Spanish option (in which Spanish-speaking respondents are called back by a Spanish-speaking interviewer) suggests that as the percentage of interviews conducted in Spanish increase, so does the percent Catholic in the sample (2008). According to a Pew Hispanic Center analysis of data from the 2011 American Community Survey, 41 percent of Hispanic adults in the

United States report speaking English less than very well (Motel and Patten 2013), which suggests that a survey design that does not incorporate Spanish language interviewing could be missing up to four-in-ten possible respondents.

The methodological approach to surveying Latinos has been improving. Many researchers now employ a stratified sampling design which oversamples areas with higher densities of Latino residents to ensure complete coverage of the population (Dutwin, Kennedy, Keeter and Kulp 2008). The use of bilingual interviewers is still not universal, most likely due to the higher cost associated with this approach, but is employed in some national surveys (e.g. Pew Research Center, Latino Decisions). While there are now some good sources of survey data on Latinos, long-term trends on religion have not yet been established. The General Social Survey, which has been asking the U.S. population about religious affiliation for decades, only recently began incorporating a Spanish language option for survey respondents. And the Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project, the gold standard for surveys of the Latino population, only recently began asking about religious affiliation in a consistent way (since 2010).

The above limitations aside, however, there are some reasons to believe that religious affiliation has shifted in certain ways among this population. Twenty-five years ago, Andrew Greeley was among the first to suggest that the Catholic Church was losing Latinos from its pews. Using data from the General Social Survey, Greeley (1988) found that in the 1970s and 1980s as much as eight percent of the Latino Catholic population left the Church. Greeley also noted that a majority of Latinos in Protestant traditions were in conservative or "fundamentalist" Protestant traditions (1994). Hunt (1998), in an

analysis of the National Alcohol Survey, found a higher proportion of Hispanic respondents were Catholic than in Greeley's analysis—most likely because the NAS included Spanish language interviewing—but also found that most non-Catholic Latinos were in “fundamentalist” Protestant traditions. Hunt (1999) also extended Greeley's analysis of the GSS into the 1990s, and while he found a decline in the proportion of Hispanics who were Catholic, he did not find corresponding growth among conservative Protestants. In a more recent study of Latinos by the Pew Research Center (2007), among Catholics, nearly all (98%) were raised Catholic. However, among evangelical Protestants, 43% were raised Catholic, suggesting a non-negligible degree of movement from Catholicism to Protestantism.

While we cannot be certain about the degree to which Latinos are leaving the Catholic Church without reliable long-term trends, it is clear that there has been some shifting, regardless of the net effect. What accounts for this? The same Pew Research Center survey of Latinos (2007) asked evangelical converts about their reasons for leaving the church. When asked whether or not a desire for “a more direct personal experience of God” was a reason for changing their religion, nine-in-ten (90%) said yes. While this response category likely reflects a post-conversion narrative in the context of an evangelical faith that emphasizes a personal relationship with God, the high rate of agreement with this statement among evangelical converts nonetheless hints at the importance of the religious experience in their decision to change. In fact, six-in-ten (61%) Latino converts said they viewed Catholic mass as unexciting, and about a third (36%) cite this as a reason for having left the Catholic Church. Four-in-ten (42%) say

they joined their new religion because they were inspired by a particular evangelical pastor, and three-in-ten (31%) because of a deep personal crisis. And most (76%) heard about their current religion from a family member or friend.

These findings give us some insight into the factors that might contribute to changing religious affiliation, but do not provide a full picture. This dissertation explores some of these factors, as well as several others that have been found to be important in sociological literature on religious conversion, and that have been suggested to be important in sociological literature on ethnic and immigrant churches.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the two bodies of literature that will inform my analysis: literature on religious conversion or religious switching, and literature on the ethnic church. Each of these bodies of literature offers fruitful avenues to explore in the endeavor of explaining the shift from Catholicism to conservative Protestantism among Latinos.

Religious Conversion

Much of the sociological research on religious conversion came out of the public interest in the growth of “new religious movements” in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s, such as the Unification Church, or “Moonies” (Lofland and Stark 1965), the Nichiren Shoshu Buddhist movement (Snow and Phillips 1980), and “Heaven’s Gate,” a millennial UFO “cult” (Balch 1980). While popular explanations for so-called “cult” involvement at the time revolved around ideas of brainwashing and coercion (Balch 1980), sociologists generally discredited this view and set out to try to explain why some people chose to join movements that were seen as deviant or marginal at the time.

Stark and Bainbridge (1980) summarize the earliest body of work focused on “cult” recruitment as falling under the “deprivation-ideological appeal” explanation. According to this approach, those who are most likely to be recruited to a religious movement are individuals who have any of a variety of deprivations (broadly conceptualized, and including examples such as a lack of friendships or other intimate relationships, marital dissatisfaction, lack of success in a career, loss of a job, etc.), and

for whom the ideology of the religious movement is therefore appealing. As Stark and Bainbridge put it, “to understand whom a particular group recruits, it is necessary to see to whom its ideology offers the most,” (1980, 1377).

In their influential analysis of recruitment to the Unification Church in its early days in the United States, Lofland and Stark (1965) outlined an additive model of factors that resulted in successful recruitment to the group. The first of these are in line with the deprivation-ideological appeal; Lofland and Stark’s model begins with the importance of an experience of tension (i.e. deprivation) by a potential recruit. They give examples of early recruits who were dissatisfied with their marriage, or who felt confusion or shame because of homosexual feelings or experiences, or who were unsatisfied with the level of spirituality experienced in the religious groups they had participated in previously, and were therefore primed for potential recruitment to a group with a different and new worldview. People who were experiencing such tension and attempted to alleviate this tension through a religious problem-solving perspective were prime candidates for recruitment.

Other scholars within this same line of research identified various possible predisposing traits—whether personality traits, cognitive orientations, or social attributes—of recruits that might make one an ideal candidate for recruitment by religious groups (Lofland and Stark 1965, Lofland 1977, Bromley and Shupe 1979, Levine 1980, Snow and Phillips 1980, Lofland and Skonovd 1981). Young, single, middle-class individuals, for example, might be good potential candidates for recruitment because they have fewer social restrictions and can afford to pick up and move and try new things

(Bromley and Shupe 1979). “Religious seekers,” or those who jump from one religion to another until they find an ideology that provides answers or solutions to their particular deprivations, would be particularly open to a new theological perspective (Lofland and Stark 1965).

Lofland and Stark (1965), and subsequently many scholars building on their approach, also moved beyond the deprivation-ideological appeal perspective, however, by highlighting the important role played by social ties. Many people experience deprivation or tension in their lives, and many of those people might seek out religion-based solutions to their life problems, but only some small subset of those people end up converting to new religious groups. Deprivation or tension alone is not a sufficient condition leading to conversion. In Lofland and Stark’s model, individuals who had a social connection to one or more members of the new religious group, and who had fewer or weaker social ties to people who might prevent them from joining the new group, were the ones who ultimately joined the group.

In fact, since much of the research that focused on predisposing traits and situational factors relied on converts’ accounts of their lives before conversion, many scholars noted the danger of giving too much weight to post-conversion narratives (Heirich 1977, Snow and Phillips 1980, Snow and Malachuk 1984). Conversion narratives often involve a reinterpretation of previous events through the new lens provided by the group the convert has joined. So while a convert might interpret an event such as a prolonged illness, a move to a new city, or loss of a job as a “turning point” in their life when they realized the new religion was the way for them (Lofland and Stark

1965), another person who had a similar life experience that did not result in a religious conversion might not give any weight to that experience as a “turning point” in their lives. What often matters more in the explanation of why one person with a particular life experience converted and another person with similar traits and experiences did not is whether or not each person developed an affective tie with members of the new religious group.

The importance of social ties for recruiting new members to religious groups is the most consistent finding in the literature on conversion (Lofland and Stark 1965, Snow and Phillips 1980, Stark and Bainbridge 1980, Snow and Machalek 1984, Sherkat and Wilson 1995, Smilde 2005, Gooren 2007). More specifically, many studies have found that a person is most likely to join a new religious group if they have an affective tie to someone who is already a member of that group, and if there is “intensive interaction” between group members and the potential recruit (Greil and Rudy 1984, Lofland and Stark 1965, Snow and Phillips 1980). In other words, if a potential recruit has a friend in the group, and participates in several group activities, that person is more likely to eventually join the group. Rather than being drawn to a religious group’s ideology and later forming relationships with members, this body of work demonstrates that more often social ties draw members to a group and the adoption of the group’s ideology comes later.

While much of the early work on recruitment to religious groups focused on conversion to so-called deviant or fringe religious groups, other work focusing on mainstream religions also found social ties to be an important element in the degree to

which individuals were involved in their religion. Stark and Bainbridge (1985) describe a few examples of research focused on non-deviant groups in their review of the significance of interpersonal bonds for recruitment to cults and sects. For example, studies of the charismatic movement among Catholics have also emphasized the role of interpersonal bonds in drawing new members to the group (Harrison 1974, Heirich 1977).

While social ties have been found to be important for drawing new members into a group, they can also play an important role in keeping someone from joining a new group, or from leaving a group they already belong to. For example, Welch (1981) found higher levels of orthodoxy among mainline Protestant churchgoers whose best friends were also members of the same congregation. Smilde (2005) importantly points out that studies focusing only on converts miss the fact that there are also other potential recruits with similar network contacts that have not converted. Just as an affective tie might serve to draw someone toward a new religious group, strong affective ties outside of the group may prevent a potential recruit from joining (Lofland and Stark 1965, Sherkat and Wilson 1995, Smilde 2005).

Stark and Bainbridge (1980) not only emphasize the roles of interpersonal bonds in recruiting people to a church, but also suggest that religious organizations provide members with direct, worldly rewards that should be considered in a theory of recruitment. While the authors suggest that affective bonds and social networks are a form of direct reward, they make a broader point that provides a potentially fruitful avenue to explore: “Whatever else they may be, religious organizations also are worldly organizations and have at their disposal resources to reward many members,” (1394). In

other words, there are benefits associated with joining a religious organization beyond just spiritual or social benefits. Much of the scholarly work on ethnic and immigrant congregations has focused on the worldly rewards provided to members, though not always in the context of explaining why people join the congregation. In the section below, I describe in more detail some of this work.

The Role of Congregations in Meeting Needs

A wealth of literature documents the various ways that religious congregations meet the needs of their members. Much of this work focuses on immigrant or ethnic congregations, in particular (Min 1992, Kwon, Ebaugh and Hagan 1997, Warner and Wittner 1998, Bankston and Zhou 2000, Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000, Campion 2003, Hirschman 2004, Cavalcanti and Schlee 2005, Abel 2006, Zhang 2006). While the primary role of any religious institution is to meet the religious and spiritual needs of members, providing spiritual development, worship experience, scriptural instruction, and so forth, there are also many other ways in which congregations meet the needs of participants.

The church is not only a center of religious worship, but provides the opportunity to make social connections with other people, as well. In addition to worship services, religious congregations provide many opportunities to build relationships with others. As Ammerman describes based on her extensive work studying congregations in America, while most congregations cite religious goals as the most important dimension of their

work, almost as important—and nearly impossible to separate—are goals such as fellowship and community building (2005).

For Latinos, and for Latino immigrants in particular, the social dimension of the congregation could mean connecting with others of one's ethnic group (and primary language) or country of origin and helping to maintain an ethnic identity (Cavalcanti and Schleef 2005, Menjivar 2003, Odem 2004). Finding a religious organization within a new community that worships in similar ways to the origin community provides a connection to the home country, as well as some continuity amongst otherwise changing, and often uncertain, circumstances for immigrants. And at the same time, the church can help newcomers transition to the culture of the new community and provide opportunities to integrate with members of the host society. As Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000) note of religious institutions, "the institutions themselves are structures to both insure continuity of practice and to assume adaptive strategies of change," (134).

In addition to providing an institution through which to adapt to a new community, congregations simply provide a place to belong and to build relationships with other people. As Chai (1998) notes, talking about the experiences of immigrants in a Korean Protestant church, "the church offers, at minimum, weekly opportunities for interaction with other immigrants and instills in members a sense of belonging, comfort, and meaning," (298).

Many religious congregations also provide more practical or material assistance to participants, including help with basic needs such as food or clothing, help finding a job or affordable housing, help with literacy training, learning English, legal advice, etc.

(Bankston and Zhou 2000, Campion 2003, Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000, Menjivar 2003, Sullivan 2000a, Sullivan 2000b, Warner and Wittner 1998). As Menjivar notes, “Religious rituals infuse important events in the immigrants’ lives with transcendental meaning, but religious institutions also respond in practical terms to the immigrants’ needs and afflictions,” (2003, 21). For example, Sullivan’s (2000b) study of a multi-ethnic, predominantly Vietnamese parish in Houston highlighted many services offered by the church to help parishioners with their needs, including scholarships for job training services, emergency grants for paying rent or utility bills, free immunizations, and education opportunities such as ESL, GED, and citizenship courses. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000) note that among the important findings from several studies of Korean Christian churches in the United States is “the fact that they serve many socio-economic functions, along with meeting the religious needs of immigrants,” (8).

Material needs often arise for immigrants in particular, or perhaps anyone who has moved to a new community. These needs also arise for those who are not necessarily new to a community, but who are facing hardships in their lives, or who find themselves in transition for various reasons (loss of a job, change in family status, etc.). Such assistance is particularly important in areas where there are no other organizations to meet such needs.

In their research on Laotian and Vietnamese immigrant churches, Bankston and Zhou (2000) describe the ways in which immigrant congregations contribute to socioeconomic mobility among members by providing opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship. The authors note that several people in the Vietnamese congregation

they studied found jobs through contacts at church, and that in the Laotian congregation, one particular local company recruited many of their employees from the church. Additionally, one of the church members who worked as a loan officer served as a go-between for church members and the bank, connecting members with housing opportunities.

Often, the services provided by a congregation meet both material and social needs at the same time. For example, in her study of a Baptist mission in Louisiana serving recent Mexican migrants, Campion (2003) describes how the church provided a home-cooked meal each week before the worship service. This was an opportunity for churchgoers to not only have a meal at no monetary cost to them, but also to socialize with other people in their community. Additionally, these social interactions often led to additional opportunities to obtain various resources, such as information from other church-goers on where to find English-language classes, job opportunities, and activities for families.

Some research on congregations has pointed to a possible relationship between meeting material needs for prospective members and bringing those prospective members into the fold of the church. Discussing one particular Catholic church that provided a range of services to meet the needs of congregants, Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000) noted that the extensive services offered to Vietnamese refugees in particular “engendered a deep sense of gratitude and commitment among recipients and resulted in numerous conversions,” (73). Similarly, Min (1992), writing about Korean immigrants to the United States, says that “many probably began attending the ethnic church primarily

because it met their practical needs associated with immigrant adjustment,” (1371, as cited in Chai 1998, p 298). The following excerpt from Sullivan (2000b) describes an example of this phenomenon in more detail:

The church has been extremely important to the Vietnamese, both upon their arrival and during their settlement in Houston. Many reported that the church helped them with English lessons; that the stipends given for refugees came to them through the church; that Catholic Charities helped them with their paperwork at INS; that members of the parish picked them up when they first moved here to bring them to the parish; that they learned how to drive and got licenses through connections made at St. Catherine’s; that housing was supplied initially through the U.S. Catholic Bishop’s offices if one did not have a sponsor; and that their medical cards were processed at the parish once a week. Over and over I heard that “everyone was very nice to me”; “I felt comfortable here at the parish”; the “celebrations at St. Catherine’s are like the ones in Vietnam and I feel at home, at least on Sunday.” Because of this kind of hospitality, a number of Vietnamese converted from Buddhism to Catholicism after they arrived in the U.S., while some others practice both faiths concurrently (255).

Previous research examining conversion to Christianity among Chinese immigrants to the United States has highlighted the ways in which conversion may be related to meeting the practical needs of potential recruits. In his research in a Chinese evangelical church in the Midwest, Zhang (2006) describes the evangelization efforts of the church as being made up of three stages: pre-evangelism, evangelism, and post-evangelism. In the pre-evangelism stage, church members focus on befriending potential recruits among college students, establishing social interaction through activities such as picking people up from the airport when they arrive to the U.S. for college, helping them find housing and used furniture and helping them move, offering rides to the grocery store and help obtaining a driver’s license. Once the new students are befriended, they might be invited to a potluck where religion might begin to play a role, with Christian songs played and testimonies offered, beginning the evangelism stage. Those who are

interested might then begin attending Bible study classes and “Sunday school”. And once they’ve become a part of the church, newcomers are trained to evangelize others.

Zhang’s observation that helping people out can serve as a mechanism for establishing the affective ties that are so important for conversion is an important insight that deserves further exploration.

Hagan and Ebaugh (2003) also emphasize the importance of social networks within religious organizations for the integration of new immigrants into a community. In their work in Mayan Pentecostal churches in Houston, Hagan and Ebaugh describe how the regular opportunities for social interaction in the churches quickly plug newcomers into social networks that might be helpful for finding employment and housing. The authors note that “the churches are so important in the initial settlement process that many Mayan Catholic newcomers convert to Pentecostal Protestantism soon after their arrival,” (1156).

Why Catholic to Protestant?

While some of the examples of conversion in the literature just described involve conversion into the Catholic Church (e.g. the Vietnamese immigrants in Houston described above), most of these examples involve conversion to evangelical Protestant churches. Why, among Latinos in particular, does finding a new church often mean finding a Protestant church? The literature suggests two fruitful avenues to explore: one possible explanation is that the evangelical or Pentecostal Protestant provides a theological shift that helps people reframe their interpretation of their life experiences and

goals; and a second possible explanation is that Protestant churches meet people's material needs in a different way than Catholic churches, and perhaps in a way that is more likely to lead to the affective ties that are so important for conversion, and in a way that incorporates people into the church community more effectively. Below, I describe some literature that speaks to each of these possible explanations.

León (1998), in his study of Victory Outreach/Alcance Victoria—a Pentecostal movement in Los Angeles—describes a play put on by members of the church, in which an immigrant family comes to the United States looking for the American Dream, but are disappointed to learn it was “just a dream” for them. The characters' lives turn around, however, when they convert to Pentecostalism. The evangelizer tells them “that even though all their dreams were lost on the streets, Jesus Christ can give them new dreams... Christ can give them hope and change them,” (189-190). In other words, the Pentecostal church provides hope to replace the unrealized dreams of success in America. Immigrants who have become disillusioned with the American Dream, and children of immigrants who have been navigating the pitfalls of the streets, can channel their frustration in constructive ways, refocusing their purpose in life toward evangelization and saving souls.

Similarly, in extensive qualitative work with Salvadoran immigrants, Menjívar (2003) finds that for those who converted to Evangelical Protestantism, personal conversion was seen as a means to combat social problems. In other words, as more people are led to Christ, social problems will no longer be an issue. These two examples of research suggest that Evangelicalism provides a sense of purpose and control over

some aspects of life for its followers, in contrast to perhaps a more passive religious experience in Catholicism.

In his research among Chinese immigrants who converted to Christianity in the United States, Yang (1998) notes that the evangelical worldview offers a sense of “absoluteness and certainty” (252) that is appealing for migrants who experience “both pre-migration traumas and post-migration uncertainties in modern America.”

While the shift in worldview is an important piece of the story when it comes to what distinguishes evangelical and Pentecostal Protestant churches from Catholic churches, when it comes to explaining religious switching it may be a step too far. Recall that much of the literature on conversion reinforces the idea that participation in a new religious group, following the presence of an affective tie, likely comes before the adoption of the new groups’ theology and/or worldview. So how do Protestant and Catholic churches differ when it comes to bringing new people in and incorporating them into the church community?

Focusing on the incorporation and inclusion of Latinos in the Catholic Church, some previous research examines how the growing number of Latino Catholics in the U.S. (largely due to immigration and fertility) affects the Catholic Church, and how the Church has responded ((Menjívar 2003, Mooney 2006, Odem 2004). For example, with previous waves of immigration the Catholic Church focused largely on assimilation of new immigrant members, whereas more recently (since Vatican II) the Church has a formal plan of integration and inclusion (Odem 2004).

Not only has the Catholic Church shifted toward integrating Latino immigrants, but it has played a role in speaking out for the humane treatment of undocumented immigrants (Mooney 2006) and has stepped in to provide aid to refugee communities, particularly those who have not been given refugee status by the U.S. government (Menjívar 2003). However, some research suggests that although the Church has officially taken a more proactive role in making Latino Catholics feel welcome, on a micro level the application of this goal varies widely from one parish to another (Odem 2004). This suggests that Latinos immigrating to the United States will have varied experiences when it comes to being integrated into established Catholic communities.

As described above, a big part of integrating newcomers into a congregation, and into a community more broadly, is meeting the various material needs of newcomers. While some congregations have ways of meeting material needs in an organized, bureaucratic way, with programs set up to disseminate food, clothing, financial assistance, etc., others provide such assistance in a more case-by-case approach as needs come up among church members. In her research with Salvadoran immigrants, Menjívar (2003) found that the Catholic churches that served immigrant populations often had an organized approach to meeting such needs, implementing programs to administer services. On the other hand, Evangelical churches had a more personal, individualized approach. For instance, a pastor might take up a special collection to help a particular individual or family in a time of need. Menjívar describes the outlook of one of the evangelical pastors in her study of Salvadorans:

[T]his pastor stressed that he was there to help his congregation, but that he had no “programs” set up to assist them; he took each case one at a time because he was familiar

with each person's special circumstances and individual problems. Personal knowledge of the members was largely possible because these evangelical churches were much smaller than the Catholic ones. The fact that he personally knew most of the church's members, he believed, qualified him to provide personal and, therefore, more effective solutions (36).

It is possible that the more personalized approach to meeting needs may have more potential for drawing new recruits to the congregation. Sullivan (2000a) describes how many Mexican Catholics in the Houston community she studied converted to Protestantism—or back and forth between Protestantism and Catholicism—because, among other reasons, they found that Protestant churches were more willing to assist them in finding jobs, housing, developing local knowledge, and making the connections needed to be successful in a new place.

Religious switching¹ is a complex phenomenon that likely has multiple contributing factors. The literature on religious conversion has established the importance of the affective tie, and the literature on ethnic and immigrant congregations begins to get at some of the ways that these ties are established and nurtured. Namely, some of the literature reviewed above suggests that the way congregations meet people's diverse needs might play a role in drawing them from one religious tradition to another (e.g., Hagan and Ebaugh 1998, Sullivan 2000a, Sullivan 2000b), with Zhang's (2006) work suggesting that some churches reach out to help people with material needs in an explicit

¹ From this point on in the paper, I will use the term "religious switching," rather than conversion. The term "conversion" is often used to describe a dramatic change in worldview and/or belief system, which I do not intend to explain in this dissertation. Religious switching, for my purposes, describes someone who now attends a religious congregation that is of a different denomination or religious tradition than the previous congregation(s) attended. In particular, I will be looking at those Latinos who have switched from attending a Catholic congregation to attending a conservative Protestant congregation (i.e., Evangelical or Pentecostal).

effort to build affective ties that will bring people to the church, using help as a mechanism for recruitment and later incorporation. And Menjívar's work (2003) suggests that Protestant churches might meet people's needs in a manner that is more conducive to building affective ties than the manner employed in Catholic churches.

In this dissertation, I intend to explore various possible factors associated with switching, particularly among Latinos who are switching from Catholicism to conservative Protestantism. Following from the insights from the literature described above, my main focus will be whether or not switching is associated with having one's needs met, with needs being categorized in the following three broad areas: *social needs*, referring to the affective ties in the church and involvement and incorporation into the church; *spiritual needs*, referring to the degree to which people feel satisfied with the religious and spiritual aspects of their church; and *material needs*, referring to whether or not people have various practical needs met within their congregation, and whether or not the involvement of the church leader in meeting these needs matters.

To explore these relationships, I will use data from the Chicago Latino Congregations Study (CLCS). The CLCS is a cross-sectional, multilevel study of predominantly Latino churches in Chicago and the people who participate in these churches (described in more detail in the following chapter). The CLCS is a good source for an initial exploration of religious switching among Latinos because it allows me to examine both individual-level factors and congregation-level factors, making it possible to account for the congregational context that contributes to the switching phenomenon. While the data is limited to Chicago Latino churches and results cannot, therefore, be

generalized nationally, the CLCS will nonetheless provide a good starting point to begin examining the factors that previous qualitative work has suggested as potentially important when examining switching. Additionally, there is no particular *a priori* reason to conclude that the findings from this study do not apply throughout the United States.

For the purposes of this dissertation, religious switching will be simply defined based on religious practice; that is, switching will be defined based on the religious tradition of the church that an individual attends and the religious tradition of the church that an individual previously attended. Switching, therefore, is not defined based on either the religious identity of the individual or the experience of a dramatic change in worldview as many might define a “religious conversion.” Rather, a person who currently participates in a conservative Protestant church, but who says they previously attended a Catholic church, is considered a switcher. A person who has not previously attended a church of a different tradition is not considered a switcher.

The analysis in this dissertation will largely be exploratory in nature. Therefore, rather than developing and testing formal hypotheses, I will instead offer some general expectations regarding the findings.

Social needs: As I will describe in Chapter 3, the CLCS sample of congregants is somewhat biased towards highly involved members; those who participated in the survey were likely people who are particularly involved in their church. Because of this, I expect that almost all respondents are involved in their church and connected to others in their church. So while affective ties to someone in the church is likely a necessary condition for switching (Lofland and Stark 1965, Snow and Phillips 1980, Stark and Bainbridge

1980, Snow and Machalek 1984, Sherkat and Wilson 1995, Smilde 2005, Gooren 2007), it will likely not stand out as an important distinction between switchers and non-switchers.

Spiritual needs: I expect that most of the congregants in this sample will be satisfied overall with the spiritual aspects of their congregation. As with social ties, spiritual satisfaction in one's religion is likely associated with both switching and retention (i.e. not switching). However, I expect that switchers will place more importance on aspects of the worship experience since the spiritual experience often becomes part of a conversion narrative.

Material needs: When it comes to material needs, I expect that differences between switchers and non-switchers on these measures will begin to emerge more clearly. I expect switching to be associated with having received help with things such as food and clothing, finding housing, finding a job, and financial needs. I also expect switching to be associated with being in a church that has programs to address these needs. However, given the insight from Menjívar (2003) that Protestant leaders are more directly involved in helping people in their church as material needs arise, I expect that having access to formal programs for assistance with material needs will be less important when it comes to switching than being in a church where the leader spends time directly helping people with such needs.

In the next chapter I describe the CLCS in more detail. I also describe the variables that will be included in the analysis, and offer some initial descriptive statistics that begin to illuminate some of the factors associated with switching.

CHAPTER 3: DATA AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Data: Chicago Latino Congregations Study

In my analysis, I use data from the Chicago Latino Congregations Study (CLCS), conducted between 2004 and 2007 by researchers at the University of Notre Dame (Burwell, Hernández, Peña, Smith and Sikkink 2010). CLCS researchers conducted a multilevel study, surveying leaders and congregants in predominantly Latino Christian churches in Chicago, gathering extensive quantitative data from more than 80 churches, along with qualitative data from 4 of the churches. This dissertation draws primarily on the quantitative data, occasionally highlighting quotes from qualitative interviews and focus groups to contextualize the quantitative findings.

The congregations surveyed in the CLCS constitute a representative sample of Latino congregations in the Chicago area². In order to obtain a representative sample of Latino churches, CLCS researchers first defined two aspects of the sampling frame: the geographic area to be included, and the definition of a Latino congregation. Rather than restrict the geographic area to the Chicago city limits, researchers also included two adjacent suburbs, Berwyn and Cicero, due to the relatively high proportion of Latinos in each (38% in Berwyn, 77% in Cicero) as well as their proximity to and historical connection to the city of Chicago (Burwell et al. 2010).

A “Latino congregation” was defined as such based on the proportion of church participants who were Latino or Hispanic. Different thresholds were set for Protestant

² The sample of congregants, however, is not representative of all churchgoers in Latino churches in Chicago. See p39 for more detail about the sample of congregants.

churches and Catholic churches. For Protestant churches, a church would be included in the sampling frame if 50 percent or more of its congregants were Latino. For Catholic churches, which tend to be much larger congregations, the threshold was set at 30 percent so as not to exclude a congregation that serves a large number of Latinos that nonetheless may not constitute a majority. For example, in a Catholic parish with 1,000 regular participants, if there are 300 or more Latinos who attend a Spanish-language service every weekend, a 50 percent threshold would exclude this church, and therefore exclude from the sample the religious experience of a substantial Latino subgroup within the church.

Once the parameters of the sampling frame were decided, researchers set out to construct a list of all congregations that fit the specifications. To accomplish this task, researchers worked to gather lists of possible Latino congregations from several sources, including denominational or church councils, pastoral associations and para-church organizations, community organizations, government offices, and other research on Chicago-area churches. In addition to collecting lists, CLCS researchers targeted ten zip codes in which the Latino population had grown significantly in the ten years prior and did street-by-street inspections to identify churches. After contacting a sample of congregations to verify their existence and their Latino constituencies, researchers ended up with a list of 606 churches.

From the full list of 606 congregations, researchers drew a random sample of 100, stratified by religious tradition—Catholic, mainline Protestant, evangelical, Pentecostal, and unknown tradition. Of the 100 churches sampled, 51 responded. Of the remaining

49, leaders at 34 refused to participate, and 15 were either in pastoral transition and therefore did not want to participate, had closed or merged with another congregation, or could not be contacted after multiple attempts. Replacement churches were drawn from the larger sample with an attempt to match each non-responding church as closely as possible by denominational affiliation, size, and geographic proximity. These efforts led to completed surveys with leaders in 82 churches, and later with congregants in 74 of the same churches.

Table 1: Religious Tradition of Latino Congregations

	Universe (unweighted)	Sample (unweighted)	Sample (weighted)
	%	%	%
Catholic	20	24	20
Mainline	13	15	13
Evangelical	21	24	29
Pentecostal	33	37	39
Unknown	14	--	--
	100	100	100
N	606	82	82

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study.

About a quarter of the churches in the final sample was Catholic (24%), and as many evangelical Protestant (24%). More than a third (37%) were Pentecostal churches, and only 15 percent were mainline Protestant churches. A weight was created based on the religious tradition breakdown of the universe of Latino churches in the Chicago area. The relatively low representation of Catholic parishes compared to Protestant churches reflects the fact that most Catholic churches are large and most Protestant churches are small.

Two separate surveys were conducted with leaders in the 82 congregations. The first was interviewer-administered, and the second was a self-administered survey left with the respondent to be completed and returned. The two surveys included hundreds of

questions covering a broad range of topics about both the congregation and the leader, including questions about how the leader spends his or her time working at the congregation, and what kinds of programs and services are provided to congregants and the community.

Following surveys with leaders in the 82 Chicago congregations, CLCS researchers visited as many of the congregations as possible to invite congregants to take a survey after a worship service. Surveys were completed with 2,382 adult congregants in 74 churches, and with 607 youth congregants in 63 churches (though this dissertation does not utilize data from youth respondents). The surveys covered a wide range of topics, including involvement in the church, satisfaction with the church and leadership, and religious beliefs and practices, among other topics.

Congregant cooperation rates varied greatly from one church to another, and were likely influenced by the degree to which church leaders encouraged congregants to participate; For example, some leaders allowed researchers to pass out survey instruments during the main worship service and strongly encouraged participation from congregants, while others did not allow the surveys to be distributed during a service and instead announced that researchers could be found after the service for those who were interested in participating.

Field researchers estimated attendance at worship services in which congregants were invited to participate, and then calculated response rates based on these estimates. The response rate across all congregations was 25 percent (2,368 respondents out of roughly 9,500 attendees), and the average response rate at the congregational level was

about 55 percent (with higher response rates in smaller congregations and lower response rates in larger congregations, generally speaking).

The CLCS is a unique source of data for exploring questions about religious switching among Latinos. While the findings are particular to the Chicago Latino church context, the CLCS offers a good opportunity to begin exploring the interplay between individual characteristics and the congregational context when it comes to religious switching. The collection of data about churches, the churches' leaders, and their congregants provides a unique opportunity to examine not only the individual characteristics associated with religious switching, but the congregational context of religious switching, as well, such as the role of clergy and their approaches to helping congregants meet various needs. Using CLCS data, I will employ multilevel modeling to account for the clustering of respondents within organizations, and to analyze both the congregational-level factors and individual-level factors that are associated with religious switching among congregants. I describe multilevel modeling in more detail below, after describing the dependent and independent variables of interest.

There are, however, some limitations of using this particular dataset to explore this topic. The first main limitation is that this is cross-sectional data, and therefore causal inferences cannot be made about the relationships between switching and various other measures. In this dissertation, I will not be making claims about causality. Rather, my goal is to identify some of the factors associated with religious switching, particularly with respect to the congregational context. The findings in this dissertation could provide

some interesting directions for future research that might focus more specifically on causal mechanisms.

The second limitation of this dataset has to do with the self-administered nature of the individual-level surveys. Because these surveys were self-administered, respondent error and non-response led to a relatively high amount of missing data. I attempt to overcome this limitation by employing multiple imputations, described in more detail below.

In the next few sections, I describe the dependent variable and independent variables at the individual and congregational levels, after first examining some characteristics of the congregations of interest.

Comparing Catholic and Conservative Protestant Congregations

Before moving on to the analysis of religious switching, it is helpful for the sake of context to first describe some of the basic characteristics of the churches in the Chicago Latino Congregations Study. Because the movement I will be examining is specifically from Catholic parishes to conservative Protestant churches, I will also compare the characteristics of these two types of churches. In this section, the descriptive statistics presented are based on the congregation as the unit, whereas in later sections the congregational-level information will be presented with individuals in churches as the unit of analysis.

Table 2: Characteristics of Churches

	Catholic Churches	Conservative Protestant Churches
	Mean	Mean
Age (in years)	90	21
Size	2,660	135
	%	%
Spanish services	10	48
<i>Integrating new members (each done "very often")</i>		
Follow-up visits	5	59
Designated hospitality	11	34
Group for new members	16	65
Invite to other groups	32	57
Any of the above	40	78
<i>Programs to help with:</i>		
Food	75	64
Jobs	55	60
Finances	65	78
Housing	50	56
Any of the above	100	92
<i>N</i>	20	50

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study.

Latinos who choose to leave a Catholic congregation in Chicago in favor of a conservative Protestant congregation are likely moving to a younger, smaller religious organization. The average Catholic congregation in Chicago was established ninety years

before these surveys were administered, much older on average than conservative Protestant churches which have a mean age of twenty-one years. The median ages show an even wider age difference, with the median Catholic church of 100 years old and the median Protestant church only 15 years old.

Catholic churches are also much larger on average than Protestant churches: the mean size for Catholic congregations is 2,660, while the mean size of Protestant churches is 135. If it is the case, as previous research suggests (e.g. Menjívar 2003), that Protestant church leaders take a more personal, direct approach to helping their members as needs arise, size almost certainly plays a role. In a smaller church, the ratio of congregants to leader would undoubtedly be smaller, making it more possible to take an individualized approach to helping people, if one were so inclined.

A Chicagoan leaving a Catholic church for a Protestant church is also more likely to be actively integrated into their potential new church. Compared with Catholic churches, larger shares of the conservative Protestant churches implement formal ways of incorporating potential new members into the church. According to the leader surveys, nearly six-in-ten conservative Protestant churches employ follow-up visits to new members by clergy, lay leaders, or other members “very often,” compared with only 5% of Catholic churches. A third of conservative Protestant churches have designated people who extend hospitality to new members and invite them to meals, compared with 11% of Catholic churches. And most Protestant churches (65%) have either a group or a course for new members, compared with only 16% of Catholic churches. The denominational

difference is smaller, though still dramatic, when it comes to inviting potential new members to join a small group, fellowship group, or something similar “very often”: leaders in about a third of Catholic churches (32%) say that new members are extended such an invitation, compared with over half in Protestant churches (57%).

Overall, about eight-in-ten Protestant churches incorporate at least one of these strategies very often, compared with about four-in-ten Catholic churches. It would seem that if a Protestant church is able to get a new potential member in the door to begin with, they make a much stronger effort to integrate that potential new member into the church longer term than do the Catholic churches.

Looking at formal programs for helping people with various material needs, high percentages of both Catholic churches and conservative Protestant churches in Chicago have such programs. Three quarters of Catholic churches have some kind of program to address food needs, along with about two-thirds of conservative Protestant churches (64%). About two-thirds of Catholic churches have a program to help people with financial needs, as do about three-quarters of Protestant churches (78%). And half or more of both Catholic and Protestant churches have programs to help people find jobs (55% and 60%, respectively) or to find housing (50% and 56%, respectively). While this measure does not speak to how many people actually take advantage of such programs, it suggests that the opportunity to find help with material needs is often available in either type of congregation.

Multiple Imputations for Individual-Level Data

Because the individual-level surveys implemented in the Chicago Latino Congregations Study were self-administered, respondent error and non-response led to a relatively high amount of missing data. In my analyses, I employ multiple imputations (MI) to deal with missing data and preserve cases. While listwise deletion has been a common way of dealing with missing data in the social sciences, in recent years as statistical programs have caught up with theory and made MI a more practical method to use, this method has become more popular among researchers (Allison 2002).

MI is thought to be a better approach to handling missing data than listwise deletion for a few reasons. Listwise deletion requires that missing data are missing completely at random, while MI requires only that the data be missing at random (a less strict assumption). If the excluded cases are not missing completely at random, listwise deletion can result in biased estimates. And a single imputation underestimates the variance of the estimates (StataCorp 2009). MI corrects for both of these issues, using the data that is available to create multiple plausible values for missing data.

There is no consensus in the research regarding how many imputations should be used. Schafer and Olsen (1998), for example, assert that 3 to 5 imputations are sufficient for obtaining efficient estimates. Graham, Olchowski and Gilreath (2007) argue that while Schafer and Olsen are likely correct in their assertion, a higher number of imputations will result in better measures of standard errors, p-values and more power. They recommend using at least twenty imputations, and, depending on how much

missing data one has, as many as one hundred imputations. I follow this recommendation and use twenty imputations in my analyses.

What Are the Most Attractive Characteristics of Your Church?

In this section, I examine what congregants tell us when asked directly which aspects of their congregation most attract them to their church. Respondents were asked, “Which aspects of your congregation/parish life most attracts you to this church/parish?” and instructed to mark all that apply from the following list: programs or ministries that help the poor or those in need; church location (close to where you live); worship/liturgical experience or music; leadership of the pastor or priest; evangelistic outreach; spiritual formation or discipleship programs; sermons, preaching, or homilies; children or youth programs; friendly environment; my family and friends attend here; that the majority of people who attend are Hispanic/Latino; other.

Before describing the results of this series of questions, it is important to note that the question did not ask respondents whether or not these were reasons for *switching* their religion. Rather, this question asks what characteristics people see as most attractive about their church, and asks all respondents—not just switchers—which has the advantage of allowing comparison between switchers and non-switchers.

Also, these measures, taken alone, would be insufficient for explaining religious switching for a few reasons. First, these are not results of an open-ended question asking congregants what most attracted them to their church; rather, respondents were asked to check all that apply from a list of possible reasons they might be attracted to their church.

(While respondents had the opportunity to write in other responses, only a small percentage did so.) Second, as a measure of why someone may have left a previous church, these measures would have the same problem based on respondent recall and post conversion narrative that previous scholars have mentioned (Heirich 1977, Snow and Phillips 1980, Snow and Malachek 1984). And third, many of the congregational characteristics that could be seen as an attraction for potential new recruits are the same characteristics that might enhance retention among people who are already members.

Nonetheless, these measures give us an idea of what kinds of congregational characteristics are particularly salient as attractive characteristics for respondents, and give us a chance to compare whether or not the salient characteristics are the same for 1) those in Catholic churches compared to those in conservative Protestant churches, and 2) those who have switched congregations and those who have not.

Overall, there are some significant differences between Catholic congregants and Protestant congregants in the characteristics that they say attract them to their church. Among Catholics, the most common responses were the friendly environment of their church (55%) and the fact that the majority of people who attend are Hispanic or Latino (56%). Among conservative Protestant congregants, the friendly environment was also a top response (59%), along with the worship or liturgical experience or music (55%).

Table 3: What Most Attracts You to Your Church?

	All %	Catholics Protestants		Non-Switchers Switchers	
		%	%	%	%
Programs or ministries that help the poor or those in need	45	50	43	45	46
Church location (close to where you live)	33	41	29	34	28
Worship/liturgical experience or music	52	46	55	51	56
Leadership of the pastor or priest	45	38	48	44	46
Evangelistic outreach	35	24	40	33	44
Spiritual formation or discipleship programs	43	30	48	40	52
Sermons, preaching, or homilies	48	42	51	47	55
Children or youth programs	49	45	50	47	56
Friendly environment	58	55	59	57	62
My family and friends attend here	43	49	40	42	44
That the majority of people who attend are Hispanic/Latino	52	56	50	52	55
<i>N</i>	1,963	581	1,382	1,558	405

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study.

When compared with conservative Protestant congregants, a higher percentage of Catholic congregants said they were attracted to their church because of the programs or ministries that help the poor or those in need (50% of Catholics vs. 43% of Protestants), because of the location (41% vs. 29%), and because their family and friends attend the church (49% vs. 40%). Meanwhile, a higher percentage of conservative Protestants (than Catholics) cited the following aspects of their church as attractive: the worship experience or music (55% of conservative Protestants vs. 46% of Catholics), the leadership of the pastor or priest (48% vs. 38%), the evangelistic outreach (40% vs. 24%), the spiritual formation or discipleship programs (48% vs. 30%), and the sermons, preaching, or homilies (51% vs. 42%).

There are also some significant differences between switchers, who are only in conservative Protestant churches by definition, and non-switchers, who are in both

Catholic and conservative Protestant churches. More than four-in-ten switchers say the evangelistic outreach is something that attracts them to their church (44%) compared with a third of non-switchers. About half of switchers cite the spiritual formation or discipleship programs at their church as most attractive (52%) compared with 40% of non-switchers. And more than half of switchers say what most attracts them to their church is either the sermons, preaching, or homilies (55%) or the children and youth programs(56%), compared with just under half of non-switchers (47% for each response).

While there are few congregational-level variables to measure differences between congregations on aspects of the worship experience or other spiritual elements, it is clear from these measures that the worship experience is important to Chicago Latino churchgoers, and particularly to those who have switched churches. Some have suggested, though often anecdotally and not studied empirically, that one reason that Latinos are leaving the Catholic church is that for the foreign-born in particular, the Catholic worship experience in the United States is less lively and exciting than mass was in their home country. In fact, in a 2006 study by the Pew Research Center (2007) six-in-ten Latinos converts (61%) said Catholic mass was not lively and exciting, and about a third (36%) cite this as a reason for having left the Catholic Church.

While examining the characteristics that switchers and non-switchers find most attractive about their churches is an interesting starting point and gives us some insight into the aspects of the church that are most salient for an individual, it is important to also account for other factors that might be associated with switching in order to assess the net

effects of each possible factor when controlling for others. In the following sections I describe the sample that I will be focusing on throughout the remaining analyses. First I will describe what the analysis sample is, and then I will describe the variables that will be included in the analysis, followed by descriptive statistics for each of these variables for the full analysis sample, the switchers in the sample, and the non-switchers. In the following chapter, I will describe the multivariate analysis.

Analysis Sample

For the analysis of religious switching, I limit the sample to adult congregants in Catholic and conservative Protestant (evangelical or Pentecostal) congregations, and exclude respondents in mainline Protestant churches. In part, this limitation is due to the fact that there are only a dozen mainline churches in the sample, and only 39 mainline Protestant respondents who have switched from Catholicism to their current tradition. More importantly, though, this limitation is imposed because my main research question is: what factors contribute to a Latino churchgoer leaving a Catholic church for a conservative Protestant church? While the same question could be asked about leaving a Catholic church for a mainline Protestant church, and it would be an interesting question, that is not the main focus of this analysis and it would be a difficult question to address with this data source given the small sample of mainline churches.

In addition to being limited to respondents in either Catholic, evangelical Protestant, or Pentecostal churches, the sample is limited to respondents who identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino (including those who said they were Mexican, Puerto Rican,

Salvadoran, etc.), and respondents who can be connected to a congregation for which data is available. There are 22 respondents that were not assigned a church number in the congregant-level data file, and who therefore cannot be connected to a congregation in the congregation-level data file. These 22 cases are excluded. Additionally, there are 193 cases in which a respondent did not self-identify as Hispanic or Latino, or mention a Hispanic or Latino heritage, and are therefore excluded from the analysis as well.

The final analysis sample includes 1,963 individuals in 64 churches.

Dependent Variable: SWITCH

The dependent variable (SWITCH) measures whether or not the respondent previously participated in a Catholic church and now participates in a conservative Protestant church (either evangelical or Pentecostal). This variable is constructed based on three variables in the congregant-level dataset: religious tradition of the church in which the respondent was surveyed (Catholic, evangelical Protestant, or Pentecostal Protestant, with mainline Protestant churches and respondents excluded), responses to the question, “Before you started coming to this congregation, were you participating in another congregation of a different denomination or religious tradition?” and, if yes to the previous question, “What type of congregation did you attend before coming here?”

If a respondent was surveyed in a conservative Protestant church and said that they previously participated in a Catholic church, the respondent was given a “1” on SWITCH. If the respondent was surveyed in a conservative Protestant church or a Catholic church and said they did not previously participate in a congregation of a

different tradition than their current church, the respondent was given a “0” on SWITCH. If it could not be determined whether or not the respondent previously attended a congregation of a different tradition, either due to item nonresponse or inconsistent responses between questions, the respondent was given a missing value for SWITCH and is excluded from analyses.

In some cases, subjective decisions were made about how to code respondents on SWITCH. For example, in some cases, a respondent skipped the question about whether or not they had previously attended a congregation of a different tradition, but still offered a write-in response for the follow-up question about the type of tradition of the previous congregation. In such cases, if the write-in response was clearly different from the current tradition (e.g. the respondent was surveyed in an evangelical Protestant church, but wrote in “Catholic” for the previous congregation), the respondent was coded as a 1 on SWITCH.

Cases in which the respondent was surveyed in a conservative Protestant church and said that they previously attended some other Protestant church were coded as a “0” on SWITCH since this analysis focuses on switching from Catholic to conservative Protestant. It is possible that the analysis includes, then, a handful of cases in which the respondent previously attended a mainline Protestant church, but the level of detail provided in the survey does not allow for this to be determined. Therefore, previously Protestant conservative Protestants are coded “0” on SWITCH. If a respondent from a conservative Protestant church said that they were previously participating in a congregation that was neither Catholic nor Protestant, they were coded as missing on

SWITCH and excluded from the analysis (this included one respondent who previously participated in a Mormon congregation and one who previously participated in a Muslim congregation).

Individual-Level Independent Variables

Various individual-level measures are included in this analysis to account for the ways that meeting social, spiritual, and material needs are associated with religious switching. Measures of meeting social needs include variables for involvement and integration in the church. The meeting of spiritual needs is accounted for with measures of the degree to which respondents emphasize the religious aspects of their congregations as important draws to their particular church. And the meeting of material needs is measured by assessing whether or not respondents have received help with various practical needs from their church.

It must be noted, however, that measures of *needs met* is not the equivalent of measures of *having needs*. For example, while the survey of congregants asks respondents questions (which will be described in more detail below) about whether or not they have received help from their congregation with needs such as finding housing or employment, the survey did not ask a more basic question about whether or not each congregant has such needs to begin with. It could be assumed that someone who reports having received help finding a job did, in fact, have the need to find a job. However, someone who reports that they have not received help with such a need could either a)

not have the need in the first place, and therefore not require help, or b) have the need, but not receive help from their congregation in meeting it.

Revealed preference theory, first introduced in the field of economics by Samuelson (1938) and built upon by many scholars since (see Varian 2005 for a summary of the development of this line of thinking), provides a potentially useful framework for addressing this issue. Used often in studies of consumer choices, revealed preference theory posits that a person's behavior (e.g. purchasing a particular product) can be seen as revealing that person's preference (e.g. they purchased product A and did not purchase product B, a similar item at a similar price). In cases where preference cannot be directly observed, but a behavior can be observed, said behavior can be seen as an act based on a preference.

Applied in this context, the argument could be made that behaviors (e.g. receiving help from the church with a particular need) represent underlying needs (e.g. financial needs, employment needs, spiritual fulfillment needs, etc.). Below I describe several measures that represent the meeting of various types of needs.

Meeting Social Needs: This analysis includes five separate measures of integration in the church. The first is the frequency of attendance at worship services, coded as a dichotomous variable with a value of "1" for respondents that attend at least once a week, and "0" for those who attend less frequently. Also measured is the degree to which congregants are involved in groups and activities in their congregation other than worship services. This is measured as having responded "often" when asked about their involvement in at least one of the following three activities: 1) Sunday school, church

school, or Sabbath school, 2) prayer, discussion, or Bible study groups, or 3) evangelism or missionary outreach activities. A third measure is whether or not respondents hold a leadership role in their congregation, such as committee chair, teacher, choir member or director, elder, usher, or deacon (examples given in questionnaire).

Also included as measures of meeting social needs are two variables measuring affective ties with others in the congregation. The first is a dichotomized measure of whether or not at least one of the respondent's close friends also attends the same church. The second is whether or not the respondent says one of the factors that most attracts them to their church is the fact that their family and friends attend the church.

Meeting Spiritual Needs: Six measures of one's spiritual experience in their church are included in this analysis. I use the term "spiritual experience" broadly to encompass the religious and spiritual experience in the church. Ideally, I would include measures regarding aspects of worship services in the church, such as the degree to which services are traditional or charismatic in nature, whether or not and what type of music is used, and whether congregants participate by dancing, clapping, shouting "amen," speaking in tongues, etc. However, detailed questions about the nature of worship services were not asked in the Chicago Latino Congregations Study.

There are, however, some alternative measures that allow me to begin to get at the religious and/or spiritual experience that congregants are obtaining. For example, I include a measure for whether or not respondents agree with the statement, "My spiritual needs are being met at this congregation or parish." Respondents were also asked how distant or close they feel to God most of the time, and this analysis includes a

dichotomized measure from this variable that is coded “1” for those who say that they feel either “very” or “extremely” close to God most of the time.

Four of the previously described measures of what most attracts a congregant to their church are also included as measures of the religious and/or spiritual experience. These include the worship/liturgical experience or music, the sermons, preaching or homilies, the leadership of the pastor or priest, and the spiritual formation or discipleship programs. Each of these is a dichotomous measure that is coded “1” if the respondent marked it as one of the characteristics they find most attractive about their church, and “0” if not.

Meeting Material Needs: There are four variables included to measure whether or not respondents have received help from their church with material needs. Respondents were asked, “Has this church or someone from this church ever helped you or your family in the following ways? Provided food or clothing, helped find a job, helped with financial need, helped find a house or apartment.” Each of these is a dichotomous measure, with “yes” coded as “1” and “no” coded as “0.”

Demographic Variables: Also included in the analysis are controls for several demographic measures. Age is a continuous variable, measured in years. Dummy variables for high school education and more than high school education are included, with less than high school education as the reference group in the multivariate model. Dichotomous variables for married or not, female or not, Mexican or not, and foreign born or not are also included, along with a dichotomous variable for income that is coded

“1” for those whose annual household income is less than \$25,000 and “0” for those who earn more.

Congregational-Level Independent Variables

At the congregation level, I account for the degree to which integrating new members into the church is a focus of the church (i.e. social needs), and the degree to which the church provides assistance with material needs. Additionally, I control for whether or not the worship services are held mainly in Spanish. This aspect of a congregation might be particularly attractive for newcomers to the country who do not yet speak English well, but may also be attractive for those who are bilingual or English-dominant but prefer to maintain a cultural connection with the Latino community through language.

Church leaders were asked about several possible ways that new members might be integrated into their church. Specifically, the question read, “Once a person has joined your congregation or parish, how often are the following procedures followed to ensure that he or she becomes integrated into the life of this congregation or parish? 1) Follow-up visits by clergy, lay leaders, or members, 2) Designated people extend hospitality and invite them for meals, 3) A group or new course for new members, 4) Invitation to join a small group, fellowship group, or similar group,” with the response options “very often,” “sometimes,” and “never.” Respondents are given a “1” on this measure if they are in a church in which at least one of these four procedures are followed “very often.”

In addition to the individual-level measures of whether or not a respondent has personally received material help through their church, the analysis includes several measures to gauge how much opportunity for material help is provided at the congregation level. Church leaders were asked about a variety of ministries, services, or programs offered in their congregations, including those related to providing food to those who need it (i.e. food pantries or soup kitchens), help finding housing (i.e. either shelter for low income people or others in need, or finding housing for immigrants), help finding a job (i.e. job placement for immigrants, or job training, career counseling, and job placement in general), and financial help (i.e. emergency individual financial assistance or economic assistance more generally). I include one dichotomous measure for each of these four areas: a respondent is given a “1” on each variable if they are in a church that offers such programs.

In addition to measuring whether or not people are in churches in which there are formal programs to provide help to those who need it, I also measure the degree to which the church leaders are personally involved in providing such help to members. In the leader-level surveys, leaders were asked several questions about how they spend their time. Three such questions are included in this analysis.

First, leaders were asked, “Do you personally get involved in helping people from your congregation or parish find jobs?” with yes and no as the response options. Respondents in churches in which the leader says “yes” to this question are given a “1” on this measure.

Second, leaders were asked “Approximately, about how much time per week do you spend helping people with social needs?” and the question included this interviewer note: “Note: It is only necessary to read the following definition of social needs if the interviewee asks for one. (Social needs are broadly defined here as any assistance given to families to find housing, translation, providing transportation or childcare, or negotiating issues of law.)” The response options were categorical: less than one, one to five, six to ten, 11 to 15, 16 to 20, 21 to 25, or 26 or more hours per week. In this analysis, the categories are collapsed into three dummy variables of ten or fewer hours, 11 to 15 hours, and 16 hours or more, with the ten or fewer hours as the reference category in the multivariate analysis. The values for respondents are “1” if their leader says they spend that particular amount of time helping people with social needs.

Third, leaders were asked a more specific question about time spent on similar tasks. Rather than a general question about how much time they spend per week, leaders were asked to recall how many hours they had spent in the *previous seven days* “assisting people with various problems such as translation, immigration, unemployment, etc.” This variable is included in the analysis as a continuous measure in hours.

The following few sections detail these variables a bit more, showing the descriptive statistics for each, and comparing switchers and non-switchers on all of these measures. These sections provide a first look at some of the factors that might be associated with switching from Catholicism to Protestantism in the context of Chicago Latino congregations.

Descriptive Statistics: the Dependent Variable

Table 4 shows the breakdown of the dependent variable. In the analysis sample, about three-in-ten respondents (30%) participate in Catholic churches and have always done so. About half are in conservative Protestant churches, and have not previously attended a church of a different religious tradition. One-in-five say they previously attended a Catholic church and currently attend a conservative Protestant church; In other words, 21 percent of respondents are switchers.

Note that this should not be taken as a measure of how many Latinos have switched from a Catholic church to a conservative Protestant church, or even of how many Latinos in Chicago churches have switched. Recall that non-Catholic churches were oversampled for this study, and that the response rates in Protestant churches were higher than in Catholic churches (which are much larger in terms of regular participants). The purpose of this table is simply to describe the distribution of the dependent variable among the analysis sample.

Table 4: One-In-Five Congregants is a "Switcher"

	%
Always attended Catholic church	30
Always attended conservative Protestant church	50
Previously attended Catholic church, now attends conservative Protestant church	<u>21</u>
	100
<hr/>	
<i>Switched?</i>	
No	79
Yes	<u>21</u>
	100
<hr/>	
N	1,963

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study. Based on analysis sample.

Descriptive Statistics: Measures of Meeting Social Needs

As described above, this analysis focuses on five separate measures of integration in the church. As also mentioned previously, the sample of congregants in the CLCS is likely representative of the most involved members of the church. This is reflected in the

descriptive statistics of these integration measures. A majority of respondents, 88 percent, say they attend worship services at least weekly. This compares with about 37 percent among the general public who report attending weekly or more (Pew Research Center 2012), and 43 percent among Latinos nationally, including 47 percent of Latino Catholics and 70 percent of Latino evangelical Protestants (Taylor, Lopez, Martínez, and Velasco 2012). Additionally, a fairly high number of respondents (81%) report being involved in other groups or activities in their congregation aside from worship services, such as Sunday school, Bible study groups or prayer groups, missionary or outreach activities, etc.

Many respondents also reported having at least one strong affective tie in their congregation; eight-in-ten respondents (80%) said at least one of their closest five personal friends attends the same congregation. When asked whether or not a list of various church characteristics most attract them to their church, 43 percent marked the option saying “My family and friends attend here.”

Comparing non-switchers to switchers on these measures, both groups are highly involved in their churches. Switchers are slightly more likely than non-switchers to say they attend worship services at least once a week (92% vs. 87%). Switchers are also

Table 5: Measures of Meeting Social Needs, Descriptive Statistics

	All %	Non-Switchers %	Switchers %
Attends services weekly or more	88	87	92
Holds a leadership role	50	49	53
Involved often in activities other than worship service	81	79	91
At least one close friend attends same church	80	81	76
Attracted to church because family or friends attend	43	42	45
N	1963	1558	405

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study

somewhat more likely than non-switchers to report involvement in other church activities in addition to worship services; About nine-in-ten switchers (91%) say they often participate in church activities such as Sunday school or Bible study groups, compared with about eight-in-ten non-switchers (79%).

Descriptive Statistics: Measures of Meeting Spiritual Needs

A large majority of respondents report that they feel their spiritual needs are being met at this congregation (88%). And fully three quarters of respondents say that they feel either “extremely” or “very” close to God most of the time. These figures suggest that overall, respondents feel spiritually satisfied in their churches.

In response to being asked which characteristics of their church most attract them, about half say the worship/liturgical experience or music (52%) or the sermons, preaching or homilies (48%) are what most attract them to their church. Slightly smaller percentages say the leadership of the pastor or priest (45%) or the spiritual formation or discipleship programs (43%) are the most attractive characteristics of their church.

Table 6: Measures of Meeting Spiritual Needs, Descriptive Statistics

	All %	Non-Switchers %	Switchers %
Spiritual needs are met	88	87	89
Feel close to God	75	75	79
Attracted to church for:			
Worship experience	52	51	56
Leadership	45	44	46
Spiritual formation	43	40	52
Sermons	48	47	55
N	1963	1558	405

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study

Switchers and non-switchers are about equally likely to report that their spiritual needs are met in their church, and that they feel close to God most of the time. They are also about equally likely to list the leadership of the pastor or priest and the worship experience as reasons they are attracted to their congregation. Switchers are somewhat more likely than non-switchers, though, to say that some more specific aspects of the overall worship experience are what most attract them to their church: 52 percent of switchers are attracted by the spiritual formation or discipleship programs, compared with 40 percent of non-switchers, and 55 percent of switchers are attracted by the sermons, preaching, or homilies, compared with 47 percent of non-switchers.

Descriptive Statistics: Measures of Meeting Material Needs

Many respondents report having received some kind of material help from their church or someone in their church. Fully half of all respondents say they have received help with food or clothing (51%), and about four-in-ten (42%) have received financial help from their church or someone in it. About a third have had help finding a job (36%), and 29 percent were assisted with finding housing.

Table 7: Measures of Meeting Material Needs, Descriptive Statistics

<i>Received help with...</i>	Non-Switchers		
	All %	Switchers %	Switchers %
Food or clothing	51	50	52
Finding a job	36	34	41
Financial need	42	41	46
Finding housing	29	28	34
N	1963	1558	405

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study

Switchers and non-switchers are about equally likely to report having received help with these kinds of material needs in their church, though switchers are perhaps

somewhat more likely to have received help finding a job (41%, vs. 34% of non-switchers).

Descriptive Statistics: Demographics

Six-in-ten respondents are women (60%) and about as many are married (62%). The average respondent is about 41 years old. A majority of respondents are foreign born (80%), and just over half are Mexican (53%). About half (52%) report a household annual income of less than \$25,000. A third have a high school degree (33%), while just under a third have less education (29%) and just over a third have more than a high school degree (38%).

Table 8: Demographic Measures, Descriptive Statistics

	All	Non-Switchers	Switchers
	%	%	%
Married	62	61	66
Female	60	60	61
Education:			
Less than HS	29	29	30
HS degree	33	32	35
More than HS	38	39	36
Income <\$25k	52	52	52
Mexican	53	50	63
Foreign born	80	79	87
Mean age	41	41	40
N	1963	1558	405

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study

Switchers and non-switchers are very similar on these measures, with two exceptions: A higher percentage of switchers than non-switchers are of Mexican origin (63% vs. 50%). Because I am examining switching from Catholicism in particular, and because Mexicans are among the most Catholic of any Latino subgroup, it is not surprising that a high percentage of switchers are of Mexican origin.

Switchers are also more likely to be foreign-born (87%, vs. 79% of non-switchers). If, in fact, the meeting of material needs is particularly important for switching, and if this task is accomplished particularly well in smaller conservative

Protestant churches (more so than in Catholic churches), the higher incidence of switching among the foreign born may in part be due to the fact that as newcomers to a community, the foreign born are likely to have high need for things like getting connected in a new community and finding opportunities for jobs and affordable housing.

Descriptive Statistics: Congregational-Level Independent Variables

As described above, church leaders were asked about various ways in which they may or may not work to integrate potential new members into their church. About seven-in-ten respondents (72%) are in a church in which the leader says that their church incorporates either follow-up visits to new members, invitations to meals, groups or courses for new members, or invitations to small group meetings “very often.” Switchers are perhaps slightly more likely to be in a church that employs these methods of incorporating new members (77%, vs. 71% of non-switchers).

Table 9: Congregational-Level Measures, Descriptive Statistics

	All %	Non-Switchers %	Switchers %
Integrate new members	72	71	77
Services in Spanish	38	34	53
Programs to help with:			
Food	75	76	70
Jobs	59	60	56
Financial needs	73	74	71
Housing	63	61	70
Leader helps with jobs	83	80	92
Leader spends:			
0-10 hours	63	63	64
11-15 hours	12	13	9
16+ hours	25	25	27
Mean hours last week	1.36	1.40	1.21
N	1963	1558	405

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study

An additional potentially important variable is whether or not worship services in one's church are held in Spanish. Given the high percentage of this sample that is born outside the U.S., it is likely that a place of worship in which Spanish is the dominant language would provide a welcoming and comforting atmosphere for those who have not yet mastered English, or who simply enjoy the connection to their home community. Even for Latinos who are U.S. born, and perhaps second or third generation Americans, many prefer to worship in Spanish as a way to maintain ethnic identity and a connection to the Hispanic community. In this sample, about four-in-ten respondents are in a church where services are held primarily in Spanish. About half of switchers are in a church with predominantly Spanish-language services (53%) compared to only about a third of non-switchers (34%).

In addition to individual-level measures of having received help with material needs, I also include measures of whether or not formal opportunities for receiving these kinds of help are available in one's church. About three quarters of churchgoers are in a church where there is a program to assist with food (75%) or offer financial help (73%). About six-in-ten are in a church that offers help finding housing (63%) or a job (59%). Non-switchers are somewhat more likely to be in a church that has some type of program to help provide access to food for those who need it (76%, vs. 70% of switchers), while switchers are somewhat more likely to be in a church that offers a program to help people find housing (70%, vs. 61% of non-switchers).

Many respondents are also in a church where the leader reports helping people directly with these kinds of needs. About eight-in-ten (83%) congregants attend a church

in which the leader says he or she personally helps congregants find work. Upwards of nine-in-ten (92%) switchers have a church leader who helps directly with finding work, compared with eight-in-ten non-switchers.

One in four respondents is in a church where the leader reports spending more than 15 hours a week helping congregants with various material needs, though most (63%) have a leader who reports spending fewer than 10 hours a week helping with such things. While high percentages of respondents have church leaders who report helping congregants directly with material needs, the average congregant's leader reports having spent just over an hour in the previous week helping people with things like translation, immigration, or unemployment (mean of 1.36 hours). There are no differences between switchers and non-switchers on these two measures.

It should be noted again that the congregants surveyed for the Chicago Latino Congregations Study cannot be considered representative of all congregants in Chicago Latino Churches. However, this initial look at descriptive statistics suggests a few possible interesting associations between certain characteristics of individuals and characteristics of churches and religious switching.

At the individual level, it seems that switchers might be slightly more well-integrated into their churches, based on measures of worship attendance and participation in additional, non-worship activities. This could be an indication of churches meeting social needs in important and varying ways. Also, switchers are somewhat more likely than non-switchers to note some specific aspects of the worship experience as the things that most attract them to their churches (including spiritual formation or discipleship

programs and the sermons, preaching, or homilies), suggesting the importance of spiritual needs being met. Additionally, switchers may be more likely to receive help from their church with finding employment, highlighting the importance of having material needs met.

At the congregational level, switchers appear to be more likely to be in churches that employ some method of integrating new members into the church. Also, switchers are more likely to be in a church that has a formal program for helping people find housing, and are more likely to be in a church in which the leader reports helping people directly with finding jobs. In the next chapter, I examine these factors in a multivariate analysis, employing multilevel modeling to account for both individual- and congregation-level factors.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this chapter, the primary analysis will be a multilevel logistic regression predicting switching. In the pages below, I provide some background on multilevel modeling and describe why multilevel modeling is appropriate for this analysis. Next I describe the results of the multilevel modeling. And finally, I include a supplementary descriptive analysis parsing out the degree to which the findings in the multilevel analysis appear to be switcher vs. non-switcher effects or Protestant vs. Catholic effects.

Multivariate Analysis: Multilevel Modeling

To further examine the factors that are associated with religious switching in Chicago Latino churches, I use multilevel logistic regression modeling. A logistic regression approach is most appropriate for analysis of a dichotomous dependent variable (Pampel 2000), and multilevel modeling is the most appropriate approach when dealing with data in which individuals are clustered in units (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002, Luke 2004, Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2012). Rather than assuming that regression coefficients apply equally in all contexts, a multilevel model allows the intercept and slope to vary across the level-2 units (Luke 2004). In this case, my analysis focuses on churchgoers (level-1) who are clustered within congregations (level-2).

Using conventional regression modeling for clustered data is problematic because “the standard assumption of independent observations is likely to be violated because of dependence among observations within the same cluster,” (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2012, xxv). Individuals within the same congregation will likely have correlated errors

(Luke 2004). Multilevel modeling allows the researcher to account for error at the organizational level separately from and in addition to error at the individual level.

For example, while I could account for the potential effects of church leader involvement in helping congregants on the likelihood of congregants being switchers or not without using multilevel modeling, a conventional model would not account for the fact that some congregants are clustered within the same church and therefore have the same leader. These observations—the individual congregants—are not completely independent of each other because they share all of the characteristics associated with their congregation that are included in the model. Multilevel modeling accounts for the clustering, and estimates error at the congregant level and the congregation level.

It is possible that in some analyses of people clustered within larger units the between-cluster variation is minimal, and therefore multilevel modeling is not necessary. To test for this, one can examine the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), which refers to the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is due to the clusters or groups (i.e. the congregations, in this analysis) (Luke 2004). In this analysis, the ICC is .34; in other words, 34 percent of the variation is due to differences between congregations. A likelihood ratio test of the ICC shows that this value is significantly different from zero, meaning the use of the multilevel model is warranted. The model includes 1,963 individuals clustered in 64 congregations.

Results: The Individual Level

The first model includes only demographic variables (see Table 10 on p.76). A small but significant effect for age is in line with the expectation that over time, one is more likely to have had the opportunity to switch religions (Suchman 1992). Being female is also associated with switching, though this finding is only marginally statistically significant ($p=0.093$). While there is little in previous literature on switching that speaks to gender differences, it is possible that because women tend to be more religiously involved than men, women have more opportunity to switch.

As the descriptive statistics outlined in the previous chapter suggested, being of Mexican origin and being foreign born are both associated with switching. Respondents of Mexican origin are nearly three times as likely as those of other nationalities to have switched, and the foreign born are nearly twice as likely as the native born to have switched. Previous literature suggests that the native born are more likely to be Protestant, along with Latinos from more predominantly Protestant countries such as Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and El Salvador (Stoll 1990). However, as noted elsewhere in this dissertation, this sample is not representative of all Latinos, or even all Latinos in Chicago churches. It is possible that in the context of Chicago Latino churches, the conventional findings do not hold. Additionally, because Latinos of Mexican origin are among the most Catholic of all Latino subgroups, it stands to reason that a high percentage of former Catholics (the switchers in this analysis) are of Mexican origin.

The next step in the analysis, shown in Table 10 as model 2, is to add variables to control for social ties within the church, including the level of involvement in the church. Recall that respondents who participated in the CLCS were likely to be among the more involved members of their churches to begin with, so these measures largely serve as controls. Nonetheless, given their importance in conversion literature, it would be inappropriate to exclude such measures.

Two measures of social ties in the church are marginally significant in model 2. Respondents who said that having friends or family attending the same church is one of the aspects that most attracts them to their church are somewhat more likely to have switched, reinforcing the importance of social ties for switching. However, having at least one of one's closest friends also attend the church is actually negatively associated with switching. It is important to note again here the fact that strong social ties are important both for recruiting potential new members to a church, and for *retaining* members of a church (Lofland and Stark 1965, Sherkat and Wilson 1995, Smilde 2005, Welch 1981). If one has strong social ties in their congregation, they might be less likely to switch to another church than someone who does not have such ties keeping them where they are.

The odds ratios and significance levels for demographic variables change very little after adding in the measures of social needs. Age, being female, being Mexican, and being foreign born continue to be positively associated with switching.

The third model includes measures to account for whether or not spiritual needs are met for congregants. The descriptive statistics suggested that switchers might be more likely to attach importance to the spiritual formation or discipleship programs in their church, and to the sermons, preaching or homilies. However, neither of these measures—nor any of the measures of spiritual needs—are significantly associated with switching after controlling for demographic characteristics and involvement in the church.

Also, once measures for meeting spiritual needs are added to the model, the measures for meeting social needs that were significant in model 2—having at least one close friend in your church and being attracted to your church because family and/or friends attend—are no longer significant. The odds ratios and significance levels for the demographic controls, however, change very little.

The fourth model begins to examine the main question of interest: whether or not receiving material help from a congregation is associated with switching. The descriptive statistics suggest that switchers are perhaps somewhat more likely to have received help finding employment than non-switchers. After controlling for demographic characteristics and meeting social and spiritual needs, only having received help with food or clothing needs is associated with switching, and only marginally so. Contrary to expectations, having received help with food or clothing needs is negatively associated with switching. However, as shown previously in the comparison of Catholic and Protestant churches and the programs they offer, programs to address food needs were among the most common type of program offered in Catholic churches (75% of Catholic

churches have some kind of formal program to help with food needs). It is not surprising, then, that respondents in Catholic churches, who are non-switchers by definition, would be likely to receive help with food needs.

Results: The Congregational Level

Model 5 begins to incorporate the congregation-level, or level-2, measures. There are two measures that stand out in this model as significantly associated with switching: Being in a church in which the services are held entirely in Spanish, and being in a church that very often takes steps to incorporate potential new members into the church. Congregants in churches in which the worship service is held in Spanish are three times more likely to be switchers than congregants in other churches. While I am reluctant to make claims about causality with cross-sectional data, it is possible that Spanish-language services are a factor that could draw members from other churches, given the importance of Spanish-language services for maintaining ethnic identity and, for immigrants in particular, a connection to country of origin.

Congregants who are in a church that reports very often taking steps to integrate new members are more than four times as likely to be switchers than congregants in churches that do not take these steps. Such steps include follow-up visits to potential new members by clergy, lay leaders or members; designated people to extend hospitality to potential new members; a group course for new members; or invitations to new members to join a small group or fellowship group.

None of the variables, however, for being in a church in which there is a formal program to help members with needs such as food, employment, financial matters, and housing are significant when controlling for all other factors. The addition of these congregation-level measures does not affect the odds ratios or significance levels for any of the previously included variables.

In the full model, measures are added to account for the role that the church leaders play in helping people with material needs, including whether or not they personally help people find jobs, how much time they spend per week helping people with “social needs” (i.e. finding housing, translation, providing transportation, etc.), and how much time they spent in the previous week helping with things like translation, immigration and unemployment. The marginal effect of having received help with food drops out in the full model, while all other significant effects from model 5 remain. And the strongest predictor of switching emerging from the full model is being in a church where a church leader says they personally spend time helping people find jobs. Respondents who are in a church with such a leader are seven times more likely to be switchers than respondents in other churches.

Parsing Out “Switcher” Effects and Religious Tradition Effects

While the descriptive statistics and multivariate results discussed so far have suggested some interesting relationships between religious switching among Latinos in Chicago congregations and various characteristics of both individuals and churches, it is

Table 10: Results of Multilevel Logistic Regression Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Level-1						
<i>Demographics</i>						
Age	1.01*	1.01*	1.01*	1.01*	1.01*	1.02*
Married	1.05	1.00	1.01	1.03	1.03	1.02
Female	1.26^	1.27^	1.28^	1.30^	1.30^	1.30^
High School degree	1.19	1.22	1.18	1.17	1.18	1.19
More than HS educ	1.22	1.24	1.19	1.18	1.19	1.19
Mexican	2.47***	2.48***	2.47***	2.45***	2.51***	2.50***
Foreign born	1.68*	1.68*	1.66*	1.67*	1.65*	1.66*
Income less than \$25k	0.94	0.93	0.95	0.97	0.96	0.97
<i>Involvement/social needs</i>						
Attends weekly or more		1.22	1.22	1.21	1.20	1.21
Holds leadership role		0.92	0.94	0.96	0.96	0.97
Involved often		1.25	1.21	1.20	1.18	1.19
At least 1 close friend in church		0.73^	0.73	0.75	0.76	0.76
Attracted because family/friends		1.27^	1.19	1.20	1.20	1.21
<i>Worship/spiritual needs</i>						
Spiritual needs are met			0.82	0.84	0.83	0.84
Close to God most of the time			1.00	1.00	0.99	0.99
Attracted because of worship experience			1.01	1.00	0.99	0.99
Attracted: leadership			0.94	0.93	0.94	0.93
Attracted: spiritual formation			1.16	1.18	1.17	1.16
Attracted: sermons			1.23	1.24	1.25	1.26
<i>Material needs</i>						
Help with food				0.73^	0.72^	0.72
Help with job				1.17	1.18	1.19
Help with money				0.91	0.91	0.90
Help with housing				1.09	1.09	1.08
Level-2						
Service in Spanish					3.15*	2.13^
Integrate new members					4.30**	4.33**
Program: food					0.57	1.17
Program: jobs					0.81	0.55
Program: financial					2.08	1.70
Program: housing					1.61	1.35
Leader helps directly with jobs						7.00**
Leader helps 11-15 hrs/wk w/needs						0.41
Leader helps 16+ hrs/wk w/needs						1.44
Hrs spent last week						0.84

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study

Note: Odds ratios reported. Those that are statistically significant are shown in bold type. P-values indicated by ^(<0.100), *(<0.050), **(<0.010), ***(<0.001).

difficult to say to what degree the associations between several of these variables are due to differences between individual people (or individual churches) and to what degree they are due to more general differences between Catholic churches and conservative Protestant churches. For example, is it the case that someone who attends a church in which the leader helps members directly with their needs is more likely to be a switcher? Or is it the case that this characteristic (i.e. the leader helping people find jobs) is more likely to be seen in Protestant churches in general, and that the apparent “switcher” association is really a “Protestant switcher compared to Catholic non-switcher” effect more so than a “Protestant switcher compared to all non-switcher” effect? Table 11 sheds some light on this question.

Table 11 shows descriptive statistics for the full sample, for Catholics (who are all non-switchers as defined for this analysis), and for Protestants—including columns for all Protestants, Protestant non-switchers, and Protestant switchers. All figures in Table 11 are percentages (from frequencies after multiple imputations) except for those shown for age and for hours spent last week helping people with social needs, which are means. This table begins to lay out some of the differences between switchers and non-switchers (whether Catholic or Protestant) and between Catholics and Protestants more broadly.

In many ways, Protestant switchers look very much like Protestant non-switchers, and both of these groups appear to be distinct from Catholics on many of the measures examined. For switchers, they have become Protestant, making them virtually indistinguishable from other Protestants on many measures—particularly those which

Table 11: Comparing Catholics and Protestants by Switcher Status

	Full Analysis Sample	Catholics	-----Protestants-----		
			All	No switch	Switch
Level-1					
<i>Demographics</i>					
Age (mean)	41	43	40	39	40
Married	62	61	63	62	66
Female	60	64	58	58	61
High School degree	33	34	32	31	35
More than HS educ	38	35	39	41	36
Mexican	52	71	45	37	63
Foreign born	80	83	79	76	86
Income less than \$25k	52	53	52	52	51
<i>Involvement/social needs</i>					
Attends weekly or more	88	80	91	90	92
Holds leadership role	50	39	55	55	53
Involved often	81	62	89	88	91
At least 1 close friend in church	80	83	79	79	77
Attracted because family/friends	43	49	40	38	44
<i>Worship/spiritual needs</i>					
Spiritual needs are met	88	85	89	89	89
Close to God most of the time	75	68	78	78	79
Attracted because of worship experience	52	46	54	54	56
Attracted: leadership	45	38	48	48	46
Attracted: spiritual formation	43	30	48	46	52
Attracted: sermons	48	42	51	49	55
<i>Material needs</i>					
Help with food	51	40	56	57	53
Help with job	36	22	42	42	41
Help with money	42	23	50	51	45
Help with housing	29	17	34	34	33
Level-2					
Service in Spanish	38	12	49	47	53
Integrate new members	72	55	79	80	77
Program: food	75	81	72	73	70
Program: jobs	59	58	59	61	56
Program: financial	73	66	77	79	71
Program: housing	63	52	67	66	69
Leader helps directly with jobs	83	58	93	93	92
Leader helps 11-15 hrs/wk w/needs	12	20	9	8	9
Leader helps 16+ hrs/wk w/needs	25	21	27	27	27
Hrs spent last week (mean)	1.4	1.8	1.2	1.2	1.2

Source: Chicago Latino Congregations Study. Percentages shown except for "age" and "hours spent last week," which are means.

measure characteristics of the church they attend. For example, in the full multilevel logistic regression model shown in Table 10, one of the measures that stood out the most as associated with switching was being in a church in which the leader reports helping congregants directly with finding jobs. In that analysis, respondents in such a church were approximately seven times more likely to be switchers than respondents who attend a church in which the leader does not report helping congregants find job. However, the descriptive statistics in Table 11 suggest that the largest difference on this measure is between Catholics and Protestants overall, and not between switchers and non-switching Protestants. Nearly six-in-ten Catholics (58%) are in such a church, but nearly all Protestants (93%) are in such a church, including 93 percent of non-switchers and 92% of switchers. Both Protestant non-switchers and Protestant switchers, then, are distinct from Catholics on this measure, suggesting a clear relationship between type of church (i.e. Protestant vs. Catholic) and direct help from the congregational leader. It is less clear from this data whether or not this measure is associated with switching.

Similarly, while just over half of Catholic respondents (55%) attend a church that takes formal steps to incorporate potential new members, upwards of eight-in-ten Protestants (79%) are in such a church, including 80 percent of Protestant non-switchers and 77 percent of Protestant switchers. This suggests that Protestant churches overall are more likely to implement formal measures of incorporation than are Catholic churches. This likely contributes to switching since such measures of incorporation provide opportunities to nurture new affective bonds, thus retaining any potential new members that an initial bond is established with, and this is more likely to occur in Protestant

churches than in Catholic churches. However, there is so little variation among Protestant churches on this measure that it is difficult to distinguish whether there are some Protestant churches that do this particularly well compared with other Protestant churches, resulting in more successful recruitment and more converts.

At the congregational level, then, there are very few differences between Protestant switchers and other Protestants who have not switched, based on the comparisons shown in Table 11. At the individual level, there are two main differences between these two types of Protestants: Protestant switchers are somewhat more likely to be foreign-born than are Protestant non-switchers (86% vs. 76%, respectively), and Protestant switchers are far more likely than their non-switcher counterparts to be of Mexican origin (63% vs. 37%). These two differences can be explained by the pool from which switchers are coming: they were all previously Catholic, and both foreign-born Latinos and Latinos of Mexican origin have historically been predominantly Catholic groups. It makes sense, then, that on these two measures, Protestant switchers look more like Catholics than other Protestants; these individual characteristics do not change when one changes their religious affiliation.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The analysis in this dissertation has identified several factors that seem to be associated with switching from participation in a Catholic church to participation in an evangelical or Pentecostal Protestant church among Latinos in Chicago. In this chapter, I review some of the factors that stood out the most throughout my analyses. Insights from both the descriptive statistics and the multivariate analysis may prove to be fruitful for future research.

The congregants

Meeting social needs: Overall, CLCS respondents are very well integrated into their congregations. The vast majority say they attend worship services at least weekly, are involved in church activities besides worship service, and that at least one of their five closest personal friends also attends the same church. But switchers are perhaps even more well integrated into their congregations; the descriptive statistics suggest that switchers are slightly more likely than non-switchers to say they attend worship services at least once a week, and more likely to report involvement in church activities aside from worship services. Though comparing Protestant switchers to Protestant non-switchers and Catholic non-switchers separately (Table 11) the differences on these measures appear to be primarily between Protestants and Catholics more broadly. And in the multivariate analysis, individual-level measures of church integration do not appear to be associated with switching among this sample once all other factors are controlled for.

Meeting spiritual needs: In the initial look at what congregants say most attracts them to their church, a comparison of Catholics to Protestants suggested Protestants overall are more likely than Catholics to cite aspects related to the worship experience or spiritual development as most attractive. And when comparing switchers in particular to non-switchers, who are in both Catholic and Protestant churches, two of these spiritual elements of the church still stand out as particularly important for switchers: the sermons, preaching, or homilies, and the spiritual formation or discipleship programs. The differences on these two measures are smaller when comparing Protestant switchers to only Protestant non-switchers, but slight differences remain nonetheless (though they are only marginally statistically significant).

There were no differences, however, between switchers and non-switchers when it came to saying their spiritual needs are met; Switchers and non-switchers were about equally likely to agree that their spiritual needs are met, and that they feel close to God most of the time. In the multivariate analysis, none of the measures of meeting spiritual needs stand out as important when controlling for all other factors.

Meeting material needs: The analysis shows very few differences between switchers and non-switchers in the degree to which they have personally received help with food or clothing, finding housing, finding a job, or financial needs. Switchers are perhaps more likely to report having received help finding a job, though only when compared with Catholic non-switchers. In the multivariate analysis, before controlling for congregation-level factors, having received help with food or clothing is actually

negatively (if weakly) associated with switching. However, once all factors are accounted for in the full model, the individual-level material needs variables are not significantly associated with switching.

The congregations

First, a comparison of some characteristics of Catholic churches and Protestant churches in the CLCS begins to get at why some of the differences between these types of church may be important for explaining switching, as suggested in some literature on ethnic and immigrant congregations. For example, Sullivan (2000b) found that many respondents in her qualitative work in Houston felt that Protestant churches were more receptive to their needs than Catholic churches. And Menjivar (2003) described a Protestant church leader who viewed the smaller, more personalized nature of his congregation as a benefit over a larger Catholic church when it came to meeting the needs of his congregants.

If it is the case that people are finding more family-like environments in Protestant churches, as well as leaders that are helping congregants in a more personalized way, it likely has much to do with the size of these churches. In the CLCS sample, the average Catholic church has 2,660 regularly attending adults, while the average conservative Protestant church has 135. As one CLCS respondent noted when asked about why their church was growing,

[I]n some churches—bigger churches, I guess, with more members—you can't talk to the pastor unless you go through 20 people, and that doesn't guarantee you talking to the pastor. The pastor [here] doesn't care...it doesn't even phase her if, you know, our income status, our social status. She doesn't care. We have a degree, we don't have [one]—she treats everyone the same. And you see her talking to a reverend or a pastor like her—in the same way she speaks to them, she speaks to us. (A female respondent in a focus group in a Protestant church)

While this quote cannot, of course, be taken as representative of all people's experiences in large churches, it is an illustrative example of the perception that church participants have of the accessibility of their religious leaders in small versus large congregations, and the possibility that more personal connections are made between the leaders and the congregants in these smaller venues.

Many of the respondents in the CLCS focus groups talked about feeling welcome, feeling love, and feeling like family when they first began attending their church. For example, one man said of his first experience in a conservative Protestant church, "It was really homey. There was a lot of love." A woman in the same church says, "It's like family here, you know? Like, when people see that you're going through something, they'll do anything, and they're willing to do anything to help you, to uplift you, you know?"

Not only are Protestant churches much smaller than Catholic churches in general, but Protestant churches in the CLCS are more likely to have a formalized approach to incorporating potential new members into the church. Higher percentages of Protestant churches (than Catholic) report that they employ methods such as follow up visits to new members and invitations to join small groups. Such an approach helps a congregation

capitalize on an initial interaction, building and reinforcing affective ties between potential new members and current members. An example from a CLCS respondent in a focus group highlights the effect that a home-visit from a church leader or member can have on a potential new member; She describes how she became involved in her Protestant church:

I am new in this church, I have been here for barely three years. I met my pastor during the most difficult times in my life. Someone took her to my home and when she started talking to me and pray[ing] in my house, I felt an immense change in my life.

This begins to get at the importance of meeting social needs, and the ways that Protestant churches might be able to do this more effectively than Catholic churches. Next, I return to discussing these factors as they relate to switching more specifically.

Meeting social needs: The descriptive statistics suggested that switchers may be more likely than non-switchers to be in a church that employs efforts to incorporate new members into the congregation, and that switchers were quite a bit more likely to be in a church in which Spanish was the primary language at services. Both of these variables proved to be significant in the multivariate analyses. When controlling for all other factors, a person in a church in which services are in Spanish is about twice as likely to be a switcher, though this is marginally significant (at the $p < .10$ level). And being in a church that employs formal methods of integrating new members into the church is strongly associated with switching (odds ratio of 4.33). The comparison in Table 11 suggests that the differences on these two measures are primarily between Protestants and Catholics rather than switchers and all non-switchers, though Protestant switchers are

somewhat more likely than Protestant non-switchers to be in a church in which the services are held mainly in Spanish.

These methods of integrating new members into the church, including follow-up visits from leaders or members, designated people to extend hospitality, and invitations for new members to join existing groups within the congregation, establish the kind of intense interaction between members and recruits that has proved important in previous studies of conversion (Greil and Rudy 1984, Lofland and Stark 1965, Snow and Phillips 1980). And holding worship services in Spanish can meet both practical needs and social needs. For those whose dominant language is Spanish, being able to worship in Spanish is a very basic need. For those who are bilingual or English dominant, worshiping in Spanish still may serve a social need, providing people with a connection to their ethnic identity and to their community.

Meeting material needs: Previous research suggests Catholic churches are more likely than Protestant churches to have formal programs in place to help meet people's practical and material needs (Menjívar 2003). However, in the Chicago context, high percentages of both types of churches have such programs established. Switchers are somewhat more likely to be in a church that has a program related to housing, while non-switchers are somewhat more likely to be in a church that has a program related to providing food, though the analysis in Table 11 suggests that these differences are primarily between Protestants and Catholics. In the multivariate analysis, however, being in a church with formal programs for meeting needs is not associated with switching.

The leaders

Being in a church in which the leader says they help people directly with material needs stands out as the variable most strongly associated with switching. When controlling for how much time the leader says they spend helping people with various types of needs, a person in a church in which the leader says they directly help people in their church to find a job is seven times more likely to be a switcher. Building on Menjívar's (2003) observation that Protestant leaders may help their congregants in a more personal, individualized way, and Zhang's (2006) observation that helping people with basic practical needs serves as a catalyst for building relationships and evangelizing, this analysis lends empirical support to the hypothesis that when it comes to switching, meeting people's needs in a certain way is potentially important. And the comparison in Table 11 suggests that Protestant churches are more likely than Catholic churches to employ this personalized approach, and Menjívar (2003) describes in her work.

Latino churchgoers in Chicago who are in a church in which the leader helps them directly with finding a job are much more likely to be switchers than those in other churches. While this is the only measure in the CLCS of direct help for a specific need, it is possible that a pastor that helps his or her congregants in this way with finding work also helps congregants in a direct way as other needs arise. In other words, while this measure is specifically about helping people with jobs, it may be that it is also indirectly a measure of a pastor's approach to helping congregants out when they need it. One CLCS congregant's response to a question about what most attracted them to their

Protestant church is illustrative of the importance of feeling like one is part of a supportive community with a pastor who cares:

I came to this church twenty years ago. What I liked the most about this church was the support—moral and spiritual—that was given to me. In one way or another, it helped me a lot. Principally, I am fond of the pastor because she is a person that assists others and she seems to enjoy doing it.

Another respondent is even more emphatic about the role the pastor plays in their church and what it means to them personally:

The impact of this servant of the Lord is enormous. Sometimes I stop to think about her and how she serves other people. She is always awake, outreaching [to] other[s] and willing to help anyone in anything they need regardless of the time, day or location. She is always willing to help. That is why I like [this church]. Nobody is taking me away from here; if I leave, it would be directly to the cemetery.

These examples speak to the importance of feeling like one has a supportive community in their congregation. Receiving help in a direct, personalized way from someone in the congregation, and especially from the pastor, is one way that the affective bonds so important for religious switching can be initiated and developed. Additionally, the results of the multivariate analysis highlight the importance of incorporating new members into a congregation. It is possible that the congregations in Chicago that are most successful at drawing in switchers are those that establish affective ties through reaching out and helping people when they need a hand, and that then maintain interactions with the potential members through methods such as follow-up visits and invitations to join small groups in order to nurture the affective bond.

While Table 11 suggests that many of the differences that seemed most important in Table 10 are actually Catholic-Protestant congregational differences, and getting

directly at the switching element is somewhat more challenging with a cross-sectional data source, nonetheless the differences between the Protestant and Catholic congregations still help illuminate some of the potential reasons why Latinos are leaving the Catholic church for Protestant churches. As literature on religious conversion has consistently found (Lofland and Stark 1965, Snow and Phillips 1980, Stark and Bainbridge 1980, Greil and Rudy 1984, Snow and Machalek 1984, Sherkat and Wilson 1995, Smilde 2005, Gooren 2007), the initiation and nurture of affective ties are essential elements in the cultivation of religious switching, and the analysis in this dissertation suggests that conservative Protestant congregations may be more successful in this cultivation than Catholic congregations.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

While the analyses described throughout this dissertation suggest some interesting possibilities for explaining religious switching, I cannot confidently establish causal relationships using cross-sectional data to explain change. Ideally I would have longitudinal data that would allow me to examine factors at various points in time, before and after switching takes place.

For examining the congregational context in particular, it would be useful to have more information about the last congregation switchers attended so that characteristics of the previous church could be compared to characteristics of the current church. While I know the religious tradition of switchers' previous churches, I do not know (beyond aggregate statistics for a particular type of church) any details about what kind of services

were available in that church, what the leader was like, what the respondent liked or did not like about it, and so on.

Even if the CLCS did include questions about one's previous church, it would be difficult to disentangle the factors that might have contributed to an individual's switch from that individual's post-conversion narrative, which often involves a reinterpretation of various aspects of one's experience using the new worldview adopted in the new church. To some degree, this is a challenge that all research on religious switching must grapple with.

Nonetheless, this dissertation identifies some fruitful areas for future research on religious switching. More detailed data collection on the various ways that church leaders reach out to help members with personal and practical needs, as well as whether or not and to what degree other church members are involved in these efforts, could provide a clearer picture of how these actions are related to religious switching. While the importance of affective ties for switching has been well established by the literature, there is less work exploring the ways that congregations go about initiating such relationships with potential new members.

Future research could examine these questions in more detail by implementing a long-term panel study design that would follow a nationally representative sample of respondents over time. Such a study could include questions about religious affiliation and participation, questions about the place of worship one attends (if they are involved in a place of worship), as well as several questions about other life circumstances and

social connections, with surveys being repeated at regular intervals to track changes in circumstances over time. A panel design could help mitigate the problem of retrospective personal explanations for religious switching. And if and when a respondent reported participating at a different place of worship than previously reported, the survey could incorporate questions about how the respondent found the congregation, who they first felt connected to in the congregation, and whether or not anyone in the congregation reached out to them early on in their connection with the congregation.

While asking respondents in a panel study about the characteristics of their places of worship would be very useful, ideally one could also empanel and survey the congregations as well, asking individual respondents for the contact information for their congregation in order to develop a hyper-network sample of congregations (see Chaves, Konieczny, Beyerlein and Barnum 1999 for more information on this method of surveying congregations). Surveying congregations, via the head clergy person or another knowledgeable key informant, would allow the researcher to gain a much broader picture of the characteristics of each congregation – including basic characteristics like size and social composition, as well as information on the kinds of programs and services offered in each – than could be obtained via surveys with individual participants.

In this hypothetical research project, if and when individual respondents changed congregations, the new congregations could also be added to the panel in order to obtain additional data about them, and allowing for a more complete comparison of the previous church and the new church than is available in any existing dataset (to my knowledge).

Such a design would allow the researcher to examine both congregational and individual characteristics associated with the event of religious switching. This ideal approach to examining switching would be very costly and time-consuming, but would allow a very detailed and rich source of data on the phenomenon of religious change.

Conclusion

While it has been somewhat difficult to establish empirically, there is reason to believe that there is a shift occurring among Latinos from Catholic affiliation to Protestant affiliation. There are many possible explanations for this shift. In this dissertation, I have drawn on some promising insights from previous literature on religious conversion and on ethnic and immigrant churches to explore some factors that are associated with religious switching among Latinos in Chicago churches. In particular, previous research on religious conversion has established the importance of affective ties for recruiting new members to a religious group, and of continued social interaction for incorporating new members (Lofland and Stark 1965, Snow and Phillips 1980, Stark and Bainbridge 1980, Greil and Rudy 1984, Snow and Machalek 1984, Sherkat and Wilson 1995, Smilde 2005, Gooren 2007). And some qualitative studies of ethnic and immigrant congregations highlight the important role that the congregation often plays in meeting people's needs—social, spiritual and material—particularly among immigrants or other newcomers to a community (Min 1992, Kwon, Ebaugh and Hagan 1997, Warner and Witner 1998, Bankston and Zhou 2000, Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000, Sullivan 2000b,

Campion 2003, Hirschman 2004, Cavalcanti and Schleef 2005, Abel 2006, Zhang 2006).

Some of these studies suggest that many people will switch religious traditions if they find the resources and community they need in a particular kind of church (Min 1992, Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000, Sullivan 2000b).

The analysis in this dissertation suggests that these insights play a role in religious switching among Latinos in Chicago. Using a unique dataset that allows me to analyze individuals in the context of their congregations, the Chicago Latino Congregations Study, I have been able to explore these insights using quantitative methods, and have found support for the hypothesis that some congregations — in particular, conservative Protestant congregations — may meet the needs of participants in ways that foster religious switching.

APPENDIX A: TABLE OF VARIABLES

Variable	Question Wording	Coding
Dependent Variable		
Switch	<i>Before you started coming to this congregation, were you participating in another congregation of a different denomination or religious tradition? If yes, what type of congregation did you attend before coming here?</i>	1 if yes, used to participate in a Catholic church 0 if no, always participated in a Catholic/Protestant church
Independent Variables		
Level 1 – Individual Measures		
<i>Demographics</i>		
Age	<i>What is your age?</i>	Continuous
Married	<i>What is your present marital status?</i>	1 if “Married, never divorced,” “Divorced, and remarried,” or “Widowed, and remarried” 0 if “Single, never married,” “Living in a committed relationship, but not married,” “Divorced,” “Separated,” or “Widowed.”
Female	<i>Are you: Female, Male</i>	1 if female 0 if male
High School degree	<i>What is the highest grade level you have completed?</i>	1 if “Completed high school” or “GED” 0 if “No formal schooling,” “Grade school,” “Some high school,” “Trade certificate,” “Some college,” “Associate degree,” “Bachelor’s

		degree (college graduate),” “Master’s degree,” or “Doctorate degree”
More than HS educ	<i>What is the highest grade level you have completed?</i>	1 if “Trade certificate,” “Some college,” “Associate degree,” “Bachelor’s degree (college graduate),” “Master’s degree,” or “Doctorate degree” 0 if “No formal schooling,” “Grade school,” “Some high school,” “Completed high school” or “GED”
Mexican	<i>If you marked Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, please indicate with which Hispanic/Latino group you most identify. (Mark only one.)</i>	1 if “Mexican American/Chicano” or “Mexican” 0 if “Puerto Rican,” “Cuban,” “Dominican,” “Colombian,” “Native American/Indigenous,” “Central American,” “South American,” or “Other”
Foreign born	<i>Where were the following people born? You</i>	1 if “In the U.S.” 0 if “Outside of the U.S.” or “In Puerto Rico”
Income less than \$25k	<i>Approximately, what is your total annual household income before taxes?</i>	1 if less than \$25,000 0 if \$25,000 or more
<i>Involvement/social needs</i>		
Attends weekly or more	<i>How often do you go to worship services at this congregation?</i>	1 if “Once a week” or “More than once a week”

		0 if “Two or three times a month,” “Once a month,” “Less than once a month,” “On special occasions only,” or “This is my first time”
Holds leadership role	<i>Do you currently have some form of a leadership role in this congregation/parish? (Example: committee chair, teacher, choir member or director, elder, usher, deacon, etc.)</i>	1 if yes 0 if no
Involved often	<i>How involved are you in the following groups or activities in this church?</i> -Sunday school, church school, or Sabbath school -Prayer, discussion, or Bible study groups -Evangelism or missionary outreach activities <i>How often have you done the following activities in this church?</i> -Read, spoken or shared testimony in front of the congregation/parish -Helped organize an event or program at church <i>Approximately how many hours a week do you spend in church related activities (including worship services or mass)?</i>	1 if “Often” in response to any of the first five subquestions listed, or more than 3 hours a week to the last question listed (left) 0 if “Seldom” or “Never” to all and less than 3 hours a week in church related activities
At least 1 close friend in church	<i>Of your closest five personal friends, how many attend this congregation/parish?</i>	1 if one or more 0 if none
Attracted because family/friends	<i>Which aspects of your congregation/parish life most attracts you to this church/parish?</i> <i>My family and friends attend here</i>	1 if checked “My family and friends attend here” 0 if not checked
<i>Worship/spiritual needs</i>		
Spiritual needs are met	<i>Think about this church. To what</i>	1 if “Agree”

	<i>extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? My spiritual needs are being met at this congregation or parish.</i>	0 if “Disagree” or “Neutral/Unsure”
Close to God most of the time	<i>How distant or close do you feel to God most of the time?</i>	1 if “Extremely close” or “Very close” 0 if “Somewhat close,” “Somewhat distant,” “Very distant,” or “Extremely distant”
Attracted because of worship experience	<i>Which aspects of your congregation/parish life most attracts you to this church/parish? Worship/liturgical experience or music</i>	1 if checked “Worship/liturgical experience or music” 0 if not checked
Attracted: leadership	<i>Which aspects of your congregation/parish life most attracts you to this church/parish? Leadership of the pastor/priest</i>	1 if checked “Leadership of the pastor/priest” 0 if not checked
Attracted: spiritual formation	<i>Which aspects of your congregation/parish life most attracts you to this church/parish? Spiritual formation or discipleship programs</i>	1 if checked “Spiritual formation or discipleship programs” 0 if not checked
Attracted: sermons	<i>Which aspects of your congregation/parish life most attracts you to this church/parish? Sermons, preaching, or homilies</i>	1 if checked “Sermons, preaching, or homilies” 0 if not checked
<i>Material needs</i>		
Help with food	<i>Has this church or someone from this church ever helped you or your family in the following ways? Provided food or clothing</i>	1 if checked “Provided food or clothing” 0 if not checked
Help with job	<i>Has this church or someone from this church ever helped you or your family in the following ways? Helped find a job</i>	1 if checked “Helped find a job” 0 if not checked
Help with money	<i>Has this church or someone from this church ever helped you or your family in the following ways?</i>	1 if checked “Helped with a financial need”

	<i>Helped with a financial need</i>	0 if not checked
Help with housing	<i>Has this church or someone from this church ever helped you or your family in the following ways? Helped find a house or apartment</i>	1 if checked “Helped find a house or apartment” 0 if not checked
Level-2 – Congregational Measures		
Service in Spanish	<i>In what language are worship services primarily conducted in your church?</i>	1 if “Spanish only” or “Mostly Spanish, some English” 0 if “Spanish and English equally,” “Mostly English, some Spanish,” or “English only”
Integrate new members	<i>Once a person has joined your congregation or parish, how often are the following procedures followed to ensure that he or she becomes integrated into the life of this congregation or parish? -Follow-up visits by clergy, lay leaders, or members -Designated people extend hospitality and invite them for meals -A group or course for new members -Invitation to join a small group, fellowship group, or similar group</i>	1 if “Very often” to any of the four subquestions listed (left) 0 if “Sometimes” or “Never” to all four subquestions
Program: food	<i>Within the past 12 months, which of the following ministries, services or programs has your congregation or parish offered for low income people and others in need? -Food pantries -Soup kitchen</i>	1 if checked “Food pantries” or “Soup kitchen” 0 if neither is checked
Program: jobs	<i>Within the past 12 months, which of the following ministries, services or programs has your congregation or parish offered for immigrants? -Job placement</i>	1 if checked any of the four subquestions (left) 0 if none are checked

	<p><i>Within the past 12 months, which of the following educational and job service ministries, services or programs has your congregation or parish offered?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Job training -Career counseling -Job placement 	
Program: financial	<p><i>Within the past 12 months, which of the following ministries, services or programs has your congregation or parish offered for low income people and others in need?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Emergency individual financial assistance <p><i>Within the past 12 months, which of the following ministries, services or programs has your congregation or parish offered for immigrants?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Economic assistance 	<p>1 if checked either of the two subquestions (left)</p> <p>0 if neither are checked</p>
Program: housing	<p><i>Within the past 12 months, which of the following ministries, services or programs has your congregation or parish offered for low income people and others in need?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Shelter <p><i>Within the past 12 months, which of the following ministries, services or programs has your congregation or parish offered for immigrants?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Find housing 	<p>1 if checked either of the two subquestions (left)</p> <p>0 if neither are checked</p>
Leader helps directly with jobs	<p><i>Do you personally get involved in helping people from your congregation or parish find jobs?</i></p>	<p>1 if yes</p> <p>0 if no</p>
Leader helps 11-15 hrs/wk w/needs	<p><i>Approximately, about how much time per week do you spend helping people with social needs? Note: It is only necessary to read the following definition of social needs if the interviewee asks for one. (Social needs are broadly defined here as</i></p>	<p>1 if between 11 and 15 hours</p> <p>0 if fewer than 11 hours or more than 15 hours</p>

	<i>any assistance given to families to find housing, translation, providing transportation or childcare, or negotiating issues of law.)</i>	
Leader helps 16+ hrs/wk w/needs	<i>(See above cell)</i>	1 if 16 hours a week or more 0 if fewer than 16 hours
Hrs spent last week	<i>Within the last seven days, approximately how much time did you spend in the following activities? -Assisting people with various problems such as translation, immigration, unemployment, etc.</i>	Continuous

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