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Who Wanted What and Why at the Second Vatican Council? Toward a General Theory of Religious Change

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Saggi

Who Wanted What and Why at the Second Vatican Council?

Toward a General Theory of Religious Change

by Melissa Wilde

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The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was a watershed event in the history of Roman Catholicism because of the multitude of changes it brought about. Vatican II ended the Latin mass; sent nuns from their cloisters and into the world; relaxed dietary restrictions, confessional obligations, and service attire for the laity; relinquished the Church's claim of being the one true church; and officially renounced its claims to power in relation to nation-states. Though sociologists have examined the extensive effects of Council reforms [e.g. Dillon 1999; Greeley 1998 and 2004; Casanova 1994; Finke and Stark 1992; Smith 1991], few studies have tried to understand how they came about.¹

This paper explores the differences among the four groups of bishops who participated at the Council, with the goal of answering a simple, but key, sociological question about the Council: who wanted what, and why? In brief, I argue that in order to understand, explain and ideally even predict, the perspectives, interests and goals, or what I call organisational strategies, of religious leaders, sociologists of religion must broaden their understandings of the factors that affect them. Though Supply-Side theory recognises that the presence of other religious institutions (i.e. religious pluralism) has powerful effects on religious leaders, I argue that in order to predict not only whether religious leaders will be open to reform, but also what

¹ An exception is Rocco Caporale's book [1964] based on interviews with 80 of the most important leaders of the Council. While his transcripts were an important data source for me, he could not examine the outcome of the Council because it was still unfolding when he conducted his interviews. Quotes from Caporale's respondents are denoted by the abbreviation "CIC," which means Caporale Interview Card, and a number which denotes the question to which the interviewee was responding.

reforms they will prioritise, we must consider not only the presence of other institutions in a society, but the relationship between those organisations, especially whether those relationships are stable. This is the case because in stable fields, legitimacy concerns trump concerns about efficiency and growth.

About Vatican II

Councils such as Vatican II (officially called “ecumenical councils,” meaning the entire church participates) are rare events for the Roman Catholic Church. Councils can be called only by the pope, and have occurred less than once every century on average. During a Council all of the bishops, cardinals, heads of religious orders and theologians of the Church gather together, discuss issues of concern, draft statements on those issues, and eventually vote on whether to ratify those statements.

Vatican II was remarkable for many reasons, but one of the most important reasons had to do with the fact that before the Council started, no one expected much from the Council’s outcome. Expectations for the Council radically changed during the first few days of the First Session, as a result of a protest event which occurred on the Council’s first day. By demonstrating that progressive leaders were going to fight for a real council, and that the rest of the more than 2,200 bishops were willing to do more than rubber stamp the Roman Curia’s views with their votes, these events called the legitimacy and power of the Roman Curia into question, as they shifted important resources to the progressive leadership by validating the legitimacy of Council votes and ensuring them access to crucial Council committees.

As the First Session closed and it became apparent that real change might come from the Council, progressives turned to the complicated task of figuring out what they most wanted to change. They quickly realised that though consensus had been fairly easy to achieve on the issue of modernising the liturgy (after all, Latin was no one’s native tongue), and though progressives were, by definition, open to accommodating the Church to the modern world in some way, there was little agreement among the different progressive groups about how and what should be accommodated.

The key bone of contention was to what extent they should prioritise rapprochement with Protestants in order to engage the ecumenical movement. The three distinct groups of progressives had different views on this issue, particularly in regards to whether it should be prioritised over other concerns, such as social justice or reforms oriented toward helping keep and attract more laity.

The first, and most well-known, group of progressive bishops at the Council, those from Northern Europe and North America, felt that building better relations with Protestants was the most important issue the Council would address, and prioritised ecumenical concerns throughout the course of the Council. Their consistent and persistent calls for ecumenically-friendly reforms, the backbone of the “new theology” they developed, ultimately became the “master frame” of the Council [Snow and Benford 1992, Snow; Rochford *et al.* 1986].

The second important group of progressives at the Council, those from Latin America, however, initially saw this agenda as strange, if not downright foolhardy. Actively dealing with Protestant missionaries’ increasingly successful attempts to win souls from the Church, they were not inclined to better relations with Protestants, and preferred instead to focus on their message of social justice, ameliorating poverty and ministering to the poor and unchurched.

The third and final major group of progressive bishops at the Council, those from “missionary countries” in Africa and Asia, saw wisdom in both of their allies’ priorities. As bishops in developing countries where the Roman Catholic Church was actively trying to grow, missionary bishops prioritised reforms which they felt would make their admittedly foreign religion more accessible and intelligible to the populations in their countries and help alleviate poverty. And, as bishops working in diverse societies with missionaries from other, mainly Protestant, religious denominations, African and Asian bishops were supportive of bettering Catholic-Protestant relations.

This paper explores the differences among the bishops at the Council (including the three groups of progressives and the staunch conservatives from Italy and Spain),² with the goal of answering a simple, but key, sociological question. That is, who wanted what, and why? In other words, what patterns can be observed among the interests and goals, or what I call organisational strategies, of the bishops at the Council? Understanding the forces and factors that shape religious leaders’ orientations to religious change is crucial to understanding the paths different religious institutions ultimately take in their dealings with the modern world.

My answer to the question of who wanted what and why integrates theories from the sociology of religion with theories from organisational and economic sociology. I argue that in order to predict religious leaders’ organisational strategies, sociologists of religion must broaden their understandings of the factors that affect them. In particular, sociologists of religion must recognise that, like other organisa-

² For a variety of reasons, primarily because the data are less than reliable, bishops from communist countries are excluded from the analysis in this paper. For a more extensive discussion of the issue of communism at the Council as well as information on the voting patterns among the bishops from communist countries please see the methodological Appendix.

tions, legitimacy concerns are at the heart of most organisational processes within religious institutions.

Data and Methods

A wide variety of primary and secondary sources helped me develop this explanation. Though the primary materials are described in detail elsewhere [Wilde forthcoming], because of their importance, it is worth briefly describing them here. The first primary data source consists of transcripts of interviews with more than 80 of the most important bishops and theologians at the Council. The interviews were conducted by Rocco Caporale during the First and Second Session of the Council for his dissertation research in sociology at Columbia University. Using snowball sampling (and over nine languages) Caporale asked respondents to identify five of the most important people at the Council and stopped when no new names were being volunteered.

I also use archival materials from six archival collections, which were in seven languages. The majority of these materials focuses on progressive and conservative leaders and includes formal minutes from meetings, letters and other personal correspondence, petitions and other documents.

Because the majority of this data admittedly omits the perspectives of the more than 2500 “rank and file” bishops who ultimately decided the outcome of Council reforms with their votes, I obtained Council votes from the Vatican Secret Archive (Archivio Segreto Vaticano) which I then entered into an electronic database. The voting data identify individual bishops, their dioceses and their votes on ten of the most contentious Council reforms. I then used the 1965 *Annuario Pontificio* (AP) to obtain country of service and other biographical information. If information was not available for a bishop in the 1965 AP, his information was obtained from the most recent year of the AP in which he appeared.

Obtaining systematic data on the relationship between the Church and state in each country at the time of the Council was complicated, primarily because the Council proscribed official governmental preference of the Church. Among other problems, I found that the *National Catholic Almanac* (NCA) from 1965 did not mention the legal situation of the Church in eight of the nine countries where the Church was noted as the state religion in 1955. I therefore used the 1955 NCA, a year which represents the Church’s relationship with the state three years before John’s announcement, for my measure of whether the RCC was the state religion or given special status at the time of the Council.

Measuring Organisational Strategies

I use two early and highly contentious votes from the Council as indications of the bishops' openness to various organisational strategies throughout this paper, and thus a brief description of them is needed here. The first vote I analyse was the vote on the Sources of Revelation, a key part of the eventfulness of the First Session, and an issue around which progressives were united.³ The majority of Northern Europeans, Latin Americans and Missionary bishops voted to reject the conservative preparatory schema, a fact which many saw as the first indication that the majority of bishops at the Council were open to change.

The second vote presented in this paper is the first vote on the Blessed Virgin Mary, an issue which was much more contentious, in no small part because it deeply divided progressives. This vote, which occurred during the second session, centred on the question of how the Council would treat Mary, in this instance, whether she would have her own conciliar document (thereby emphasising her importance), or be treated as a chapter in the document on the Church.

Mary was a contentious issue because devotion to Mary "has been a hallmark of the Catholic tradition," [McCarthy 1994, 343] and has often served to differentiate Catholics and Protestants. At the time of the Council, conservatives wanted to further elevate Mary's status in the Church. Progressives from Northern Europe and North America resisted these efforts because their central goal for the Council was rapprochement with Protestants; and many Protestants saw Catholic devotion to Mary as inappropriate, even verging on the heretical, because her status among Catholics often seeming to equal, or even surpass, Jesus'.

These two competing expectations for the Council (one, the conservative, view which held that the Council should reaffirm and uphold distinct Catholic doctrine and the other, progressive view, which wanted to deemphasise differences between Catholics and Protestants) confronted each other over Mary. Ultimately, this vote was the closest of all of the votes taken during the Council (1114-1074), with progressives winning by only 40 votes [Alberigo and Komonchak 2000, 98; Fesquet 1965, 199; Rynne 1968, 214].⁴

³ While an ecumenically-relevant issue, because Protestants had long taken offence at the Church's focus on the two sources of revelation (both scripture and tradition), the vote on the Sources of Revelation did not divide progressives because it did not have any on-the-ground implications, and thus, unlike the vote on Mary, did not threaten Latin American's marketing concerns.

⁴ After entering the vote into an electronic database, I found that these totals were off by one placet and one non-placet, most likely because these two votes were isolated on the last page of the vote summary and were not included in the totals. See appendix C for more information on the voting data.

However, though these two votes reveal important differences between conservatives and progressives, as well as within the three groups of progressives, an important caveat about them is necessary. These two votes provide only a partial picture of the patterns which occurred during the Council, primarily those associated with why, once something got to a vote, some bishops supported it or not. The issue of what made it to the table to be voted on is also an important part of a sociological explanation of the Council, but not one which can be told in this paper.

This is because Northern Europeans prioritised reforms with ecumenical implications over those, such as birth control, which were important to their constituents. Thus issues without ecumenical implications were much more likely to “die in committee,” and never make it to the table to be voted on. While the evidence and analysis of this finding appears elsewhere [Wilde forthcoming], the implications of it have informed my theoretical conclusions, and are thus a part of the theoretical argument presented in this paper.

Four Groups of Bishops and Their Votes

Conservatives from European Monopolies: Unthreatened and Unwavering

Bishops from Western Europe, particularly those from Italy, Portugal and Spain, as well as those from Ireland, were infamous for their staunch conservatism at the Council, and for in general being against any sort of accommodation to the modern world. Led by bishops from Italy and Spain (which together constituted more than fifteen percent of the voting bishops at the Council), and dominated by the Roman Curia, these bishops were used to being the centre of power in the Church.

As bishops in monopolistic religious environments with prospering Churches who were central to the administration of the Church, bishops from Western Europe cared deeply about primarily one thing: protecting the status quo. Irish Bishop William Conway eloquently described monopolistic bishops' take on reform to Caporale:

Ireland is deeply religious, 95% practice (...) [It] has not been faced with problems of mass paganism and defections and new mores. Many suggestions brought up in the Council have been forced upon bishops [for these reasons]. In Ireland we don't feel the same pressure as in other countries; obviously our situation is different [CIC 9].

Though relatively few in number, these countries have long constituted the administrative centre of the Church, and thus, the hierarchy from these countries made up a sizable proportion of the episcopate, as table 1 demonstrates, approximately twenty percent of the voting bishops at the Council.

TAB. 1. *State-Supported European Monopolies at the Second Vatican Council^a (by the Number of Bishops in Each Country)*

Countries	Number and Percent of all Bishops (n= 2.594) ^b		Percent Catholic 1965	Change in Percent Catholic (65-55)	Percent Voting Progressively on Revelation ^c	Percent Voting Progressively on Mary ^d
Italy	367	14%	99	0	19	12
Spain	89	3.4%	100	0	33	5
Ireland ^e	32	1.2%	94	0	40	42
Portugal	28	1%	92	-4	32	5
Totals ^f	519	20%	97 ^g	-1	23	12

^a This table includes only those countries which were predominantly Catholic and where the Roman Catholic Church was the state religion or had special status [1955 NCA]. Sources: The number of bishops in each country and the country names in tables 1-5 reflect the Church's categorization from the *Acta* [1962], and thus represent the total number of bishops serving in a given country at the beginning of the Council, not necessarily the number who went to the Council, nor who voted on any particular vote. I obtained the Catholic percentage of the population from the 1955 and 1966 NCA.

^b 2594 is the official number of bishops according to the *Acta*, though the numbers in tables 1-5, when combined with table B8 only total 2593.

^c First Session, November 20, 1962, *Suffragationes*, Volume I: No. 5.

^d Second Session, October 29, 1963, *Suffragationes*, Volume XIX: No. 97.

^e Includes four bishops from Northern Ireland.

^f To protect their anonymity, the totaled figures include three bishops from Malta.

^g This figure for tables 1-5 represents the mean country, not the population mean.

With close ties to the Roman Curia, bishops from these monopolistic countries presented a formidable group of opponents for the more progressively oriented bishops at the Council. This is in no small part because, as table 1 demonstrates, the bishops from these countries were nearly uniform in their conservatism, with more than three-quarters of the bishops voting conservatively on the vote on the Sources of Revelation and the first vote on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Northern Europe and North America: Focusing on Colleagues, not Constituents

Bishops from Northern Europe, and to a lesser extent North America, distinguished themselves at the Council as the bearers of a "new theology" [Seidler and Meyer 1989, 56-57]. This new theology had many parts, but the single unifying factor

throughout it was the new, radical, and some certainly felt, even heretical, idea that Protestants and Catholics were both Christians and should be working together in the world rather than fighting with or competing against each other.⁵

As Archbishop John Heenan of England stated in his intervention on the schema on ecumenism, “The renewal of the Church requires a true religious dialogue. Genuine interest in the mission of the Church demands that we undertake a fuller and frequent dialogue with all Christians of whatever denomination.” [Anderson 1965, 286].

TAB. 2. *The Church in Non-Monopolistic Countries in Europe and North America at the Second Vatican Council (by the Number of Bishops in Each Country)*

Countries	Number and Percent of All Bishops (n=2594)		Percent Catholic 1965	Change in Percent Catholic (65-55)	Percent Voting Progressively on Revelation ^a	Percent Voting Progressively on Mary ^b
United States	216	8.3%	23	+2	66	78
France	131	5%	83 ^c	-1	92	90
Canada	90	3.5%	46	+1	79	65
Germany	54	2.0%	48	+2	94	98
Australia	39	1.5%	23	+5	62	34
Great Britain	35	1.3%	8	+1	67	81
Belgium	26	1%	95	-3	86	85
Austria	17	0.6%	85	-4	89	86
Switzerland	12	0.5%	40	-1	71	60
Greece	5	0.2%	1	NA	57	50
New Zealand	5	0.2%	14	+3	75	67
<i>Totals^d</i>	<i>663</i>	<i>25.5%</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>78</i>

^a First Session, November 20, 1962, *Suffragationes*, Volume I: No. 5.

^b Second Session, October 29, 1963, *Suffragationes*, Volume XIX: No. 97.

^c France, Belgium and Austria are included on this table even though they were majority Catholic countries because they had formal religious freedom at the time of the Council.

^d To protect their anonymity, the totaled figures include twenty-four bishops from Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Gibraltar, Holland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Monaco, Norway and Sweden.

Table 2 demonstrates that these ecumenically-minded bishops constituted fully a quarter of the voting episcopate and came from a variety of countries, all of which had two important qualities: they were 1) industrialised, politically and religiously

⁵ A central place where this theology was disseminated during the Council was the Dutch Documentation Centre, or DOC.

stable countries (note the lack of change in percent Catholic on table 2), 2) in which the Roman Catholic Church was not the state religion, either because of formal religious freedom, as was the case with France⁶ and the United States, or because a Protestant denomination served as the state religion.

Table 2 demonstrates that the proportion of these bishops who voted progressively did not change from the vote on Revelation to the vote on Mary, with seventy-eight percent voting progressively on both votes. On any issue connected to ecumenical concerns, more than three-quarters of these bishops voted progressively.

However, while these bishops were progressive, they were not unilaterally so. Elsewhere I demonstrate that they prioritised reforms connected to the ecumenical movement at the expense of reforms that were important to the laity. Latin American and missionary bishops were far more invested reforming birth control than bishops from Northern Europe and North America, who simply let the matter drop, despite the fact that the laity in Northern Europe and North America was more interested in the matter than those from Latin America and Africa and Asia. Thus, Northern Europeans and North Americans had a very clear agenda, the focus of which was bettering relations with Protestants.

Latin American Progressives: Saving the Poor and Their Church

With almost 600 bishops, or more than twenty-two percent of the voting episcopate, Latin American bishops were an important group at the Council. Table 3 demonstrates that the Church enjoyed the same monopolistic advantages in many Latin American countries as it did in the European countries shown on table 1. In fact, in no small part because of the dominance of the Church in Latin America, many initially expected the Latin American bishops to be “a monolithic group of conservatives” [Falconi 1962, 343].

⁶ As a majority Catholic country, France, along with Belgium, was different from the majority of the countries on table 2. Contrary to what we would expect from majority Catholic countries, both France and Belgium had ecumenically-friendly hierarchies. This fact can be explained by the relatively unique histories of the Church in both countries, which were often intertwined. Belgium’s uniqueness stems from the fact that it lost political sovereignty to the Netherlands, and the Protestant House of Orange, in 1815. Catholic clergy allied with liberals who wanted a strict separation between Church and state, and Belgium ended up with a very strong separation of Church and state a significant and powerful Protestant presence [Gould 1999, 28]. In 1903 the French government expelled all of the members of Catholic religious orders, and many of them, particularly those who would be important theologians at the Council, spent their exile in Belgium [Martina 1988, 34].

TAB. 3. *Latin American Countries at the Second Vatican Council (by the Number of Bishops in Each Country)*

Latin American Countries	Number and Percent of all Bishops (n=2594)		Percent Catholic 1965	Change in Percent Catholic (65-55)	Percent Voting Progressively on Revelation ^a	Percent Voting Progressively on Mary ^b
Brazil	167	6.4%	93	-2	70	50
Colombia*	54	2.1%	97	-1	65	33
Mexico	53	2.0%	94	-2	55	17
Argentina*	50	1.9%	88	-2	70	27
Philippines ^c	40	1.5%	86	+4	68	36
Peru*	36	1.4%	95	-1	48	45
Chile	25	1%	88	-3	79	86
Venezuela	24	0.9%	93	-3	75	63
Ecuador	22	0.8%	94	-2	27	33
Bolivia*	21	0.8%	94	-2	64	59
Paraguay*	10	0.4%	92	-3	70	64
Uruguay	7	0.3%	67	-12	85	58
El Salvador	6	0.2%	98	-2	33	50
Honduras	6	0.2%	96	-1	50	40
Nicaragua	6	0.2%	94	0	50	17
Costa Rica*	5	0.2%	76	-21	67	17
Panama	4	0.2%	73	-16	75	80
<i>Totals^d</i>	<i>570</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>-4</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>44</i>

^a First Session, November 20, 1962, *Suffragationes*, Volume I: No. 5.

^b Second Session, October 29, 1963, *Suffragationes*, Volume XIX: No. 97.

^c Colonised by Spain during the same period, the Philippines shared many similarities with Latin America, including a majority Catholic population and a government which granted “special status” to the Church [Godement 1997, 29].

^d To protect their anonymity, the totaled figures include 34 bishops from British Honduras, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe & Martinique, Guatemala, Haiti and Puerto Rico (the RCC was the state religion in Puerto Rico).

* Catholicism was the official state religion or given special status [1955 NCA; see also Schmitt 1972, 11-16].

However, despite their monopolistic situation, unlike Italians and Spaniards, Latin Americans were progressive. Indeed many Latin American leaders became well-known as progressive visionaries. A first indication of Latin Americans’ progressive

inclinations is presented on table 3, which demonstrates that two-thirds of Latin American bishops voted progressively on the issue of Revelation.⁷

Despite their progressive leanings, however, Latin Americans had difficulty supporting ecumenically-oriented reforms, particularly those which watered down Catholic doctrines they thought were important to the laity in their countries. Fewer than half of them voted progressively on the first vote on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Their ambivalence for ecumenically-friendly reforms put them in conflict with other progressives, especially those from Europe, as Bishop McGrath, an active leader in CELAM and the DM from Panama, told Caporale:

For central European theologians – the renewal of the Church is a preparation for reunion of Christianity but, in Central America the problem is quite different. Here, the question is to build a bridge with the modern world. This is our problem [CIC 5].

The Missionary Church in Africa and Asia

In contrast to bishops from Latin America, bishops from missionary countries in Africa and Asia were progressive on all fronts, and, as tables 4 and 5 indicate, with as many bishops as Latin America, the majority of whom voted progressively on both Revelation and Mary, missionary bishops were a central voting bloc during the Council. Missionary bishops' openness to both ecumenical and more social justice-oriented reforms that addressed issues of poverty and development is well represented by the following quote from an African leader, Bishop Blomjous, from Tanganyika. He wrote:

The Church is not destined simply to save men for heaven but also to humanise man's social life, to inspire a sense of personal responsibility in all men, and to foster a social order that sins less flagrantly against divine justice (...) There should be a common Christian confrontation with the modern industrialised world [Blomjous 1964, 19].

Thus, there were four distinct groups of bishops at the Council, three of whom were open to reform, but all of whom had different interests and priorities: Northern Europeans were focused on ecumenical concerns, Latin Americans were focused on

⁷ Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador were noticeably more conservative than the rest of Latin America, possibly because the majority of their bishops were not natives of those countries (as was the case for Latin American leaders who tended to be from Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Mexico and Venezuela) but of Spain and Italy. For example, 64 percent of the 14 native Peruvians who voted on revelation voted progressively. Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador had only two native bishops each voting on revelation. Ecuador seems to be the only Latin American outlier, with four of its six native bishops voting conservatively on Revelation.

reforms that would help stem the tide of lay defections to Protestantism and Marxism, and missionary bishops were open to and supportive of both types of reforms. How do we make sense of these patterns? How can we explain the differences between the four groups, in terms of general openness to reform, as well as their prioritisation of different types of reform? Doing so requires combining theories from the sociology of religion and economic and organisational sociology.

TAB. 4. *The Church in Africa at the Second Vatican Council (by the Number of Bishops in Each Country)*

Countries	Number and Percent of all Bishops (n=2594)		Percent Catholic 1965	Change in Percent Catholic (65-55)	Percent Voting Progressively on Revelation ^a	Percent Voting Progressively on Mary ^b
Congo, Dem. Rep.	40	1.5%	37	+11	98	82
Occidental Africa ^c	28	1.1%	5	NA	92	88
South Africa	28	1.1%	6	NA	72	69
Tanganyika	21	0.8%	18	NA	86	68
Nigeria	19	0.7%	6	+5	46	53
Rhodesia and Zambia	14	0.5%	9	+3	92	57
Madagascar	13	0.5%	20	+2	83	82
U.A.R. (Egypt)	13	0.5%	1	NA	88	30
Equatorial Africa ^d	11	0.4%	15	NA	92	93
Kenya	9	0.3%	12	+4	56	63
Cameroon	8	0.3%	22	+7	88	89
Ethiopia and Eritrea	7	0.3%	1	0	50	38
Nyassaland	7	0.3%	20	NA	80	60
Ruanda-Urundi and Burundi	7	0.3%	26	NA	86	67
Uganda	7	0.3%	32	+7	55	70
Algeria	5	0.2%	4	-6	83	57
<i>Totals^e</i>	289	11%	19	+5	80	67

^a First Session, November 20, 1962, *Suffragationes*, Volume I: No. 5.

^b Second Session, October 29, 1963, *Suffragationes*, Volume XIX: No. 97.

^c This category includes Benin (previously Dahomey, 13.2 percent Catholic), Burkina Faso (previously Upper Volta, 3.5 percent Catholic), Ivory Coast (9.1 percent Catholic), Mali (.8 percent Catholic) and Senegal (4.8 percent Catholic).

^d This category includes: The Central African Republic (14 percent Catholic), Chad (3.2 percent Catholic), The Republic of Congo (35 percent Catholic) and Gabon (46.4 percent Catholic).

^e To protect their anonymity, the totaled figures include 49 bishops from Angola, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Libya, Liberia, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, Reunion, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South-West Africa, Spanish Guinea, Sudan, Togo, and Tunisia.

TAB. 5. *The Church in Asia (and all other Missionary Countries)^a at the Second Vatican Council (by the Number of Bishops in Each Country)*

Countries	Number and Percent of all Bishops (n=2594)		Percent Catholic 1965	Change in Percent Catholic (65-55)	Percent Voting Progressively on Revelation ^b	Percent Voting Progressively on Mary ^c
India	80	3.0%	2	0	70	48
Lebanon	26	1.0%	31	-6	80	63
Japan	18	0.7%	<1	0	83	53
Vietnam	17	0.7%	9	+3	75	53
UAR –Syria	15	0.5%	3	-1	62	25
Iraq	12	0.5%	3	-1	55	43
Pakistan ^d	10	0.4%	<1	0	60	60
Korea	20	0.4%	2	+2	38	67
Burma	8	0.3%	1	0	57	50
Ceylon	6	0.2%	7	0	83	50
Turkey ^e	4	0.2%	<1	0	43	29
<i>Totals^f</i>	290	11%	7	+1	72	56

^a I define a missionary country as a developing country in Africa and Asia in which the Church never had a monopoly.

^b First Session, November 20, 1962, *Suffragationes*, Volume I: No. 5.

^c Second Session, October 29, 1963, *Suffragationes*, Volume XIX: No. 97.

^d These figures include East Pakistan or modern-day Bangladesh.

^e Includes Turchia Europea and Turchia Asiatica.

^f To protect their anonymity, the totaled figures include 98 bishops from Arabia, Bahamas, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cambodia, Falkland Islands, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Laos, Malaysia, Melanesia, Micronesia, Palestine, Polynesia, Taiwan and Thailand.

Religious Competition, Legitimacy and Institutional Change

The “new paradigm” [Warner 1993] in the sociology of religion offers some fruitful insights about the factors that affect religious institutions. Rejecting the long held belief in sociology of religion that religious diversity was bad for religious institutions, Institutional Competition Theory, commonly called “Supply-Side” theory, argues that religious diversity increases religious participation [e.g. Finke and Stark 1992; Finke, Guest and Stark 1996; Stark and Iannaccone 1996]. Diversity causes religious institutions to feel more competition and thus work harder to attract and keep members, by “marketing” their religion more actively than religious institutions with monopolistic religious economies.

Supply-Siders define a religious economy as “a market of current and potential followers (demand), a set of organisations (suppliers) seeking to serve that market, and the religious doctrines and practices (products) offered by the various organisations” [Stark and Finke 2000, 36]. Supply-Side theorists argue that three factors contribute to the overall level of religious competition in a religious economy: 1) religious regulation, or the relationship between religious institutions and the government,⁸ 2) pluralism, or the variety of religions, and 3) market share, or the percentage of the population belonging to a particular religion [Finke and Stark 1992, 18-19; Olson 1999; Stark and Finke 2000, 219]. These three factors are often highly correlated, and depend to a large extent on regulation, in that a country with a state-supported church will have no religious pluralism and up to 100 percent of the market share if the government outlaws all other religions.

For Supply-Side theorists, religious diversity is the key independent variable because it determines the amount of competition religious leaders feel, and thus how actively they market their Church. In Supply-Side terms, “religious pluralism is important only insofar as it increases choices and competition, offering consumers a wider range of religious rewards and *forcing suppliers to be more responsive and efficient*” [Finke and Stark 2000, 201, my emphasis]. As this quotation should make clear, the key causal relationship for Supply-Siders is the effect competition has on religious leaders (and thus its nickname, “Supply-Side” theory).

Despite the theoretical focus on religious leaders, however, proponents [Finke and Stark 1988; Iannaccone 1991; Finke and Stark 1992; Finke and Iannaccone 1993; Hamberg and Pettersson 1994; Stark, Finke and Iannaccone 1995; Finke, Guest and Stark 1996; Stark and Iannaccone 1996; Perl and Olson 2000] and sceptics [c.f. Gorski 2000, 160; e.g. Breault 1989; Land, Deane and Blau 1991; Chaves and Cann 1992; Chaves, Schraeder and Sprindys 1994; Verweij, Ester and Nauta 1997; Olson 1998; Olson 1999; Olson and Hadaway 1999; Chaves and Gorski 2001] alike have concentrated on examining correlations between pluralism and religious participation, and have neglected to directly examine the ways in which competition affects religious leaders, despite the fact that competition’s effects on religious leaders is the key mechanism of the theory. This study focuses on competition’s effects on religious leaders, and leaves the question of its ultimate effect on religious participation to others.

⁸ Regulation is thought to work so that governmental support (through laws, subsidization or tax breaks) creates a “lazy” institution; whereas governmental neglect or sanction contributes to a competitive environment.

Applying Supply-Side Theory to Vatican II

Supply-Siders argue that “monopoly firms always tend to be lazy” [Finke and Stark 1992, 19]. I choose not to use this terminology because the word “lazy” conjures up images of bishops lounging on divans, largely unconcerned about the state of their institution, and the very opposite is true of these conservative bishops – they fought tenaciously and actively. However, I do borrow the insight that religious leaders in monopolistic environments will be less oriented toward change. In fact, Supply-Side theory’s most basic insight, that religious pluralism creates religious competition and thus creates more active religious leaders, explains a very important part of the variation being examined here. That is, which types of bishops were more or less open to change?⁹ However, as I will explain below, it leaves a key question about this variation unanswered, because it does not help us understand what kind of change they prioritised.

Strictly speaking, according to the measures currently employed to measure competition (pluralism, market share and regulation) the bishops who participated in Vatican II came from two types of religious economies – those in which the Roman Catholic Church was the predominant religion in the society numerically and legally (including Italy, Spain, Portugal and those Latin American countries delineated by an asterisk on table 3), and those in which it was not (Northern Europe, North America, and Africa and Asia). Overall, for at least three of these four groups, this dichotomy seems to accurately predict the overall openness of the bishops at the Council. Bishops from monopolistic environments in Europe were, as the theory would predict, against accommodation with the modern world. Bishops from pluralistic or religiously free environments in Northern Europe, North American and missionary

⁹ Because it was developed to explain the US case, most empirical tests have focused on the US, which has much higher levels of religious participation and pluralism than most other nations. See for example: Finke and Stark 1988; Breault 1989; Land, Deane and Blau 1991; Finke and Stark 1992; Blau, Redding and Land 1993; Finke and Iannaccone 1993; Johnson 1995; Finke, Guest and Stark 1996; Olson 1998; Finke and Stark 1998; Olson 1999; Perl and Olson 2000. Though researchers have begun to apply Supply-Side theory to other countries, these studies also have limitations. By and large, they examine only a selection of countries, whether that selection is based on perceived outliers [Stark 1992; Hamberg and Pettersson 1994; Stark, Finke and Iannaccone 1995; Stark and Iannaccone, 1996; Olson and Hadaway 1999; Wilde 2001] industrialized countries for which survey data is available, or one area of the world such as Latin America or Europe [Gill 1999; Jelen and Wilcox 1998; Lechner 1996; Stark 1993; Chaves and Cann 1992; Chaves, Schraeder and Sprindys 1994; Iannaccone 1991; Iannaccone 1992; Verweij, Ester and Nauta 1997]. By focusing primarily on one country that has formal religious freedom, great pluralism and no clearly dominant religious institution, researchers have been unable to differentiate among the factors which determine competition, much less incorporate other important factors which this case suggests are important.

countries in Africa and Asia, most of which Supply-Siders would identify as competitive, were open to change.

However, in contrast to bishops from Italy and Spain, and despite their similar monopolistic status, Latin American bishops were among the most progressive of all of the bishops at the Council. Latin American progressivism is somewhat unexpected, given Supply-Side predictions about the orientations of religious leaders in monopolistic environments (and indeed was not expected by Italian and Spanish bishops who initially thought Latin Americans would be their allies). However, Latin American progressivism can be explained within the Supply-Side framework. This is because, by the time of the Council, the Church no longer enjoyed a true monopoly in most countries in Latin America.

Latin America: A Monopoly in Crisis

In the decade or so prior to the Council, the Latin American Church was experiencing competition from both religious institutions (Evangelical missionaries) and secular institutions (Marxist political parties).¹⁰ Though this competition had not progressed far enough to be captured in many of the measures we currently use (such as the market share of various organisations), it had progressed far enough to be picked up by a different measure. Return to tables 1-5, and the column that presents data on the change in percent Catholic. These data demonstrate that Latin America was the only place in the world where the Roman Catholic Church was in decline in the decade prior to the Council.

By the time the Council began, though the Church had only lost four to five percent of its market share, this decline had created a “strong sense of institutional insecurity” [Smith 1991, 76] and Latin American leaders were searching for solutions. For example, take the Chilean leader Raul Cardinal Silva Henríquez’s, Archbishop of Santiago, and leader of CELAM, summary of the ways in which the Church had failed to provide for the religious needs of the multitudes in Latin America. He stated that the Church was in decline because:

¹⁰ Smith attributes the emergence of Liberation Theology to a number of factors which created a growing sense of insecurity within the Latin American Church: the successes of both non-Catholic religious groups and “secular working class movements, such as labour unions, socialist organizations, and communist parties,” which were making visible headway among the urban poor in many countries by the 1930s [Smith 1991, 76], the publication of studies by “sociologist-priests which confirmed the weakness of religious commitment among most of the laity” [*ibidem*, 78], and urbanization that made the Church’s failures easily visible [*ibidem*, 71-88]. See also Neuhauser 1989. Vallier [1970, 179] argues that the Church became more progressive more quickly in Brazil and Chile because these countries had a longer-established separation of Church and state.

of a shortage of clergy, or because of the way the laity are neglected, or because the liturgy is unintelligible, or because our catechetical instructions are too moralistic and devotional, or because of the social injustices of some wealthy Catholics.¹¹

Another Latin American leader, Bishop Leonidas Villalba Proano, told Caporale that in order to stem this decline,

We cannot stay put and closed but must go out to attract masses to Christ. And this has to be done by sharing the beauty of Christian doctrine. Look at the attitude of the communists. They would even penetrate into our seminaries! (...) They would infiltrate everywhere.

Proano closed by arguing that “we must” make “greater efforts to give a solid [religious] formation for people,” because by doing so, “we avoid the danger of them being conquered by others.”¹²

The aggressive posture of Protestant missionaries in Latin America was recognised by even leading Protestant ecumenists. Lukus Vischer [1963, 58] noted that “Many Protestant missionaries regard it as their obvious duty to draw live members away from the Roman Catholic Church”.

The Church was in decline in Latin America, and Latin American bishops were concerned. Consistent with the history of Catholic Action¹³ in many countries in Latin America from the 1920s and 30s [Schmitt 1972, 18-19] Latin Americans developed a radical plan for renewing their Church, a plan which ultimately became the seed of Liberation Theology, which would blossom once the Council closed.¹⁴ The plan focused, as Silva’s statement implies, on ministering to unchurched populations, and

¹¹ Source: Divine Word News Service Press Release titled, “Chilean Cardinal Points Out Great Differences in Protestantism Geographically,” November 28, 1963 [DOH 1(28)].

¹² CIC 5. This note card was almost illegible. It took careful reconstruction with the help of William John Shepard at CUA to get this quote, and thus it is only an approximation.

¹³ Catholic Action began in France, when the exiled members of the French Church returned from Belgium between 1937 and 1939 to find a largely unreceptive audience, particularly among the working classes, which were heavily involved in Marxist political parties. In response to this situation, leaders of the French Church began to develop a theology of social justice, *Catholic Action*, and by the time of the Council, was one of the most progressive, in terms of both social justice and ecumenism of all the churches in Europe [Martina 1988].

¹⁴ Though Latin American progressivism was in place by the early 1950s, with few exceptions [e.g. Dussel 1981; Neuhouser 1989; Schmitt 1972; Vallier 1970; Vallier 1972] most investigations of Liberation Theology focus on the its growth after the Council.

addressing social injustices, particularly those in which the Church had been implicated, all over Latin America.¹⁵

Thus, Latin American progressivism was a result of the increasing competition these leaders were experiencing prior to the Council, and is consistent with Supply-Side predictions about the effects competition has on religious leaders. When a complete understanding of the Latin American case is included with an analysis of the three other groups of bishops at the Council, it becomes clear that the presence of other religious institutions does indeed have powerful effects on religious leaders. Put simply, bishops in places where other religious institutions created even a minimal amount of religious competition were more open to reform than those from places where the Church had a stable monopoly.

Thus, Supply-Side theory explains what kinds of bishops were more or less open to reform. However, this is as far as Supply-Side theory can take us. Much about what the bishops wanted and why at the Council remains to be explained. In order to do so, some key concepts within Supply-Side theory need to be broadened, and incorporated alongside insights from organisational and economic sociology.

From Marketing to Organisational Strategies

The key problem within Supply-Side theory, when it comes to understanding the bishops' priorities at Vatican II, is that the theory provides a very limited understanding of the effects of competition. In a nutshell, competition affects religious institutions because it causes religious leaders to market their institution. Supply-Siders loosely define marketing as any actions on the part of religious leaders which are focused on constituents [Finke and Stark 1992, 17].

However, while some groups of bishops at the Council, namely Latin Americans and missionary bishops, were interested in marketing to their constituents, the ecumenically-minded bishops from Northern Europe and North America pose a problem for Supply-Side theory as it is currently conceived. Supply-Side theory simply cannot explain why bishops from the most competitive situations were the least interested in marketing their Church to their constituents, but were instead focused

¹⁵ Though Protestant and Marxist successes varied from country to country, with the Church in Brazil and Chile taking some of the most serious hits (and becoming the progressive leaders, see Vallier 1970), by and large, the Latin American hierarchy interpreted these losses not as Brazilians or Guatemalans, but as Latin Americans. This is indicated by the fact that they responded by building the largest supra-national organization within the Catholic Church, outside of the Vatican, the Latin American Episcopal Conference, or *Consejo Episcopal LatinoAmericano* (CELAM) in 1955, under the guidance of important leaders such as Bishops Manuel Larraín, from Chile, Dom Helder Camera, from Brazil, and Marcos McGrath, from Panama [Smith 1991, 102].

on bettering relations with the leaders of other institutions. Though Supply-Side theorists have acknowledged that legitimacy concerns are important to religious institutions, they mainly focus on how incorporating legitimacy concerns can lead to organisations' decline (as with their studies of Methodists or the effects of the Council), or on how Churches are more subject to legitimacy concerns than sects.¹⁶ What is lacking is a coherent theory of when and why legitimacy concerns are more or less important to religious leaders within one organisation.¹⁷ Thus, if we were to stop with the Supply-Side explanation, we would have no way to explain who wanted what and why at the Council.

To eliminate this theoretical weakness, sociologists need stop referring to the goals and decisions of religious leaders strictly as "marketing strategies," and instead think about them as organisational strategies,¹⁸ of which the decision to market to constituents is but one possibility. Once we do so, it becomes clear that in order to identify and explain the patterns within the bishops' organisational strategies at the Council, Supply-Side theory needs to incorporate insights from economic and organisational sociology, particularly those which see legitimacy concerns at the heart of most organisational processes.

Theories of Institutional Legitimacy and Organisational Change

Sociologists who study capitalist markets and organisations and have found that "organizations compete not just for resources and customers, but for political power and institutional legitimacy, for social as well as economic fitness" [DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 150] and thus that organisations' success, can be "explained as much by how well they resonated with their symbolic environment as by their technical efficiency" [Armstrong 2002a, 9].

The symbolic environment most relevant to an institution is called its organisational field, "those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies and other organizations that produce similar services or products." In sum,

¹⁶ See Finke and Stark 1992; Finke 1997; Stark and Finke 2000.

¹⁷ The one exception to this is Kent Miller's paper, "Competitive Strategies of Religious Organizations," which combines insights from Supply-Side theory, organizational sociology, and the strategic management literature [Miller 2002].

¹⁸ My understanding of organizational strategies is roughly consistent with Fligstein's "conceptions of control," which "refer to understandings that structure perceptions of how a market works and that allow actors to interpret their world and to control situations" [Fligstein 1996, 658]. I use organisational strategies rather than concepts of control simply as a matter of personal preference.

an organisational field includes the “totality of relevant actors” from an institution’s point of view [DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 148].

Researchers have found that as organisational fields become more highly structured,¹⁹ and the professionals within them become more highly trained and credentialed, and the field more highly regulated and systematised, the organisations or firms within that field begin to resemble one another more and more closely. This increasing resemblance results from a variety of processes associated with the legitimacy concerns that arise as a result of processes of professionalisation,²⁰ education, government regulation and the desires of firms to mimic other firms they see as successful.

Neil Fligstein argues that legitimacy concerns become paramount for organisations because the social structures of fields and “the internal organization of firms are best viewed as attempts to mitigate the effects of competition with other firms.” [Fligstein 1996, 657]. Fligstein argues that this is the case because:

Economic worlds are social worlds; therefore, they operate according to principles like other social worlds. Actors engage in political actions vis-à-vis one another and construct local cultures to guide that interaction [*ibidem*].

Thus, rather than viewing the actions of firms as continual attempts to out-compete each other, Fligstein argues that firms attempt “to erect social understandings whereby firms can avoid direct price competition and can solve their internal political problems”. They do so because

Market actors live in murky worlds where it is never clear what actions will have which consequences. Yet, actors must construct an account of the world that interprets the murkiness, motivates and determines courses of action, and justifies the action decided upon. In markets, the goal of action is to ensure the survival of the firm. No actor can determine which behaviours will maximise profits (either *a priori* or *post hoc*), and action is therefore directed toward the creation of stable worlds [*ibidem*, 659].

Just as these concepts help us to understand the actions of for-profit firms, they can also help us to understand the actions of religious organisations [Bourdieu 1991]. Religious leaders are also interested first and foremost in the survival of their firm, and

¹⁹ Researchers typically use the term “structured.” I will use structured throughout the text in this sense an attempt to be kind to my readers.

²⁰ Supply-Siders have also noted that professionalisation has important effects on religious leaders, especially the religious leaders of large institutions, and argue that it is one of the two key sources of pressure for accommodation [Finke and Stark 1992, 150; Finke and Dougherty 2002; Stark and Finke 2000, 164-67]. In doing so, they have focused on how it encourages a more educated, growth-oriented clergy who no longer focus on “religious motives” but instead seek to accommodate their institution to the world in order to gain and keep constituents. My argument is different in that I argue that professionalisation is important because it encourage religious leaders to become more like each other.

thus, are also oriented toward keeping stable organisational fields stable, stabilising those which have not yet stabilised, and minimising the risks of competition. We can see this in how easily many of the actions Fligstein argues that for-profit firms use to control competition translate into the religious field, and even to the ecumenical movement itself. Writing at the height of the ecumenical movement, sociologist Peter Berger attributed its growth to denominations' desire to mitigate competition [c.f. Miller 2002]:

Every move made by the denominational organisation carries with it substantial economic risks. Cooperation, as expressed in a rational limitation of cutthroat competition, thus becomes an economic necessity. As one speaker put it in the writer's hearing at a meeting of denominational executives called to consider a more cooperative planning process: "Gentlemen, you may as well face it – you have a multi-million dollar investment to protect" [Berger 1963].

Fligstein's theory applies not only to religious institutions in competitive situations. He argues that firms attempt to "involve the state in regulation or protective legislation that increases the odds of firm survival." The Roman Catholic Church has historically been one of the most successful religious organisations at obtaining governmental support for itself – and indeed, their relationship with the state was a central issue at the Council for Protestants.

Fligstein identifies three types of markets or fields: those which are stable, emerging, or in crisis. In stable fields "the identities and status hierarchies of firms (the incumbents and the challengers) are well known" and large firms share understandings of the field, organisational structures, and tactics.²¹ Emerging fields are those in which "the roles of the challengers and incumbents have yet to be defined, and there is no accepted set of social relations" [Fligstein 1996, 663-664]. Field "crisis is observed when incumbent organizations begin to fail," most often as the result of firms "invading" the field [*ibidem*, 664].

Combining Theories of Organisational Fields with Theories of Religious Competition

By combining organisational theorists' understandings of the effects of field structure and stability with Supply-Side theory's focus on the importance of religious

²¹ Fligstein [1996, 663, note 8] applies the three typologies I use here in reference to markets, but acknowledges that his view of markets is "roughly consistent with the idea of organizational fields". Because I feel that the term field is more applicable, generalisable and less confusing (especially because Supply-Side theorists already use the term market in a different way), I refer only to fields in reference to his theories.

diversity, we can accurately predict the two key variations in the bishops' organisational strategies. This is demonstrated by Table 6.

TAB. 6. *Variations in Bishops' Organisational Strategies at the Second Vatican Council*

	MONOPOLISTIC	DIVERSE
STABLE	European Monopolies: Monopolistic Fields Organisational Strategies: Anti-Change Not Ecumenical Did Not Prioritise Marketing	Non-Monopolistic European Countries: Stable Fields Organisational Strategies: Pro-Change Ecumenical Did Not Prioritise Marketing
UNSTABLE	Latin America: Fields in Crisis Organisational Strategies: Pro-Change Not Ecumenical Prioritised Marketing	Missionary Countries: Emerging Fields Organisational Strategies: Pro-Change Ecumenical Prioritised Marketing

Table 6 demonstrates that wherever there was significant religious diversity, bishops were open to the legitimacy pressures made prominent by the ecumenical movement. And, though the full ramifications of Northern Europeans' neglect of marketing strategies is examined elsewhere [Wilde, forthcoming], Table 6 also indicates that wherever the Church's organisational field was unstable, bishops prioritised marketing to their constituents more so than their colleagues from stable fields.

Monopolistic Fields

Monopolistic fields are, by definition, not diverse. But, importantly, they must also be quite stable. Bishops from such fields were not ecumenically oriented, because the Church had virtually no other religious institutions to deal with. In addition, the states in monopolistic fields were openly preferential to the Church. Thus, in monopolistic fields, no institutions posed serious legitimacy challenges for the Church.

Bishops from monopolistic fields were also not marketing oriented. Without any competition from other firms, bishops from monopolistic fields were not under pressure to keep and attract more constituents. Thus, bishops from monopolistic fields were, in general, opposed to the vast majority of reforms that were on the table at the Council.

Fields in Crisis

When a monopolistic field becomes unstable, it becomes a field in crisis.²² Thinking about Latin America as an unstable field allows us to explain why a very small amount of religious diversity, as little as four to six percent, created such active bishops.²³ Latin Americans felt such competition not because of the level of diversity, but because that level of diversity reflected a very real change in the Church's market share, a change which "unsettled" [Swidler 1986] and introduced real instability to their formerly monopolistic field. Fligstein argues that in fields in crisis, leaders are spurred to create inventive organisational strategies, and, as was the case with the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America, these strategies often resemble the invaders' tactics [Fligstein 1996, 669].

Latin American bishops saw two organisations successfully taking away their constituents – Marxist organisations and evangelical Christian missionaries, and developed organisational strategies which incorporated the tactics and critiques of both organisations by the time of the Council.²⁴ They began to mimic evangelicals' recruiting tactics, in particular by realising that a substantial part of the population was unchurched and needed more access to priests. And their focus on social justice and critiques of capitalism, especially their recognition of the Church's role in supporting monarchies and dictatorships which had done little to help the less fortunate in Latin America, was a direct outgrowth of powerful Marxist critiques of the Church.

²² This is also true for oligopolistic fields, which would fit on Table 6 if another column was added in between the ideal-typical categories of monopolies and diverse fields.

²³ Anthony Gill [1994, 420] found that only "a relatively modest increase in religious competition (4% to 6%)" was needed to liberalize the Church in the more progressive countries in Latin America.

²⁴ Here I am describing the process of institutional diffusion which involves "the spread of normative expectations across the organizations in a field," [DiMaggio 1998, 14] which theorists call "isomorphism." Organizational theorists identify three types of isomorphism: Coercive, normative and mimetic. Consistent with theorists' predictions, mimetic isomorphism, when professionals mimic the successful strategies employed by other firms, seems to have been most powerful in fields in crisis. Normative isomorphism, which occurs when the "professional networks that span organizations" diffuse concepts, strategies, tactics and institutional forms from one organization to another, was most powerful in stable fields. Coercive isomorphism, which stems from "political influence and the problem of legitimacy," and comes from both "formal and informal pressures" [DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 150-152], was not as common as either of the other two forms of isomorphism. Because of its unique situation as a religious city-state, the Church had little formal coercive pressures on it at the time of the Council. Though the UN, and the international community in general, were powerful influences at the Council, especially in relation to the Declaration of Religious Freedom, they had no formal authority over the Church, and I would thus categorize the pressures from them as more normative than coercive.

Noticeably absent from Latin American strategies was any attempt to better relations between Catholics and Protestants. The anti-ecumenical bent of Latin American bishops suggests that in fields in crisis, leaders remain hostile to the invaders, even as they are influenced by their strategies and tactics. Latin Americans were very cognisant of this difference between them and Northern Europeans, and were quite clear that it was due to the very different sort of relationships each group had with Protestants. They continually compared their relationships to Protestants to the friendlier relationship between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Europe and North America. For example, a Chilean leader told a reporter that “Protestantism in Europe today differs profoundly from Protestantism as found in Latin America where it is daily growing.”²⁵

In sum, it is only when we understand that the bishops saw their Church in crisis in Latin America that we can understand the content of the reforms they supported. Thus, I argue that Latin American progressivism was less a result of the competition posed by Evangelicals and Marxists than it was the instability their increasing presence introduced in the Latin American organisational field.

Emerging Fields

Africa and Asia in the 1950s and 1960s were among the most turbulent of places, with the vast majority of both continents changing from colonial to independent rule during this time [Chikeka 1998]. Between 1955 and 1965, thirty African countries gained independence from their colonial powers. Those colonial powers consisted primarily of Belgium, France, Great Britain and Portugal (and to a lesser extent Italy and Spain, though their colonies gained independence prior to and after this period) [Wilson 1994, maps 1 and 2]. More than half of these transfers occurred in 1960 alone, just two years before the Council began.

This rapid decolonisation seriously affected religious organisations in many African countries, which had virtually flooded many areas of Africa since the beginning of the century [c.f. Martina 1988, 6]. As one indication of how pervasive missionaries were in many African countries, in Belgian Congo, “the mission establishment had virtually as many personnel as the state, and more than three times as many outposts” [Gifford and Louis 1988, 17]. However, unlike the white political commissioners who left upon independence, “many white missionaries remained” [Birmingham 1995, 7] and with them, many remnants of pre-colonial rule. Among those who

²⁵ Source: Divine Word News Service Press Release titled, “Chilean Cardinal Points Out Great Differences in Protestantism Geographically,” November 28, 1963 [DOH 1(28)].

stayed were more than 250 Roman Catholic bishops (see table 4) living in countries with no dominant religion, and alongside missionaries from many Protestant groups who were eager to win the souls of the native populations. It is difficult to imagine a more unstable, and indeed, more competitive environment for religious leaders.

Though Asia's story differs from Africa in many ways, the most significant difference certainly being the role of communism, and Asia's central place in the cold war, Asia was also very unstable during this time period [Godement 1997; Berger 2003]. After a period of upheaval and Japan's colonisation of many countries in Asia, World War II marked the beginning of a period of perhaps even greater instability, as "most of the Western colonies" of the British, French and US [Jeffrey 1981, xiv-xv] "were resurrected briefly, only to disappear again through negotiation or by force." "By 1954, the only parts of Asia still under colonial rule were New Guinea, Borneo, Timor and Hong Kong." Perhaps even more importantly, "a third of the Asian population was ruled by communist governments" [Godement 1997, 84-86], and the US fought throughout most of the 1950s and 1960s to prevent that proportion from growing, a fight which made Asia the battleground of the cold war.

Thus, at the time of the Council, Asia and Africa were areas of great instability, in which the Catholic Church was not only fighting to win new souls, and to do so faster than Protestant missionaries, but was also fighting to maintain the infrastructure it had developed in chaotic times. This situation created Roman Catholic bishops who were willing to change their church to make it more accessible and meaningful to the native populations in their countries.

Fligstein argues that competition exacts its greatest toll in emerging fields, and that firm leaders are most actively entrepreneurial in these types of markets [Fligstein 1996, 663 and 668]. This observation holds true in relation to Vatican II. Bishops from emerging organisational fields were extremely responsive to their constituents, voting progressively on any reform which might help them make their admittedly foreign religion more attractive, or might alleviate poverty or other problems in these impoverished areas.

This research also suggests that leaders in emerging fields see their competitors as legitimate and are thus much less hostile to other institutions than leaders in fields in crisis. As religious leaders working in environments in diverse organisational fields in which the only other person who spoke their native tongue was often a Protestant missionary, many of whom were engaged in similar, if not the very same, humanitarian missions as the Catholic Church (building roads, schools, hospitals and so forth), missionary bishops were entrepreneurial, but open to ecumenical dialogue.

Stable Fields

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this typology helps us understand why bishops in what Supply-Siders would see as the most competitive religious economies were the least invested in reforms which would help them market to their constituents. Fligstein argues that incumbent firms in stable fields are risk averse, because their primary consideration is keeping the field stable and ensuring the firm's survival. Thus, incumbent firms in stable fields attempt to "mitigate the effects of competition with other firms", and "try to cooperate with competitors to share markets" [Fligstein 1996, 657-659]. Cooperation necessitates conversation, and it is through these conversations that legitimacy concerns, meaning primarily concerns about fair and just ways of doing "business," are voiced and heard by firms.

A key organisational arena in which such a process was occurring at the time of the Council was in the ecumenical movement, which was greatly increased both the density and inter-connectedness of the networks within stable religious fields at the time of the Council. In order to understand the full implications of the ecumenical movement for the bishops who voted at Vatican II, a brief history of it is necessary.

The Ecumenical Movement

Though earlier theological and cultural precursors can be identified, scholars agree that the ecumenical movement, which stressed that all Christians, whatever their particular interpretations of the Bible, are baptised in Christ and share a common vision of the world, and should thus put aside their differences, began in the United States in 1908, with the formation of the Federal Council of Churches [Berger 1963; Bilheimer 1989; Lee 1960, 78]. In 1950, The Federal Council of Churches merged with a number of smaller American ecumenical organisations to form the National Council of Churches [Lee 1960, 124].²⁶

²⁶ Lee argues that WWII cemented the role of the Federal Council of Churches within Protestantism in the United States when the US government used it as the primary organization through which to obtain chaplains for the military. In addition, he argues that decreasing class, race, region, ethnic and cultural disparities among American Protestants in the 1950s as immigrant groups assimilated made ecumenism more likely. Finally, Lee argues that denominational mergers and an interchangeable ministry, caused by the pressures of professionalisation connected to seminary training, lead to theological and ideological convergence among the larger Protestant denominations, and thus a sense that American Protestants shared more similarities than differences [Lee 1960, 89-93]. Lee's analysis of this process is very similar to the factors Finke and Stark identify as leading to decreasing religious distinctiveness [Finke and Stark 1992], and as a key part of the "restructuring" of American religion identified by Robert Wuthnow [1988].

Though officially born in the US, the ecumenical movement was also strong in Europe, officially beginning with the First World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 [Gaines 1966]. After recovering from World War II, the international movement established the World Council of Churches (WCC) [Bilheimer 1989; Gaines 1966; Van der Bent 1994; Visser't Hooft 1982; Zeilstra 2002], the ecumenical body that was most influential at Vatican II, in 1948. The WCC grew in size and scope rather quickly, with organisations in and reports from seemingly every corner of the world by 1950,²⁷ though its backbone remained in the US and other Protestant European countries such as Germany and the Netherlands [Todd 1956, 1].²⁸

Initially, the Roman Catholic Church had little contact with the movement and the WCC.²⁹ This was a result of the fact that relations between Protestants and Catholics in many countries, particularly in the US and the Netherlands, where the ecumenical movement was strongest, were cool at best until the mid-1950s [Hennesy 1981]. Until then, in the US, Catholicism had been a “minority religion fighting desperately to meet the needs of impoverished immigrants” [Underwood 1957, xix].³⁰ As an immigrant church, the American Catholic hierarchy was focused on keeping immigrants “in the church and away from the blandishments of Protestants,” as they waited for them to assimilate into “a more American Catholicism,” as Robert Orsi wrote in his study of Italian Harlem in the early 20th Century [Orsi 1985, 56].

²⁷ See the “Ecumenical Chronicle” section of *The Ecumenical Review*.

²⁸ Unlike most of the other countries on table 2, neither Greece nor Australia were closely connected to the Ecumenical movement. Protestants in geographically more isolated Australia had focused on missionising the “South-west Pacific” rather than on building better relationships between Protestants within Australia [Rouse and Neill 1954, 375, 400 and 482]. Greece was dominated by the Greek Orthodox Church which was “on the periphery of the World Council of Churches” [Mehl 1957, 242]. Thus, the conservatism of both Greece and Australia is consistent with the overall argument presented in this paper.

²⁹ I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that Pius XII first allowed Catholic biblical scholars to use modern methods of scholarship in an encyclical issued in 1943. That encyclical was authored by the Catholic ecumenical leader Augustine Cardinal Bea (who would become a major figure at the Council as the head of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity) [Martina 1988, 15]. Though it is difficult, if not impossible to trace the relationships and institutional affiliations of the Catholics who became active in biblical scholarship, it is conceivable that they too provided an important connection to and source of information about Protestants in the years leading up the Council, that was separate from, if often connected to, the network connections which were growing as a result of the ecumenical movement. See Fogarty 1989.

³⁰ See also: Ellis 1955; Greeley 1977; O’Brien 1989; Orsi 1985. Examples of Protestant-Catholic tension from the 1940s and 1950s abound. Openly anti-Catholic sentiments were provided by the book by American Protestant Paul Blanshard [1949] and a variety of other publications. For example, sociologist John J. Kane counted forty-two articles, editorials and letters “critical of Roman Catholicism” the American Protestant periodical *Christian Century* during the first six months of 1949 [Kane 1955, 6; Underwood 1957, xvii]. This anti-Catholic barrage was met by a less extensive, but still quite forceful and substantial, response from Catholics in their periodical *America*, which, according to Kane, published fourteen articles critical of Protestantism during the same period.

With somewhat antagonistic relations with Protestants in general, it is not surprising that Catholics had little contact with the ecumenical movement, especially given that a major impetus behind the ecumenical movement was Protestants' stated desire to have an organisation that could counter the institutional strength of the Roman Catholic Church [Lee 1960; Wuthnow 1988, 81]. In fact, since 1919, Catholics were forbidden to participate in ecumenical congresses without the permission of the Vatican [McCarthy 1994, 177-183; Todd 1956].

Relations between Catholics and Protestants began to significantly improve around the mid-1950's,³¹ though they did so tentatively,³² and largely unofficially,³³ because the Roman Catholic hierarchy was initially reluctant to allow Catholics to take part in the WCC.³⁴ By 1955, as the ecumenical movement gained ascendancy,³⁵ Catholics and Protestants began to engage in ecumenical dialogue in earnest, a fact reflected in the ecumenical literature.³⁶

³¹ The fact that tensions began to decrease during the early 1950s is indicated by Kane's finding that both Protestants and Catholics published only a third as many articles critical of each other in 1954 as they had in 1949 [Kane 1955, 7], and by the fact that a Protestant ecumenist wrote that, "There are quite a number of people in the Roman Catholic Church, some of them influential, who are seriously prepared to discuss the subject (...) many Catholics *want* to discuss the matter as representatives of their Church" in 1955 [Kinder 1955, 339-343].

³² A Roman Catholic journalist's assessment of the 1955 World Council of Churches Assembly in Evanston provides a good indication of both the improving relations as well as the tensions which remained. After complaining variously that "The sight of Paul Blanshard's work in the Assembly book-shop naturally offended a Catholic eye, for his books can hardly be classified under 'ecumenical literature,'" and at the presence of anti-Catholic signs, pamphlets, "the distribution of *The Protestant Reporter*, an anti-Catholic periodical," Jung closed by noting the exceptional nature of these instances of hostility amid "the excellent intentions of most officials of the World Council," and by optimistically observing that "Catholic and Protestant theological thinking are no longer moving along diverging lines, ignoring each other, but along converging lines which eventually will meet" [Jung 1955, 121 and 125].

³³ As a Catholic journalist noted in his description of the 1955 WCC Assembly when he wrote, "I believe I can summarize the [Protestant] position [on Roman Catholicism] in this way: much friendliness and courtesy on the part of the delegates to the Assembly and of its staff for individual Catholics – little sympathy, to say no more, towards the Catholic Church as an institution" [Lialine quoted in Van der Bent 1955, 278].

³⁴ As a Roman Catholic writer explained the hierarchy's reluctance, "If the Roman Catholic Church agreed to take part in the ecumenical movement, she would be bound to regard herself as one Christian communion among others, seeking the Body of Christ, unaware where and how that Body expresses itself; this would be tantamount to admitting that Christ has deserted His Church, and has denied it the means of recognising and expressing itself as His Body" [Rocquette quoted in Snow, Rochford et al. 1949, 433-34].

³⁵ For example, in 1955 a Roman Catholic wrote that the world had entered "The Hour of Protestantism," and that Protestantism's "hour to deliver its message to the world would seem to have come at last" [Lambert quoted in Van der Bent 1955, 275].

³⁶ In 1955, *The Ecumenical Review* published five articles which focused solely on the RCC, more than it published from 1950-1954 combined.

Though these improving relations were most apparent in the United States, and not coincidentally, occurring at a time when American Catholics had finally become fully “American,” [Ellis 1955; Greeley 1977] a similar process of rapprochement between Catholics and Protestants was occurring in other Protestant dominated countries such as the Netherlands³⁷ and Germany. Sociologist Erik Sengers argues that Roman Catholic tension with Protestant-dominated Dutch society “ended around 1945,” after which Catholic “proselytizing activities” focused on building the Dutch Catholic Church “were changed into ecumenical ones, aiming no longer to attract members from other churches but to work together for the Christianization of Dutch society” [Sengers 2004, 134].

By the early-1950’s, the networks between Catholics and Protestants had become denser and exchanges between them more common wherever the ecumenical movement was making headway. This is evidenced by the fact that a substantial literature on Protestant/Catholic relations existed “in France, Holland and Germany,” [Todd 1956, 1]³⁸ in addition to the United States. This literature makes it apparent that Protestants had begun to increasingly share the belief that bettering relations with Catholics was a natural extension of the ecumenical movement, as Ernst Kinder, a German Lutheran theologian wrote in *The Ecumenical Review* in 1955:

The very existence of the Roman Catholic Church as such prevents ecumenical thought from leaving it out (...) The Roman Catholic Church is a fact, and it embraces a considerable number of the Christians of the world. That alone is sufficient reason for true ecumenical thought not to ignore it, whatever its own attitude may be. (...) If our thought and action are to remain truly ecumenical, we must bear the Roman Catholic Church constantly in mind... [Kinder 1955, 339].

Kinder closed with a very positive assessment of the increasing ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Protestants. He reported:

There is a new spirit today in the relations between Protestantism and Catholicism. The old historical barriers between them have crumbled from within, and they are being drawn together by a renewal of the Christian spirit [*ibidem*, 343].

Kinder’s optimism was shared by other Protestant ecumenists writing in the next couple of years. In 1956 *The Ecumenical Review* noted that, “We rejoice in the fact that (...) the number of Roman Catholic ecumenists (...) is constantly growing,” a conclusion they drew from the growing “stream of Roman Catholic publications concerning ecumenical questions,” and the number of publications by Belgian and French authors they reviewed with approval [Dussel 1956, 191-197]. By 1957, Ro-

³⁷ See Stark and Finke 2000, 242; Coleman 1978.

³⁸ See also: Sperry 1945; Skydsgaard 1957.

ger Mehl wrote in *The Ecumenical Review* that “the ecumenical movement today has valuable collaborators among Roman Catholic theologians,” a fact which he interpreted (I think correctly) as an indication “that within a few years the WCC has succeeded in compelling recognition and acquired real and indiscutable (sic) authority” in the world, and within the Roman Catholic Church [Mehl 1957, 240]. That same year, the book jacket for the Danish Lutheran theologian K. E. Skydsgaard’s well-known book *One in Christ* stated that, “Protestants and Roman Catholics today are carrying on a more real ‘conversation’ with each other than at any time since the Reformation.”

The increasing optimism apparent in the ecumenical literature at this time reached a crescendo with Pope John XXIII’s sudden decision to call the Council, in October of 1958. After his announcement, the literature on Protestant/Catholic relations continued to expand so rapidly³⁹ that one author wrote in *The Ecumenical Review* just before the Council started in 1962 that “we find already so much conversation going on between Roman Catholics and churchmen of other churches (...) the literature on this subject has become of (...) overwhelming dimensions” [World Council of Churches 1962, 78 emphasis added].

With John’s announcement came much improved formal relations between the RCC and the WCC. Five Catholic observers officially attended a World Council of Churches’ meeting [*ibidem*, 480-487], and Protestant observers attended a Roman Catholic council for the first time in 1962, the year the Council opened.

Thus, by the time of the Council, “Ecumenical dialogue” between the Catholic Church and Protestants was “very intense” [CIC 5] (as one German bishop told Caporale), with some bishops, having a great deal of experience with the movement. For example, American Bishop Robert Tracy told Caporale at the beginning of the Council that he had “been very active in the ecumenical movement for the past ten years” [*ibidem*]. Canadian Bishop Georges Pelletier told Caporale that, “we have many organisations for the ecumenical movement. It is a permanent work well done” [*ibidem*]. American Bishop John Wright told Caporale that he “counted some of” the Protestant Observers “as personal friends,” “even prior to the Council,” and said that he “usually went to conventions and meetings of Protestants” [*ibidem*].

³⁹ Between 1959 and 1962, after John’s announcement, but before the Council started, *The Ecumenical Review* published 24 articles that focused on or gave significant attention to the Roman Catholic Church. This is the same number which had appeared in the previous decade, between 1948 and 1958.

The three years of the Council strengthened these relations both formally⁴⁰ and informally. For example, American Bishop Paul Hallinan told Caporale that though he had not known any of the observers before the Council, “here I have dinner with many of them,” and that he had spoken at the World Methodist Council and eighteen other meetings of Protestants between the First and Second Sessions [*ibidem*]. A Catholic observer at the 1963 Faith and Order meetings for the WCC wrote,

We have here undoubtedly an area of ecumenical triumph. Catholics and Protestants have recognised that their understanding of tradition and its relation to the Scriptures has largely been coloured by polemical preoccupations [Baum 1963, 510].

Conclusion: Competition from the Perspective of the Competitors

If we are to understand the factors that direct religious change, we must understand the factors that affect religious leaders. Sociologists of religion have begun to use organisational theory, but these beginnings have not been completely incorporated into the powerful explanatory framework offered by Supply-Side theory.⁴¹ In order to explain variation in bishops’ organisational strategies at the Council, sociologists of religion must examine not only the presence of other religious institutions in an organisational field, but the relationships between those institutions. This is the case because like other organisations, religious organisations are affected by legitimacy concerns as much as they are the efficiency concerns pointed to by Supply-Side theorists.

The point being made in this paper is that we can only understand the overall ecumenical focus of the organisational strategies of bishops from stable fields when we understand how their organisational fields were becoming more highly structured. By increasing “the extent of interaction” among religious organisations, creating “sharply defined interorganisational structures of domination and patterns of coalition” through the WCC and its national counterparts, increasing “the information load with which” the organisations in the field had to contend through conferences and publications, the ecumenical movement helped to develop a “mutual awareness” among religious leaders in that they were “involved in a common enterprise” [DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 148].

⁴⁰ Many of these relationships were created and supported officially by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, otherwise known as the SCU.

⁴¹ E.g. Bender 2000; Demerath *et al.* 1998; Dillon 1999; Stark and Finke 2000 [164]; Finke and Dougherty 2002; Finke 2004; Wuthnow 1980.

As their fields became more structured, the bishops⁴² in them began to see Protestants not as competitors, who might take their members away, but as colleagues who had similar goals and interests,⁴³ a process which only accelerated once the Council began.⁴⁴ This shift explains why, ironically, religious leaders from the most competitive religious economies were the least focused on marketing concerns of the three progressive groups. The findings presented in this paper suggest that we cannot truly understand religious leaders' organisational strategies, or the eventual paths of their institutions, until we incorporate understandings of the ways in which legitimacy concerns affect religious leaders in different environments.

Incumbents versus Challengers

This paper also demonstrates not only that sociologists of religion need to develop more complete understandings of institutions' organisational fields, but that they need to develop better understandings of how an institution's position within an organisational field is important to its actions. Just as they are for for-profit organisations, politics are a key factor which determines a religious institution's position within an organisational field.

In all of the fields examined in this paper, with the exception of the missionary countries, the Roman Catholic Church was an incumbent organisation. Organ-

⁴² Though this is not the focus of the present analysis, it is also true that the opposite process occurred as well. Protestants definitely began to learn about Catholic concerns and made compromises in their doctrine and statements as well.

⁴³ For evidence of Catholics beginning to see Protestants as their colleagues, see Father Charles Boyer's account of the 1949 WCC Assembly in Amsterdam. After unofficially observing the assembly (because the hierarchy would not officially allow Catholics to attend), Boyer wrote that he wanted to, "thank all those who gave him such a courteous and cordial welcome in Amsterdam," and mentioned "pleasant and valuable discussions" with Visser t' Hooft, president of the WCC among others [quoted in Dussel 1949, 203]. In fact, Boyer is a great example of a Roman Catholic ecumenical pioneer, as the co-founder of one of the first Roman Catholic ecumenical organizations, Foyer Unitas, in 1952, with the Dutch congregation the Ladies of Bethany. By the time of the Council, Daniel O'Hanlan (the interpreter/guide for the English-speaking Protestant and Orthodox observers at the last three sessions of the Council) wrote that it had become "quite natural to invite a Catholic representative to sit in" on the planning committees for the 1963 Faith and Order Conference in Montreal which was to be held by the WCC [O'Hanlan 1963: 138].

⁴⁴ Once the Council began, more friendships between Protestants and Catholics developed, particularly for bishops who were involved with the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, or SCU. For example, though an American member of the SCU, Bishop Primeau, told Caporale he did not know any observers prior to the Council, he certainly developed strong friendships with the Protestant observers as the Council progressed. For example, see the personal correspondence between Primeau and the prominent American Protestant observer Douglas Horton (Sources: Horton to Primeau, February 4, 1963, PC.; Horton to Primeau, March 16, 1963, PC.; Primeau to Horton, March 14, 1963, PC).

isational theorists have noted “incumbent firms pay attention to the actions of other incumbent firms, not challenger firms” [Fligstein 1996, 667; also DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 148]. This distinction became particularly apparent when Latin Americans began wrestling with their North European allies’ desires to better relations with Protestants. While Protestants were incumbents in Northern Europe and North America, whom the bishops from these areas clearly saw as legitimate players, they were pesky challengers to Latin Americans. Latin Americans continually differentiated between the denominations who were members of the ecumenical movement in Northern Europe and North America from the “sects” that “we have to deal with” [CIC 5]. As Bishop Alejandro Olalia, told Caporale, some “sects and are hostile. But, the Anglicans, the Lutherans and Evangelists are very open” [*ibidem*].

Challengers tend to be the most innovative and responsive firms. Though it is perhaps a stretch to call the Roman Catholic Church in any organisational field a true “challenger,” it is also true that neither was the Church a real incumbent organisation in Africa and Asia. As such, it was an innovative and active organisation in these missionary countries.

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Who Wanted What and Why at the Second Vatican Council?

Toward a General Theory of Religious Change

Abstract: This paper explores the differences among the four groups of bishops who participated at the Second Vatican Council, with the goal of answering a simple, but key, sociological question about the Council: who wanted what, and why? In brief, I argue that in order to understand, explain and ideally even predict, the perspectives, interests and goals, or what I call organizational strategies, of religious leaders, sociologists of religion must broaden their understandings of the factors that affect them. Though Supply-Side theory recognises that the presence of other religious institutions (i.e. religious pluralism) has powerful effects on religious leaders, I argue that in order to predict not only whether religious leaders will be open to reform, but also what reforms they will prioritise, we must consider not only the presence of other institutions in a society, but the relationship between those organisations, especially whether those relationships are stable. This is the case because in stable fields, legitimacy concerns trump concerns about efficiency and growth.

Keywords: Vatican II, religious change, supply-side theory, religious leaders, legitimacy concerns.
