

Religious Economy or Organizational Field? Predicting Bishops' Votes at the Second Vatican Council

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Abstract

This article explores the national factors that predict bishops' votes on two of the most contentious issues at the Second Vatican Council. Using data obtained from the Vatican Secret Archive, analyses demonstrate that rational choice oriented theory in the sociology of religion that focuses on competition is limited. While competition is important to religious leaders' actions, its effects can be understood only in relation to other crucial characteristics of the social environment within which leaders operate. These characteristics, which we derive from Neo-Institutional Theory (NIT), shape leaders' interests and often lead them to prioritize concerns about their institutions' legitimacy over the concerns about efficiency and growth rational choice theorists assume are predominant. Most NIT studies examine the population of firms within one organizational field. Because we hold firm constant and examine how variation in the type of organizational field (supplied by the more than 100 countries in our analyses) predicts firm leaders' actions, this study represents a unique test of NIT.

Keywords

Vatican II, Neo-Institutional Theory, Rational Choice Theory, voting behavior, religious change

The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II, 1962 to 1965), a watershed event in the history of Roman Catholicism, brought about a multitude of changes. Vatican II ended the requirement of a Latin mass; sent nuns from their cloisters out into the world; relaxed dietary restrictions, confessional obligations, and service attire for the laity; significantly relaxed the Roman Catholic Church's (RCC) claim of being the one true church; and officially renounced the RCC's claims to power in relation to nation-states. Many researchers note that bettering the Church's relations with Protestants was a key issue at the Council, the master frame

around which many reforms revolved (Snow and Benford 1992), and ultimately one of the Council's most important achievements (Alberigo and Komonchak 1995; Brown 1967; Greeley 2004; Rynne 1968).

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Although sociologists are unified in seeing the Council as an important event, and many have examined the effects of Council reforms (e.g., Burns 1990; Casanova 1994; Dillon 1999; Finke and Stark 1992; Greeley 2004; Seidler and Meyer 1989; Smith 1991), few studies attempt to explain how Council reforms came to fruition. This gap is no doubt related to the fact that although many theories in the sociology of religion make implicit assumptions about institutional change, and its study was fundamental to the theories of founding sociologists such as Weber and Durkheim, there is surprisingly little theory available to explain how, why, or when institutional religious change occurs.¹

We seek to further understandings of the factors that direct religious change in particular, and organizational change in general, by answering the following two questions about the Council: Why were some bishops more or less open to reform than others? And just as importantly, what explains the types of reform they supported; in particular, why were bishops more or less likely to favor improving relations with Protestants?

Answering these questions provides insight into sociological theories of religion and institutions. We will demonstrate that rational choice oriented theory in the sociology of religion, known as Religious Competition Theory (RCT), is limited. RCT argues that competition creates more flexible religious leaders who are more open to change. We find that competition is important in explaining religious leaders' actions, but its effects can be understood only in relation to other crucial characteristics of the social environment within which leaders operate. These characteristics, which we derive from Neo-Institutional Theory (NIT), shape leaders' interests and often lead them to prioritize concerns about their institutions' legitimacy over the concerns about efficiency and growth that RCT assumes are predominant.

This study also contributes to NIT. Most studies testing the theory examine a population of firms within one organizational field.²

While these studies provide useful insights into how firm characteristics predict various organizational outcomes (for an example specifically related to religious organizations, see Chaves [1996, 1997]), such studies cannot examine the effects of the broader organizational field. We hold firm constant (by focusing only on the RCC) and examine how variation in organizational fields (supplied by the more than 100 countries in our analysis), in particular how stable and structured they are, predict firm leaders' actions.

ABOUT VATICAN II

Councils such as Vatican II are rare events for the Roman Catholic Church. Only the Pope can call a Council, and they have occurred, on average, less than once every century. During a Council, all of the bishops, cardinals, heads of religious orders, and theologians of the Church (hereafter referred to simply as bishops) gather together, discuss issues of concern, draft statements on those issues, and eventually vote on whether to ratify the statements.

Researchers agree that many of the most important statements that came out of Vatican II were intended to, and did, improve relations with Protestants (Alberigo and Komonchak 2000; Rynne 1968). Wilde (2007) demonstrates that this focus on Protestants was a key dividing line among the bishops, whom she argues came from four distinct types of organizational fields. The first group, bishops from religiously diverse but stable countries (e.g., Germany and the United States), was the friendliest to Protestants. Such countries had a strong ecumenical movement, providing an organizational arena in which religious leaders, primarily Protestants, sought to better relations among all Christians.

These ecumenically friendly bishops' agenda contrasted sharply with that of bishops from monopolistic Catholic countries, such as Italy and Spain, who constituted the second

major group. These bishops were openly antagonistic to ecumenism and even to Protestants in general. Because these two groups' agendas were so diametrically opposed, passing any particular reform, whether ecumenically oriented or not, depended on winning a majority of the votes from the two remaining groups: monopolistic countries in Latin America, where the Church was in decline and whose bishops were progressive but not ecumenical, and missionary countries in Africa and Asia, where the Church was growing and whose bishops were generally supportive of all change (Wilde 2007).

Wilde (2007) attributes the bishops' differential willingness to support change in general, and ecumenically friendly reforms in particular, to the ways in which the Church's status as an incumbent organization combined with the stability and diversity of the religious field in a given country. While this argument melds important concepts from RCT with those from NIT, many of these concepts are poorly operationalized, if at all, in her book, and her argument has not been subjected to a rigorous quantitative test. As a result, the interactions among these factors have never been systematically examined. These interactions are crucial theoretically, and our analysis demonstrates they do predict bishops' openness to various types of reforms.

THE COUNCIL VOTES

For the first Council vote³ we examine, the bishops had to decide whether "On the Sources of Revelation" (hereafter referred to as "revelation"), a very conservative document that had been written prior to the Council, was an acceptable basis for a statement.⁴ The document was considered conservative for a number of reasons. First, contrary to the feelings of most progressively inclined bishops, it upheld the inerrancy of the Bible and refuted the validity of historical or anthropological Biblical research. Furthermore, to the distress of ecumenically oriented bishops,

the schema asserted that there are two sources of revelation—scripture and tradition (tradition meaning Church interpretation or doctrine). This was problematic because Protestants had long argued that scripture was the only valid source of revelation. While ecumenists did not expect a true resolution of this major difference, they wanted to avoid having the Council emphasize such differences.

Thus, whether or not they were ecumenically inclined, progressive bishops were united in their opposition to the schema, making a vote rejecting it a good indication of general openness to change. Toward the end of the first of the four Council sessions, the conservative schema was rejected, 1,368 to 822 (Alberigo and Komonchak 1997).

The second vote we examine in this article is the first vote on the Blessed Virgin Mary (hereafter referred to as "Mary").⁵ This vote asked the bishops to decide to what extent the Council would stress Mary's importance. Those in favor of emphasizing Mary (and along with her, differences between Catholics and Protestants) wanted her to have her own separate Council schema. Bishops whose primary goal for the Council was bettering relations with Protestants were very much against this. Many Protestants saw Catholic devotion to Mary as inappropriate, even verging on the heretical, because her status among Catholics often seemed to equal, or even surpass, Jesus'. Catholic devotion to Mary was thus a significant issue for the ecumenical movement at the time of the Council (much more so than the issue of revelation),⁶ and ecumenically oriented bishops felt very strongly that the Council should avoid emphasizing Mary's importance. They thus opposed giving Mary a separate Council document.⁷

The question of how the Council would treat Mary deeply divided the bishops. The vote on Mary was the closest vote of the Council (1,115 to 1,075),⁸ with the ecumenical position that she would not have her own statement winning by only 40 votes during the Second Session (Alberigo and Komonchak 2000).

In summary, the vote on revelation allows us to differentiate among factors that predict a general openness to reform, while the first vote on Mary enables us to examine factors that predict openness to ecumenical concerns in particular. To achieve these goals, it is necessary to combine rational choice oriented RCT, which focuses on the effects of competition, with culturally oriented NIT, which sees legitimacy concerns at the heart of most organizational processes.

RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY AND RELIGION

Rational Choice Theory contends that individual and group actions are based on utility maximization. In short, this tradition asserts that individuals and organizations act on the basis of real or imagined cost-benefit calculations. Consistency between preferences and actions (as a result of such calculations) makes such choices rational.

As a parsimonious and predictive theory, Rational Choice Theory has made inroads into many fields of sociology (see Hechter and Kanazawa 1997), most visibly (and many would say surprisingly) in the sociology of religion (see Warner 1993; Young 1997). According to proponents of Religious Competition Theory (RCT), religious institutions that feel more competition work harder to attract and to keep members, generally being more flexible and open to change than institutions in monopolistic environments (which, according to the theory, “tend to be lazy” [Finke and Stark 1992:19; see also Seidler 1979]).⁹ These institutions then enjoy more participation and dedication from their members as a result (Finke, Guest, and Stark 1996; Finke and Stark 1992; Stark and Finke 2000; Stark and Iannaccone 1996).

The key causal relationship for the theory is the effect competition has on religious leaders, as its self-appointed nickname, Supply-Side Theory, implies (Finke and Iannaccone

1993; Stark and Iannaccone 1994). Despite this, however, research that tests the theory has concentrated on predicting religious participation and has entirely neglected to examine the ways in which competition affects religious leaders.

In this study, we test this key causal relationship by taking RCT as a starting point for the first of the two questions we examine. That is, were the bishops at Vatican II who came from competitive environments more open to change than their counterparts from less competitive environments?¹⁰ We find that bishops from competitive environments were indeed more open to change, substantiating RCT’s most basic causal mechanism.

In addition to providing support for what was, until now, a largely untested causal mechanism, our analyses improve upon empirical investigations of competition in a number of ways. First, because our sample of bishops who voted at the Council comes from more than 100 countries, we examine religious competition more thoroughly than research on more limited samples.¹¹

Second, proponents and critics agree that another weakness of most empirical examinations of RCT is the almost exclusive use of religious pluralism to measure competition. This is particularly problematic because the most common measure of pluralism has mathematical problems (Chaves and Gorski 2001; Olson 1998).¹²

Furthermore, the focus on pluralism has meant that the two other factors that theoretically determine competition have been largely ignored (Olson 1999). The first of these factors is the relationship between religious institutions and the state. Often referred to simply as “regulation,” it is widely seen as the most important explanatory variable in the theory (cf. Chaves and Cann 1992). Our measure of the relationship between the Church and the state comes from the *National Catholic Almanac* (1955)¹³ and has three categories:¹⁴ (1) the RCC is the state religion, (2) another

religion is the state religion, and (3) the country has formal religious freedom.¹⁵

The second factor we include to measure competition is the proportion of the population belonging to the RCC in 1965, which is commonly referred to as “market share” in the literature (hereafter “percent Catholic”).

Together, these two measures constitute a significant improvement over previous empirical investigations of RCT. This is partly because, although theoretically it is not necessarily the “real” amount of religious competition in an environment so much as the amount of competition an institution *perceives* that spurs marketing, previous research relies on survey data to construct measures of religious pluralism and market share. Such information is arguably accurate, but it is not the same as using data that reflect an institution’s own perception of its situation, which we have with our two measures, both obtained from the *National Catholic Almanac* (Foy 1966 and 1955). Furthermore, we find that the interaction between the Church’s relationship with the state and its market share is particularly important.

With these two measures, our analyses, particularly of the vote on revelation, demonstrate that RCT does indeed help to predict which bishops were more or less open to change. However, RCT could not explain the fact that market share had virtually no effect in religiously free environments, an enormous conservative effect in places where the RCC was the state church, and contradictory effects from vote to vote in places where another religion was established by the state. We argue that RCT’s focus on how competition forces “*suppliers to be more responsive and efficient*” (Stark and Finke 2000:201, emphasis added) causes researchers to ignore other key factors that determine leaders’ priorities. Neo-institutional scholars, who have long argued that concerns about efficiency and growth are not typically a driving concern of the leaders of for-profit firms, emphasize these other factors.

NEO-INSTITUTIONAL THEORY AND THE COUNCIL

Neo-Institutional Theory (NIT) developed in response to rational choice models of organizational behavior. NIT scholars argue that institutional settings shape actors’ preferences and actions (Immergut 1998; Ingram and Clay 2000); they thus insist on the importance of institutional embeddedness and bounded rationality when explaining human and organizational behavior (Scott and Meyer 1991). In a nutshell, these scholars argue 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). This is the case because “economic worlds are social worlds . . . [and] 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” (Fligstein 1996:657). These local cultures are constructed within an institution’s organizational field, which is defined as “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” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:148).

NIT has been incorporated into research on education (e.g., Crowson, Boyd, and Mawhinney 1996; Kraatz and Zajac 1996; Meyer 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1978; Rowan 1982, 2006; Schofer and Meyer 2005), health care (e.g., Ruef and Scott 1998; Scott et al. 2000; Wholey, Christianson, and Sanchez 1992), for-profit industries and corporations (e.g., Baum and Ingram 1998; Baum and Mezias 1992; Carroll and Wade 1991; Dobbin 1995; Hannan et al. 1995; Haveman 1993; Mezias 1995), nonprofits (e.g., Binder 2007; Rao

1998), social movement organizations (e.g., Armstrong 2002; Clemens 1997; Hage 1999; Lounsbury 2005; McAdam and Scott 2005; Minkoff 1994; Schneiberg 2002), and some aspects of religion (e.g., Bender 2000; Chaves 1996, 1997; Demerath et al. 1998; Dillon 1999; Finke 2004; Finke and Dougherty 2002; Stark and Finke 2000).

Most of these studies examine a population of firms within one organizational field and consequently do not consider how the characteristics of differing organizational fields determine firms' actions. In this article, we examine two of NIT's key concepts about an institution's organizational field: how *structured* and how *stable* it is. The concept of structuration originated with Giddens's (1979) theory about the ways in which individuals' actions are embedded in and shaped by the social worlds they inhabit. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), organizational fields become more structured through four processes, all of which were occurring for the Church in Protestant-dominated organizational fields at the time of the Council.

First, structuration entails "an increase in the extent of interaction among organizations in the field" (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 148). This was seen among Protestants in the ecumenical movement as a whole (see Berger 1963; Gaines 1966; Visser't Hooft 1982), and between Protestants and Catholics in particular, at the time of Vatican II (see Skydsgaard 1957; Todd 1956). Second, structuration involves "the emergence of sharply defined inter-organizational structures of domination and patterns of coalition" (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:148). The ecumenical movement was, by its very nature, a coalition among the most established and most powerful religious institutions in their organizational fields. Third, structuration results in "an increase in the information load with which organizations in a field must contend" (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:148). Such an increased information load was evident in the ecumenical literature on Protestant/Catholic relations, which one

author described as approaching "overwhelming dimensions" as the Council started ("Ecumenical Chronicle" 1962:78).

Finally, and most importantly, structuration creates "a mutual awareness" among different organizations "that they are engaged in a common enterprise" (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:148). Such a realization is readily apparent in the ecumenical literature from the decade prior to the Council. For example, a German Lutheran theologian wrote in 1955 that "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" (Kinder 1955:343).

As fields become more structured, legitimacy concerns, such as whether Catholic devotion to Mary diminishes Jesus' importance, rise to the foreground. To examine whether being in a field structured by Protestants affected bishops' openness to such concerns, we coded the countries that were more than 50 percent Protestant or had strong ecumenical movements in 1970 as 1;¹⁶ we coded all other countries as 0. This relatively simple variable has significant explanatory power in predicting bishops' votes at Vatican II.

Field stability is the second key factor from NIT that we examine. In stable organizational fields, "the identities and status hierarchies of firms (the incumbents and the challengers)" are well established, and firm leaders attempt "to mitigate the effects of competition with other firms" by erecting "social understandings whereby firms can avoid direct price competition and can solve their internal political problems" (Fligstein 1996:657–63). In their efforts to mitigate competition and keep their fields stable, firm leaders often focus on legitimacy far more than the concerns about efficiency or growth for which their for-profit organizations were originally designed.

To examine whether bishops from more stable fields were indeed more concerned

Table 1. Summary Statistics (N = 1,627)

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Dependent Variables				
First Vote on Mary	.507		.000	1.000
Vote on the Sources of Revelation	.618		.000	1.000
Independent Variables				
Percent Catholic in a Bishop's Country	61.003	38.361	.100	99.700
Countries with Formal Religious Freedom	.645		.000	1.000
Countries with Another Established Religion	.042		.000	1.000
Countries where RCC is State Religion	.313		.000	1.000
Change in Percent Catholic	.241	3.352	−20.720	13.270
Strong Protestant Presence	.251		.000	1.000
RCC is an Incumbent Organization	.758		.000	1.000

about legitimacy than were those from less stable fields, we created a measure of the Church's organizational field stability by subtracting each country's percent Catholic in 1954 from the same measure for 1965.¹⁷ We obtained these data from the 1955 and 1966 *National Catholic Almanac* (Foy). This measure thus represents the Church's own perspective of how it was faring in various areas around the world at the time of the Council. Although it spans just more than a decade, our measure of stability has significant variation, with 16 percent of the countries in our analysis (mostly from Africa and Asia) showing at least 2 percent growth in percent Catholic, and 18 percent showing at least a 2 percent decline (mostly from Latin America). Our analyses demonstrate that an organizational field's stability is crucial to predicting bishops' votes at Vatican II, particularly once it is interacted with the last variable we developed with the help of NIT: a measure of whether the RCC was an incumbent organization in a given country.

For our variable representing whether the Church was an incumbent organization, we coded all of the countries in Africa and Asia as 0 (with the exception of the Church in the Philippines, which we coded as incumbent)¹⁸ and all other countries as 1. While it is perhaps a stretch to call the RCC in any organizational field a true "challenger," the Church was not a real incumbent organization in Africa or Asia (see Kollman 2005;

McKenna 1997), certainly not the way it was in Italy, Spain, Brazil, or even the United States. Incumbent firms are most averse to competition, and thus most responsive to legitimacy concerns, in more stable fields—a conclusion our findings support.

RESULTS

We present results from separate binomial logistic regression analyses that examine the effects of Church establishment, percent Catholic, structuration, stability, and incumbency on both votes,¹⁹ as well as results from a multinomial logistic regression that allows us to examine swing voters.²⁰ Because our primary theoretical concern is with how bishops' national contexts influenced their voting behaviors, for the sake of a parsimonious article and models, all independent variables are at the country level.²¹ We use robust standard errors to adjust for country-level effects on individual-level observations. Table 1 presents the summary statistics for the variables used in our models.

The Sources of Revelation: General Openness to Change

Our analysis begins with a model that examines how Church establishment and percent Catholic affect the likelihood that a bishop voted progressively on revelation. Model 1

Table 2. Binary Logistic Regression Models Predicting a Progressive Vote on the Sources of Revelation

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Religious Competition Variables</i>				
Market Share (percent Catholic)	-.002 (.004)	-.172** (.028)		-.172** (.027)
Countries with Religious Freedom	1.622** (.484)	-14.780** (2.638)		-15.490** (2.552)
Countries with Another Established Religion	1.293* (.573)	-14.851** (2.655)		-15.392** (2.559)
Percent Catholic \times Religious Freedom		.172** (.028)		.175** (.027)
Percent Catholic \times Another Established Religion		.134** (.047)		.086 (.072)
<i>Neo-Institutional Variables</i>				
Incumbency (RCC is an incumbent)			-1.307** (.478)	-.710 (.389)
Field Stability (change in percent Catholic)			.046 (.057)	.108 (.104)
Structurated (by a strong Protestant presence)			-.003 (.269)	.030 (.242)
Incumbency \times Structurated			1.951** (.585)	1.239** (.323)
Stability \times Incumbency			-.180 (.113)	-.110 (.069)
Stability \times Structurated			-.221 (.226)	-.268 (.206)
Stability \times Religious Freedom				-.070 (.088)
Stability \times Another Established Religion				.032 (.385)
Constant	-.429 (.548)	15.884** (2.630)	1.070** (.172)	16.556** (2.542)
BIC	-255.525	-324.996	-180.349	-304.422

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors; N = 1,894.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed tests).

in Table 2 demonstrates that even after controlling for percent Catholic, bishops from countries where the RCC was established (the reference category for all models) were more conservative than bishops living in countries with formal religious freedom or countries where another religion was established. At 90 percent Catholic (the middle of the range of percent Catholic for countries where the RCC was established), the predicted probability that bishops where the RCC was established would vote to reject the conservative schema was .35. The same predicted probability for bishops in

religiously free environments was more than twice that at .73.

Despite the stark differences shown by Model 1, Model 2 demonstrates that we should not assume these variables operate independently.²² The effect of percent Catholic varies substantially with different Church/state relations (see Figure 1).²³ Most strikingly, percent Catholic has virtually no effect on the bishops' votes in countries with formal religious freedom (the dotted line). Bishops become more conservative as the Church's market share increases in countries where the RCC or another religion was

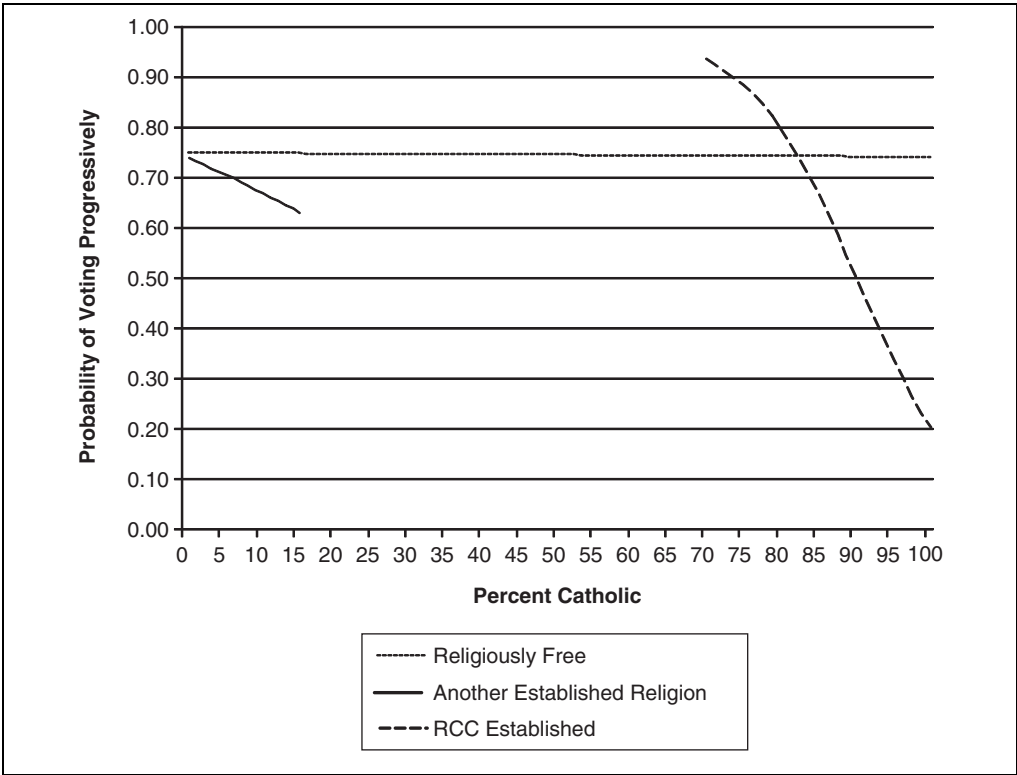


Figure 1. Predicting Progressive Voting on Revelation Using Religious Competition Theory

established. This effect is most dramatic for bishops in countries where the RCC was the state religion. In these countries, the probability that a bishop voted progressively on revelation decreases dramatically, from .95 to .21, as the percent of the population Catholic increases from 75 to 100.

Here we see our first indication that the variables developed from RCT have limited explanatory power. RCT would not predict that bishops would be extremely progressive where the Church enjoys a substantial but not complete majority (i.e., around 75 to 80 percent of the population) along with legal protection from the state. RCT stresses the importance of the relationship between Church and state for predicting religious institutions' actions; institutions that enjoy state support should be much less open to change than those that do not. Figure 1 demonstrates, however, that bishops enjoying state support

were the most (as well as the least) progressive of all the bishops at the Council.

Rather than attributing this finding to a unique situation in which market share matters more in places where an institution is established than it does in religiously free environments (something that in and of itself would be a substantial qualification of the theory), we suggest this is a result of the ways in which market share changed during the previous decade in some of the countries in this category. Figure 2 supports this conclusion, presenting predicted probabilities generated on the basis of Model 3 (which includes only our neo-institutional variables).

Figure 2's x-axis plots changes in percent Catholic from 1954 to 1965, with less stable fields at both ends of the spectrum (representing places where the Church's market share was declining or growing the most) and the most stable fields in the middle. As

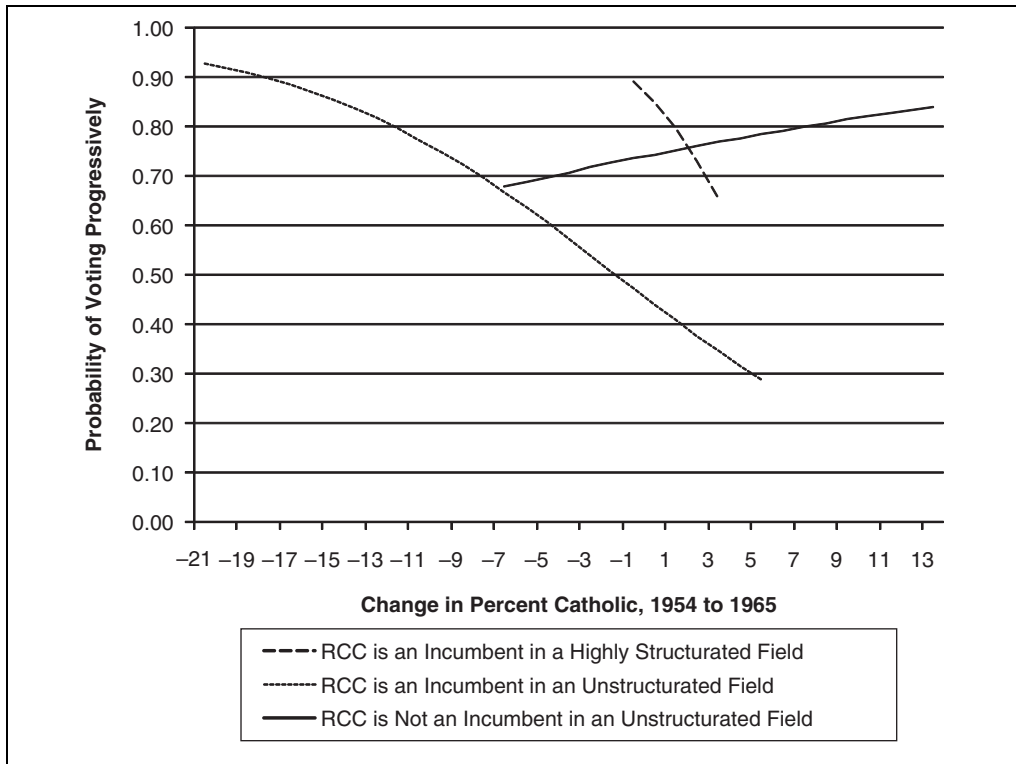


Figure 2. Predicting Progressive Voting on Revelation Using Neo-Institutional Theory

NIT predicts, bishops were most open to change in places where the Church had declined the most. Such declines were most apparent in organizational fields where the Church had been the dominant institution (operationalized here as an incumbent organization in a field that was not structured by influences from other organizations).

In summary, Model 3, and its depiction in Figure 2, suggests that the concepts developed by Neo-Institutional theorists to explain the actions of leaders of for-profit firms are also useful for predicting the actions of leaders of religious organizations. The best way to assess these theories' usefulness, however, is to include the measures that operationalize them in the same model as our measures that operationalize religious competition.

We have done so in Model 4, which demonstrates that both types of measures are useful in predicting religious leaders' general openness to change.²⁴ Even after controlling

for Church establishment and market share, the interaction between incumbency and our measure of whether an organizational field was structured by a strong Protestant presence retains a substantial and statistically significant effect.

Recall, however, that organizational sociology is primarily oriented toward predicting whether and how organizations' leaders react to legitimacy concerns. The most prevalent legitimacy concerns at the Council were raised by Protestants, who were not nearly as concerned with what the Council would say about revelation as with what it would say about Mary.

The Blessed Virgin Mary: Predicting Bishops' Concerns about Legitimacy

Table 3 presents the findings from our analysis of the contentious vote on Mary. The results

Table 3. Binary Logistic Regression Models Predicting a Progressive Vote on the First Vote on the Blessed Virgin Mary

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Religious Competition Variables</i>				
Market Share (percent Catholic)	-.005 (.005)	-.100** (.033)		-.106** (.029)
Countries with Religious Freedom	1.651** (.502)	-7.400* (3.144)		-8.980** (2.718)
Countries with Another Established Religion	1.124 (.718)	-8.595** (3.155)		-9.789** (2.737)
Percent Catholic × Religious Freedom		.095** (.033)		.104** (.029)
Percent Catholic × Another Established Religion		.258** (.069)		.142* (.063)
<i>Neo-Institutional Variables</i>				
Incumbency (RCC is an incumbent)			-1.273** (.397)	-.625* (.273)
Field Stability (change in percent Catholic)			.044 (.041)	.191* (.081)
Structurated (by a strong Protestant presence)			.579* (.242)	.546* (.237)
Incumbency × Structurated			2.060** (.490)	1.523** (.367)
Stability × Incumbency			-.174 (.092)	-.160** (.057)
Stability × Structurated			-.074 (.171)	-.133 (.181)
Stability × Religious Freedom				-.152* (.070)
Stability × Another Established Religion				-.177 (.226)
Constant	-.819 (.610)	8.205** (3.134)	.334 (.181)	9.417** (2.714)
BIC	-302.227	-318.527	-341.963	-385.873

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors; N = 1,921.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed tests).

share many similarities with our findings regarding the vote on revelation.²⁵ Once again, we find that the effect of percent Catholic varies significantly with the Church’s relationship with the state.²⁶ Figure 3 (based on Model 2), demonstrates that bishops from religiously free environments were again quite progressive, but that, again, this is true almost regardless of percent Catholic. Furthermore, we once again find that market share has the biggest effect on bishops in countries where the Church was established as the state religion, with relatively small decreases in market share

radically changing the likelihood that a bishop voted to minimize Mary’s importance. Again, we suspect this finding is due to the instability of these more progressive bishops’ organizational fields, rather than the relatively small differences in market share within this category (our models that include the organizational variables support this conclusion).
So far, our findings about both votes are fairly consistent, but we begin to see differences between them with the solid line in Figure 3, which represents countries where another religion was established as the state

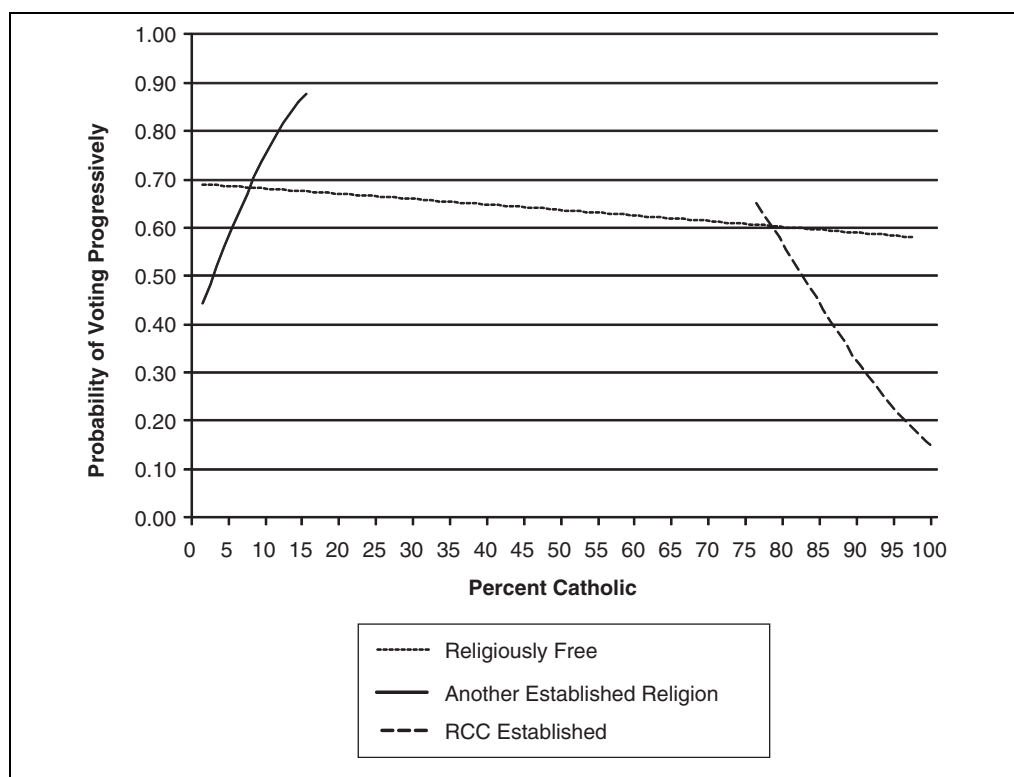


Figure 3. Predicting Progressive Voting on Mary Using Religious Competition Theory

religion. In these countries, percent Catholic has an unexpected and fairly dramatic progressive effect for the vote on Mary. This contradicts our findings on revelation, where the bishops in this category became more conservative as percent Catholic increased.

RCT makes few detailed predictions about what to expect when a religious institution is a minority in a religious economy with another established religion (other than the prediction that when such situations give rise to hostility, as they do in Northern Ireland, religious participation will likely be high). We thus have little reason to expect that increases in the RCC's market share would cause bishops to be more likely to support bettering relations with Protestants, much less a theoretical explanation for why this would be so.

This finding is interpretable from within the Neo-Institutional framework, however,

because although they are indistinguishable within current RCT, the countries in this category have two very different kinds of organizational fields. The countries in the first type of field, such as Great Britain and New Zealand, have an established Protestant Church and tend to be at the high end of percent Catholic for this category. The second type of field consists of Muslim countries such as Syria, Jordan, and Iraq, which tend to be at the low end of percent Catholic among countries where another religion is established. Because of the ecumenical movement, bishops in Protestant-dominated countries were subjected to more legitimacy critiques both generally and about Mary in particular. We thus suspect that their progressivism on the issue of Mary is spuriously correlated with percent Catholic—and is much better explained by our measures of incumbency, field

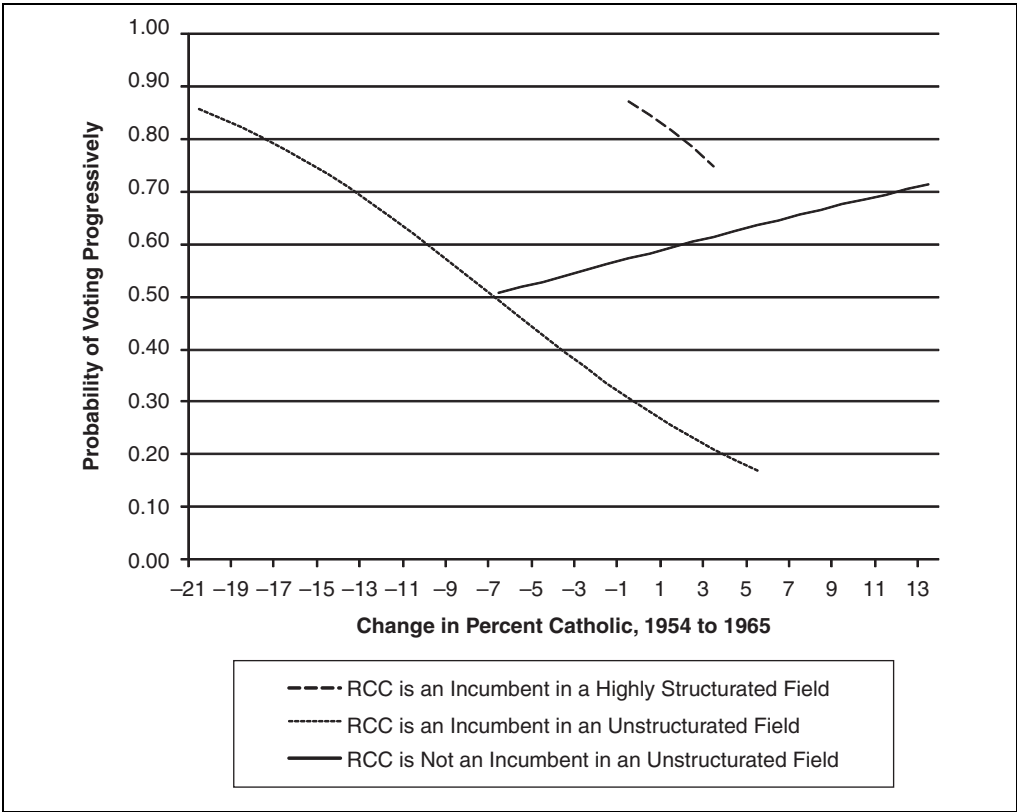


Figure 4. Predicting Progressive Voting on Mary with Neo-Institutional Theory

stability, and the amount of Protestant structuration in their countries.

The analyses that include our organizational variables provide support for this conclusion. Whereas percent Catholic seems to have either unpredicted or conflicting effects from vote to vote, Model 3 and its illustration in Figure 4 demonstrate that our organizational variables have consistent and expected effects. Furthermore, the majority of coefficients for the organizational variables are larger and more statistically significant in Model 4 for the vote on Mary than on revelation, something to be expected given Mary’s centrality to legitimacy concerns.²⁷

Model 4 also demonstrates, once again, that the way in which incumbency interacts with stability is crucial: incumbents in declining fields were very progressive, although not as progressive this time as incumbents in highly

structured fields (which also tended to be rather stable, thus the short range for that line in Figures 2 and 4), who were the most likely to vote against having the Council emphasize Mary by giving her her own schema.

The binary logistic regressions analyzed so far enable us to examine the factors that predict a progressive or conservative stance on each individual vote, but they do not provide insight on the most crucial population: bishops who swung between the two votes. Of the 1,627 bishops who voted on both issues, more than a quarter of them voted progressively on one but conservatively on the other.

SWING VOTERS

To examine these bishops and the factors that predict their priorities in greater detail, we

conducted a multinomial logistic regression comparing four categories of voters: those who always voted progressively, those who voted progressively on revelation but conservatively on Mary and vice versa, and those who always voted conservatively. Most findings from this analysis are consistent with our analyses of the individual votes, so to save space we do not present the full models.²⁸ A few central findings from this analysis, however, are worth describing in greater detail.

The most useful comparisons arise when we examine differences between structured and unstructured countries within the two categories of swing voters.²⁹ Compared with bishops from unstructured countries, bishops from structured countries were up to *two times more likely* to be the swing voters who voted conservatively on revelation but progressively on Mary, and *three times less likely* to be the swing voters who voted progressively on revelation but conservatively on Mary.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This article sought to answer two questions about the Council: Why were some bishops more or less open to reform than others? And just as importantly, what explains the type of reform they supported; in particular, why did some support the master frame of improving relations with Protestants? To answer these questions, we tested two theories: Rational Choice Theory that focuses on competition, and the more culturally oriented Neo-Institutional Theory that focuses on other factors pertaining to an organization and its environment.

We found that, as RCT would predict, the relationship between church and state is a crucial predictor of bishops' openness to change. Bishops from religiously free environments were much more likely than bishops from

countries where the RCC was the state Church to vote progressively on both of the votes we examined here.

However, once we examined this relationship in conjunction with how it interacted with the RCC's market share, we found that RCT could not explain the fact that market share had virtually no effect in religiously free environments, an enormous conservative effect in places where the RCC was the state church, and contradictory effects from vote to vote in places where another religion was established by the state. This finding is novel, in large part, because although religious leaders' actions are a key intervening variable for RCT, empirical tests of the theory have neglected to examine such actions in detail (focusing instead on correlations between competition and religious participation). RCT has thus neglected to consider the ways in which characteristics of the broader institutional environment influence leaders.

Neo-institutional theorists, by contrast, argue that the structuration and stability of leaders' institutional environments, or organizational fields, couple with the position of their organizations within those fields (namely whether they are incumbents or challengers) to shape leaders' interests. They further argue that this often causes leaders to prioritize concerns about their institutions' legitimacy in the eyes of important players over concerns about efficiency and growth that RCT assumes are predominant.

Our findings demonstrate that these organizational factors are key to predicting bishops' votes at Vatican II. Just like leaders of for-profit firms, religious leaders are interested first and foremost in their firms' survival. They are thus oriented toward keeping stable organizational fields stable (by interpreting murkiness, justifying actions, and addressing legitimacy concerns), stabilizing fields that have destabilized or are not yet stabilized, and minimizing the risks of competition.

These findings have two important implications for RCT, both of which require broadening commonly used theoretical concepts. First, rather than thinking of a religious institution's environment strictly as a "religious economy" that presents more or less competition for that institution, sociologists of religion need to examine institutions' broader organizational fields and all of the organizations that "constitute a recognized area of institutional life" (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:148). Doing so means recognizing that the presence of other powerful institutions creates pressure to demonstrate organizational legitimacy, not necessarily greater concerns about retaining a competitive edge.

Second, religious competition theorists need to move away from conceptualizing religious leaders' actions as simply "marketing strategies." Instead, theorists should think about them in terms of organizational strategies, of which the decision to market to gain or keep constituents is but one of many possible priorities. Doing so will enable researchers to better predict when legitimacy concerns will move to the foreground of leaders' priorities. This will also allow for a more careful exploration of the link between the type of organizational strategy leaders pursue and the effects they have on their institutions.

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Notes

1. The sociology of religion largely focuses on religion's effects on people; on the growth, decline, or persistence of a particular religious group; or on individual participation, rather than the

organizational resources, forces, and mobilization efforts involved in an event like the Council (notable exceptions are Burns 1992; Chaves 1997; Finke 2004; Kurtz 1986; Seidler and Meyer 1989; Smith 1991; Wuthnow 1988; Zaret 1985).

2. The most notable exceptions are Hannan and colleagues (1995), who examine the same industry in several different countries, and Meyer, Ramirez, and Soysal (1992), who examine how the system of mass education diffused globally. Neither of these studies, however, focuses on the same firm across countries, as we do here.
3. The vote tallies identify individual bishops, their titles, dioceses, and votes (in the case of the two votes analyzed in this article, a *placet* for accept or a *non-placet* for reject). We obtained the bishops' country information from the 1965 *Annuario Pontificio*, or the year closest to 1965 in which a bishop appeared (*Annuario Pontificio* 1962–66). For more information on the database construction, please see Wilde (2007:131–32). The database is available at <http://www.thearda.com>.
4. November 20, 1962, *Suffragationes*, Volume I: Number 5.
5. October 29, 1963, *Suffragationes*, Volume XIX: Number 97.
6. Whereas there was little to no mention of revelation in the ecumenical literature before and during the Council, many Protestant commentators emphasized their profound feelings of alienation in relation to Catholic devotion to Mary.
7. One Catholic ecumenist noted that if the First Session had ended with a separate schema on Mary being promulgated, the Council would have been "striking a blow at the ecumenical spirit" (Laurentin 1964:2).
8. The official totals for this vote were 1,114 *placets* to 1,074 *non-placets* (Alberigo and Komonchak 2000). We found that two bishops whose votes were isolated on the last page of this vote were excluded from the Vatican's official totals (one *placet* and one *non-placet*).
9. This applies to groups regardless of theological orientation. RCT posits that in competitive environments, even the most conservative religious leaders should be more active and willing to change aspects of their religion than would those who live in less competitive environments.
10. By "more open to change," we do not mean to imply that all religious leaders in competitive environments are oriented toward *lessening* tension between their institutions and broader society. Religious change can be world-rejecting or world-accepting, although RC theorists argue that liberalization, such as that which occurred during the Council, is detrimental and that strict churches are stronger (Iannaccone 1994). Because we focus on the causes of the changes that came from the

- Council, not the effects, we do not engage this debate.
11. Until now, studies have either focused solely on the United States (e.g., Blau, Redding, and Land 1993; Breault 1989; Finke et al. 1996; Finke and Iannaccone 1993; Finke and Stark 1988, 1992, 1998; Johnson 1995; Land, Deane, and Blau 1991; Olson 1998, 1999; Perl and Olson 2000), on a selection of countries consisting of outliers (e.g., Hamberg and Pettersson 1994; Olson and Hadaway 1999; Stark 1992; Stark, Finke, and Iannaccone 1995; Stark and Iannaccone 1996; Wilde 2001), countries from only one area of the world, such as Latin America (Gill 1999) or Europe (Jelen and Wilcox 1998; Lechner 1996; Stark 1993), or only industrialized countries (e.g., Chaves and Cann 1992; Chaves, Schraeder, and Sprindys 1994; Iannaccone 1991; Verweij, Ester, and Nauta 1997).
 12. Olson (1998) demonstrates that these problems are particularly serious in analyses that include measures of market share, such as percent Catholic. Because this is a key measure for us, we do not include a measure of pluralism in this analysis.
 13. We use data from 1955 to avoid problems created by the Council, which was called in 1958, because religious freedom was one of its major focuses and seems to have changed the Church's assessment of its situation in some countries, particularly where it enjoyed privileges (see Wilde 2007:132).
 14. Most studies use scales or indices to examine the effects of relative amounts of religious regulation (e.g., Chaves and Cann 1992; Chaves et al. 1994; Gill 1999; Grim and Finke 2007). We use a categorical variable because we could not obtain detailed information about many of the measures included in such indices for more than half of our countries at the time of the Council, and because doing so is truer to the descriptions provided in the *National Catholic Almanacs*.
 15. If the Church's official legal situation in a country differed from on-the-ground reality, the variable reflects the de facto situation. Furthermore, if there were regime or border changes between 1955 and 1965 (the end of the Council), we coded the country according to what the NCA said about it for the year closest to that change. A list of the countries in our analysis and the codes they were given for this variable are available in Table S1 in the online methodological supplement (<http://asr.sagepub.com/supplemental>).
 16. The percentage of the population that was Protestant was obtained from the World Christian Database (<http://worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/>). Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and France were the non-majority Protestant countries with a strong ecumenical movement (see Wilde 2007).
 17. This was the largest pre-Council span of time with decent data. To obtain change in percent Catholic statistics for Dahomey, Ivory Coast, and Senegal, which were aggregated under French West Africa in 1955, we re-aggregated their 1965 population statistics and gave each of them the change in percent Catholic for the entire area (which was 0). In addition, percent Catholic from 1954 was missing and substituted with data from 1953 for Guadalupe, Martinique, Malaysia, and Somalia (Foy 1954), and from 1957 for Ghana (Foy 1958).
 18. We considered coding the Church as an incumbent organization in French West Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, and Uganda because these regions had a longer-standing history of RCC missionary activity than did other areas within Africa. Ultimately, we determined that the Church's presence suffered from "a lack of consistency" (Hastings 1994:194) in these regions, making its presence much weaker than it was in other missionary countries, such as the Philippines, where we coded the Church as an incumbent organization.
 19. Because GDP is a national-level variable of general importance, we also examined its effect (World Bank 1960-present). It did not have significant effects, did not change the effects of any of our other variables on either vote, and caused us to lose an additional 150 cases, so we do not include it here.
 20. Our analyses include about 85 percent of the almost 2,200 bishops who lodged valid votes on each issue. The vast majority of lost voters are due to unavailable or unreliable information about a country, usually either Church establishment or percent Catholic, often because of communist suppression (a third of the missing cases on each vote). Another third of our missing cases are superior generals or heads of religious orders ($N = 95$), for whom country of service information is not available. Analyses suggest no great differences between bishops with missing data and the average voter.
 21. We examined all of the individual-level variables we had at our disposal, including age, whether a bishop's position was residential or administrative, and whether he was native to his country of service. Although age (and only age) has significant effects, with older bishops voting more conservatively, including it does not significantly change the effects of any of our more theoretically interesting national-level variables.
 22. A difference of 69.471 in the Bayesian Information Criteria (BIC) statistics between Models 1 and 2 provides very strong support for the model with interaction effects.
 23. Each line is truncated so that only actual values are displayed for Figure 1 and every other figure we present.
 24. We checked for problems associated with multicollinearity in Model 4 by generating Variance

Inflation Factors (VIFs). Incumbency and percent Catholic have the highest VIF at 4.25 (anything over 5 is considered a problem [Menard 1995]). A Wald test of these two variables (see Allison 1999) indicates that our conclusions are robust. The hypothesis that both incumbency and percent Catholic have a coefficient of zero cannot be rejected ($X^2 = 4.18, p = .12$). Furthermore, a simple comparison of the models indicates that multicollinearity does not seem to be inflating the regression coefficients when the variables are included together in Model 4, as compared to when they are examined separately in Models 2 and 3. However, because percent Catholic and incumbency are highly correlated at .7, we do not emphasize the nonsignificance of any coefficients in our models.

25. We compare the analyses from both votes in the following section, despite the fact that only 85 to 86 percent of the bishops voted on both issues. Restricting the models to only these bishops decreases the statistical significance of some coefficients (most likely due to the smaller sample size), but it does not substantially change their direction or magnitude. Furthermore, our multinomial model, which is, by necessity, restricted to bishops who voted on both issues, provides additional support for the findings from the binomial analysis (for more information, see Tables S2 and S4 in the online methodological supplement).
26. A difference of 16.300 in the BIC statistics between Models 1 and 2 provides strong support for Model 2.
27. As expected, the competition variables appear to be much less robust predictors of progressivism for the vote on Mary than for the vote on revelation. For revelation, BIC tests (reported in Tables 2 and 3) strongly prefer Model 2, which has only the competition variables, and somewhat prefer the (much less parsimonious, a key factor of BIC tests) full Model 4 over Model 3. For the vote on Mary BIC tests strongly prefer Model 4 over Models 2 and 3. Furthermore, excluding Italy (our largest and most conservative category of bishops) does not affect our findings for the vote on revelation, but it does alter our findings for the vote on Mary, with only the organizational variables retaining significance in Model 4.
28. See Table S4 in the online methodological supplement.
29. For realistic comparisons, we only examined predicted probabilities for religiously free countries and levels of percent Catholic and change in percent Catholic that existed in *both* structured and unstructured environments. These values are presented in the online syntax supplement.

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