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Preachers, Politics and the Pulpit: The Influence of Church Structure on How Clergy Approach Political Topics and How Congregations Receive Their Messages

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Abstract

Inspired by the Catholic Church's nationwide resistance to President Obama's contraceptive mandate in the summer of 2012, this honors thesis paper attempts to discover a link between church polity (or church structure) and whether political messages are more or less likely to be preached by clergy from the pulpit and accepted by their congregants. Given that churches are places where attendees are exposed to political messages, this paper hypothesizes that structurally centralized Christian denominations are more likely to have preached on the contraceptive mandate than decentralized denominations. Accordingly, it is assumed that Catholics are more likely to have heard about the mandate than mainline Protestants and evangelical Protestants. Additionally, I suppose that clergy who oppose the mandate will be more likely to have addressed the mandate from the pulpit than those who support it. Finally, it is assumed that Catholics will be more likely to oppose the mandate than evangelical Protestants who are more likely to oppose the mandate than mainline Protestants. I gather primary data via semi-structured interviews with clergy from six select denominations with different church governance polities and theological views. Secondary data was obtained from the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press's February 2012 Political Survey concerning self-identified Christians' views regarding the mandate. I find that church structure and views on the mandate had no bearing on whether Protestant pastors addressed it (though all Catholic priests did so) and that church attendance has little influence on how congregants view it.

Dedication or Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the clergy who took the time to sit down with me and conduct an interview. This honors thesis project is dedicated to my family for their constant support, and to Dr. Joshua Ambrosius for being a great advisor.

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Introduction

In 2010, President Barack Obama signed his signature piece of legislation, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly called Obamacare. One of the most controversial aspects that stemmed from this law was the contraceptive mandate, which required that businesses, including religiously affiliated institutions, cover contraceptives in their health insurance plans. As implementation of the mandate began in 2012, a backlash developed from the Catholic Church, which argued that the mandate forced Church-associated institutions as well as individual Catholics involved in health insurance or medical decisions to violate their consciences by subsidizing contraception, the use of which is considered immoral by Church teaching. The mandate, the Church asserted, infringed upon its First Amendment rights.

The Catholic Church's resistance to the contraceptive mandate spread across the nation. Forty-three Catholic institutions, including the Archdioceses of New York and Washington, D.C. and the University of Notre Dame sued the Obama Administration (Dwyer, 2012). The Church's effort also found its way to the pulpits. Bishop George Coleman of the Fall River Diocese in Massachusetts wrote a letter in early 2012 that was critical of the mandate and had it distributed to parishes within the diocese to be read from the pulpit during Mass (Fraga, 2012). Archbishop William Lori spoke out against the mandate during a Thursday evening Mass in June 2012 at the Basilica of the Assumption in Baltimore (Rector, 2012).

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) wrote a one page open letter titled *Standing Together for Religious Freedom* (see Appendix A for text) where they declared that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) was

breaching “universal principles affirmed and protected by the U.S. Constitution and other federal laws,” (“Catholic, Southern Baptist Religious Liberty Leaders Lead Open Letter Effort”, 2013). Among the signatories of the document were Catholic clergy, nuns, and lawyers as well as non-Catholic clergy and theologians including a Jewish rabbi.

Literature Review

Theories of Belonging and Belief

The religion-oriented subfields of political science and sociology, as well as legal studies, have robust literature on the relationships between religion and politics, or churches and state. When it comes to the concept of religion itself, scholars have identified various components which may have an impact on politics and government. Smidt, Kellstedt, and Guth (2009) consider two competing theoretical perspectives on how religion relates to politics: the *ethnoreligious* perspective and the *theological restructuring* perspective. The *ethnoreligious* perspective is concerned with the sense of belonging to a certain group. In the realm of Christianity, these groups are represented by the various Christian traditions and denominations (e.g., Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, and Methodists). Smidt et al. argue that this perspective has lost importance with respect to politics recently and has been superseded by the *theological restructuring* perspective. This latter view stresses belief systems more than religious belonging. Within this model, religious groups themselves are further divided into traditionalist, modernist, and centrist camps, each reflecting a level of orthodoxy to a denomination’s doctrines. The terminology used here is not unlike that used when describing political ideology. Most notably, this perspective explains the recent alliance between the Catholic Church and some conservative evangelical Protestant denominations or organizations.

Conceptions of religion as belonging and belief have been found by scholars to be linked to clergy's ideologies and political behavior. An analysis of Protestant clergy by Guth, Green, Smidt, Kellstedt, and Poloma (1997) indicates that theological orthodoxy is the primary shaper of their political attitudes. Christian orthodoxy, association with the fundamentalist movement, and a conservative eschatology were all statistically significant factors in determining identification with the Republican Party. Beatty and Walter (1989) likewise find that religious orthodoxy within the clergy is strongly related to their political ideology, but political communication hinges more on one's denominational group.

Churches as Institutions

In spite of these two distinct perspectives, they are not entirely independent of each other. Political scholars have observed two notions that possibly bridge the gap between belonging and belief. These are the understandings of churches as social groups and as institutions. Djupe and Calfano (2014) describe the emerging social network approach to religion and politics that emphasizes messages conveyed by clergy and received by congregants. Churches, Djupe and Calfano say, comprise their own social worlds where clergy (and others) communicate political information and members are exposed to these messages. During their time in church, members are also exposed to the political norms of the ecclesial community. In a study of the influence of churches on civic skills, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (2011) join Djupe and Calfano (2014) in noting that clergy do in fact preach on political matters from the pulpit and that church officials take stands on public issues. They add that "churches provide the institutional

infrastructure for political mobilization," (p. 4). Those who are active in church outside of the usual services will gain skills that are relevant for politics and that facilitate political activity. Even Smidt et al. (2009) do not deny that religious belonging functions like a social group, as members receive all sorts of information as well as different interpretations of political events.

However, Verba et al. (2011) also take into account the importance of the institutional structure of churches on churchgoers. They find that Catholics are no less likely than Protestants to be exposed to political messages, yet Protestants, because their churches tend to encourage and foster more lay participation, practice more civic skills than do Catholics. Ambrosius (2011) studies the effect of church polity (or structure) on how Catholics and Southern Baptists viewed the efforts to consolidate the governments of the city of Louisville, Kentucky and surrounding Jefferson County. He discovers that Catholics were much more likely to be supportive of consolidation than Southern Baptists. He attributes this to a theory of *polity replication*, which states that "congregants come to prefer institutions in other realms of society to be structured similarly to their church polity," (p.3). Ambrosius posits that the organizational structure of a church shapes the ability to convey preferences and shape those of their members, particularly on questions of institutional design.

The institutional structure of a Christian denomination can have an impact on how "flexible" a churchgoer's belief system is. Davidson, Schlangen, and D'Antonio (1969) observe that Protestants recognized that their church structures possessed democratic elements where lay persons had all or a great deal of say in church decisions. Protestants were also more likely to say that the laity could determine their own beliefs. Catholics, on

the other hand, were well aware that their church's structure was hierarchical and that the laity had little say in determining church decisions or beliefs. Interestingly, they found that Protestants believed Catholic governance was more centralized than Catholics themselves believed it to be.

McMullen (1994) contends that neoinstitutional theory can be applied to several different organizational fields, with religion being among them. He examines how the Catholic Church, with its hierarchical structure, and the United Church of Christ, with its more decentralized structure, mobilized individual behavior differently. Among his findings were that Catholics mostly agreed that what the bishops said was more important than what their local priest said and that they should still support their church's social teachings even when they disagreed with them. Conversely, UCC members recognized the importance of their local pastor over denominational superiors and felt less of an obligation to support the social policies of their church which they disagreed with. McMullen claims that participation by a Catholic brings him or her into contact with institutional myths and rituals different from those of a UCC member, myths and rituals created and sustained by different church polities.

Sullins (2004) identifies three distinct church polities among Protestant denominations representing differences in centralization of authority: decentralized, moderately centralized, and most centralized. He presumes that a denomination's authority structure has a wide range of effects on congregations. One example he gives is that "if a congregational polity constrains controversy from above and encourages innovation from below…it may follow that congregants also feel freer to dispute church teachings," (p. 279).

Clergy as Political Communicators

Research on the relationship between religion and politics has also analyzed the role of the clergy. Smidt (2004) states that clergy have a political significance because they provide the link between religious teachings and political attitudes. They "often provide political cues to their parishioners," (p. 7). Smidt attempts to uncover differences in religious orthodoxy between clergy from evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, black Protestant, and Catholic traditions. He finds that evangelical and black Protestant clergy are the most theologically orthodox while mainline Protestant and Catholic clergy have a more diverse range of attitudes, with Catholic priests being the most modernist.

Using data gathered from Catholic parishes throughout the United States by the Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life conducted between 1982 and 1984, Smith (2008) appears to demonstrate that liberal pastors exercise more significant influence over their parishioners' ideologies than do conservative pastors. While the data was unable to predict parishioners' issue positions with pastors' issue positions, it did suggest that influence among Catholic priests was limited to liberal pastors only.

In a study of ELCA and Episcopal clergy, Djupe and Gilbert (2003) find out that those who are more educated are more likely to speak out. Clergy speech is also greater when congregations approve of their clergy talking about political issues and when there is disagreement between clergy and congregants, with the latter point seeming to suggest that clergy are more than willing to address political issues when there is a divide in the hopes of bridging the gap. On the contrary, clergy will speak publicly less when they have more years of clerical service.

Calfano and Oldmixon (2015) study the effects of parishioners and institutional superiors on Irish clergy. They conclude that when the salience of a clergyman's professional network is raised, then the clergyman is likely to exhibit conservative attitudes. However, they also find that clergymen who perceive distance between themselves and their parishioners are likely to adopt more liberal stances. Financial motives also underlie the public behavior of a clergyperson, as Calfano (2010) observes that clergy will adjust their political rhetoric if they believe that it will jeopardize the number of parishioner contributions.

Research Questions & Hypotheses

Research has thus shown that Christian clergy do in fact speak out on political matters from the pulpit and that their denomination's polity has significance, particularly when there are superiors involved. The episode regarding President Obama's contraceptive mandate demonstrates that churches have a presence in politics. However, it only dealt primarily with a single Christian denomination (the Catholic Church). Why were other denominations not as outspoken about the mandate as was the Catholic Church? This event was not a Catholic issue only. The USCCB letter clearly shows that members and leaders of other churches were convinced that the mandate was a violation of First Amendment rights. Is it possible that church structure had an influence on whether clergy preached about the mandate from the pulpit? The question is an important one, as it leads one to wonder if congregants from non-Catholic churches were exposed to preaching on the contraceptive mandate. Additionally, how did churchgoers respond to such preaching when exposed? What are the differences between Catholics, evangelical

Protestants, and mainline Protestants with respect to their views on the contraceptive mandate? I made four hypotheses concerning these questions, with two relating to the clergy and the other two respecting the laity.

Hypothesis #1: Clergy from more centralized denominations are more likely to have addressed the mandate from the pulpit than those from decentralized denominations.

Churches which have a hierarchical structure where authority is centralized in a single superior or board are in better position to communicate with clergy from around the country, spread information, and mobilize the faithful. This is made evident with the Catholic Church's nationwide resistance to the mandate. On the other hand, decentralized denominations do not have such an ability. Autonomy is held within the local church, where the pastor has complete authority to decide what is preached and taught from the pulpit.

Hypothesis #2: Clergy who support religious exemption from the mandate are more likely to address the mandate from the pulpit than those who oppose it.

I assume that a clergyperson who opposes the contraceptive mandate and sees it as an infringement on First Amendment rights will be more motivated to speak out from the pulpit. Conversely, I assume that one who supports the mandate will be less enthused to address the issue during church services.

Hypothesis #3: Catholics are more likely to have heard about the mandate than mainline Protestants, who are more likely to have heard about it than evangelical Protestants.

Because I hypothesize that clergy from centralized churches as well as ones who oppose the mandate will be more likely to talk about the mandate, I hypothesize that Catholic priests will be more likely to address it and that Catholics will have this heard more about the mandate. Since mainline Protestant churches are often more centralized than evangelical churches tend to be, I presume that congregants in mainline Protestant churches will have heard more about the mandate than evangelicals.

Hypothesis #4: Catholics are more likely to oppose the mandate than evangelical Protestants, who are more likely to oppose the mandate than mainline Protestants.

Given that the Catholic Church launched a national fight against the mandate that extended into individual churches, I hypothesize that Catholics will be the ones most likely to see the mandate as a transgression against their religion. While I do not believe that evangelical Protestants will have heard about the mandate more than mainline Protestants have, I do believe that they will be more likely to oppose the contraceptive mandate on the grounds that it was conceived by the Obama administration, a fact that will lead evangelicals, considered a major segment of the Republican base (Flanigan, Zingale, Theiss-Morse, & Wagner, 2015), to oppose such a policy.

Data & Methods

To test my hypotheses, I gathered data via a couple different means. The first way was to collect primary data through semi-structured interviews with clergy from select Christian denominations throughout Montgomery County, Ohio. Montgomery County represents an ideal place to conduct interviews because it contains an urban center

(Dayton) as well as suburban and rural areas. I chose six Christian denominations as displayed in Table 1.

The denominations were selected primarily according to church structure. They were also chosen due to their substantial presence in Montgomery County according to a 2010 report prepared by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, located on the website for the Association of Religious Data Archives (http://thearda.com/). The Assemblies of God and the Church of the Nazarene were chosen as the decentralized churches, the Southern Baptist Convention and the United Church of Christ to represent the moderately centralized polities, and the Episcopal and Catholic Churches for their centralized structures (Sullins, 2004). The original target was to obtain interviews with three clergy from each of the six denomination across the three geographical contexts: urban, inner suburban, and outer suburban/rural. I was successful in achieving three interviews for four of the six denominations, with the Assemblies of God and the Church of the Nazarene being the exceptions with two interviews each. Clergy were contacted through email and telephone calls and asked to participate in interviews where their personal and church identities would be kept confidential. As such, only descriptive terms will be used to refer to any remarks or quotes they made in this paper. The nonresponse rate was rather substantial, as most emails were ignored and many phone calls failed to reach anyone, though few pastors made outright rejections. Of those who agreed to participate, all were white and one was female. The interviews were semi-structured. The clergy were all asked the same nineteen questions as they appear in Appendix B, though I frequently asked follow-up questions to allow for elaboration on anything of interest to the project. The interviews started out with generic questions about

Table 1: Description of Churches Chosen for Interviews

Denomination	*Tradition **	*Polity/Structure #*	*Clergy Interviewed*
Assemblies of God	Evangelical	Decentralized	2
Church of the Nazarene	Evangelical	Decentralized	2
Southern Baptist Convention	Evangelical	Moderately Centralized	3
United Church of Christ	Mainline	Moderately Centralized	3
Episcopal Church	Mainline	Most Centralized	3
Catholic Church	Catholic	Most Centralized	3

* Pew Research Center (2015)
# Sullins (2014)

the pastor's or priest's personal story before seguing into questions regarding the relationship between religion and politics, all of which led into questions with respect to contraception and the contraceptive mandate before ending with questions on the demographics of the church location.

The second manner in which I obtained data was through secondary analysis of the February 2012 Political Survey from the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press which asked respondents about their beliefs on a variety of issues. This study analyzes the responses to those questions about the morality of contraception and the contraceptive mandate (see Appendix C). I utilized descriptive statistics and significance tests to find differences between Catholics, evangelical Protestants, and mainline Protestants on their responses to these questions. I further constructed binary logistic regression models to predict those beliefs among the full sample (N = 1501) as well as Catholics only (N = 337). This regression technique is the appropriate model when the dependent variable is binary with 1/0 values. For example, a "yes" to the question of whether contraception is immoral is assigned a "1" while a "no" is assigned a "0".

Findings & Results

Analysis of Interviews

Of the sixteen clergy interviewed, fourteen approved of discussing political issues from the pulpit and have done so themselves, confirming the findings of Verba et al. (2011) and Djupe and Calfano (2014). However, it should be noted that half of them qualified their affirmative responses by injecting that they talk about political issues from a moral or ethical standpoint or in light of what the Bible says rather than by embracing an explicit political posture.

Only the three Catholic priests believed that contraception was immoral, a position supporting their denomination's teaching. All thirteen Protestant pastors considered contraceptive use to be morally acceptable or not a moral issue. In spite of this fact, ten of them joined their Catholic counterparts in supporting a religious exemption from the contraceptive mandate.

The Catholic priests were all contacted fervently by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (the jurisdiction of which extends to the Dayton area) in the midst of the Catholic Church's fight against the contraceptive mandate in 2012. They were highly encouraged to preach against the mandate in their homilies during Sunday Mass. All three of them told me that they did not specifically discuss the mandate from the pulpit, instead opting to make references to "religious freedom".

Perhaps the most interesting discovery that came out of my interviews was among the Protestant pastors. With regards to the ten who sympathized with the Catholic Church on the contraceptive mandate, seven did not even mention the topic in church. Like the

Catholic priests, the three who did bother to address the issue did not specifically talk about the mandate but did make allusions to religious freedom.

Analysis of Survey Data

Turning to the results from the Pew Research February 2012 Political Survey, Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for Catholics and the full sample with respect to their views on the morality of contraceptive use, how much they have heard about the mandate, and their support for religious exemption from the mandate. Nearly one in five Catholics believe that contraception is morally wrong (this proportion increases to nearly three in ten when those who do not view contraception as a moral issue are filtered out). Among the full sample, only 8% believe contraception to be morally wrong (16% for those who consider it a moral issue). These percentages are reduced to 6% and 11% when Catholics are removed. The differences for the morality of contraception are statistically significant to the 0.001 level. Less of a discrepancy is seen for responses to questions regarding hearing "a lot" about the mandate and supporting religious exemption. Almost two-thirds of Catholics have heard about the mandate compared to just under 60% for the full sample, while almost two-thirds of Catholics support religious exemption from the contraceptive mandate compared to just under 60% of the full sample. The full sample percentages are reduced to 55% for hearing about the mandate and 54% for support of religious exemption when Catholics are removed. The differences to these two questions are also significant, but not as much as the previous two questions. A noteworthy finding from this table is that only one-third of Catholics said that their priest discussed the mandate from the pulpit.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for All Dependent and Independent Variables with Differences between Catholics and the Full Sample

	Full Sample				*Catholics Only (N=337)*				
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Range	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Range	N	*t*
Dependent Variables									
Contraception morally wrong	0.08	-	0-1	1429	0.18	-	0-1	320	**5.281*** **
Contraception morally wrong (only if seen as a moral issue)	0.16	-	0-1	757	0.29	-	0-1	191	**5.112*** **
Heard "a lot" about the mandate	0.57	-	0-1	1042	0.62	-	0-1	236	**1.906‡**
Support religious exemption	0.56	-	0-1	958	0.63	-	0-1	224	**2.417***
Independent Variables									
Age	51.85	17.61	18-89	1472	50.80	17.81	18-89	330	-
Female	0.51	-	0-1	1501	0.52	-	0-1	337	-
Income	4.89	0.500	1-8	1342	4.98	2.147	1-8	303	-
Education	3.15	1.212	1-5	1494	3.13	1.287	1-5	337	-
White	0.81	-	0-1	1472	0.81	-	0-1	334	-
Black	0.11	-	0-1	1472	0.05	-	0-1	334	-
Hispanic	0.04	-	0-1	1472	0.10	-	0-1	334	-
Other race	0.04	-	0-1	1472	0.04	-	0-1	334	-
Urban residence	0.30	-	0-1	1501	0.34	-	0-1	337	-
Suburban residence	0.46	-	0-1	1501	0.48	-	0-1	337	-
Rural residence	0.19	-	0-1	1501	0.12	-	0-1	337	-
Conservativism	3.16	1.009	1-5	1428	3.18	0.892	1-5	325	-
GOP	0.30	-	0-1	1481	0.32	-	0-1	330	-
Church attendance	3.66	1.625	1-6	1486	3.99	1.382	1-6	336	-
Priest discussed mandate	-	-	-	-	0.32	-	0-1	242	-
Catholic	0.22	-	0-1	1501	-	-	-	-	-
Evangelical Protestant	0.28	-	0-1	1501	-	-	-	-	-
Mainline Protestant	0.21	-	0-1	1501	-	-	-	-	-
Jewish	0.02	-	0-1	1501	-	-	-	-	-
Eastern Tradition	0.01	-	0-1	1501	-	-	-	-	-
Other Religious Tradition	0.04	-	0-1	1501	-	-	-	-	-
No Religious Tradition	0.21	-	0-1	1501	-	-	-	-	-

NOTES: Significance levels: ‡ 0.10; * 0.05; ** 0.01; *** 0.001. Significant *t* statistics in **bold**. Test compares means for Catholics and non-Catholics. Means for dummy (0-1) variables indicate proportion taking a value of "1." Data source: Pew Research Center Political Survey, Feb. 2012.

Table 3 compares the differences of both evangelical Protestants and mainline Protestants on these questions to Catholics. Catholics were more likely than both evangelical and mainline Protestants to believe contraceptive use was morally wrong, and the differences were all statistically significant. When it came to hearing about the mandate, 56% of mainline Protestants had heard "a lot" about, just more than the half of evangelicals who did. However, only the difference between Catholics and evangelical Protestants was significant. Seven in ten evangelicals supported religious exemption from the mandate, which was surprisingly greater than the 63% of Catholics. Not quite as surprising was that barely over half of mainline Protestants supported exemption. Only the difference between Catholics and mainline Protestants was significant though.

Table 4 presents binary logistic regressions predicting the belief that contraceptive use is morally wrong among the sample respondents, with Table 5 doing so only among those who considered contraceptive use a moral issue. Both tables show similar results. Political conservatism was significant in predicting the belief that contraceptive use is morally wrong among the full sample and also for the Catholics alone. Church attendance was also a significant factor in predicting this belief. Contrarily, being an evangelical or a mainline Protestant was significant in predicting the belief that contraceptive use was *not* morally wrong (when compared to the reference category, Catholics). As Table 4 shows, being a Catholic female is a significant (but only at the 0.10 level) negative predictor of the belief that contraceptive use is morally wrong, but this factor does not retain its significance when those who do not consider contraceptive use to be a moral issue are

Table 3: Differences on Dependent Variables between Catholics and Evangelical and Mainline Protestants

	Catholics	*Evangelical Protestants*	Versus Catholics	*Mainline Protestants*	Versus Catholics
	Mean	Mean	*t*	Mean	*t*
Dependent Variables					
Contraception morally wrong	0.18	0.10	**-2.999****	0.03	**-6.127*****
Contraception morally wrong (only if seen as a moral issue)	0.29	0.16	**-3.269****	0.06	**-5.956*****
Heard "a lot" about the mandate	0.62	0.51	**-2.538***	0.56	-1.286
Support religious exemption	0.63	0.70	1.590	0.52	**-2.244***

NOTES: Significance levels: * 0.05; ** 0.01; *** 0.001. Significant *t* statistics in **bold**. Tests compare means for Catholics with Evangelical Protestants and Mainline Protestants, respectively. Means for dummy (0-1) variables indicate proportion taking a value of "1." Data source: Pew Research Center Political Survey, Feb. 2012.

Table 4: Binary Logistic Regressions Predicting the Belief that Contraceptive Use is Morally Wrong

	Full Sample		*Catholics Only*	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Age	0.003	-0.001	-0.001	-0.015
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Female	-0.128	-0.343	**-0.622‡**	**-0.774‡**
	(0.223)	(0.237)	**(0.374)**	**(0.401)**
Income	-0.022	-0.046	-0.006	0.004
	(0.062)	(0.067)	(0.106)	(0.109)
Education	-0.126	**-0.220***	0.081	-0.050
	(0.106)	**(0.113)**	(0.175)	(0.185)
Black	0.573	**0.775‡**	-19.330	-19.304
	(0.378)	**(0.411)**	(10334.135)	(9877.965)
Hispanic	**0.954‡**	0.204	-0.420	-0.840
	(0.501)	(0.531)	(0.740)	(0.748)
Other race	**0.987***	**0.955‡**	0.801	0.226
	(0.483)	**(0.546)**	(0.860)	(0.883)
Suburban residence	-0.008	0.118	-0.046	-0.072
	(0.252)	(0.270)	(0.401)	(0.437)
Rural residence	0.145	0.470	0.664	0.836
	(0.302)	(0.327)	(0.537)	(0.590)
Conservativism	**0.770*****	**0.740*****	**1.359*****	**1.120*****
	(0.141)	**(0.157)**	**(0.263)**	**(0.285)**
GOP	**0.521***	**0.566***	0.224	0.321
	(0.256)	**(0.274)**	(0.394)	(0.425)
Church attendance	-	**0.550*****	-	**0.882*****
		(0.111)		**(0.216)**
Evangelical Protestant	-	**-1.621*****	-	-
		(0.297)		
Mainline Protestant	-	**-1.813*****	-	-
		(0.419)		
Jewish	-	0.051	-	-
		(0.827)		
Eastern Tradition	-	-1.167	-	-
		(1.130)		
Other Religious Tradition	-	**-2.220***	-	-
		(0.770)		
No Religious Tradition	-	**-1.701‡**	-	-
		(0.646)		
Intercept	**-5.105*****	**-5.758*****	**-6.275*****	**-8.204*****
	(0.754)	**(0.883)**	**(1.306)**	**(1.494)**
N	1204	1109	274	274
χ^2	65.172***	150.224***	52.323***	75.234***
	(df=11)	(df=18)	(df=11)	(df=12)
Nagelkerke Pseudo R^2	0.122	0.272	0.287	0.397

NOTES: Binary logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. A score of "1" on the dependent variable denotes that respondent believes contraception is morally wrong (versus "0" for respondent believing contraception to be either morally acceptable in some or all instances or not a moral issue). Omitted reference categories: male, white, urban residence, Democrat/Independent, and Catholics (latter for models 1 and 2). Significance levels: ‡ 0.10; * 0.05; ** 0.01; *** 0.001. Significant predictors in **bold**. Data source: Pew Research Center Political Survey, Feb. 2012.

Table 5: Binary Logistic Regressions Predicting the Belief that Contraceptive Use is Morally Wrong Among Those Who Believe Contraception is a Moral Issue (Reduced Sample)

	Full Sample		*Catholics Only*	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Age	0.000	-0.003	-0.002	-0.017
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Female	-0.113	-0.325	-0.517	-0.635
	(0.237)	(0.257)	(0.425)	(0.461)
Income	0.019	-0.031	0.003	-0.014
	(0.068)	(0.074)	(0.119)	(0.123)
Education	-0.146	**-0.246***	0.092	-0.022
	(0.113)	**(0.123)**	(0.201)	(0.215)
Black	0.414	**0.743‡**	-19.773	-19.738
	(0.394)	**(0.437)**	(14072.044)	(13204.623)
Hispanic	**0.891‡**	0.235	-0.356	-0.854
	(0.530)	(0.566)	(0.802)	(0.811)
Other race	**1.050***	**1.091‡**	1.352	0.545
	(0.528)	**(0.649)**	(1.324)	(1.286)
Suburban residence	0.106	0.273	-0.032	-0.083
	(0.270)	(0.296)	(0.452)	(0.502)
Rural residence	0.256	**0.648‡**	0.735	1.029
	(0.321)	**(0.355)**	(0.612)	(0.682)
Conservativism	**0.685‡**	**0.673*****	**1.293*****	**1.049*****
	(0.150)	**(0.171)**	**(0.299)**	**(0.321)**
GOP	**0.501*****	**0.616***	0.287	0.387
	(0.271)	**(0.295)**	(0.436)	(0.478)
Church attendance	-	**0.539*****	-	**0.860*****
		(0.114)		**(0.219)**
Evangelical Protestant	-	**-1.782*****	-	-
		(0.331)		
Mainline Protestant	-	**-1.779*****	-	-
		(0.440)		
Jewish	-	-0.290	-	-
		(0.877)		
Eastern Tradition	-	-1.238	-	-
		(1.284)		
Other Religious Tradition	-	**-2.181****	-	-
		(0.809)		
No Religious Tradition	-	**-1.213‡**	-	-
		(0.671)		
Intercept	**-4.154*****	**-4.823*****	**-5.488*****	**-7.151*****
	(0.780)	**(0.921)**	**(1.389)**	**(1.537)**
N	634	631	162	162
χ^2	49.808***	119.029***	41.502***	62.249***
	(df=11)	(df=18)	(df=11)	(df=12)
Nagelkerke Pseudo R^2	0.130	0.297	0.321	0.454

NOTES: Binary logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. A score of "1" on the dependent variable denotes that respondent believes contraception is morally wrong (versus "0" for respondent believing contraception to be moral in some or all circumstances). Omitted reference categories: male, white, urban residence, Democrat/Independent, and Catholics (latter for models 1 and 2). Significance levels: ‡ 0.10; * 0.05; ** 0.01; *** 0.001. Significant predictors in **bold**. Data source: Pew Research Center Political Survey, Feb. 2012.

filtered out. The model as a whole performs better for Catholics only, as evidenced by the higher pseudo R-square statistics.

Table 6 contains regression results predicting whether a respondent heard “a lot” about the contraceptive mandate. The most noticeable factor that sticks out is education. The more education that one has received, the more likely that individual is to have heard “a lot” about the mandate. Church attendance is significant to the 0.10 level for Catholics for Model 4, but it loses its significance when the “Priest discussed mandate” question is taken into account in Model 5 and becomes significant to the 0.10 level. One other thing of note is that being Hispanic is negatively significant across the full spectrum in determining whether one has heard about the mandate.

Finally, Table 7 displays the factors predicting the belief that religiously affiliated institutions should be granted an exemption from the contraceptive mandate. Unfortunately, whether one’s priest discussed the mandate had no significant effect on Catholic support for exemption. Church attendance, while significant for the full sample, is only significant (at the 0.10 level) for Catholics without factoring in their priest’s messaging. It is interesting though that political conservatism and identification with the Republican Party are positively linked with support for religious exemption. Another noteworthy point is that being female negatively impacts one’s support for exemption.

Table 6: Binary Logistic Regressions Predicting Whether the Respondent Heard "A Lot" About the Contraceptive Mandate

	Full Sample		*Catholics Only*		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Age	0.005	0.006	0.017	0.015	0.021
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.015)
Female	-0.196	-0.190	-0.116	-0.188	-0.287
	(0.152)	(0.155)	(0.355)	(0.360)	(0.458)
Income	**0.132***	**0.122***	0.006	0.004	0.149
	(0.042)	**(0.043)**	(0.102)	(0.103)	(0.124)
Education	**0.460*****	**0.479*****	**0.822*****	**0.815*****	**0.813*****
	(0.073)	**(0.075)**	**(0.180)**	**(0.181)**	**(0.218)**
Black	**-0.682***	**-0.651***	-0.800	-0.832	-0.934
	(0.275)	**(0.290)**	(0.851)	(0.857)	(1.083)
Hispanic	**-0.947‡**	**-0.996‡**	**-2.551***	**-2.780***	**-2.471***
	(0.526)	**(0.533)**	**(1.190)**	**(1.239)**	**(1.232)**
Other race	**-1.241***	**-1.177****	-1.140	-1.437	**-2.212***
	(0.411)	**(0.432)**	(0.903)	(0.925)	**(1.078)**
Suburban residence	-0.042	-0.042	0.097	0.016	-0.136
	(0.167)	(0.170)	(0.371)	(0.378)	(0.491)
Rural residence	**0.442***	**0.458***	1.009	0.987	0.830
	(0.224)	**(0.227)**	(0.628)	(0.633)	(0.841)
Conservativism	0.040	0.044	**0.511***	0.371	0.080
	(0.086)	(0.093)	**(0.230)**	(0.246)	(0.315)
GOP	0.198	0.196	-0.157	-0.165	-0.006
	(0.185)	(0.190)	(0.386)	(0.389)	(0.489)
Church attendance	-	0.064	-	**0.241‡**	-0.113
		(0.059)		**(0.135)**	(0.303)
Priest discussed mandate	-	-	-	-	**1.001‡**
					(0.540)
Evangelical Protestant	-	-0.291	-	-	-
		(0.221)			
Mainline Protestant	-	-0.363	-	-	-
		(0.232)			
Jewish	-	-0.652	-	-	-
		(0.462)			
Eastern Tradition	-	-0.304	-	-	-
		(0.720)			
Other Religious Tradition	-	**-1.014****	-	-	-
		(0.376)			
No Religious Tradition	-	0.172	-	-	-
		(0.267)			
Intercept	**-2.185*****	**-2.336*****	**-4.684*****	**-4.903*****	**-3.529*****
	(0.494)	**(0.559)**	**(1.313)**	**(1.330)**	**(1.845)**
N	881	877	202	202	147
χ^2	125.390***	137.252***	56.361***	59.568***	50.744***
	(df=11)	(df=18)	(df=11)	(df=12)	(df=13)
Nagelkerke Pseudo R^2	0.179	0.195	0.333	0.349	0.407

NOTES: Binary logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. A score of "1" on the dependent variable denotes that respondent heard a lot about the contraceptive mandate (versus "0" for hearing little about the mandate). Omitted reference categories: male, white, urban residence, Democrat/Independent, and Catholics (latter for models 1 and 2). Significance levels: ‡ 0.10; * 0.05; ** 0.01; *** 0.001. Significant predictors in **bold**. Data source: Pew Research Center Political Survey, Feb. 2012.

Table 7: Binary Logistic Regressions Predicting Belief that Religiously Affiliated Institutions Should Be Given Exemption from the Contraceptive Mandate

	Full Sample		*Catholics Only*		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Age	0.008	0.007	0.007	0.005	0.007
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.016)
Female	**-0.426****	**-0.515***	**-0.633‡**	**-0.705***	**-0.874‡**
	(0.166)	**(0.172)**	**(0.345)**	**(0.352)**	**(0.464)**
Income	-0.045	-0.047	-0.125	-0.123	-0.033
	(0.047)	(0.049)	(0.100)	(0.101)	(0.129)
Education	**0.221****	**0.217****	0.213	0.193	0.115
	(0.080)	**(0.082)**	(0.158)	(0.161)	(0.204)
Black	-0.430	**-0.799****	-0.022	-0.012	1.601
	(0.296)	**(0.310)**	(0.829)	(0.843)	(1.392)
Hispanic	-0.705	**-0.921‡**	-0.731	-0.856	-0.419
	(0.524)	**(0.530)**	(0.778)	(0.787)	(0.916)
Other race	-0.113	-0.075	1.394	1.128	1.705
	(0.426)	(0.469)	(1.259)	(1.256)	(1.392)
Suburban residence	0.182	0.144	0.441	0.353	**0.904‡**
	(0.182)	(0.187)	(0.356)	(0.362)	**(0.494)**
Rural residence	0.296	0.243	0.143	0.090	0.729
	(0.249)	(0.257)	(0.554)	(0.561)	(0.726)
Conservativism	**0.868*****	**0.739*****	**0.980*****	**0.822*****	**1.334*****
	(0.105)	**(0.111)**	**(0.236)**	**(0.250)**	**(0.355)**
GOP	**0.922*****	**0.811*****	**0.704‡**	**0.723‡**	**1.051‡**
	(0.207)	**(0.213)**	**(0.394)**	**(0.398)**	**(0.542)**
Church attendance	-	**0.275*****	-	**0.246‡**	0.377
		(0.066)		**(0.129)**	(0.270)
Priest discussed mandate	-	-	-	-	-0.212
					(0.507)
Evangelical Protestant	-	-0.037	-	-	-
		(0.248)			
Mainline Protestant	-	-0.380	-	-	-
		(0.246)			
Jewish	-	-0.657	-	-	-
		(0.511)			
Eastern Tradition	-	**-1.759***	-	-	-
		(0.893)			
Other Religious Tradition	-	0.037	-	-	-
		(0.427)			
No Religious Tradition	-	0.043	-	-	-
		(0.281)			
Intercept	**-3.596*****	**-3.810*****	**-3.207****	**-3.417****	**-6.373*****
	(0.572)	**(0.639)**	**(1.192)**	**(1.217)**	**(1.905)**
N	824	821	197	197	142
χ^2	223.426***	252.404***	38.717***	42.442***	41.003***
	(df=11)	(df=18)	(df=11)	(df=12)	(df=13)
Nagelkerke Pseudo R^2	0.318	0.355	0.243	0.264	0.350

NOTES: Binary logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. A score of "1" on the dependent variable denotes that respondent is in favor of an exemption (versus "0" for being in favor of requiring religiously affiliated businesses to cover contraceptives). Omitted reference categories: male, white, urban residence, Democrat/Independent, and Catholics (latter for models 1 and 2). Significance levels: ‡ 0.10; * 0.05; ** 0.01; *** 0.001. Significant predictors in **bold**. Data source: Pew Research Center Political Survey, Feb. 2012.

Discussion

Looking at the perspectives of both clergy and laity has revealed some interesting features. There is little support for my first hypothesis. Outside of the three Catholic priests, there was no correlation between church polity and whether or not a pastor preached on the mandate (or referenced religious freedom in the context of the mandate). My second hypothesis does not hold up well either, again with the exception of the Catholic priests. Seven of the ten Protestant pastors who favored religious exemption did not speak out on the issue during church services. The three clergymen who did not favor religious exemption from the mandate were the urban and inner suburban UCC pastors and the urban Episcopal rector – all leaders in the more liberal denominations in the study. Ironically enough, the urban Episcopal rector was the only clergyperson interviewed who admitted to publicly talking about the mandate by name in church, doing so to assure his congregants that it was not forcing anyone to use birth control.

Why then did seven of ten Protestant pastors who aligned with the Catholic Church in supporting religious exemption from the contraceptive mandate not bother to address the issue from the pulpit? While they themselves did not have any moral objections to contraceptive use, they certainly understood the Catholic Church's position and believed that Catholic-affiliated businesses should not be forced by the government to cover contraception. I asked all the clergy about their thoughts regarding the phrase "separation between church and state." Eight of them understood it as a measure protecting the church from the state. The urban and inner suburban UCC pastors understood it as protecting the government from religious influence, and the remaining six clergymen thought of it as protecting both church and state. Three even mentioned

Jefferson's letter from which the phrase originates. Five of the seven Protestant pastors who supported exemption but did not address the topic from the pulpit were of the understanding that this separation is more protective of the state. So, if they were of the opinion that the government shouldn't have intruded on the Catholic Church, why did they not speak out during church services?

The answer lies in a pastor's concern for his congregation. The inner suburban Episcopal rector I interviewed told me that the issue "wasn't important enough" for his congregation. The inner suburban Baptist pastor said that it was "not applicable to the congregation." Though he said that talking about political issues was permissible for clergy, the outer suburban Baptist pastor said that in doing so they risk alienating people. Even the inner suburban UCC pastor who opposed religious exemption from the mandate said he did not talk about it from the pulpit in part because he did not want to risk alienating his conservative, Republican members.

This concept of risk is a reality touched upon by Crawford and Olson (2001). It is especially appropriate for Protestant pastors, who are hired into their positions by the local church. Eleven of the thirteen Protestant pastors I talked to obtained their current positions in such a way (the two exceptions were one who started the church and one who was placed by a district superintendent). Even the Episcopal rectors were approved by the vestry, a board of lay people in the church location. In a sense, these pastors are accountable to the congregation. The Catholic priests, on the other hand, were given their placement by the Archbishop of Cincinnati via the recommendation of the Priest Personnel Board. They are much more accountable to their superiors versus the lay members of their parish.

Tenets of the denominations are also in play. Protestant denominations have a greater focus on the laity and the "priesthood of all believers". One Assemblies of God pastor, in explaining why he did not preach about the mandate even though he supported religious exemption, said, "If we preach God's Word, most people will make their own decision." The belief that the individual can interpret the Bible for oneself gives pastors a reason (or maybe an excuse) to avoid discussing subjects that ignite controversy. Catholic priests have no such luxury. Their authority is derived from above, and they pledge obedience to their bishops. They are thus given a greater incentive to conform to and uphold church teaching. The Episcopal Church, despite its centralized structure, gives more power to the local congregation than to its bishops. The outer suburban Episcopal rector I spoke to said, "At the end of the day, the bishop can't make me preach on a topic."

Examination of the Pew Research survey reveals that involvement within church can be significant in influencing political attitudes, but maybe not to the degree that other factors are. A higher education level was more significant in determining one's knowledge about the contraceptive mandate than was church attendance. Educated individuals are more likely to follow news and current events, so they may not have needed their church to become aware of the mandate. My third hypothesis has support to an extent. The statistics show that Catholics were more likely to have heard about the mandate than mainline Protestants, who were more likely to have heard about it than evangelicals, although only the difference between Catholics and evangelicals was significant. The regression models suggest that church attendance may not have a great deal of significance, but it does have some nonetheless.

It was also discovered that political ideology and party affiliation were more important than religious affiliation and behavior in determining support for religious exemption from the mandate. This may explain why the regression model shows that evangelicals support religious exemption at a higher rate than do Catholics. Republicans and conservatives are prone to reject everything and anything that has President Obama's name written over it, which can include the contraceptive mandate that was born out of the Affordable Care Act. Since evangelicals are a part of the GOP base, it is no wonder that they would dislike the mandate as the model suggests. However, it should be noted that only the difference between Catholics and mainline Protestants was significant. (In Table 7, even mainline Protestants do not differ significantly from Catholics once other factors are controlled. Only the amalgamation of Eastern traditions are significantly lower than Catholics.) In any case, my final hypothesis has little support. Furthermore, this study shows that church attendance does provide exposure to political messages, but its influence on shaping opinions is minimal.

Conclusion

There are several limitations to this project. It covers only one policy issue to measure the effect of church influence on political attitude. Another drawback is the small sample of clergy who were interviewed to obtain data. It is certainly not representative of the clergy population in the United States. Moreover, the clergy interviewed are all from a single county in the Midwest. Differences in clerical attitudes towards politics may exist depending on the region of the U.S. in which they are found. Additionally, the quantitative data were gathered from a survey that was carried out in a

single moment of time as tensions regarding the issue under study were flaring up. Opinions change and can change quickly. Given the nearly four year gap between the time the survey was performed and the completion of this analysis, it is very possible that attitudes towards the contraceptive mandate have changed significantly in one direction or another – particularly given the Obama administration's granting of the religious exemption and the Supreme Court's pro-religious freedom decision in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* (2014).

Still, this study does have usefulness. Catholics and evangelicals have come a long way from the days where they were on opposite political sides – as the ethnoreligious model explained. Social issues like abortion, where both groups are largely pro-life, have brought them together into an alliance that was unthinkable just decades ago when John F. Kennedy's Catholic faith was considered a potential liability in his bid for the presidency in 1960. The issue of the contraceptive mandate is unique in the sense that Catholics and evangelicals do not agree on the morality of contraceptive use but can fight together in defense of one another's religious freedom.

It was shown that the church still maintains an influence on aspects of politics and the state. The Catholic Church was ultimately successful in getting religiously-affiliated businesses that object to contraceptive use an exemption from the mandate, though aspects of the Church are still uneasy with the compromise that forces health insurance companies to pay for contraceptives when a religious entity decides to opt-out (Masci, 2015). Moreover, seven of the pastors interviewed said that their church location conducts letter-writing campaigns to influence government policymaking on a variety of issues from homelessness to health care.

Future studies should look more into the effects of clergy influence on shaping individuals' political opinions in addition to how congregants view the appropriateness of their pastor or priest discussing political matters from the pulpit. The intimate settings of the interviews have provided meaningful, insight into the minds of clergy when it comes to approaching political topics from the pulpit. Their responses indicate that care is given to the predispositions of their churchgoers. Scholars have long studied the effectiveness of religious preaching on shaping opinions, but perhaps the opinions of the congregants shape the messages of the clergy more than we know.

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Appendix A

Standing Together for Religious Freedom

An Open Letter to All Americans

We write as an informal and diverse group of religious leaders, theologians, lay practitioners and community servants. We believe the doctrines of our respective faiths require something of us beyond the walls of our churches, synagogues, temples, and other places of worship. Those faith convictions manifest themselves through our daily interactions among family, neighbors, strangers and institutions.

Further, we recognize the United States, at its best, is unique among the nations of the world when it defends the self-evident freedom of all people to exercise their faith according to the dictates of their consciences. This freedom contributes to the vibrancy of our nation. Unfortunately, this delicate liberty of conscience is under threat.

Through its contraceptive coverage mandate, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) continues to breach universal principles affirmed and protected by the U.S. Constitution and other federal laws. While the mandate is a specific offense, it represents a greater fundamental breach of conscience by the federal government. Very simply, HHS is forcing Citizen A, against his or her moral convictions, to purchase a product for Citizen B. The HHS policy is coercive and puts the administration in the position of defining–or casting aside–religious doctrine. This should trouble every American.

Many of the signatories on this letter do not hold doctrinal objections to the use of contraception. Yet we stand united in protest to this mandate, recognizing the encroachment on the conscience of our fellow citizens. Whether or not we agree with the particular conscientious objection is beside the point. HHS continues to deny many Americans the freedom to manifest their beliefs through practice and observance in their daily lives.

The First Amendment states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Free exercise includes the freedom to order one’s life, liberties and pursuits in accordance with his or her convictions. HHS breaches the free exercise clause and federal statutes (passed with broad bipartisan support) by selectively denying some Americans this constitutionally protected right.

Americans afford each other broad liberties with respect to lifestyle choices. However, the federal government has neither a compelling interest nor the appropriate authority to coerce one citizen to fund or facilitate specific lifestyle choices of another. If the federal government can force morally opposed individuals to purchase contraception or abortion-

causing drugs and devices for a third party, what prevents this or future administrations from forcing other Americans to betray their deeply held convictions?

Therefore, we call upon HHS to, at a minimum, expand conscience protections under the mandate to cover any organization or individual that has religious or moral objections to covering, providing or enabling access to the mandated drugs and services. Further, because HHS claims to be acting on authority granted it by Congress, we ask Congress to consider how it might prevent such offenses from occurring in the future. Any policy that falls short of affirming full religious freedom protection for all Americans is unacceptable.

Signed:

Most Rev. William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore
Chairman
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty

Russell D. Moore, Ph.D.
President
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
Southern Baptist Convention

Leith Anderson
President
National Association of Evangelicals

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
Hispanic Evangelical Association

Bishop Gary E. Stevenson
Presiding Bishop
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
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Dr. William J. Hamel
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Bishop Bruce D. Hill
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The Most Rev. Craig W. Bates
Patriarch
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The Christian and Missionary Alliance, U.S.

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Bill Hossler
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Joseph Tkach
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Rocky Rocholl
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John Ashmen
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Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. Why did you decide to become a pastor/priest/preacher?

2. How did you become a pastor/priest/preacher here at your church?

3. Were you given any instructions from your denomination on how to carry out your preaching duties at here as part of your appointment, aside from or after seminary training?
   If so, what were they?

4. How do you decide to preach about a certain subject on a given Sunday/weekend? Are you influenced by news and current events?

   What about your own congregants' interests and requests?

5. Do you ever coordinate with fellow preachers of your own denomination to establish some sort of societal agenda or mission that goes beyond your church walls? [Explain agenda/mission if more details are needed.]
   What about with members of other denominations?

6. Does your church hold events outside of Sunday church services where members can learn about various subjects?

7. To what extent do you think it is permissible for Christian preachers to speak out on political subjects from the pulpit?

8. Have you ever preached on political subjects from the pulpit?

9. What does the "separation between church and state" mean to you?

10. When you preach a sermon, which of the following lettered statements best describes how you view your role: do you (a) seek to make an argument that persuades the congregation to agree with you (or your church's) view on the subject or issue; or (b) seek to provide your congregation with education to help them come to their own views on a subject or issue?
    Why did you choose the letter you did? [If a mix, please describe.]

    Is your answer shaped by your tradition or denomination? How?

11. *I'd like to ask a few questions regarding your tradition's beliefs on a specific issue and connect it to your role as a pastor.*

[For non-Catholic traditions] Does your tradition believe that contraceptive use is:

a. Morally wrong
b. Morally acceptable
c. Not a moral issue

12. Do your views on this issue as a pastor align with your tradition?

13. Were there any kind of notable reactions or discussion among your churchgoers as President Obama's health care reform [the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*, sometimes called *Obamacare*] was signed into law and later implemented?
    If so, can you tell me about these reactions/discussion?

14. *One of the most controversial aspects of President Obama's health care law was the contraceptive mandate, which required businesses, including those owned by religious organizations, to provide contraceptive coverage in their health care insurance plans. When the mandate went into effect in 2012, there was a backlash amongst religious conservatives. The Catholic Church was most noticeably at the forefront of this backlash when it launched a seemingly united effort against the mandate.*
    How much have you heard about this proposed federal requirement?

    a. Nothing at all
    b. A little
    c. A lot

15. Are you aware of an open letter titled “Standing Together for Religious Freedom” that was written by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and signed by advocates of numerous Christian denominations?
[Show printed letter and, if applicable, point out signatories from the clergy member’s own or related denomination/tradition.]
Were you aware that this letter was signed by [named from same tradition]?

16. Do you believe that religiously-affiliated institutions that object to the use of contraceptives be given an exemption?

17. Did you ever preach against the mandate from the pulpit? [If so, please describe the content of your sermons related to this issue. If no, why did you not address this issue from the pulpit?]

[If applicable, if centralized tradition – but ask of others if a clear position was taken]:
Were you instructed to take the public position that you did by a superior (such as your bishop or other representative from your denomination)? Please describe your interaction with your superior(s) on this issue.

[If applicable, if moderately centralized or decentralized tradition]: Are you aware of any efforts by the clergy from your denomination as a whole to combat or support the contraceptive mandate? Were you aware of other preachers in your denomination who preached for or against the mandate from the pulpit?

18. Has your church ever undergone a united effort to influence government policymaking (e.g. sending letters to your congressman or senator)? If so, please describe.
Did your church do so related to healthcare reform? If so, please describe.

19. Finally, can you give me a few details that will help me understand your congregation a bit more? In particular, can you tell me about:

a. The size of your congregation (members and average weekly attendance over the past year)
b. Your perception of the partisan political make-up of your church (e.g., how many Republicans or Democrats would you estimate make up your congregation?).

c. Your perception of the political ideology of your church members (e.g., what share of conservatives and liberals would your estimate make up your congregation?) Would you describe your church as largely conservative, largely moderate, or largely liberal relative to other churches? Is this typical or unusual for your particular tradition?
d. Your perception of your congregants' view of President Obama and his healthcare reform package
e. The [gender/age/education/income] make-up of your church.
[Record any other relevant unique details that emerge about the congregation.]

Appendix C: Pew Research Center February 2012 Political Survey Questions

ASK ALL:
On a different subject…
Q.40 Do you personally believe that **[INSERT ITEM AND RANDOMIZE]** is morally acceptable, morally wrong, or is it not a moral issue. **[IF NECESSARY:]** And is **[INSERT ITEM]** morally acceptable, morally wrong, or is it not a moral issue?

a. Using contraceptives
b. Getting a divorce
c. Having an abortion

RESPONSE OPTIONS
1 Morally acceptable
2 Morally wrong
3 Not a moral issue
4 Depend on situation **(VOL.)**
9 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

ASK ALL:
Q.66 How much, if anything, have you heard about a proposed federal requirement that religiously-affiliated hospitals and colleges, along with nearly all other employers, cover contraceptives in their employee health care benefits, even if the use of contraceptives conflicts with the religious position of these institutions. Have you heard a lot, a little, or nothing at all about this?

1 A lot
2 A little [OR]
3 Nothing at all
9 **[VOL. DO NOT READ]** Don't know/Refused

ASK IF HEARD A LOT OR A LITTLE (Q.66=1-2)
Q.67 Should religiously-affiliated institutions that object to the use of contraceptives be given an exemption from this rule, or should they be required to cover contraceptives like other employers?

1 Should be given an exemption
2 Should be required to cover
3 Other **(VOL.)**
9 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

ASK IF CATHOLIC (RELIG=2) AND CHURCH ATTENDER (ATTEND=1-4):

Q.75 As best you can recall, was the new federal rule requiring contraceptive coverage in health care benefits brought up by your priest or another official at your church over the past few weeks, or not?

1 Yes, issue was brought up
2 No, was not
3 Didn't attend recently **(VOL.)**
9 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**