The Latino Experience at Catholic Parishes in the United States; A Stakeholder Analysis Approach

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Motivation

- *Among U.S. Latinos, Catholicism Continues to Decline but Is Still the Largest Faith*

  Pew Research Center, 2023

- *Hispanic Growth Is Strength but Also Challenge for U.S. Catholic Church*
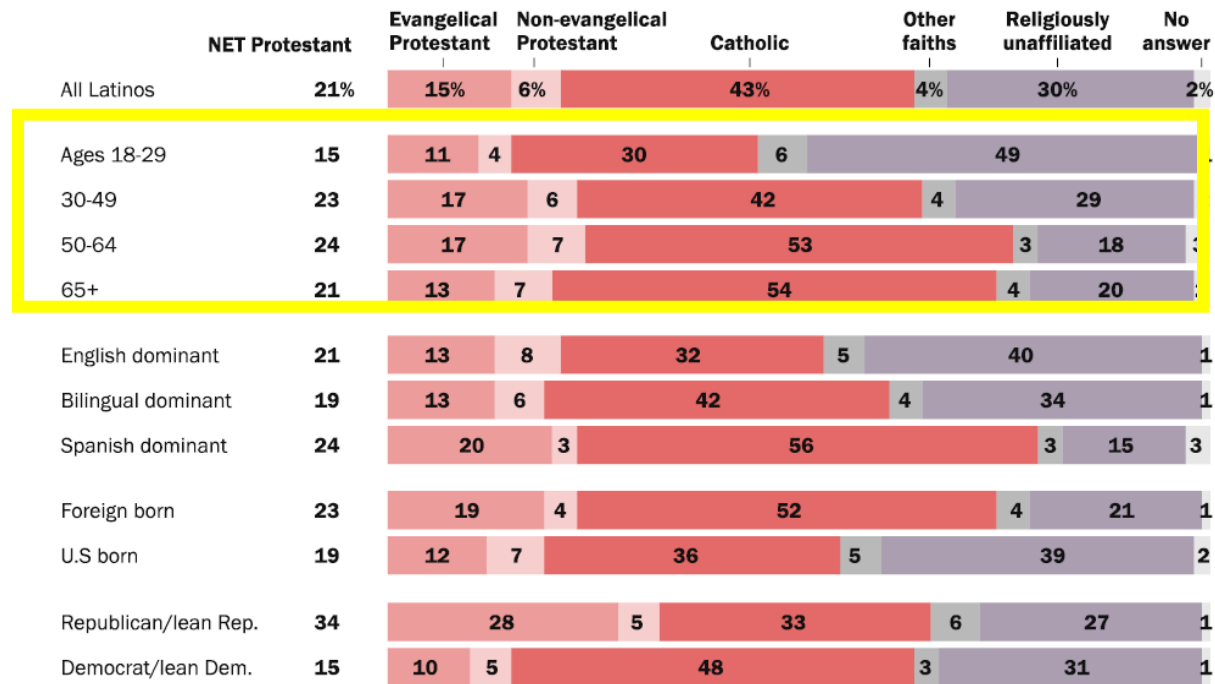
  The New York Times, 2014

- *Latinos may be the 'future' of U.S. Catholic Church*

  CNN, 2009

Motivation

Young U.S. Hispanics are less Catholic and more likely to be religiously unaffiliated than older Hispanics

% of U.S. Latino adults who identify as ...

	NET Protestant	Evangelical Protestant	Non-evangelical Protestant	Catholic	Other faiths	Religiously unaffiliated	No answer
All Latinos	21%	15%	6%	43%	4%	30%	2%
Ages 18-29	15	11	4	30	6	49	
30-49	23	17	6	42	4	29	
50-64	24	17	7	53	3	18	
65+	21	13	7	54	4	20	
English dominant	21	13	8	32	5	40	1
Bilingual dominant	19	13	6	42	4	34	1
Spanish dominant	24	20	3	56	3	15	3
Foreign born	23	19	4	52	4	21	1
U.S born	19	12	7	36	5	39	2
Republican/lean Rep.	34	28	5	33	6	27	1
Democrat/lean Dem.	15	10	5	48	3	31	1

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. Religious affiliation for Latinos is weighted to targets drawn from the 2021 National Public Opinion Reference Survey.
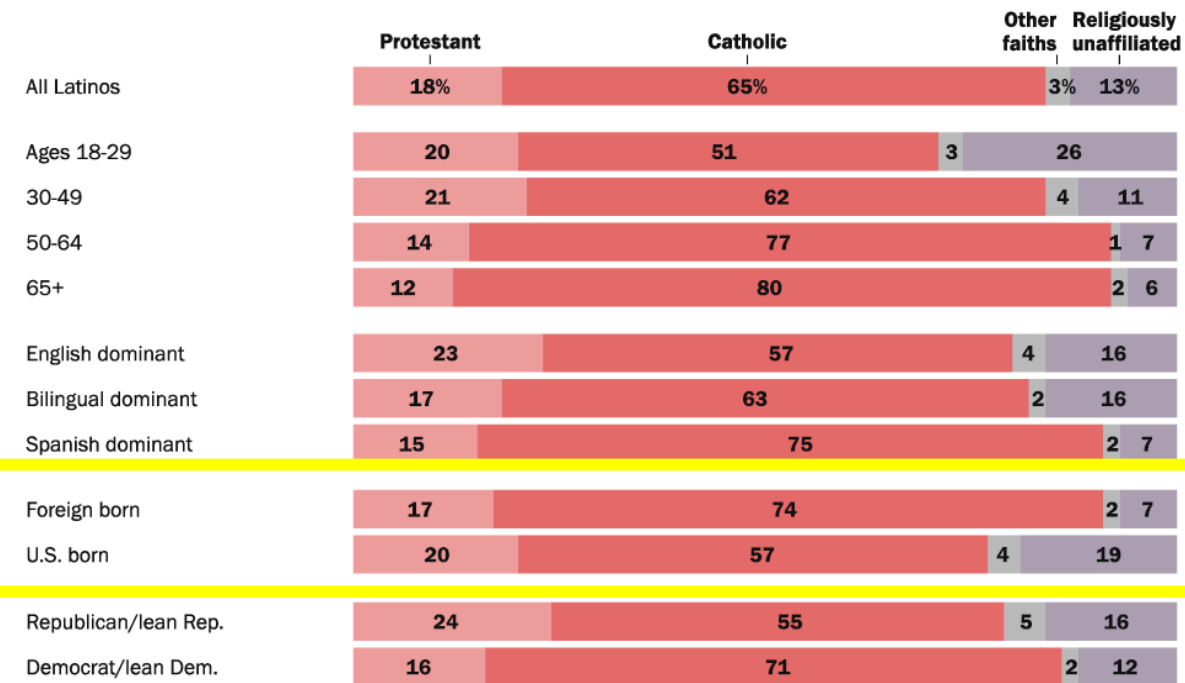Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted Aug. 1-14, 2022.
"Among U.S. Latinos, Catholicism Continues to Decline but Is Still the Largest Faith"

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Motivation

Three-quarters of foreign-born U.S. Latinos were raised Catholic

% of U.S. Latino adults who were raised ...

	Protestant	Catholic	Other faiths	Religiously unaffiliated
All Latinos	18%	65%	3%	13%
Ages 18-29	20	51	3	26
30-49	21	62	4	11
50-64	14	77	1	7
65+	12	80	2	6
English dominant	23	57	4	16
Bilingual dominant	17	63	2	16
Spanish dominant	15	75	2	7
Foreign born	17	74	2	7
U.S. born	20	57	4	19
Republican/lean Rep.	24	55	5	16
Democrat/lean Dem.	16	71	2	12

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown. Protestant respondents are not further divided into evangelical and non-evangelical, because respondents were not asked to report childhood evangelical/born-again status.
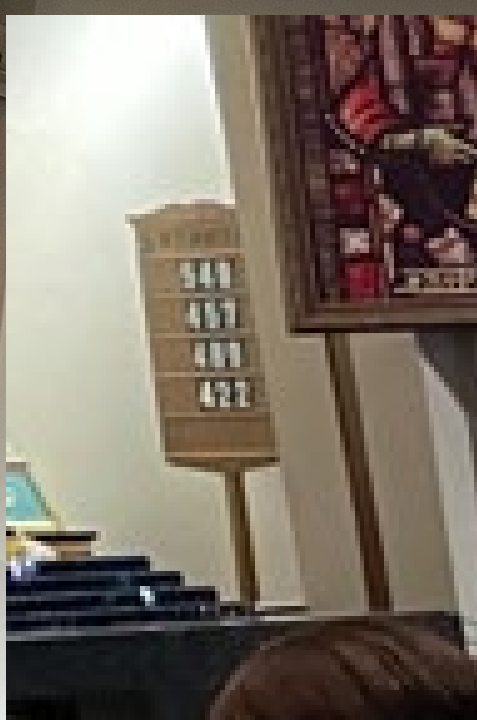Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted Aug. 1-14, 2022.
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Purpose of your study

- This study will contribute to the understating of how Catholic Parishes in the United States can increase their value creation service strategies for Latino Stakeholders.

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Research questions

The study will investigate the following research questions:

- What external context are affecting Latino stakeholders of Catholic parishes?

- What is the (strong/weak) connection of the Latino stakeholders to the services offered by the parishes?

- Which parishes' issues are affecting Latino stakeholders?

- What is the role of Language?

- Which Latino stakeholders' strategies are successful, and which need to the reviewed?

Research Methods

- Field-based case studies allowed us to examine the phenomenon in more detail generating a deeper and more detailed understanding (Eisenhardt, 1989; McCutcheon & Meredith, 1993; Yin, 1994).

To increase the **case variation the study selected:**

- Three different geographies varying in the degree of Latin/Hispanic diversity.

- To generate variation in subjects, I Interviewed seven pastors, one Deacon and twelve parishioners.

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Major Religious Families

BY COUNTIES OF THE UNITED STATES: 2020
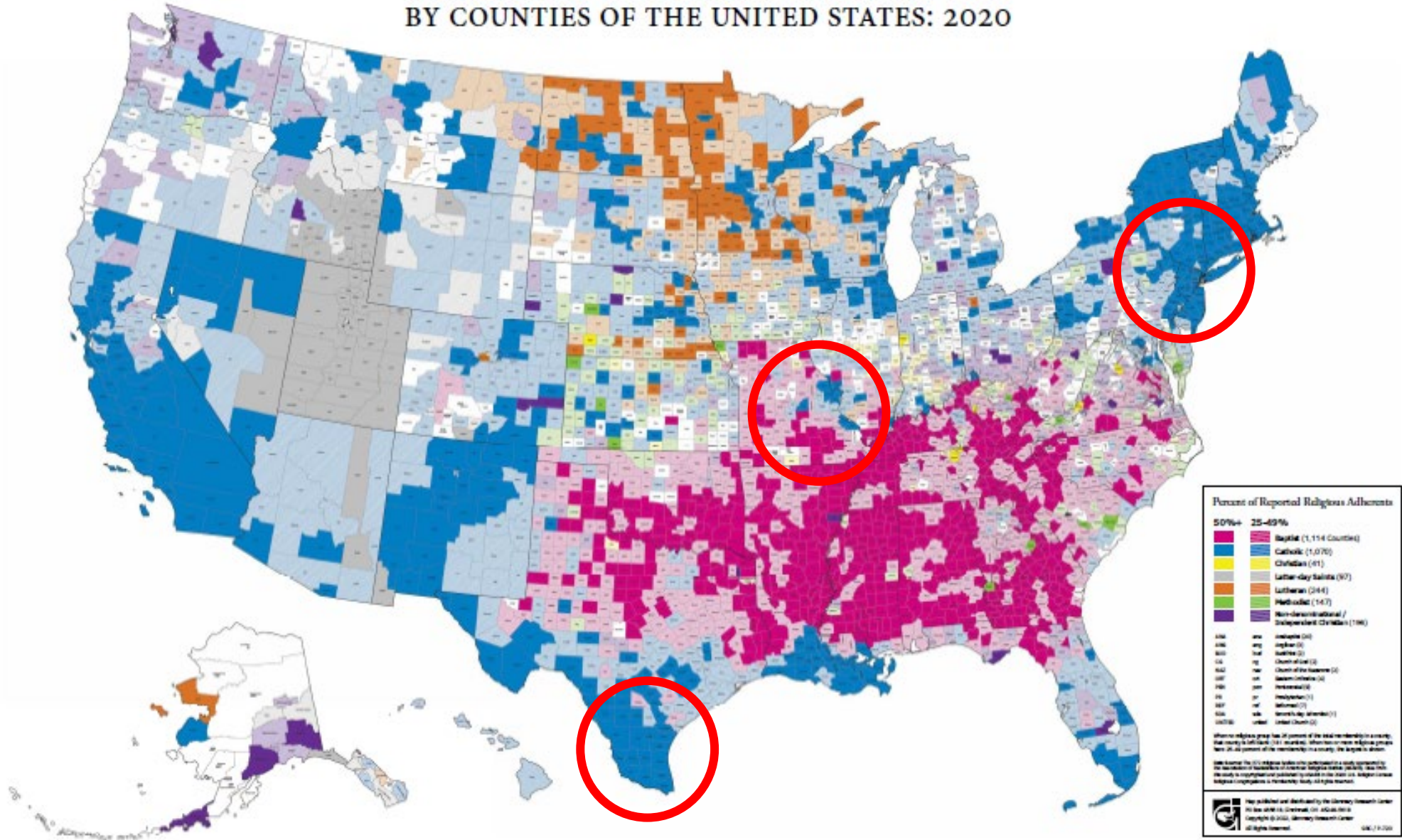
Published and distributed by the Glenmary Research Center.

Participants: Leaders (n=8)

ID	Role	Native speaker	Dominance of Spanish	Context	Ratio of Spanish/English mass	Landing Page Language	Website
Leader1	Pastor	Other	Limited	Rural	1/8	English	Google translate
Leader2	Deacon	Spanish	Fluent	Suburban	7/8	Bilingual	Parallel websites
Leader3	Pastor	Spanish	Fluent	Suburban	1/14	English	English
Leader4	Pastor	Spanish	Fluent	Urban	6/6	Spanish	Spanish
Leader5	Pastor	Spanish	Fluent	Rural	9/9	English	English
Leader6	Pastor	Other	Fluent	Urban	7/8	Bilingual	Mix of languages
Leader7	Pastor	English	Limited	Suburban	0/5	English	English
Leader8	Pastor	English	Limited	Rural	0/12	English	English

Saturation point. Eisenhardt (1989)

Participants: Parishioners (n=12)

ID	Role	Native speaker	Dominance of English	Context	Ratio of Spanish/English mass	Landing Page Language	Website
Parishoner1	Attendee	Spanish	Confort	Rural	1/14	English	English
Parishoner2	Volunteer	Spanish	Limited	Rural	1/14	English	English
Parishoner3	Attendee	Spanish	Limited	Rural	1/14	English	English
Parishoner4	Volunteer	Spanish	Fluent	Suburban	7/8	Bilingual	Parallel websites
Parishoner5	Volunteer	Spanish	Fluent	Suburban	7/8	Bilingual	Parallel websites
Parishoner6	Attendee	Spanish	Fluent	Suburban	7/8	Bilingual	Parallel websites
Parishoner7	Volunteer	Spanish	Fluent	Urban	7/8	Bilingual	Mix of languages
Parishoner8	Volunteer	Spanish	Limited	Urban	7/8	Bilingual	Mix of languages
Parishoner9	Volunteer	Spanish	Limited	Rural	1/8	English	Google translate
Parishoner10	Volunteer	English	Fluent	Suburban	7/8	Bilingual	Parallel websites
Parishoner11	Attendee	Spanish	Limited	Urban	6/6	Spanish	Spanish
Parishoner12	Volunteer	Spanish	Fluent	Urban	6/6	Spanish	Spanish

Saturation point. Eisenhardt (1989)

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Patterns that emerge from the data

- Family Characteristics
- Language
- Customs and habits
- Church Administration
- Non-religious Services

Selected results: Family Characteristics

- *So, I came up with a pastoral plan. Why don't I put together a different catechesis program for them? So, I did.... because their parents were not stable people, they actually work today here, and they are there tomorrow. **(Leader1, direct)***

- *Most of them work in restaurants and, well, that is the excuse for not attending mass. The mass is not in Spanish, it is bilingual on Sundays at 3:00 p.m. and well, most of them cannot because weekends are when they are working. **(Leader3, translation)***

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Findings: Family Characteristics

- Latino family composition is larger on average. Limited access to day care or relatives create an obstacle
- Difficulties attending services due to conflicts with work schedules
  - *27.3 in construction, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (23.1 percent) and leisure and hospitality (22.3 percent). U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014*
- Seasonal/temporary jobs increases mobility of Latinos
- Bicultural marriage/ First-second generations

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Selected results: Language

- *It sort of cuts my inspiration to meditate when there are both languages… perhaps I'm meditating on what the priest is saying in Spanish and he cuts it off and starts saying it in English.* **(Parishoner1, translation)**

- *So they don't speak English, they don't speak Spanish or if they do, they don't speak it very well and that becomes a barrier.* **(Leader3, translation)**

Findings: Language

- Leadership may have different levels of Spanish.
- Many Latino families prefer to worship in Spanish, even when their members are comfortable speaking English.
- For some Latino immigrant, Spanish is their second language. They speak other tradition tongues such as Maya, Seri, Totonac, etc.
- Some families both parents speak Spanish. Some cases, one of the Spouses only speak English.
- There are Latino **Communities**. Latinos from Honduras worship differently that Mexican Latinos.

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Selected results: Customs and habits

- *Our welcoming committee waits at the entrance of mass to guide the newcomers **(Leader2, translation)***

- *There is one meeting a year before the start of the year, the entire calendar is made with the festivities, what are the festivities and every time a festivity is played, all the other groups support that country to celebrate the activity, they are a total union. **(Leader2, translation)***

Findings: Customs and habits

- Many Latino families arrive to the USA with some expectations of the services of a Catholic Church. Goes beyond the language.

- Welcoming "committees" help with the transition of newcomers

- The role of music and singing is different for Latinos.

- Offerings (flowers, candles, etc.) play a different role

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Selected results: Church Administration

- *The parish has 500 registered families. Father John was Hispanic, and he was here for about 34 years. He attracted a lot of Hispanic people to the parish. We were celebrating Spanish masses until he died of cancer about nine years ago.* **(Leader1, translation)**

Findings: Church Administration

- Rotation of pastors should consider if the former pastor was serving the Hispanic population using fluent Spanish.

- Little involvement of Latinos in the steering committees of churches.

- Church's media (websites, bulletins, social media, etc.) have limited information of programs in Spanish.

- On occasions, it feel like running two churches that share the same space.

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Selected results: Non-religious Services

- *The immigration services provided by the Basilica gave us peace and at an affordable rate. They helped us to be "legal" here in the [location]. Now, we know that we can be visible and work in a normal job. We have normal job and feel part of the community.* **(Parishoner 6, translation)**

Findings: Non-religious Services

- Services provided by the church are seeing as honest.
- These communities have been scammed constantly. In many cases is misinformation and fear.
- The churches have different levels of involvement in these services; from allowing the use of the facilities to running the service.

Discussion and conclusion

External context

• Seasonal jobs, industry and schedules

• Family composition

The role of Language

• Historical use of language in a Parish should be taking into account when changing Parish leadership. (If a Parish has a Pastor that serves in Spanish, try to continue the service in Spanish)

• Pair the Spanish proficiency of Pastors to the service

• Use language as an asset. Classes of English/Spanish

Discussion and conclusion

Strong/weak connection of the Latino stakeholders

- Create an inventory of resources or assets (Deacons, Apostol, etc.)

- Guide newcomers on the "customs and habits" of the local mass or service

- Consider family as the "customer"

- There is value in having several **communities** in a Parish. (Incorporating the **communities** have interesting potential)

- Evaluate the need language proficiency for services/events. Create a mix.

Limitations and future directions

Limitations

- Research findings cannot be generalized beyond the sample investigated in this study

- Researcher bias

- Different context or industries

Future directions:

- Unit of analysis: Family? Domestic Church?

- Bilingual services should be evaluated. (The spiritual connection should be evaluated)

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Instrument

General information

1) Size of the parish?

2) How many parishioners speak Spanish/English?

3) How many months/years have you been in this parish?

4) When did you began to observe the influx of Spanish speakers' parishioners?

Stakeholder/ External change Matrix

1) Identify Latino stakeholders and external change that affects the parish.

2) Identify programs or services of the parish for Latinos.

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Questions?

Use the Q&A function to submit any questions you may have.

Follow up with me:
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