VATOS SAGRADOS:
EXPLORING NORTHERN OHIO’S RELIGIOUS BORDERLANDS

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ABSTRACT

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Latinos are transforming the religious landscape of the United States, especially the Catholic Church, due to their rising numbers and distinct forms of religiosity. However, this “browning” of the Catholic Church has not translated into an enhanced ecclesial leadership infrastructure. Perhaps one exception to this pattern has been the emergence of Latino permanent deacons, a relatively unfamiliar story in the life of the U.S. Catholic Church today.

This dissertation seeks to examine and develop the border narratives of a group of Latino permanent deacons from the Toledo, Ohio and Cleveland, Ohio dioceses who trace their family histories to Texas, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. Their stories encompass a complex interweaving of ethnicity, gender, migration, and religion that reveal paradoxical lives across and between structural (socioeconomic/political), discursive (racial, gender/sexual, and religious), and geopolitical boundaries that help advance a Midwestern borderlands framework. The lack of a border narrative in the heartland is consistent with a lack of insufficient research on the Midwestern Latino experience.

The participants in this study were examined using qualitative research methods grounded within a feminist borderlands paradigm, and data collection involved semi-structured interviews with and observations of each participating deacon. Additionally, archival materials were examined and utilized to trace the historical development of a Midwestern borderlands Catholicism in the Cleveland Diocese and Toledo Diocese.
This is dedicated to

my parents, Deacon José Francisco Bautista (April 25, 1939 - May 13, 2001) and Alícia Bautista,

whose love, commitment to education, and faith inspire me daily.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Significance of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Permanent Deacon</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Vatican Council &amp; Restoration of the Diaconate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos and the Diaconate</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework &amp; Methodology</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Study</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW</th>
<th>26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Devil in the Heartland</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Overview</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontier Historicisms</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration Studies</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borderland Theory</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border Writing and Literary Studies</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Men in a Gendered Borderlands</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonialism and Resistance</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Masculinity &amp; Sexuality</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Borderlands Catholicism</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hispanic/Latino Theology ................................................................. 55
Latina Spirituality & Mujerista Theology .................................................. 56
Summary of Literature ........................................................................... 57

CHAPTER III. FACTORIES, FIELDS, AND FAITH IN OHIO:
A NEW BORDERLANDS CATHOLICISM ............................................. 60
The Religious Borderlands of Northern Ohio ........................................ 63
The Devil Dances North: Latina/o Migration to Ohio .......................... 63
Early Missions and Migrant Work ....................................................... 66
Brown Souls and Denominational Boundaries ..................................... 72
Ministering to the Migrant ................................................................. 78
Lay Activism & the Migrant FLOC ..................................................... 82
Faith, Fordism, and Masculinity ......................................................... 88

CHAPTER IV. THE LATINO DEACON MIGRANT IMAGINARY ............. 95
The Serpent’s Forked-Tongue ......................................................... 95
A Midwestern Devil Dance ................................................................. 96
Characteristics of the Northern Ohio Latino Deacon ....................... 98
Narratives of Migration ................................................................. 102
The Texas Migrant Stream ............................................................... 102
Crossing the U.S.-Mexican Border .................................................... 105
Caribbean Transnational Crossings ................................................. 111
Summary ....................................................................................... 115
The Interactional Milieu of the Latino Deacon ............................... 115
Deacons for La Causa ................................................................. 116
Clerical and Parish Boundaries ....................................................... 123
APPENDIX A. INVITATION LETTER ................................................................. 205
APPENDIX B. PARTICIPANT REPLY FORM .................................................. 206
APPENDIX C. LETTER OF INTERVIEW CONFIRMATION .............................. 207
APPENDIX D. CONSENT FORM ................................................................. 208
APPENDIX E. DEACON STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE ....................... 209
APPENDIX F. HSRB FORM ...................................................................... 213

Figure/Table                          Page
1 Interviewed Latino Deacon Demographics .............................................. 98
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

*El Cruzar del Vato*

On July 10, 1982, twenty-two deacons were ordained at Rosary Cathedral in Toledo, Ohio. The group included eight ethnic Mexican men ordained into the Permanent Diaconate, the biggest cohort of Hispanic/Latino deacons in diocesan history. A Catholic permanent deacon is a man at least 35 years of age or older who is ordained into the holy orders, and therefore a cleric by Canon Law, but one who can also marry. Deacons perform a broad range of sacramental ministry including, non-exhaustively, reading the Gospel and delivering homilies, celebrating baptisms, witnessing marriages, and presiding over funerals and burials.

The “Liturgical Planning Sheet” for the ordination reveals a meticulously planned multicultural ceremony. Two diocesan bishops presided - John Anthony Donovan, a Canadian immigrant, and James Robert Hoffman, a native of Fremont, Ohio, home to at one time the largest ketchup producing factory of the H.J. Heinz Company. “The Gospel Deacon” was James Campos, whose name included an “English & Spanish” notation, presumably to highlight his bilingual skills. Deacon Campos (’73) was born Santiago Campos in Saspamco, Wilson County, Texas in 1918. Campos, one of the first two permanent deacons of any ethnicity/race in the Toledo Diocese, was ordained at Saints Peter and Paul Church in South Toledo. In 1963, Saints Peter and Paul absorbed the Mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe, founded in 1927 to serve the migrant families settling in northwest Ohio.

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1 I will use a range of ethno-racial labels to reflect: (a) “Hispanic” as a more commonly used term in the Catholic Church and among Catholic leaders/scholars; “Latino” as a broad panethnic identity term as this study utilizes data from interviews with proportionate numbers of deacons of Puerto Rican and Mexican descent. Latino is also generally considered the preferred term of many Latinos when adopting a panethnic identification of speaking of self and community (Allatson, 2007); and, national origin specific when referencing nationality.

2 Ordination year for deceased deacons will be placed in parentheses following last name. This will not be done with interviewed deacons for the purpose of anonymity.
This ordination ceremony of the 1982 cohort of Latino deacons came nearly thirty years after a letter was sent to diocesan priests in the mid-1950s summarizing “a general discussion of the problems presented by the Mexican migrants in the Diocese of Toledo.”\(^3\) The letter conveyed urgency in gathering all Spanish-speaking personnel for the purpose of “servicing the Mexican migrant families” and countering rather active Protestant ministers. The narrative of this 1982 cohort and of the Latino permanent deacons interviewed for this study suggests that the permanent diaconate was viewed as the way to deal with the ongoing “Latino problem” and the “critical dearth of clergy from within its own ranks.”\(^4\) Yet the fact that the 1984 revision of the guidelines for the permanent diaconate no longer contained specific references to diaconal ministry in Spanish-speaking communities may have signaled that, with this largest class of Latino deacons, the Toledo Latino diaconate had indeed peaked.\(^5\)

The ordination’s “Music during Communion” listed four songs alternately played in English and Spanish, including “Pescador de Hombres” and “Es Mi Cuerpo” performed by “Spanish Folk Group.” A note clarified that Terry Garza, who read the Second Reading, was not the wife of candidate Ignacio Garza. There was indeed attention to gender orderliness as the seventeen permanent deacons, all married with children, were accompanied by their wives. In addition to the seventeen permanent deacons, five transitory deacons – deacons studying for the priesthood – were accompanied by their mothers as the event marked the first time in diocesan history that transitory deacons were ordained alongside permanent deacons.

\(^3\) Monsignor Michael J. Doyle, “Copy of Report on Meeting Re Mexican Migrants Sent to Pastors of the Diocese,” May, 1955, Toledo Diocese Archives.


\(^5\) The 1971 Guidelines includes the section “Diaconal Ministry Needed in Particular Communities,” and contain principles specific to the “Black Community,” “Communities of Spanish-speaking,” “the Rural Community,” and “the College and University Campus Community.” The 1984 and 2005 revisions contain no such sections.
Following the homily, a reminder in the planning sheet stated, “Then those to take commitment to celibacy come forward.” Soon thereafter, all of the deacon candidates proceeded to the bishop one-by-one to take the “Promise of obedience”. In making his promise of respect and obedience to the bishop, the deacon takes as his model Jesus Christ, and formally becomes the link between the lay world and the world of priestly ministry. During the formation program, each permanent deacon had also signed an “Oath of Freedom” in which each declared to “clearly understand all that the law of limited celibacy implies” and to “resolve that, with God’s help, I will fulfill it and keep it in its entirety until death.” For married candidates, the law of limited celibacy reinforces adherence to Catholic orthodoxy in the areas of marriage and sexuality.

The cohort of permanent deacons also received Spanish-language instruction, at times separate from the other non-Hispanic deacon candidates, on Church teachings. Unlike the English version, the Spanish-language training handbook for the Latino deacons (“Guia Para Diáconos Permanentes”) included an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the front cover. Additionally, and absent from the English version, the Spanish handbook included instructions for performing duties for “Quinceañera,” “Posadas,” “Estaciones de la Cruz,” and “Los misterios del rosario.” Notes from a September 1981 planning staff meeting encouraged deacon formation program personnel to “Note the presence of the Hispanic candidates and rejoice over the bi-

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6 According to the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), “In one way or another, celibacy affects every deacon, married or unmarried. Understanding the nature of celibacy—its value and its practice—are essential to the married deacon. Not only does this understanding strengthen and nurture his own commitment to marital chastity, but it also helps to prepare him for the possibility of living celibate chastity should his wife predecease him.” (35). In the case of a widowed deacon, dispensation for new marriage may be granted in extraordinary cases. A widowed deacon may pledge to remain celibate for the pursuit of a call to the priesthood.

7 Oath of Freedom (Permanent Diaconate), Deacon Humberto Puente Personnel File, 4 May 1975, Toledo Diocese Archives Office, Toledo Diocese.

8 The quinceañera in Latin American/Latino culture is the celebration marking the fifteenth birthday of a young woman. Las Posadas is the nine day celebration recalling the perils of Mary and Joseph in search of a place for Jesus to be born. Estaciones de la Cruz is Spanish for Stations of the Cross, a ritual that recalls the final hours of Jesus’ life (or Passion) most commonly practiced during the season of Lent. Los misterios del rosario is Spanish for Mysteries of the Rosary, subcategories of devotions when praying the Rosary.
lingual opportunities.”

This incorporation of Latina/o popular religiosity into Catholic orthodoxy was not always a reality as Latino popular religious practices had most often been viewed as impure and functioning on the fringes of traditional Catholicism at best. Yet this multicultural ordination paralleled a religious trend in the 1980s that saw the decade “identified both as the period of entrance of Latinas/os into the U.S. theological academy and as the decade of the initial endorsement of mestizaje as a useful theological category,”

recognizing a U.S. Latina/o common historical experience of biological and cultural intermixture.

In this moment that brought together four first-generation Mexican immigrants and four Mexican Americans from South Texas to be ordained alongside the Anglo candidates, the numerical apex of the Hispanic/Latino diaconate in Toledo, it seems the diocese had come to understand that the previous immigrant Church, catering mostly to European immigrants, had come to an end and new Latino im/migrant Catholics were exerting influence beyond the Southwest. Just four months after this ordination, at its November 1982 assembly, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops recognized the need to usher in a new tradition, stating: “Historically, the Church in the United States has been an ‘immigrant Church’ whose outstanding record of care for countless European immigrants remains unmatched. Today that same tradition must inspire in the Church’s approach to recent Hispanic immigrants and migrants a similar authority, compassion, and decisiveness.”

The U.S. bishops authorized the preparation of a pastoral letter on the Hispanic ministry, with the final draft resulting in the 1984 statement/brochure/declaration entitled “The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment.”

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9 “Staff Meeting for Deacon Candidates,” 1981, Toledo Diocese Archives.
But “compassion,” as the bishops stated, might not have always described the histories of these eight Latino deacons whose journeys are rooted in a historical site of racial and class domination – the U.S.-Mexico border. In addition to the four deacons from South Texas ordained in 1982, eight of the nine Latino deacons listed in the Toledo Diocese necrology (excluding two from the 1982 class) were born and baptized in towns in South Texas. Macedonio SanMiguel (‘76) was born in 1926 in Agua Dulce, Nueces County, Texas, site of the Battle of Agua Dulce Creek in 1836 during the Texas Revolution. Of his youth, SanMiguel, who passed away in 1994, writes: “as far back as I can remember we live a very poor life…my third year of school I went to a school in a little town where we were separate the Spanish from the American. I did not know what discrimination was so I did not care.”

Deacon Humberto “Bert” Puente (1975), who died on the same day as SanMiguel, was born in Crystal City, Zavala County, Texas on November 27, 1930. According to the *Handbook of Texas*, the majority of residents in 1930s Crystal City were,

> Mexican or Mexican-American migrant laborers who followed a seasonal cycle of spinach in the winter, onions in the spring, and beet or cotton work in the summer and fall. A government report of 1941 estimated that 97 percent of the 5,500 Mexican Americans living in Crystal City at that time were migrant laborers. Making Crystal City their home base, most of these workers lived in slum conditions with poor services and limited educational opportunities.

In the 1960s, Crystal City was home to La Raza Unida Party and became a hub of the Chicano movement. Puente reported engaging in migrant farm work until 1948, when he joined the United States Air Force, serving as a clerk typist. Puente went on to become the State Supervisor for Migrant Services for the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, a position he held while serving as a deacon.

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12 Macedonio SanMiguel, undated letter, Toledo Diocese Archives.
Deacon Martiniano Carlos (’82) was born in Hostotipaquillo, Jalisco, Mexico on January 22, 1923 and immigrated to Texas in 1944, marrying his wife Guadalupe Barrera “in October or November of 1956 in St. Cecilia Church, Los Fresnos, Texas by Rev. Fortunato Guerrero.” Los Fresnos, in Cameron County, is home to the Port Isabel Detention Center formerly part of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), now U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Los Fresnos was founded by Leonidas (Lon) Carrington Hill III, a man who in 1915 “received orders from the Texas Rangers to be a border scout so that he might fight off Mexican bandits.”

These selected brief backgrounds of deceased deacons point to a historical rootedness in the U.S.-Mexico border region and the racial and class struggles of that area. According to Bauman, the border life of South Texas has been “fundamentally heterogeneous, defined by forces of social differentiation—ethnicity, class, language, power. Historically, the tenor of the contact, its dominant relational temper, has been one of conflict, engendered by the enforced domination of Anglos over a subject people.”

Purpose and Significance of the Study

This dissertation seeks to examine and develop the border narratives of a group of Latino permanent deacons in northern Ohio whom I interviewed between April and December of 2010. Their stories encompass a complex interweaving of ethnicity, gender, migration, and religion that reveal paradoxical lives across and between structural (socioeconomic/political), discursive (racial, gender/sexual, and religious), and geopolitical boundaries that help advance a
Midwestern borderlands framework. The lack of a border narrative in the heartland is consistent with a lack of insufficient research on the Midwestern Latino experience.

Exploring these borderland narratives in a Midwestern setting is significant as this study seeks to “reimagine” American studies and answer affirmatively the following question posed by José David Saldivar: “Is it possible today to imagine new cultural affiliations and negotiations in American studies more dialogically, in terms of multifaceted migrations across borders?”

Starting with the history of Mexican American and Puerto Rican migration to Ohio and the Midwest, this dissertation will focus on positioning the Midwestern Latino experience in a borderlands narrative, expanding traditional conceptualizations of the boundaries of Nuestra América. Redefining the border as its subjects oscillate and settle out (establish permanent residence locally) across the United States, and specifically in a post-Second World War Midwest context, challenges us to think beyond traditional paradigms. In this way, this study seeks to continue a tradition of “remapping” American cultural studies.

This dissertation encompasses the experiences of deacons who identify as Mexican American and Puerto Rican and is thus significant in its efforts to compare and contrast the border-crossing narratives of different Latino communities. While Puerto Ricans do not cross or navigate geopolitical boundaries in quite the same way as ethnic Mexicans, they have and continue to cross colonial, ethnic, and cultural borders. Thus, this study seeks to contribute to

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18 José Martí, Nuestra América (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1939).
19 Gina Pérez’s The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, & Puerto Rican Families (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) is an excellent ethnographic example of the Puerto Rican transnational narrative as a border/boundary crossing experience while acknowledging that Puerto Ricans, as U.S. citizens, do not cross a geopolitical border in the same way as Mexicans and others who cross the U.S.-Mexico border. As Pérez indicates, economic, gender, and religious forces also shape the displacement experiences of Puerto Ricans.
the discourse on Latinidad by delving into the Midwestern Latino Catholic experience and the role the church may play in the construction of a sense of shared consciousness.

Migration to the Midwest also entailed negotiation of hegemonic masculine discourses related to work, family, and place. Consequently, this dissertation contributes to a relatively new but growing literature that incorporates ethnicity/race, gender, and sexuality in analyses of migration. Previous relevant literature has taken a transnational approach, exploring migration experiences particularly between Mexico and the United States, with few scholars focusing their examinations of migration within U.S. boundaries. These studies are indeed important, responding to a plea in the field for Latina/o studies to incorporate transnational analyses. Not arguing against the importance of the transnational, rather, this dissertation reflects the complexity of Ramón Saldívar’s notion of the transnational imaginary, which recognizes that “What is perhaps confusing to conceive is that both social structures, a nationalist and a transnationalist one, can be vitally present in the same historical moment.” By exploring post-World War II Mexican-American and Puerto Rican migration to Ohio, this study offers the Latino deacon as a subject that complicates the transnational imaginary.

Finally, this study seeks to be in dialogue with, and perhaps serve as a bridge between, U.S. Latino religious studies (an interdisciplinary, secular study of religion) and theological studies (the study of religious beliefs and practices) by offering the Latino Catholic deacon as a cultural-religious version of the mestizo in a religious borderlands.

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20 Important studies include, for example, Pedraza (1991); Almaguer (1993); Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994); Gonzalez-Lopez (2005); Hirsch (2005); Broughton (2008); and, Cantú (2009).
21 The aforementioned studies focus largely on U.S.-Mexico immigration experiences.
“new mestiza consciousness” expanded the genetic-oriented conceptualization of *mestizaje* of Mexican philosopher Jose Vasconcelos’ cosmic race, or *raza cósmica*. Mestizaje has been a significant theological metaphor for U.S. Hispanic theologians; however, while usage of mestizaje within theological circles has been highly debated, it is seemingly disengaged from Anzaldúa’s mestiza subjectivity.

*The Permanent Deacon*

A permanent deacon is a man 35 years of age or older who is ordained into the holy orders and therefore a cleric by Canon Law. Deacons engage in parish and non-parish ministry. Examples of non-parish ministry – at such sites as a hospital, diocesan office, prison, social service agency, or school - include counseling, spiritual or retreat direction, social work, teaching/administration, and serving as a chaplain. Parish activities, indicative of a deacon’s clerical duties, include assisting the priest at mass, preaching homilies, celebrating baptisms, presiding at wakes/funeral services, pastoral ministry to the sick, witnessing marriages, and religious education/catechesis. Most deacons do not engage in ministry in a full-time compensated manner. In fact, according to a 2009-10 study, fewer than one in five (18%) permanent deacons are compensated for their ministry. The diaconal ministry is generally three-fold – preaching the gospel (ministry of the word), assisting in public worship (ministry of liturgy), and assisting those in need and fighting injustice (ministry of charity). Permanent deacons are not required to dress in clerical attire. Deacons are expected to maintain a balance, in the following order, between family, professional, and ecclesial responsibilities.

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There are approximately 17,000 total deacons in the United States. This compares to approximately 44,000 priests in the U.S. With regard to the number of deacons, the Cleveland Diocese ranks tenth (256 deacons) and the Toledo Diocese eighteenth (211 deacons) out of 194 dioceses in the U.S. Ninety-two percent of permanent deacons in active ministry are married, four percent are widowers, and two percent have never been married. In terms of race/ethnicity, 81% of active deacons are Anglo while 14% are Hispanic/Latino. About 6.5% of the nation’s priests are Hispanic/Latino. In terms of the overall U.S. Catholic population, approximately 39%, or 26.4 million, are Hispanic/Latino. Put another way, though 1 in 5 Catholic men age 35 and over are Hispanic, just one in ten permanent deacons are Hispanic. So while Latino diaconate numbers have increased, the sum of resources, leaders, and structures serving this community appear insufficient.

The Second Vatican Council & Restoration of the Diaconate

The Second Vatican Council, a three-year (1962-1965) conference of the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, represents the most significant example of institutionalized religious change since the Reformation. One of the legacies of Vatican II was its restoration and encouragement of the order of deacons. The permanent diaconate reemerged after nearly a four hundred year gap beginning in the 15th century during which deacons ceased to be a permanent order but rather a step to priesthood. Ditewig discussed several “streams of influence” that facilitated the renewal of the permanent diaconate. These included a sentiment in Germany that priests were too disconnected from the daily lives of people (with a specific call to expand the

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diaconate); the World War II internment experience of German priests which led to consideration of postwar ministry; a renewed call to missionary work across the globe; and, interventions on the part of Pope Pius XII in the form of papal statements which led to increased theological consideration of the diaconate in the years leading up to Pope John XXIII announcing in January of 1959 his intention to convene the Second Vatican Council.30 

The changing mindset of Catholics with regard to religious leadership on matters of sexuality also served as the backdrop for the restoration and development of the permanent diaconate. As Irish-American Catholic priest and scholar Andrew Greeley conceded, “I am now forced by theory and data to conclude that there was indeed a revolution within Catholicism in the United States (and in most other countries) in the years immediately after the Vatican Council, which was itself a revolutionary event.”31 Unintentionally, the fervor of the bishops was passed to the Catholic laity, and swept away was “the basis of a sin-oriented, blind-obedience relationship between the lay Catholic and the Church leadership.”32 Lay Catholics came to rethink what they had been taught in such areas as birth control, divorce, weekly Mass attendance, masturbation, in vitro fertilization, and homosexuality. As mentioned earlier, the permanent deacon represented a subject straddling the pre- and post-Vatican II worlds, and a good number of bishops were concerned with the possible negative impact of the permanent diaconate on the priesthood, believing many would rather serve in an order that would permit marriage and non-celibacy. Eventually, it was the sacramental nature of the diaconate – as servant – that melded well with the missionary dimension of the Church and the deacon’s ability to serve in different ways and adapt to the pastoral needs of his assigned area.

The final draft of *Lumen Gentium*, one of the principle documents of Vatican II, described the role of the diaconate within the apostolic hierarchy and listed specific duties including: “to administer baptism solemnly, to be custodian and dispenser of the Eucharist, to assist at and bless marriages in the name of the Church, to bring Viaticum to the dying, to read the Sacred Scripture to the faithful, to instruct and exhort the people, to preside over the worship and prayer of the faithful, to administer sacramentals, to officiate at funeral and burial services.” As Vatican II closed, Pope Paul VI formally implemented the renewal of the diaconate, reestablishing the Order of Deacons in the apostolic letter *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*. United States bishops petitioned the Pope for approval in 1968 for authorization of the diaconate in the U.S. (Vatican II consigned the decision on the diaconate to individual episcopal conferences) with approval coming several months later.

Knitter considered whether the Second Vatican Council served as a bridge or boundary. While the majority of American Catholics were basically content with their faith if not extraordinarily docile and comfortable within the invisible boundaries of their own self-reinforcing culture, the social issues leading up to the event sparked the tremendously progressive nature of the Council. Pope Paul VI’s vision of the diaconate as a *medius ordo* reveals the diaconate as an intermediary between social structures and Church structures. As McKnight highlights, the final apostolic letter issued at the end of Vatican II - *Ad Pascendum* – further specified the role of the deacon as a *medius ordo*, or intermediate order: “between the higher grades of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the rest of the people of God, being as it were a

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mediator [interpres].” Paul VI viewed this intermediary deacon as a bridge “that binds the members of the local church more closely together in an ever greater communion.”

The Cleveland Diocese was especially important with regard to ecclesial leadership in the Vatican II era. As Kennedy writes, when Pope John XXIII ascended to the papacy, the American source of power in the Church was switched to Cleveland Bishop Edward Hoban (1945-1966). A new family of ecclesiastical appointments, including Cleveland Auxiliary Bishop John Krol as Archbishop of Philadelphia, soon emerged. John Dearden, a former Cleveland seminary rector, was named archbishop of Detroit in 1959. Dearden would name a young auxiliary bishop from Atlanta, Joseph L. Bernadin, as archbishop of Cincinnati. Bernadin would later become archbishop of Chicago and an American Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church. The “Cleveland Connection” in Rome moved the Church through the Vatican II transition and, at the local level, shaped the Spanish-Speaking Apostolates from which many Latino deacons would emerge.

Latinos and the Diaconate

Within the Latino community, the permanent diaconate has had a significant impact in terms of grassroots Church leadership for both the Mexican American and Puerto Rican Catholic communities, particularly given the shortage of Latino priests. Unlike priests in the immigrant era Church who encouraged assimilation, the Latino deacon represents a “native clergy” who moves back and forth between the domains of the parish and the community, the religious and the sociological:


The emergence of the permanent diaconate, which has no celibacy rule and whose training is within the reach of persons with only a high school education, allowed many of the leaders who had emerged from the Cursillo and Charismatic movements to seek ordination. In this way the community came to have ordained leaders who had risen from its ranks, who could be seen vested at the altar on Sunday or presiding at Baptisms and other sacraments, but who were also seen in overalls at the factory or shopping with their wives at the local bodega. They were married clergy, and clergy which had not been assimilated into the middle class or the American ethos by seminary experience.\(^{38}\)

The Toledo Diocese expanded its Vocation Department in 1973 to accommodate the need for a permanent diaconate program.

The Spanish-Speaking Apostolate was a factor in the diocese’s permanent diaconate program from the beginning given the challenges presented by migrant farmworkers and increased numbers of settled out migrants. The first two men ordained into the permanent diaconate in the Toledo Diocese were Latinos who received training in Detroit, Michigan as the Toledo program was still developing. In 1979 deacon formation in Spanish began under Father Richard Notter, director of the pastoral program for the Spanish-speaking.\(^{39}\) Nine more Hispanic deacons were ordained in Toledo through 1981, with the 1982 ordination culminating in the diocesan peak of eight Latino men. From 1984 to 2008, only six Hispanic men were ordained into the permanent diaconate. In northeast Ohio, the Cleveland Diocese ordained its first permanent deacon in 1971, with the first Spanish-surname deacon ordained on May 31, 1986. On June 21, 1986, the Cleveland Diocese ordained a cohort of nine Latino (predominantly Puerto Rican) permanent deacons separately from ten non-Latino deacons ordained in May of the same year. From 1987 to 2008, ten more Spanish-surname deacons were ordained in the Cleveland Diocese.


It is in the context of ministry to migrant farmworkers and industrial laborers, identified by the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on the Permanent Diaconate as a “struggle” that would “tax the openness of bishops”, that the northern Ohio Hispanic/Latino diaconate advanced. The diaconate did (and continues to) challenge the openness of parish priests as some felt threatened by deacons, choosing to assign Latino deacons very few tasks, while others might give their deacons more latitude.40 And while many Hispanic Catholics have come to appreciate the presence of a “native clergy,” intra-ethnic debate existed as some felt the diaconate turned good lay leaders into “artificial” clergy.41

Additionally, not only has the permanent diaconate attracted Latinos, but it has also provided them and often their wives, with an expanding base of ministries in hospitals, prisons and in social service of many kinds along with the traditional parish-based functions. According to Allan Figueroa Deck, Executive Director of Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops), the emergence of Hispanic permanent deacons is an under-reported success story in the life of the U.S. Catholic Church today.42 While the diaconate has unquestionably provided Latino men and their wives with leadership opportunities in the Church, the purpose of this study is not to measure the “success” of the diaconate. Rather, this study addresses the “double blindness” of contemporary gender studies, described by King in the following manner: “on one hand most contemporary gender studies, whether in the humanities, social sciences or natural sciences remain extraordinarily ‘religion-blind’; on the

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41 Vidal briefly discusses the case of a lay community called Los Hermanos de la Familia de Dios in Chicago in “Citizens Yet Strangers: The Puerto Rican Experience.” The moving of many of Los Hermanos on to the diaconate in the late 1960s was met with “disgust” by some of the early founders of the group.
other hand many studies in religion continue to be profoundly ‘gender-blind.’” By interrogating what it means to be a man as a Latino deacon, this dissertation attempts to provide insight into the complex relationships among gender, ethno-racial identity, and religion.

**Theoretical Framework & Methodology**

To pursue analysis of a gendered, ethno-religious borderlands narrative, I apply the spiritual perspective of Gloria Anzaldúa. Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* ushered in a new feminist theoretical framework that transcended the boundaries of the U.S.-Mexico geopolitical border, expanding the term “border” to signify a range of boundaries including the political, psychological, sexual, religious, racial, cultural, linguistic, and ideological. In a religious borderlands context, *Borderlands/La Frontera* represents a reexamination and critique of Catholicism, particularly its heteronormative, culturally exclusionary script.

According to Carrasco and Sagarena, “many scholars and writers have focused on the ethnic, gendered, and political elements of the space she describes. But we believe that the heart of her portrayal of the borderlands is articulated, and must be understood, as a religious vision.” For Anzaldúa, a “borderland” is an ambiguous, in-between, emotional space created by the existence of such boundaries. Similarly, the gendered ethno-religious spaces of the Latino diaconate are marked with ambiguity and contradiction.

The title phrase “Vatos Sagrados” (translated “Holy Guys/Dudes”) captures these contradictions and summons the border narratives of José Limón’s *Dancing with the Devil.* Meditating on the gendered, folkloric discourse of South Texas, Limón considers the Catholic
Church’s role in the emergent postmodern culture of South Texas as one providing instruction on
the “devil” and accompanying evils with a “singular focus on personal conduct” while ignoring
“the evident evil expressed in the social treatment of the barrios it ostensibly served.”

Additionally, the devil’s appearance in narratives of class and race resistance was predicated on
gender domination as the U.S.-Mexico border served as a site of ritualizing a form of masculine
honor among Anglos and men of Mexican descent alike. In addressing the latter, Limón provides
two examples in South Texas – the sexualized male humor amongst a group of batos, or vatos
(“guys, dudes”) as evidenced in the ritual of the male barbecue; and secondly, the lower class
Mexican male discourse tradition or cult of machismo. Limón critiques the intellectual construct
of Samuel Ramos’ prototypical pelado and Octavio Paz’s pachuco, which “perhaps
unintentionally, helps to ratify dominance through its negative psychologicist interpretation of
the Mexican male lower class and their language.”

For numerous deacons in my study, the permanent diaconate functions as an ethno-
religious landscape along which many have grappled with machista narratives and shifting
gender displays in relationship to such roles, ideologies, and practices as alcohol consumption,
marrige, fatherhood, cleric, and worker. In the context of today’s Church, it is useful to consider
the deacon’s “devil dance” not only as one traversing Latino masculinity, but, following
ordination, as a cleric positioned to speak for and act on behalf of the Church on such gendered
issues as marriage, abortion, abstinence, and appropriate gender roles. That only men can
become permanent deacons also reminds us that ordination provides access to a patriarchal holy
orders and civic standing as formally recognized religious leaders, while denying the same to
women.

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46 José E. Limón, Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas
(Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), ix,
47 José E. Limón, Dancing with the Devil, 124.
Yet the ministry of Latino deacons has often been as near to the dynamics of the peace and civil rights movement as to traditional Catholic orthodoxy. The Latino diaconate has been rooted in a border consciousness sensitive to the deep realities of a Latino subaltern, and diaconal ministry was meant to address two specific areas:

The first is the ministry to migrants, the “forgotten Americans”… The second peculiar area of ministry will tax the openness of bishops still more. This is in the area of “La Causa.” Because of the position of the Spanish-speaking as subjects of discrimination, second-class citizens, as persons lacking in human dignity and representation, a primary scene for diaconal activity should be in this area, where struggle is bitter.48

This call to respond to local needs and to change conditions that breed racism reflected the significant Church renewal of the post-Vatican II period. Latino-focused apostolic movements in this period declared that Catholics “cannot disregard the fact that changes in Catholicism have left many individuals caught in post-Vatican II practices with a pre-Vatican II mentality,” and “Many…are straddling both worlds; some are tottering at best.”49

That Latino deacons have been required to straddle these worlds reflects the tolerance for ambiguity characterized in Anzaldúa’s borderlands consciousness. In this way, we can begin to better appreciate the in-between nature of the Latino deacon as a cleric positioned to incorporate a Latina/o popular religiosity into Catholic orthodoxy, through such ethno-religious practices as the quinceañera, posadas, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and Cursillo. Latino deacons have been positioned to challenge and reinforce a rigid Catholicism. For Anzaldúa, challenge and transformation entails movement from a static, rigid Catholicism.50 For the Latino deacon, resistance and reform might be exercised while functioning within the Church institution.

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48 U.S. Bishops’ Committee on The Permanent Diaconate, Permanent Deacons in the United States, 17.
The participants in this study were examined using qualitative research methods grounded within a feminist borderlands paradigm as described by Segura and Zavella. A borderlands methodology permits new ways of exploring relationships of power and domination, resistance and agency, among women and men hitherto cast as marginalized “others.” Such a method meshes nicely with a study in American Culture Studies, as it is varied and interdisciplinary. In this way, a borderlands methodology explores issues of gender inequality; intersections of historically specific regional dynamics; exclusionary boundaries based on race/ethnicity, class, and gender as well as structural and discursive ideologies and practices.

Sample

The Toledo (OH) Diocese and the Cleveland (OH) Diocese represent the two primary sites of this study. Established as a diocese April 15, 1910, the Catholic Diocese of Toledo includes 8,222 square miles in nineteen counties with 322,523 Catholics in an area population of approximately 1.5 million. The Catholic Diocese of Cleveland was founded on April 23, 1847 and includes 3,414 square miles in eight counties with 710,351 Catholics in an area population of approximately 3 million. There are 215 Permanent Deacons in the Cleveland Diocese and 211 in the Toledo Diocese.

The sample is drawn from a population of Latino permanent deacons in the Toledo Diocese and the Cleveland Diocese, and includes deacons ordained between 1973 and 2002. The Office of the Vicar for Deacons & Deacon Formation in the Toledo Diocese, and the Diaconate Formation Office in the Cleveland Diocese facilitated access to this pool of respondents. Both

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offices suggested that I utilize the official diocesan directory to look up Latino permanent deacons by Spanish surname. While this proved effective in identifying a pool, in one instance, another deacon following our interview provided a participant’s name, and he acknowledged that the other deacon’s last name did not easily identify him as Latino. In sum, twenty-three (23) Latino deacons were identified in the Toledo Diocese, and eighteen (18) in the Cleveland Diocese. Additionally, the names of deceased Latino permanent deacons were also identified in each diocesan directory and utilized to request access to necrology files in each diocesan archives office.

HSRB permission was received for the project (H10D239GE7). Sample recruitment was performed in March, 2010 and April, 2010. A mailing was sent to each identified Latino deacon. The mailing included the Letter of Invitation (Appendix A) describing the project, and the Deacon Reply Form (Appendix B) with a self-addressed stamped envelope in order to return the form to the investigator to indicate interest in participating. Upon receiving the form, I followed up by telephone to confirm interest and to schedule an interview at a location of his choice, and then sent to each participant the Letter of Interview Confirmation (Appendix C).

The Deacon Structured Interview Guide (Appendix E) facilitated semi-structured interviews that lasted about one and a half hours, and was designed to gather information related to the three borderlands contexts – gender borderlands, spatial borderlands, and spiritual borderlands experiences. As part of the interview greeting, I explained the purpose and procedure of the conversation, and asked each participant to review the Consent Form (Appendix D). An interview approach was essential as my goal is to share the voices of these deacons by constructing meaning around their experiences and knowledge through shared dialogue. The semi-structured interviews are designed to gather such information as challenges these Latino
Catholic male deacons faced up to ordination, how they relate to their wives, experiences of agency, and changes in gendered attitudes/behaviors. This format allowed me to maintain a set of themes to be explored while permitting flexibility for new or probing questions to be raised depending on interviewee responses. Interview data is shared/analyzed primarily in Chapters 4-6. I use pseudonyms in order to protect the confidentiality and privacy of my respondents.

Table 1 (Interviewed Latino Deacon Demographics) offers the demographic characteristics of study participants that were gathered from the second page of the interview guide (“Survey”). These items helped me gather basic demographics (year born, place of birth, education, etc.) as well as such information as the type of ministry work each deacon had performed. Additionally, at the outset of each interview, I reminded each participant that in the Deacon Confirmation Letter, they were asked to please bring an item that has some personal significance for us to discuss at the beginning of our conversation. This often proved effective in immediately making a personal connection as well as producing items that provided interesting and insightful deacon perspectives (and which are discussed at various points in later chapters of this dissertation).

It is important for me to recognize my position in relationship to both of these deacon communities. My father – José Bautista – was a permanent deacon in the Toledo Diocese from 1982 until his death in 2001. He was a member of the 1982 cohort that I have referenced in this chapter. I was also a seminarian for the Toledo Diocese for a period of my undergraduate years. From the very beginning of the study (Invitation to Participate), I identified myself as the son of a former deacon. Many of the individuals I spoke with and interviewed knew my father and/or performed ministry with him. These facts contributed significantly to building rapport in each interview with deacons in each diocese. I believe the preexisting relationship between the
deacons in the Toledo Diocese and my father also facilitated a comfort with inviting me to conduct the interview in their home. Nine of the ten participants from the Toledo Diocese invited me into their homes for the interviews. This is in contrast to one out of eight in the Cleveland Diocese.

At various moments during interviews, the preexisting familiarity/relationship also assisted in complementing vignettes shared by deacons as they introduced, in some instances, examples of ministry performed alongside my father, or shared how my dad influenced them. There were also moments when the wives of deacons related experiences they had with my mother that provided insight into the marital dynamics of the deacon-wife couple. Yet there were many moments, including those when my father was recalled, in which I was reminded of the cultural “distance” between the deacons and myself. The first voice mail I received from one of the deacons expressing an interest in participating in my study was in Spanish and immediately reminded me of the potential linguistic differences (as I am not proficient in Spanish). Mexican cultural critic Ilan Stavans, in acknowledging his European ancestry, once confessed how he was not “Mexican” in the same way as Mexican Nobel laureate Octavio Paz. For me, differences along language, national origin group, religious practice, educational attainment, and experiences of discrimination, for example, helped me realize how I am not Mexican American or Latino in quite the same way as the deacons in my study.

In acknowledging my personal Catholic narrative as the son of a permanent deacon, and in further advancing a Midwestern borderlands paradigm, I incorporate several personal vignettes (“The Devil in the Heartland,” “The Serpent’s Forked-Tongue,” and “Homeland, Homemaking”) and, at various points of this dissertation, offering them as a form of auto-historia, the term for Anzaldúa’s self-narrative. Memoir-like, the auto-historias offered in this
manuscript serve to remind the reader of the hybrid space that the heartland represents in the Latina/o experience.

Finally, archival materials from the Toledo and Cleveland diocesan archives were also analyzed and utilized. A non-exhaustive list of these materials includes files of deceased deacons, diocesan newspaper articles, minutes from meetings of the Spanish-Speaking Apostolates, bishop and priest correspondence, parish reports, and letters from parishioners. While these materials did not start off as a significant part of the project, they became increasingly important as I started working with the archives to trace what was going on in each diocese during the historical period with which this dissertation is concerned (1946-1996). Additionally, archival documents revealed that Latino deacons and other religious personnel interacted and collaborated across diocesan boundaries to address the spiritual needs of their Latino communities and themselves, thus providing an example of panethnic consciousness.

The usefulness of archival materials offsets the relatively small amount of historical documentation. The Archives Office in the Toledo Diocese, for example, has just three standard sized storage boxes of files for its Hispanic Ministry Office and just one box for the permanent diaconate. Information in the Cleveland Diocese Archives is even more scant. Nonetheless, as I ventured deeper into the study, it became evident that use of both historical and ethnographic methods would provide a broader range of sources and contribute to a deeper understanding of the Ohio Latino Catholic experience. For example, archival materials included files for those deacons listed in the diocesan necrology, information not accessible via interview or ethnography. Archival information is utilized primarily in Chapters 1-3.
Organization of the Study

The remaining sections of this study include a review of literature, an historical account of the development of Latina/o ministry in the Cleveland and Toledo dioceses, an explication of the findings divided into two chapters, and a concluding chapter to further discuss themes and their implications.

More specifically, Chapter Two examines existing literature from a variety of fields to reflect the complex, multidimensional nature of the Latino deacon borderlands subject. Thus, the review might be considered an “intellectual borderland,” an interweaving of border epistemologies passing through a range of disciplinary traditions. At the heart of this chapter is a reclaiming of Ohio’s frontier/borderlands history in an effort to situate a Midwestern Latino borderlands subjectivity.

Chapter Three traces the historical development of Latina/o ministry in the Cleveland and Toledo dioceses, revealing themes consistent with the notion of a borderlands Catholicism. Migration, early church missions, Catholic-Protestant tensions, farmworker struggles, and lay activism in the form of migrant ministry reveal the historical background and backbone of the Latino diaconate in northern Ohio. The chapter also elucidates the gendered nature of this ethno-religious landscape.

Chapter Four introduces the participants and relevant/interesting characteristics. Focusing on the spatial aspects of a borderlands paradigm, I outline multiple migrant stream narratives. I also analyze interview responses that reveal social interactions along and across exclusionary and class and ethno-racial boundaries.

Chapter Five introduces findings that reflect the Latino deacon’s experiences along and across discursive boundaries and shifting gender displays in relationship to their various roles,
ideologies, and practices. These include struggles with machista narratives involving alcohol consumption, parenting, work, marriage, gendered cultural-religious practices such as Marianism and officiating at the quinceañera.

Finally, my concluding Chapter Six will summarize the findings and themes against the backdrop of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Implications of the findings for study and practice are presented and suggestions are made for future research in the area.
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Devil in the Heartland

Where else but in America’s heartland could one find a site that hosted both the National Tractor Pull and my younger sister’s quinceañera? In Bowling Green, Ohio, the Junior Fair Building at the County Fairgrounds was the normal location for the comida and baile portions of the quince celebration. The religious ceremony occurred at Saint Aloysius Church. The front pews were reserved for the damas and chambelanes of the quinceañera court of honor. Bowling Green's demographics guaranteed that half of the damas were ordinarily white. The Anglo priest was usually accompanied by one of the two Mexican-American deacons of the parish, one of whom was my father José Francisco Bautista. Assisting the priest, my dad performed his diaconal duties – reading the gospel, delivering a homily, administering the chalice and sacred host – in his preferred Spanish language while dressed in the distinctive attire that included the robe-like chasuble and the stole draped across the left shoulder. In my days as an altar boy at Saint Aloysius, I might even assist the priest and my dad in this bilingual service that suited a multiracial, multigenerational congregation.

During the 2-3 hour time span between the mass and the comida, my father exchanged his suit and clerical attire for something more casual. Arriving at the fair building, a group of women occupied the kitchen space, prepping the large food warmers with bountiful amounts of chicken with mole, rice, and beans that would feed a crowd which, by the time the dance started, would grow significantly larger than the congregation at the preceding misa. The men would begin to make their path to the bar area, securing a plastic cup or two of beer from a keg. In our pre-teen years, my little brother and I could only hope to convince some of the older men to
provide several gulps of beer from their cups. The priest usually made his cameo at the *comida* and maybe even sipped a beer before exiting.

As the *conjunto* warmed up, the dance program would begin with the presentation of the Court and the Quinceañera, followed by a dance with her father. The endless list of *padrinos* and *padrinas* was also presented. Once the dance program was over, the *rancheros* and *cumbias* would begin. My father’s appearance always seemed to give me pause for a brief moment (and not just because I wondered if he knew I was drinking). Now dressed less conspicuously in his *guayabera* style shirt and slacks, Deacon Bautista, a recovering alcoholic, never drank at these events. And until his wife Alicia suffered a stroke in 1993, Deacon Bautista would join in the dancing, particularly when the *conjunto* performed his favorite *ranchero* “El Chubasco.” I know this song reminded José of his younger days in South Texas.

*Introduction*

It is difficult to imagine a better in-between subject by which to explore intersections of ethnicity, faith, and gender than the Latino deacon. The introductory vignette, “Devil in the Heartland,” highlights this by offering an example of a multifaceted ethno-religious site in the quinceañera at which the Latino deacon navigates complex gendered behavioral expectations and ethnic/religious identities. The study of religion is itself today an intellectual borderland of evolving, cross-pollinated vocabularies.55

In this chapter, I cull from a vast, heterogeneous, and interdisciplinary intellectual borderlands to examine the complex Latino permanent deacon. Navigating religious and secular lifestyles, orthodox and popular religiosities, and geopolitical boundaries through migration

experiences, the Latino deacons in this study can shed light on how we understand the construction and overlap of class, ethno-religious, and gendered borders and identities.

The explosion in recent years of books with the words “border” or “frontera” in the title indicates that the “border,” at least as a concept, has gone from a marginal field of specialization to the center of academic debate across several disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities. Yet it is difficult to neatly categorize the body of literature relevant to this study. As the social and religious forces in the deacon’s life intertwine, similarly, scholarly works often and unavoidably overlap. But it is precisely at the disciplinary intersections across this intellectual borderlands where we can make sense of the Latino deacon’s paradoxical existence. “It is possible to locate such alter-spaces, these borderlands, geographically, materially, yes. But that space entremundos, between worlds, Anzaldúa insisted, also exists in consciousness and culture, in all economies of power.” The next few sections focus on a range of scholarly works that allow for greater understanding of critical aspects of the Latino deacon’s multidimensional life.

Historical Overview

Anzaldúa’s queer frontier highlights the amazing endurance of frontier figures in late twentieth-century discourse and should dispel the notion that we can find social justice in history only by forgetting all our “F” words. How far we press “frontier” is another question.

Pressing for a Midwestern frontier in Ohio represents an effort to reclaim the “F” word as an analytical concept. Kerwin Klein reminds us that Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Mestiza* was a reclamation project, redirecting the frontier thesis from Frederick Jackson Turner’s white, male,
heterosexual, and middle-class image, to new borderlands along psychological, sexual, spiritual, regional, and ethno-racial boundaries. Klein also reminds us that Anzaldúa’s borders “join and divide, for good and for evil,” further supporting the border-crossing narrative as a devil dance.

Redirecting a borderlands thesis to the Midwest, my objective is to bring to light the frontier and migration history of Ohio in order to facilitate a reimagining of border crossing narratives and “American” frontiers in an unconventional setting. Prior to the twentieth century Latina/o experience, one can argue for a borderlands approach in the case of Ohio given its frontier status in early colonial U.S. history, and, as Castronovo discusses, in an African American fugitive discourse that reveals shifting zones of cultural interaction and overlap in the North as a symbolic land of freedom. By placing the Latino deacon in the material, geospatial narrative of Ohio’s borderlands history, and not simply troping the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as a paradigm of national imaginary formation and transcultural signification, this study eases the tension between the material and discursive by applying a theoretical framework to an ethnographic study. Hence, in the same way that Limón approaches the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as both a historical-material location, and as a trope for cultural flux around a range of folk practices, my study seeks balance to this dual usage. Moreover, placing the Latino deacon in a borderlands discourse provides a practical way to historicize a mestizo subjectivity.

Frontier Historicisms

In the late eighteenth century, the Ohio Country was situated in the Northwest Territory of the United States. Organized by Congress in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the territory was made up of federal land to which several states, most notably Virginia, had ceded their

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The borderland nature of this pre-statehood Ohio is well documented by historians. The Ohio Country “was a hotly contested borderland on the western fringes of the United States, itself a tenuous collection of states whose citizens were in the midst of debating the nature of authority in a republican empire few had imagined in 1775.” Late eighteenth century Ohio was site to the most enduring struggle between whites and Indians in North America and Ohio indeed recapitulated the history of colonial encounter, conquest, and postcolonial development with breathtaking speed.

There is a lengthy body of historical and anthropological scholarship covering frontier studies, American West studies, ethnohistory, and historiography that elucidates Ohio’s frontier history. As a project seeking to reclaim the “F” in Ohio, beginning with the progenitor of the frontier thesis, Frederick Jackson Turner, is appropriate. Frontier historiography designates that branch of U.S. history that explores the idea of the frontier, either in dialogue with Turner or diverging from him. Anzaldúa’s borderlands project grew out of a geospatial location – the U.S.-Mexico border – and expanded “border” to include the spiritual, sexual, regional and ethnic. And while this in many ways diverges from Turner, “enough history glimmers through for us to recognize it as more than a trendy, ‘politically correct’ inversion of academic frontier figures.”

My project seeks to position the Latino deacon as an academic frontier figure in ways that resonate with Turner and Anzaldúa.

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According to Turner “the frontier is the outer edge of the wave-- the meeting point between savagery and civilization.” The opposition of “savagery” and “civilization” alone deserves (and has received) entire monographs. Turner and his protégés enjoyed scholarly success while advancing the notion of frontier as an intellectual construct, one that rejoices at the transformation of European immigrants into Americans through a celebratory westward expansion. In Chapter IV (“The Middle West’) and Chapter V (“The Ohio Valley in American History’) of The Frontier in American History, Turner (a Midwesterner himself) positions Ohio in frontier/borderlands history.

Turner discusses both Cleveland and Toledo in speaking to Ohio’s significance in the early Northwest. Ohio’s rich natural resources positioned it highly and at a “front rank among the manufacturing States of the Union.” Turner continues, “Potential on the Great Lakes by reason of her ports of Toledo and Cleveland, tapping the Ohio river artery of trade…Ohio has become distinctly a part of the eastern social organism.” Turner frames Ohio’s early settlement history as part of the “Middle West” in the context of contestation (Indian wars and War of 1812), migration, technology/economic development (the steam boat, Great Lakes industry), and religious spirit (diverse religious sects). Turner also reveals the complex multidimensional nature of Ohio with regard to borders. More than an evolving part of a western frontier, Ohio, specifically the Ohio Valley, “as a whole, was an extension of the Upland South.” Control of Ohio was thus considered essential in ongoing expansion:

It was the entering wedge to the possession of the Mississippi Valley, and, although reluctantly, the Eastern colonies and then the Eastern States were compelled to join in the struggle first to possess Ohio, then to retain it, and finally to enforce its demand for the possession of the whole Mississippi Valley and the

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66 Ibid., 185.
basin of the Great Lakes as a means of outlet for its crops and of defense for its settlements.69

Turnerian critics, primarily New Western Regionalist historians, in seeking to counter this frontier-style western history, with celebratory accounts of what a good thing it was for Europeans to have slaughtered their way across the continent, would argue that the only way to introduce non-male, non-white voices to our public memory is to renounce frontier history, give up talking about western history in continental terms, and concentrate on the West as a region.70 Additionally, the development of ethnohistory, a field that integrated anthropology and history with the study of indigenous cultures and customs through examination of archival materials, offered scholarly connections to Ohio and the Great Lakes region, particularly through studies of Native Americans in the Ohio Valley (the first issue of Ethnohistory in 1954 is subtitled The Bulletin of the Ohio Valley Indian Conference). According to ethnohistorian and Ohio Valley Historic Indian Conference chairperson Erminie W. Vogelin in 1954, “Although trained American ethnologists have consistently refused to consider the problem of origins, they have not hesitated to occupy themselves with problems which the trained historian refuses to consider, namely, problems of historical reconstruction based on inferential evidence.”71 As Klein points out, early ethnohistory combined contemporary ethnography with the sort of antiquarian history against which Frederick Jackson Turner had rebelled over a half-century earlier.

It does not take much imagination to see reflected in Turner’s words the spirit of Daniel Boone and Andrew Jackson, as well as the spirit of Christopher Columbus and Hernán Cortés. From a Latina/o perspective, the latter two remind us that the conquering of Mexico, Puerto

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69 Ibid., 166.
70 Kerwin Lee Klein, “Reclaiming the ‘F’ Word,” 181.
Rico, and other lands is the conquering of frontiers.\textsuperscript{72} Though seemingly unconventional in today’s borderlands discourse, Turner reminds us that Ohio is part of the frontier narrative. In the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, historical subjectivity and frontier history took highly unconventional forms.\textsuperscript{73} Anzaldúa’s spirituality is also more evident than that of historians and literary critics writing on the subject. In this way, I consider the Latino deacon as an unconventional and spiritual border subject. Long understood as a location of danger and social outcasts, Anzaldúa reclaimed the border for a new mestiza identity and chapter in Latina/o and Chicana/o studies. Similarly, I argue for the Latino deacon to be considered a new borderlands Catholicism context, a multidimensional subjectivity unexplained by the simple dichotomies of orthodoxy/popular religiosity, male/female gender normativity, and “traditional” Latina/o geospatial regions. Academic frontier history (including that of Anzaldúa and Turner) reveals the border to be a site of marginalization and physical/psychic violence and, when reclaimed, an intimate location of spirituality and new identity.

**Migration Studies**

Industrial expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to significant rates of urbanization and immigration in the Midwest. European immigrants initially dominated the labor pools but exclusionary immigration policies curtailed this pattern. During World War I (WWI), ethnic Mexicans and African-Americans were enthusiastically recruited from the southern U.S. to migrate, often as strikebreakers and reserve labor for large industry. Industrial expansion and renewed labor shortages caused by U.S. involvement in World War II (WWII)


\textsuperscript{73} Klein, 266.
revived this migration with Puerto Rican contract laborers, initially recruited to the east in small numbers, following suit into the Midwest.

The experiences of marginalization that these African-Americans and Latinas/os endured are well documented in the war and migration historical literature. The range of these migration studies, particularly abundant in documenting the African-American experience, reflects the truly complex phenomenon this dissertation addresses. Migration research has developed within several overlapping theoretical frameworks including race relations, ghetto formation, and proletarianization, often calling for further scholarly activity in any number of research areas including gender.

Studies of the Great Migration for African-Americans proliferated during WWI and into the 1930s. Oft-cited texts about this period include *Negro Migration in 1916-1917*, A Century of Negro Migration, and “Documents: Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-1918.” The “Letters of Negro Migrants” are important because other sources that focus on the “izations” in this story – industrialization, racialization, urbanization, modernization, proletarianization,– often make us lose sight of the migrants as historical actors and they subsume their experiences into unwieldy, large historical processes. The “Letters” succeed in fore-fronting the voices of African-Americans migrating north primarily to seek jobs. In fact, the word “work,” or some version of the word (e.g., “worked” or “working”), appears over two hundred times, and “job” on at least sixty occasions. African-Americans were of course exiting the south en masse, crossing the

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Mason-Dixon Line, a historically disputed border and symbolic cultural boundary separating the North and the South, to flee racialized violence and lynchings.

In *Contested Terrain*, Bunch-Lyons examines Midwestern migration with a focus on the experiences of marginalization, resistance, and community formation for black women from 1900 to 1950 in Ohio. Utilizing oral interviews for sections of the text, *Contested Terrain* reveals the importance of family dynamics, economic opportunity, domestic conditions, race relations, and concerns for education in the Great Migration. *Contested Terrain* intentionally introduces a borderlands theme to the migration narrative through its geographic backdrop – Cincinnati, Ohio. The city’s nearness to the South and close relationships with southern neighbors provide a unique aspect to the research:

Geographically and socially, Cincinnati was contested terrain for the African-American women who migrated there. Although Cincinnati is geographically defined as a midwestern city, its borderland location places it in such close proximity to the southern state of Kentucky and other southern states that in many ways it can be viewed as a southern city in a midwestern state, a paradox of sorts.78

This Midwestern/Ohio African American borderlands experience is important for understanding a later Latino migrant experience as each reflects a racialized subjectivity falling short of the full rights and citizenship the North ostensibly granted.

There is a growing if not sufficient body of literature addressing Latino im/migration to the Midwest. Although rarely the focus of the texts, religious life in the im/migrant’s new location are often referenced. In *The Mexican Immigrant*, Manuel Gamio conducts guided interviews with Mexicans immigrating throughout the United States, including the east and Midwest. While not amongst the eight subheadings of the text, statements as to religious activities are made throughout. In *Proletarians of the North*, Zaragosa Vargas traces the

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experiences of Mexican industrial workers in Detroit in the interwar period. Vargas references the religious and secular cultural work of El Circulo Mutualista Mexicano (Mexican Mutualist Circle) and the organizations conferences and lectures held in Lorain and Toledo.

In Barrios Norteños, Valdés focuses on the experiences of Mexicans on west side of urban St. Paul, Minnesota. Valdés mentions Mexicans in Toledo on several occasions, including the inconsistent policy of local churches: “Msgr. Gorman…was selectively sympathetic toward Mexican culture. He presided over the opening of the Guadalupe Center in the heart of the South Side barrio, holding masses and celebrating fiestas and Mexican dramas that Msgr. Gorman himself wrote.” Gorman “was replaced by the ‘strongly assimilationist’ Father James F. Southard, who held the post in the 1950s and 1960s. Asserting that ‘I just can’t take the wildness,’ the new priest limited the fiesta cycle and secular activities”. Valdés also mentions Mexican settlement in Lorain, Ohio in the 1920s.

Studies that focus specifically on the Latino communities of Toledo and/or Lorain generally tend to be shorter sociological/anthropological accounts and collections of pictures as well as poetry/prose. These studies also include references to religious activity, but religion is not the central focus of any of the studies. Macklin’s Structural Stability and Culture Change in a Mexican-American Community was originally a dissertation and focused on the Mexican community of Toledo (“toledanos”) and is likely the most comprehensive study of a Latino community in Ohio. Completed in 1963, Macklin published an update to the dissertation in 1976 with new interviews and 1975 Census data. The text’s ten chapters reflect research begun in

80 Valdés, Barrios Norteños, 153.
1958 of Mexican and Mexican American participants who were "strangers in the community."81

The thirty-four page "Chapter VII: Religious Organization" contains a wealth of information on "the role of symbols of Roman Catholicism, and especially Mexican Catholicism…Since toledanos are overwhelmingly Roman Catholic."82 Including sections on "The Role of the Priest," "Organization of the Catholic Laity," "Unorganized Religion," "Curanderismo," "Miscellaneous Supernaturals," and "Protestantism," Macklin effectively portrays the religious boundary between Roman Catholicism as practiced by the majority of Toledo Catholics, and "Mexican Catholicism" as practiced by the growing community of toledanos. Macklin thanks Toledo Deacon Humberto Puente for his assistance in the "Acknowledgements."

Latino Midwestern migration/border experiences are of course not limited to Mexicans/Mexican Americans. Like African-Americans and Mexican-Americans, the Puerto Rican experience is rooted in colonialism. The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives83 extends what has traditionally been a focus on the New York City experience in the considerable literature on Puerto Rican migration and settlement in the U.S. by examining communities in such Midwestern cities as Chicago, Illinois and Lorain, Ohio. A theme that runs through the essays included is the political aspect of Puerto Rican identity in the form of community-based organizing and action groups to confront migrant encounters with discrimination, police brutality, poor housing, and the lack of familiar cultural comforts.

Eugenio “Gene” Rivera’s “La Colonia de Lorain, Ohio” is perhaps the most cited account of the Puerto Rican colonia of Lorain. Interestingly, Rivera conjures religious symbolism in describing the recruitment and selection of men on the island of Puerto Rico to work in the steel

82 Macklin, Structural Stability and Culture Change in a Mexican-American Community, 200.
mill of Lorain ("The Migration of the Chosen"). Rivera provides an interesting personal account from Gregorio López, an agricultural worker who left Mayagüez, Puerto Rico in 1945: "López recalled his journey, 'I am from Mayagüez...I worked briefly in the sugar cane fields. Hard times came...I used to gamble at the time, now I do not. I am Christian, I follow the Lord." As Rivera indicates, Catholic and Protestant affiliations existed amongst Lorain’s Puerto Ricans, and he credits Trinitarian Father Bruce Ward for his role in the advancement of the Latino community.

The migration experiences of Latinas/os into Ohio and the Midwest reveal such themes as: significant and multidirectional human/cultural flows; the transgression of physical, psychic, and social boundaries; marginalization along racial and class lines; engagement in active resistance to discriminatory practices; the formation of real and imagined cultural communities; integration into a new U.S. industrial nation-state; and, paradoxical lives reflective of the ethnic, cultural, and political “border-crossing” occurring on a daily basis. This border-crossing theme to complex Latina/o migration into the Midwest is not necessarily reflected in the established scholarship.

**Borderland Theory**

The complexities of the frontier/borderlands as a geopolitical/material site have opened up arguments for the border as a conceptual framework, creating a significant analytical distinction between the U.S.-Mexico geographical boundary, and broader notions of the border. Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* ushered in a new feminist theoretical framework that transcended the boundaries of the U.S.-Mexico geopolitical border to influence many fields,

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including gender studies, history, Latina/o studies, and religion, to name just a few. Anzaldúa utilized the concept of borderlands/border to convey the marginalization of certain groups based on race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Originally intended by Anzaldúa to describe the position of Chicana women in the U.S., the notion of borderlands/border is now used broadly by other scholars to discuss the marginalized state of various other groups.

Subsequent scholarship maps a discourse of the U.S.-Mexico border/borderland/frontier, providing a broad genealogy of border writing while debating the tensions between discursive/symbolic and material/geopolitical border narratives. Such consideration of the U.S.-Mexico border culture has remapped the field of American studies as a variety of cultural forms including art, music, the corrido, novels, and poetry, have been examined through interdisciplinary methods. Hence, Saldívar poses the questions that border theorists contemplate: How can we begin to situate and map U.S.-Mexico border spaces without privileging political and cultural “centers”? How do we characterize non-Eurocentered transfrontier identifications?

Rosaldo, in referencing Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera*, acknowledges “the many-stranded possibilities of the borderlands.”85 Despite what I would call a complex consideration of the border on the part of Saldívar and Rosaldo, sociologist Pablo Vila critiques what he deems homogenized approaches, citing the use of metaphors grounded in literary criticism rather than ethnographic study. Vila’s assessment from the perspective of an ethnographer is no doubt merited. The strength in his works is its ethnographic insight, permitting “snapshots” of identifications at various distances from the border, on both the Mexican and U.S. sides. Yet perhaps rather than labeling the approaches of Anzaldúa, Rosaldo, and Saldívar as “the border

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studies pitfalls,” Vila might do better to acknowledge the evolving nature of border studies. After all, his studies come nearly twenty years after publication of *Borderlands/La Frontera.*

A significant debate in the literature revolves around the tension in maintaining the centrality of the U.S.-Mexican border while encouraging focus away from traditional epicenters to distort the usual North/South and East/West paradigms. Johnson and Michaelson boldly proclaim that a border “is always and only secured by a border patrol,” and critique the “soft” borders “produced within a broadly liberal discourse: benevolent nationalisms, cultural essentialisms, multiculturalisms, and the like”. Yet Saldivar reminds readers that the border theorizing of Rosaldo and others “entails a new intercultural theory making sensitive to both local processes and global forces, such as Euro-imperialism, colonialism, patriarchy, and economic and political hegemonies. Thus envisaged, U.S.-Mexico border writing does not dichotomize the local and the global.”

**Border Writing and Literary Studies**

In this section, I review important works in comparative literary studies that have established border writing and crossing in a hemispheric or Pan-American context. Saldivar reminds us that an invitation should be extended to literary scholars in the mapping of cultural theory within the discourse of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Often examining Latin American texts side by side with other North American writers, or re-reading Latin American/Latino writers, border writing in Latin American literary studies challenges us to ponder whether or not the frontier experience has produced any common experiences amongst Latinas/os. Literary critics began to highlight the writings of Cuban revolutionary and intellectual José Martí,

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87 José David Saldivar, *Border Matters,* 61.
particularly his “Nuestra América” (“Our America”) as a touchstone for remapping the field of American studies. Martí’s conceptualization of Pan-Americanism is a broader Americanism that articulates his continental political, social and humanitarian vision. Thus, Martí might be thought of as a “Latino migrant subject,” a writer living in-between the U.S. and Latin America, English and Spanish, nation (Cuba) and Nuestra América.

Nicholas De Genova and Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas discuss the crossing of borders and disruption of traditional Latino population boundaries (e.g., Mexicans in the Southwest, Puerto Ricans in New York) among national subgroups that leads to an emerging sense of shared Latinidad or Latino identity. Positioned in the pan-Latino literature, such a Latino ethnic consciousness is relevant to this dissertation as I examine adjacent Midwestern dioceses with significant and intermingling Mexican American and Puerto Rican populations. Border theorists, particularly in the hemispheric literary community, have considered the significance of the border in the boundary-crossing narratives of non-Mexican Latino groups. Positioned in the context of “nuestra América” or a “Greater Mexico,” these accounts rarely treat the Midwest (or Ohio for that matter) in the Latino diaspora.

Martí’s pan-americanism or broader Latino consciousness is relevant to this dissertation as I examine adjacent Midwestern dioceses with significant and intermingling Mexican American and Puerto Rican populations. The crossing of national boundaries amongst Latino sub-groups is explored in a body of literature debating national and pan-ethnic identities. Less understood is how transnational migrants forge new identities, based exclusively neither on their home countries nor on the dominant groups in the host society, but on pan-ethnic allegiances.

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such as those often pursued by Latinas/os or Asians in the United States. Latina/o border crossings have placed that Latino national origin groups side-by-side throughout the United States. Scholars that have explored an emerging sense of shared Latinidad or Latino identity, debating classification of Latinas/os along immigrant histories, colonial legacies, racial/ethnic similarities, socioeconomic status, language, and cultural traditions. Latino ethnic consciousness represents conduct “which transcends the boundaries of the individual national and cultural identities of the different Spanish-speaking populations and emerges as a distinct and separate group identification.”

Particularly relevant to this study is gender and sexuality in the pan-ethnic literature. When Hispanics/Latinos are grouped together along a set of cultural values, behaviors, and attributes, machismo and gender patterns may be considered in a set of presumed cultural characteristics. As part of the trend toward looking at the effects of globalization in the mid-1970s, a significant group of women scholars emerged in the field of Latin American and Latino studies who opened the door to later research focused on gender and sexuality. Works that followed examined women in relation to gender and class and, since the mid-1980s, women’s studies and gender studies have emerged as one of the strongest components of Latin American and Latino studies, taking on masculinity and masculine sexuality. This progression toward treatment of masculinity and masculine sexuality in Latin American/Latino studies was nurtured in a borderland feminist consciousness.

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Latino Men in a Gendered Borderlands

There is ambiguity, confusion, and contradiction in male identities throughout the putative heartland of machismo.92

This dissertation explores the “putative heartland of machismo” in the heartland of the United States by engaging with a feminist borderlands consciousness. With Borderlands/La Frontera, Anzaldúa burst onto the feminist conceptual scene offering new ways of exploring the U.S.-Mexico border and relationships of power and domination, resistance and agency, among women and men hitherto cast as marginalized “others.”93 Yet through the 1990s and into the recent literature, scholars have continued to cite the absence of a borderland feminist framework from social theory. Antonia Castañeda introduced a monograph based on a 2001 conference with the same name that addresses “the persistent absence of gender from public discourse, although gender ideologies are pivotal in the geopolitics shaping new imperial borderlands.”94 Studies exploring the gender identity of migrant Latina/o subjects in the Midwest have also been noticeably absent.

In this section, I will sketch the changing narrative of Latino men as borderland gendered subjectivities. A number of scholars in recent years have conducted this type of intellectual inquiry, producing a gendered borderlands literature that is indeed broad, interrogating masculinity and sexuality from a variety of paradigms including colonialism and resistance, popular cultures, Chicana/Latina feminism, and regional/national/transnational political cultures. Some questions that the literature in this section discusses in general include:

- To what extent, if any, did the Spanish Conquest produce a culture of machismo?

How have the politics of geocultural location and representation shaped a border masculinity?
What are the implications of male border masculinities from a Chicana/Latina perspective?
How do the various dimensions of migration, including religion, affect gender and sexual ideologies and practices?
How are gender and sexual values, practices, and identities being communicated between generations of Latinas/os?95

Colonialism and Resistance

A variety of scholars have traced the roots of a Latina/o discourse on masculinity to the Spanish Conquest, citing the hyper-masculine Conquest and its effects of powerlessness, weakness, and emasculation on indigenous men in colonial Latin America as an explanation for the preoccupation with masculinity that machismo would seemingly represent. In this way, the Spanish Conquest might be thought of as “an event so devastating that it produced a form of ‘masculine protest,’ an almost obsessive concern with images and symbols of manhood, among Indian and mestizo men.”96 While my study is situated in the contemporary, critical U.S.-Mexico border, this literature merits mention as such a politico-religious imperial project is relevant to an examination of Hispanic/Latino Catholic clergy and their relationship to the institutional Church.

The Catholic conquistadors used the phallus as well as gunpowder to subdue the indigenous masses.97 Thus, one must acknowledge that the collision of European and Indigenous has been gendered and sexualized from the beginning as masculine conqueror emasculated native males while violating the female. Priests, horrified by cultural practices previously unknown to them and bent on the conversion of the Indians, bore witness to (and participated in) the sexual exploits of Spanish soldiers. Employing psychoanalytic theory and arguments about

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colonization, scholarly colonial approaches examine machismo as a gender category, lending it the significance of a historical event/pattern that lead to generalizations about a personality or character trait (i.e., Latino men as machos). Lacking complex, multidisciplinary consideration of race and class, this literature provides a limited understanding of masculinity/patriarchy in Mexico and Latin America.

From the Spanish colonial venture, we move to a body of literature associated with U.S. colonial projects – signifying the transfer of the Spanish borderlands, or Spanish colonial frontier, to the United States. In this section, I argue that a white male frontier discourse is reinforced, creating a gendered borderlands that stretches across the United States. This gendered borderlands underpins a discourse of white supremacy and Latina/o subservience and ushers a new White male hero subject as we shift from consideration of the conquistador and Spanish padre, to the glorification of the Texas-Mexico frontier/border military exploits of the cowboy/vaquero and Texas Ranger. These narratives created an Anglo masculine border hero that rationalized the violent Anglo-American colonization of south Texas.

Webb assigned primacy to the plains as the true frontier over the Midwestern Turnarian “woods” frontier, “staking out a loyalty to a site distinct from that of the Midwesterner, but offering yet another elevation of the western, white, male subaltern to hero.”98 For writers like John G. Bourke and Walter Prescott Webb, the innocent, pure frontier in their narratives momentarily, and only textually (as Limón reminds us), absolve a new subaltern hero from the complicity and guilt of social domination in South Texas (we might also link a narrative of organic masculinity in the Caribbean excursions of the naturalist and “Rough Rider” Teddy Roosevelt). As men like J. Frank Dobie, Bourke, and Webb navigated the contradictions in their

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98 Klein, Frontiers of Historical Imagination, 98.
lives – particular a manhood/sexuality “in homes pervaded by Victorian morality,”99 as well as individual/group relationships to Mexicans and tejanos throughout the frontera – so too would Latina/o subjects migrating to the Midwest encounter a social domination that required a constant negotiation of gender and class in the frontier of factories and fields.

Américo Paredes initiated “in south Texas between 1958 and 1987 a unique Chicano intellectual and artistic response to the white supremacist scholarship of the thirties and forties by Walter Prescott Webb and his followers.”100 According to Limón, in 1958, Paredes appeared offering With His Pistol in His Hand as “an analytically advanced, comprehensive, and compelling elaboration of the Texas-Mexican male heroic tradition”.101 Examining various cultural forms (literary criticism, décimas, corridos, folktales, poetry), Paredes has come to occupy a significant position among scholars whose works complicate Latino masculinities.

Paredes was indeed responding to a lengthy tradition of border writing that blurred the line between war and intellectualism. In parallel to the Spanish Conquest, the conquering of Texas and American West is positioned in terms of manliness, “and exclusively of Anglo-Saxon manliness” as Paredes describes. Paredes goes on to explain the gendered nature of the weaponry as the revolver, for example, not only changed the character of conflict with indigenous populations, “but it also revolutionized the North American concept of manliness.”102 Paredes’ work framed ethnic conflict at the Texas-Mexico border from the U.S.-Mexico War until World War II and countered a significant body of work that, to that point, had served to glorify the cowboy/frontiersman border subject. In this way, the gendered character of the frontier/border is

99 Owens, Three Friends, 85.
101 Limón, Dancing with the Devil, 76.
revealed. The U.S.-Mexico border indeed served as a site of ritualizing a form of defending masculine honor among Anglos and Mexicans alike. Women of course could not claim “masculine honor” so border heroes and defenders of Mexican masculine honor like Catarino Garza\textsuperscript{103} and Gregorio Cortez linked the domination of women with the contestation of the South Texas geopolitical landscape.

**Latina/o Masculinity & Sexuality**

Here I am addressing works that reveal the complex dynamics of Western male power in social, cultural, psychoanalytic, and literary discourse.\textsuperscript{104} Matthew C. Gutmann has perhaps received the most acclaim for revealing the complexity of working-class Mexican male identity.\textsuperscript{105} Gutmann’s reading of interview data collected from male and female residents of working-class colonia Santo Domingo – and gendered reconstruction of such activities as drinking, diaper changing, dishwashing, and sex - leads to his assertion that gender identities must be understood as historical constructions shaped by cultural, economic, political, and social circumstances. Thus, the author’s definition of male identities “focuses on what men say and do to be men, and not simply on what men say and do.”\textsuperscript{106}

Gutmann’s work is useful to this study in several ways. First, the Latino deacon’s negotiation of his male identity with his role as “religious servant” may reveal a portrait of Mexican “maleness” that similarly contests and asserts the meanings of macho and what it means “to be a man.” Secondly, Gutmann’s use of “contradictory consciousness,” or concern with the tensions between an uncritically inherited consciousness and one that is experienced, could prove

\textsuperscript{103} Elliott Young, *Catarino Garza’s Revolution on the Texas-Mexico Border*, (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2004), 44.

\textsuperscript{104} Saldívar, *Border Matters*, 63.

\textsuperscript{105} In a review of *The Meanings of Macho*, José E. Limón writes that Gutmann’s ethnography concerns not only the construction of manhood in Mexico City, but, “by clear implication, Mexican manhood throughout Mexico and in Mexican America as well.” (185)
insightful in a religious context. For the Latino deacon, contradictory consciousness might represent the tension between an inherited patriarchal, hierarchical (Roman Catholic) faith, and Hispanic popular religion and grassroots leadership practiced by married “native clergy.” Here, contradictory consciousness might assist in reframing the psychic legacy of the Conquest as a multi-layered inheritance from the past entailing both a religious component through the imposition of Christian doctrine and a gendered machismo consciousness, a hyper-masculine protest to the racial castration suffered by indigenous males at the hands of the conquistadors.

Gutmann discusses the notion of degendering, indicative of when “when certain activities and beliefs become less associated with particular gender identities and more with other social groups such as adolescents, truck drivers, mestizos, or the rich.” To this point I would argue that the Latino deacon serves to degender Latino Catholic traditions in which women typically, but not exclusively, bear the cross for religious instruction. With regard to the gendered nature of the Conquest, an uncritical inheritance from the past represents a lack of degendering related to traditional gender identities. By this I mean, for example, that the machismo attitude is strictly associated with a Latino male identity.

In *The Latino Male*, former priest David T. Abalos discusses what he refers to as the Latino male’s heritage of domination in a church context and the messages around gender and sexuality as a Latino Catholic male:

I was raised as a male in the Chicano/Mexican tradition that gave me permission to dominate women as an all-knowing lord. In addition, my Catholic training reinforced patriarchy and male domination by teaching me to transcend the body and to use willpower and prayer to control my own desires by resisting the temptations of the world, sexuality, and women.

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For the Mexican priest, celibacy would certainly seem to disassociate him from the traditional macho stereotype. Abalos speaks to the notion of self-castration and its transformative implications:

But there was something else; priests were attractive to me not only because they were potential fathers but also because they were pure, that is, they didn’t have sex. They were transcendent beings above the fray, the muck of things. They were heroic figures in a world filled with sexual demons…I sought to join them as an escape from the suffocation of my own matriarchal mother…believed I had put myself in a situation where I could silence the issues of my identity and sexuality…

While Abalos would later leave the priesthood, he acknowledges the role his seminary training provided in degendering the inherited, negative machismo he grew up with. In the end, Abalos actually saw his entrance into the priesthood as non-transformative in terms of sexuality. Rather than reconfiguring his inherited machismo, Abalos ran from it and into the priesthood. In fact, Abalos might theorize that any degendering his vocational path represented is tainted by the psychic racial implications of his studies. Not only was Abalos running into the “good masculine-patriarchal world of the Catholic priesthood,” he was fleeing his version of “Mexican-ness” for a priesthood he associated with a higher-valued whiteness.

Another scholar concerned with the physical, social, and cultural boundaries of normative gender is Lionel Cantú, Jr. Cantú problematizes the discourse on gay Latino men, offering a queer analysis of sexual migrant experiences to create a paradigm that integrates immigration, gender, and sexuality. Cantú’s “queer political economy of migration” encompasses a variety of methods including archival and ethnographic research to explore this range of experiences of Mexican men who have sex with men. As Cantú indicates, much of the scholarly writing on

\[\text{References}\]

\[\text{110 David T. Abalos, } \textit{The Latino Male}, \text{ 13.}\]

Latino gender roles has continued stereotypes and constructions of gender roles, limiting our understanding of Latino masculinities and sexualities. And while the body of literature on multiple masculinities is expanding, an intersectional approach that clarifies the simultaneous influences of gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity (and religion in this dissertation) is infrequently employed. Additionally, it is important to understand the power relationships of men over women as well as of men over other men. This dissertation seeks to explore the multi-relational character of the deacon – with his wife/family, parish priest, bishop, fellow deacons, and parish members.

*Latino/Borderlands Catholicism*

*Simultaneously, Catholicism, as both an institution and as a marker of individuality, is also challenged and altered by Anzaldúa’s mestiza consciousness. This transformation is from a static, rigid Catholicism to liberation theology.*

Just as border theory and feminist borderlands literature has boomed, so too is there an increasing body of border-influenced literature in Latina/o religious studies representing a heterogeneous array of predominantly social scientific and theological scholarship. This growing body of Anzaldúa-influenced work comes as no surprise given the affirmation of her spirituality throughout *Borderlands/La Frontera*. According to Carrasco and Sagarena, “many scholars and writers have focused on ethnic, gendered, and political elements of the space she describes. But, we believe that the heart of her portrayal of the borderlands is articulated, and must be understood, as a religious vision.”

In this section, I am concerned with literature that can be thought to describe a gendered religious borderlands, or the spiritual in-between. I return to Roof’s basic definition of religious

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borderlands as spaces “geographical, cultural, psychological – in contemporary society where the
boundaries of the religious are in questions, if not openly challenged and contested.”

Important and related questions and themes evolving from the literature with respect to the
Hispanic/Latino diaconate include:

- Does the Hispanic/Latino deacon challenge and/or reinforce the hegemonic norms (e.g.,
  valuation of religious practices, enforced gender dynamics, clergy hierarchy, political
  activity) of the Roman Catholic Church?

- How does personal suffering inform the deacon’s religious experience?

- What is the role of the Cursillo Movement in the “conversion” experience of many
  deacons?

- How does the diaconate as practiced today reflect or contradict the original intent for this
  clerical position when restored as a result of Vatican II?

- What is the relationship between Hispanic/Latino liberation theology and religious studies
  work informed by cultural studies?

- Does the Hispanic/Latino diaconate dilute or strengthen grassroots leadership efforts.

There exists a group of religious studies scholars who utilize an Anzaldúan borderlands
thesis to discuss religious beliefs and practices and a spiritual activism that occur between
Mexico/Latin America and the United States. Religious studies is that academic field of study
which examines religious beliefs, behaviors, and institutions through an inter-disciplinary,
secular method. The themes in this Latina/o religious literature include such topics as Hispanic
popular Catholicism, nepantla identity, Marian devotion, the reinvention of religious institutions,
and shifting gender roles.

Luis D. León employs border theory to articulate his conceptualization of religious
borderlands “as a creative and often effective means to manage the crisis of everyday life.”

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115 Luis D. León, La Llorona’s Children, 5.
León examines a variety of religious phenomena along the Southwest border – *curanderismo*, Guadalupe devotion, evangelical Protestantism, *espiritualismo* - through the lens of religious or sacred poetics, defined as a strategy to “reinvent religious institutions and their place in the lives of constituents”\(^{116}\) by deploying a range of religious signs, myths, rituals, narratives, and symbols. In Chapter Three “Religious Nationalism,” León positions La Virgen de Guadalupe in a spiritual borderlands as she remains a symbolic link for the diasporic Mexican American community to Mexico/Mexico City – a Mexican and Mexican American “place, history, and identity”. Interestingly León also juxtaposes the patriarchal (theologians and clergy) borderlands Catholicism with the matriarchal home altar site of Mexican Catholic devotional life. The author also underscores the devotion of Mexican men to Guadalupe. These gender dynamics will prove interesting when considering the Latino Catholic deacon as both clergy member and Guadalupe devotee.

David Carrasco and Roberto Lint Sagarena also explicitly engage with the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, believing “that the heart of her portrayal of the borderlands is articulated, and must be understood, as a religious vision.”\(^{117}\) The authors focus on the “shamanic spaces” of a religious borderland as “shadowy places” marked by the notions of spiritual journey, ancestral spirits, songs, sexuality/gender, psychic injury, and healing. As this dissertation seeks to explore the experiences of Puerto Rican as well as Mexican American deacons, the Carrasco and Sagarena essay is particularly relevant because it point to Anzaldúa’s religious borderlands within and beyond the “raza”\(^{118}\) community.

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\(^{116}\) Ibid., 4.
\(^{118}\) Raza may be translated literally as “race,” but is generally associated with the Mexican American/Chicano experience.
Thomas Tweed, whose background reflects training in both theology/divinity studies and religious studies, presents a case study of Cuban immigrants and popular Catholicism by focusing on devotion at the Our Lady of Charity Shrine in Miami, Florida. The first book-length analysis of Cuban-American Catholicism, Tweed explored the Miami exile experience while looking at larger issues concerning religion, identity, and place. Migration, displacement, and diaspora are important themes as the author examines the relationship of migrants to their Cuban homeland and the role religion plays among people with varying links to an exile experience. Tweed’s study at Our Lady of Charity Shrine led to his more recent publication *Crossing and Dwelling*, a text that proposes a theory of diasporic religion that promises to illuminate the experiences of other groups that have been displaced from their native land.

Tweed uses the concepts of crossing (movement of people) and dwelling (religion in place) to cross intellectual boundaries and describe a broad range of religions and nationalities beyond Cubans/Cuban Americans. Drawing on the aquatic and spatial tropes that informed *Our Lady of the Exile*, Tweed defines religions as “confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries.” Tweed describes the religious as both migrant and settlers, with religion helping make sense of both the nomadic (crossing) and sedentary (dwelling). Tweed’s work is particularly relevant as I explore the migration experiences of deacons and the process by which they attempt to “make a home” in Ohio and perhaps deal with the day-to-day psychic

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connection to “homeland.” Interestingly, Tweed’s works and their resonance with spiritual borderland themes are not framed overtly in Anzaldúa’s terminology.

Hispanic/Latino Christianity might be thought of as a mestizo Christianity. The Spanish Conquest, as various Latina/o theologians and religious studies scholars have argued, “marks the birth of mestizo Christianity, the experience of God from within mestizaje reality. Mestizo Christianity is the Latino’s heritage.” Robert Wuthnow discusses the importance of syncretism, popular religion, and cultural identity as overarching themes in Latina/o religion research. Syncretism may be thought of as the blending of disparate religious traditions – Roman Catholicism and Aztec religion, for example. Syncretism also represents the intermingling of the religious and nonreligious. Popular religion (as opposed to “official” religion) is interesting in the context of a dissertation on Latino deacons as the term often conveys an anticlerical bias in some parts of the Latino community, especially, as Wuthnow highlights, when Latinos are so underrepresented in the Church hierarchy. Popular religion can also be thought of as the combining of, or tension between, the sacred and the secular. Cultural identity, in a religious context, also connotes a tension between individually constructed identities and institutional constructions. For the Latina/o faithful of the future, as Wuthnow mentions, it may or may not be the church that confers an identity on a population constantly in flux, or living “in-between”.

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121 Tweed, mistakenly in my opinion, insists that his model “only helps if we have aquatic and not terrestrial analogies in mind.” The Midwestern Latino migrant stream and subsequent religious-cultural flows and dwelling would seem to make the terrestrial as important as the aquatic.
Hispanic/Latino Theology

A collection of essays edited by Miguel A. De La Torre and Gastón Espinosa focuses on the borderlands-related concepts of *nepantla* and *mestizaje* to bridge the secular academy of religious life scholars and the faith-based community of Latino intellectuals/theologians. Espinosa reveals the tendencies of seminary/divinity school trained Hispanic scholars to overlook Anzaldúa’s work. Other essays in *Rethinking Latino(a) Religion and Identity* by Manuel A. Vásquez (“Rethinking Mestizaje”), Michelle A. González (“Rethinking Latina Feminist Theologian”), Luis D. León (“Exhibiting Religious Erotics: Ethics of Machismo after Aztlan”), and Lara Medina (“Nepantla Spirituality”) also blend borderlands concepts/analyses while seeking to cross the boundaries that separate secular religious studies and theology.

The De La Torre and Espinosa monograph highlights the tensions between Latina/o religious studies and U.S. Hispanic theology while revealing a borderlands dialectic amongst Hispanic theologians. Roman Catholic priest Virgilio Elizondo is considered the dean of U.S. Hispanic theologians. Elizondo utilized the mestizaje concept not only to remind readers of the historical/biological dynamics of racial mixing in the colonial histories of the indigenous Americas, but also to underscore the complex interaction and mutual exchange between two or more cultures. Consideration of the historical Jesus as a mestizo is relevant to Latino deacons not only due to their mestizo background, but also as deacons “are charged at ordination to shape a way of life always according to the example of Christ and to imitate Christ”. Elizondo’s discussions of the lack of Spanish in the liturgy, shortages of Hispanic priests, nuns, and bishops,

124 Miguel A. De La Torre and Gastón Espinosa, *Rethinking Latino(a) Religion and Identity* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2006).
as well as unsatisfactory seminary experiences for Latinos, also call for attention to the success of the diaconate among Latino men.

According to Catholic theologian Roberto S. Goizueta, his book “represents an attempt, however partial and incomplete, to articulate the theological significance of a passage still ongoing, a life lived ‘in between.’” Goizueta’s theory of accompaniment is grounded in Hispanic theology’s tradition of liberation theology and its “preferential option for the poor.” Positing that even as exiled subjects, Latinos spiritually “walk” with Jesus, Goizueta attempts to balance the socioeconomic marginalization of Latinos with the theological aesthetics of U.S. Hispanic popular Catholicism - set within the context of everyday narratives, practices, symbols, and sayings. His commentary on the anthropologies of Jesus and Mary (La Virgen) also illuminates the gendered nature of Hispanic theology and the tensions between mainstream (i.e., male) Hispanic theology and Latina, or mujerista theology. Mujerista theologians like Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Jeanette Rodriguez remind us of the powerful gender forces in Latino religious movements, myths and symbols.

**Latina Spirituality & Mujerista Theology**

Mujerista theology is a term coined by Ada María Isasi-Díaz, a Cuban-born Roman Catholic theologian. In concerning herself with the moral agency of Latinas, mujerista theology emphasized the importance of grounding theological reflection in the day-to-day struggle of Latina women. According to Isasi-Díaz, mujerista theology “is a liberative praxis—reflective action that has as its goal the liberation of Hispanic women.” In the context of this dissertation,

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mujerista theology is important and relevant in several ways. As Alma Rosa Alvarez writes, there are profound parallels between mujerista theology and mestiza consciousness. In paralleling the work of liberation theologian María Pilar Aquino and Anzaldúa, Alvarez highlights both as feminist projects, the focus of each on the oppressed woman and call for individual empowerment, and the oppressed woman’s sexuality as a source of liberation and connection to spirituality. The majority of deacons in the United States are married, and the majority of deacons in this study are married to Latinas. It is therefore interesting to consider issues of empowerment and sexuality in relationship to the Latino deacon and wife.

Summary of Literature

The borderlands literature reviewed is indeed broad, symbolizing a field that represents a meeting place of intellectual border-crossers in cultural studies, ethnic studies, history, postmodern anthropology, and religion. The central principle of a borderlands thesis has most often been the geopolitical, international U.S.-Mexico boundary, with the study of borders typically concerned with legal, geographical, and political questions. Consideration of transnational migration in the mid-/late-1990s broadened the scholarship, encompassing an expanding field to include borders around the world as crucial components in a global system of nation-states. The transnational turn also opened border theory to the fields of gender and sexuality. The border metaphor also came to be employed in the study of religion as shifting immigrant streams and the spread of the world’s religions meant that religious identities had grown in complexity and “much more contingent upon extended networks across oceans and seas.”

Scholarship utilizing border theory in the study of religion falls generally into the categories of theological studies (religious faith, practice, and experience) and religious studies

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(academic, interdisciplinary, secular study of religious beliefs, behaviors, and institutions),
situating the topic along the U.S.-Mexico border or in locations with traditional “pockets” (e.g.,
Los Angeles, Miami, San Antonio) of Latinos. Theological methods that utilize a borderlands
analysis of Hispanic popular religion and practices focus effectively on the themes of (1) being
captured "in-between" Latino and mainstream U.S. culture, and, (2) being "in exile" from the
family's country of origin. This everyday experience of symbolically "crossing borders" in the
United States is the locus for their normative insights, with particular attention to the concept
of mestizaje, particularly as embodied in Our Lady of Guadalupe and Jesus as mestizo subjects,
to link popular religion and self-identity.

Latino religious studies literature tends to be more multidisciplinary, focusing less on
institutional histories and dominant groups and more on religion as it is lived and practiced.
Scholarship addresses the power of popular religious cultural symbols and traditions (e.g., Our
Lady of Guadalupe, home altars) as means of resistance and empowerment. Studies examining
power relationships, gender dynamics, social change and activism have emerged to argue for the
strategic potential of religion.

In my dissertation, I apply a multidimensional borderlands framework to learn more
about the experiences of Latino deacons. I argue for the applicability of a borderlands narrative
to a setting not generally considered in such a way – the Latino communities of northern Ohio.
Additionally, while consideration of migration and gender/sexuality is most often considered

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131 The theological literature is indeed vast to cover within the limitations of a dissertation
literature review. Other important studies not discussed include Espín, 1997; Isasi-Díaz, 1996; González, 1996;
Rodriguez, 1994

132 John Francis Burke, “Review: U.S. Hispanic Theology and the Politics of Border Crossings: ‘We Hold
These Truths’ from La Frontera,” The Review of Politics, Vol. 60, No. 3 (Summer, 1998): 563-573.

133 Luis D. León, La Llorona’s Children, 6.
from a transnational perspective, I will explore the gender implications of displacement within
the United States for these deacons.
CHAPTER III. FACTORIES, FIELDS, AND FAITH IN OHIO: A NEW BORDERLANDS CATHOLICISM

Jose Trevino lives in Belmore, Ohio. He settled there in 1963 after many years on migrant stream. He has 19 children, 9 of whom are married...Jose is sort of a recognized leader of the Mexican migrants in the whole area. In his desire to become a deacon, he expressed the hope that his apostolic activities need not be limited to Leipsic, but that he would be more or less free to continue as he had been by showing interest in people all over the diocese. He indicated to me that just the day before, he was in Delphos, Ohio at a meeting in which Bishop Ottenweller presided at the Mass for migrants.\footnote{Rev. Cleo S. Schmenk, “Interview with Jose Trevino,” July 23, 1974, Toledo Diocese Archives.}

Deacon Jose Treviño ('75) was born in McAllen, Texas on April 22, 1916. In response to the item in his deacon application form asking to “Indicate any aspect of work history having a bearing on your acceptance in the program,” Treviño replied, “As a migrant worker I saw the need of these people needing a lot of help.”\footnote{Jose Treviño, “Application for Permanent Diaconate Program,” undated, Toledo Diocese Archives.} According to Treviño’s employment history, he was a migrant farm worker on a part-time basis as early as 1932, and until 1963, working in such places as Bay City, Michigan (1956), Coolidge, Arizona (1958), South Dakota and Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin (1959), and Ohio into the 1960s. Also in his application, in responding to “Please state why you feel that you wish to serve as a Permanent Deacon,” Treviño’s form, seemingly completed with the assistance of another person, indicated, “As Jose told me, it is important to do the work of Christ. He was first interested in aiding the migrants. He helped with instructions and getting them to Church.”

Treviño’s journey, one likely initiated by the economic imperatives of a Latina/o migrant subaltern, is balanced by social aspirations and a notion of justice that conjures Alicia Schmidt Camacho’s migrant imaginary. Much like Limón, Schmidt analyzes the devil dance of Mexican migrants locked in an international capitalist economy that has exploited them for over a century, with little in the way of democratic rights or social welfare from either the U.S. or Mexico. Yet
under oppressive capitalist structures, migrant sojourners and their intellectual patrons have challenged capitalist subordination and racist attitudes across the breadth of the twentieth century. The resulting narratives, constructed by border intellectuals like Américo Paredes, reveal a moral vision of social justice, effecting an expansion of democratic rights through social movements that worked with and within state structures. It is my contention that the Latino deacon represents one such narrative of the migrant imaginary. Flowing to the Midwest and Ohio, both ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans seeking the privileges of citizenship constructed a moral system both against and in partnership with a Catholic institution that I describe as a Midwestern borderlands Catholicism.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the historical development of a Midwestern borderlands Catholicism in the Cleveland Diocese and Toledo Diocese, particularly through the use of archival documents from each diocese. These sources reveal that, reflective of the Chicano civil rights activism that arose in the Mexican American community in the 1960s – also known as La Causa – the campaign to organize farm workers in northern Ohio was intertwined with Catholic Church activism. In 1967, the Bishops Committee for Spanish Speaking established a Midwest Regional Office that promoted the formation of Spanish-speaking offices in the Midwestern dioceses. The immediacy of the social needs of the Latino communities gave social action top priority.

In addition to the rural labor experience in Ohio, Toledo and Cleveland provided industrial urban settings that paralleled the rural condition of Latinas/os. While union membership for Puerto Rican industrial workers in the United Steel Workers of America

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provided protection, housing conditions revealed exploitative practices outside the work place.

Writing in 1951 as Chancellor of the Cleveland Diocese, Reverend John Krol, who would become Auxilliary Bishop of Cleveland in 1953, noted in his summary of a presentation by a local reporter on the results of his investigation, “they have been exploited. As many as 40 people may live in a one-frame two family dwelling…the color, the language and the religious traditions of the people have kept them away from the parishes.”

Through the use of Cleveland and Toledo diocesan archival materials, which comprise a range of primary documents including correspondence from church personnel, personnel files for deceased Latino deacons, handwritten letters from local Catholics, newspaper articles, parish and diocesan reports, and training materials, this chapter argues that the migrant imaginary of Latinas/os in the Cleveland and Toledo dioceses may be examined through a religious borderlands framework. This evolving borderlands Catholicism may be attributed to significant Latina/o migratory patterns; insufficient Catholic Church resources with accompanying concerns over Protestant outreach to migrants; tensions between a preexisting Anglo Catholic orthodoxy and a new Latina/o popular religiosity; discriminatory practices and poverty; and, a growing Latina/o lay activism made possible through new apostolic movimientos (movements) that helped ensure that the spiritual needs of Midwestern Latino Catholics were addressed. These apostolic movements nurtured grassroots Latina/o leadership from which a number of Latino deacons progressed.

139 Chancellor John Krol, “Memo,” undated, Cleveland Diocese Archives, Cleveland, OHIO.
The Religious Borderlands of Northern Ohio

According to Tweed, the religious are migrants as much as settlers, and religions make sense of the nomadic as well as the sedentary in human existence. In the case of Latinas/os in the Cleveland and Toledo dioceses, migratory and settled-out communities created a borderlands Catholicism that eventually challenged the authority, competence, and soul of a white male-dominated Catholic institution, while capturing a post-Vatican II Catholic (re)imagination in the throes of social transformation. Latino migration to Ohio was accompanied by a religious-cultural flow as these mostly Catholic agricultural and industrial workers moved north. In the post-WWII era, the increasing numbers of seasonal migratory laborers presented unique challenges to the Cleveland and Toledo dioceses that were seemingly more intense than urban centers with more significant Latino populations.

The Devil Dances North: Latina/o Migration to Ohio

The post-World War I period marked a time of unprecedented Mexican immigration to the United States, and to a lesser extent Texas Mexican or tejano migration to the Midwest as economic and social conditions along the U.S.-Mexico border worsened. Between 1900 and 1930 about a million Mexicans crossed the U.S.-Mexico border seeking work or political refuge from the Mexican Revolution of 1910. These immigrants/refugees were predominantly young, single males. Industry’s need for cheap labor pulled early waves of Mexicans to many areas of the Midwest, ranging from Kansas to the Michigan. During this post WWI period, one of the largest regional migrations of American workers was launched by the expansion of production in steel, automobile, rubber, and electrical manufacturing in the North. Although eclipsed by the

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140 Thomas A. Tweed, Crossing and Dwelling, 75.
great migration of blacks in size and scope, early ethnic Mexican immigration to the North represented a shift from previous patterns in which Mexicans were confined to the Southwest.142

And while periods of economic recession and the Depression would curb immigration into the Midwest in the 1920s and 1930s, and promote the active displacement of ethnic Mexicans living in the U.S., renewed agricultural and industrial labor demands beginning in the late 1930s brought a second phase of largely Mexican American migration from Texas into the Great Lakes region. Migrant workers who settled initially in Texas’ lower valley would become the primary source of seasonal labor through World War II. In Toledo, for example, while rural agricultural development proved to be the major force attracting Mexican and tejano seasonal workers during the World War I, interwar, and World War II periods, there was a gradual shift in the post-WWII period from rural to urban areas due to the increase in the industrialization of Mexican-American workers.

During the 1940s, the steel industry and landscape nurseries in northeast Ohio recruited large numbers of Mexican immigrants and Puerto Ricans for war and agricultural work, with Puerto Ricans accounting for the largest influx of Latinos into northeast Ohio in the post-WWII period. Encountering several labor shortages and high turnover rates with its Anglo work force at the end of WWII, the National Tube Company, a subsidiary of the U.S. Steel Corporation, initiated the first experiment in the country of contracting labor for heavy industry in Lorain, Ohio as part of Puerto Rico’s industrialization program Operation Bootstrap. La colonia initially numbered about 1,000 mostly male Puerto Ricans recruited to Northeast Ohio by the National Tube Company; by 1952, la colonia had grown to about 5,000 with most still working at National Tube and two other factories “working at top speed producing items essential to our

142 Zaragosa Vargas, Proletarians of the North, 1.
The development of a Puerto Rican *colonia* in Lorain represents an intriguing chapter in United States and Latina/o history as cultural, class, ethnic, gender and racial forces collided in this modest-sized northeastern Ohio town known as the “International City,” giving birth to a *colonia* that has been, according to Rivera, hailed as the most organized and stable Puerto Rican community in the United States.

Throughout the im/migration and settling out experiences, the Catholic Church conducted outreach to newly arrived im/migrants, addressing basic physical needs as well as spiritual needs though seemingly in insufficient fashion. For example, while the first ethnic Mexicans settled in Cleveland in the early 1920s, and largest influx of Puerto Ricans settled in that city in the 1945-1965 period, permission to conduct services in Spanish in the Cleveland Diocese was not received until 1965. This example illustrates the severe deficiencies of the Church in crossing cultural boundaries to meet the spiritual needs of Latina/o communities migrating to the area. The boundaries of national parishes traditionally served to define the neighborhoods of Catholic ethnic groups. Parishes arose in these neighborhoods and strengthened cultural solidarity within the community. This was not necessarily the case for Latinos in Ohio as early attitudes by diocesan Catholic officials in Cleveland and Toledo reflected little appreciation for a Latino Catholic heritage. It was not until the 1970s, with Latina/o-focused apostolic ministries such as the national Encuentro gatherings, deacon programs, and the Cursillo Movement, that more coordinated efforts developed that reflected a greater appreciation for the Latino Catholic presence.

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143 Rev. John Krol, Letter to Mr. John J. Flynn, Jr., 14 February 1952, Diocese of Cleveland Archives, Cleveland, Ohio.
Early Missions and Migrant Work

As early as 1927, the Toledo Diocese identified the need to assist “the Spanish speaking people.” In that year, a Mexican Mission was established in South Toledo under the leadership of Father Joseph Lua, a Mexican priest. In 1931, Lua was succeeded by Father Raymond Gorman, a Lima, Ohio native who, according to Diocesan records, was “the first Catholic priest in northwestern Ohio to specialize in service to the Spanish speaking.” Gorman had become fluent in Spanish while teaching and completing graduate studies in Bogota, Colombia as well as living for several months in Brownsville, Texas, residing with Mexican American clergy and assisting with the local Spanish-speaking population there. Gorman led the Guadalupe Mission until 1951. A letter to Gorman reports the figures for Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1952 from the diocesan Status Animarum to be “900 souls. (40 children attending weekly religious instruction classes.).” The same letter indicates 1,123 Mexicans living within the diocese, plus 237 families as “some pastors reported souls, others families”. It was also reported that 1,993 Mexicans plus 247 families were in the diocese for certain seasons only, and 32 Mexicans and an additional 8 families attending Protestant churches.

Gorman’s efforts in the 1920s and 1930s are credited for the eventual establishment of the Spanish Speaking Apostolate as well as the later organization of the Department for the Spanish Speaking within Toledo’s Diocesan Office of Community Relations. Gorman was also known for his efforts to purify folk Catholicism in Toledo by eliminating several aspects of Mexican folk culture he thought superstitious and seeking to “Romanize” religious practices.

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146 Secretary, Letter to Father Gorman, 24 June 1953, Diocese of Toledo Archives Office, Toledo, Ohio.
Macklin’s study refers to “A forceful man, Father H.” who admitted to her in an interview that he did attempt to eliminate many of the aspects of “folk Catholicism,” inserting the following quote from the interview with Father H.: “I recall one case in which the girl was dying of TB. Her mother wanted to take the girl to a curandera (spiritual healer) in Chicago…and I said, ‘Save your money and buy a dress to bury your daughter; forget the curandera!’”148 That Father H. is Rev. Gorman in Macklin’s study is highly likely as she indicates in 1963 that H. is “now located in an English-speaking parish some forty miles south of Toledo,” and Gorman served as pastor of St. Michael in Findlay, Ohio, a parish forty-four miles directly south of Toledo, from 1951 to 1963. Macklin goes on to indicate that Father H. had considerably less impact on the toledanos’ belief system, though they apparently had much respect for him. Gorman’s concern with curanderismo is important with regard to a borderlands Catholicism in Ohio as, in curandero practices, individual religious agents contest the borders of institutional religion and healing. Curanderismo practice obscures the boundary separating indigenous traditions from Catholicism.149

In northeast Ohio, the influx of Mexicans in the 1920s similarly challenged existing pastoral services. As early as 1924, P.A. Logan, pastor at St. John’s Church in Lorain, Ohio, communicated by letter with Bishop Joseph Schrembs about the five hundred Mexicans attending that parish with a special request: “Do you approve of a special mass in this church every Sunday for these people? May I make arrangements to have a priest conduct a mission in this church during the Easter week that these Mexicans may have an opportunity of complying with the law of the church concerning the Easter duty?”150 In November of 1925, Logan writes

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149 Luis D. León, *La Llorona’s Children*, 130.
150 Reverend P.A. Logan, Letter to Reverend Bishop Joseph Schrembs, D.D., 21 March 1924, Diocese of
Bishop Schrembs to relay a request on behalf of over a dozen local pastors to erect a grade school in Lorain for an ethnically diverse range of European children, as well as fifty presumably Mexican/Latino children listed by Logan’s name and the St. John’s Church address.\footnote{Reverend P.A. Logan, Letter to Reverend Bishop Joseph Schrembs, D.D., 17 November 1925, Diocese of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.}

In May of 1926, Father Clemente Vilorio writes from the same St. John’s Church in Lorain, reporting to Bishop Schrembs that 113 Mexican families and seventeen “Spanish Families” exist in Lorain totaling 1,535 individuals. The great majority (1,300) of this population was Mexican. Vilorio also informs the Bishop, “While in Cleveland I called on some of the Spanish and Mexican people. From these people I learned that there were about two hundred Spanish Families in the City of Cleveland.”\footnote{Reverend Clemente Vilorio, Letter to Reverend Bishop Joseph Schrembs, D.D., 24 May 1926, Diocese of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.} In August of 1926, the diocesan chancellor writes to M.P. Mooney, Attorney, about a piece of property that Father Logan “has secured for the Spanish and Mexican Colony in Lorain.”\footnote{Chancellor (unsigned), Letter to M.P. Mooney, Attorney, 06 August 1926, Diocese of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.} Ten days later, the chancellor writes Father Vilorio, informing him that the bishop has appointed Vilorio administrator of the newly formed parish of “St. Mary of Guadalupe,” adding “He wishes you to devote your time to the Spanish and Mexican people of the City of Lorain, and hopes that you will be able to educate them to the support of this parish…the first one for Spanish and Mexican people in the Diocese of Cleveland.”\footnote{Chancellor (unsigned), Letter to Rev. Clemente Vilorio, 16 August 1926, Diocese of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.}

In April, 1928, Rev. Vilorio reported mission activities for a week in March of 1928 to be five hundred confessions and communions, thirty-four communions for children, and
a “High Mass for the Dead in Mexican Governments Persecution there against Catholics [sic].”¹⁵⁵

A letter to Rev. Vilorio in the fall of 1928 indicates the priest was sent St. John’s Church in the neighboring Diocese of Youngstown to address “the problem of the Spanish in Canton.”¹⁵⁶

As later with the city of Lorain, post-WWII Puerto Rican migration to Youngstown would also be significant, with several thousand Puerto Ricans living in Youngstown by 1951. Vilorio’s successor was Rev. David Ramos, a priest from St. Bonaventure’s Seminary in Allegheny, New York. Rev. Ramos appears to have had a somewhat bumpy stay in Lorain. His letter in 1929 to Cleveland Bishop McFadden provides a “faithful translation of the slanderous notice printed in the Spanish paper of San Antonio, Texas” which reads, “Several readers from Lorain, Ohio who give their full names…complain bitterly against a Catholic clergyman – Spanish and even Franciscan…that gentleman is very materialistic, his avarice knows no limits, he has no compassion for many Mexicans living in poverty and for everything he charges them very much money.”¹⁵⁷ Rev. Ramos was unsuccessful in convincing the diocese to sue. An unsigned letter in 1930 from Lorain, Ohio was sent to the bishop and states, “I am writing…to let you know that it is a shame the way the priest is living in Lorain. He gambles with cards drinks and goes out his name is Father Ramos…I think he bootlegs…and is in partnership with another man. He is really no good.”¹⁵⁸ Correspondence from Rev. Ramos indicates that he remained at Our Lady of Guadalupe at least until June of 1931. At that time, Rev. Ramos writes the chancellor to indicate the struggles at Our Lady of Guadalupe and its decreasing numbers. This was likely the effect of

¹⁵⁶ Chancellor, Letter to Rev. C. Vilorio, 28 September 1928, Diocese of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.
¹⁵⁷ Fr. David Ramos, Letter to Rev. James A. McFadden, Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland, 28 February 1929, Diocese of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.
¹⁵⁸ Unsigned, Lorain, Ohio, Letter to Bishop, 18 June 1930, Diocese of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.
the Depression era dynamics in which Mexican immigration was closed and many ethnic
Mexicans in the Midwest were repatriated. According to Ramos,

> For very near three years I have been trying to keep going the Church…but now I
> have to give up as the Mexicans went back to Mexico and all those that are left of
> the Spanish language are no more than 600 and most of them are almost
> starving…Please tell me what I should do. Must I close the Church at once?\(^{159}\)

A letter from Cleveland Bishop Joseph Schrembs in 1936 to the Lorain County Auditor’s Office
would indicate that the church was closed at some point in this period as Bishop Schrembs wrote
that the property where the church building is located “is being restored to tax duplicate because it
is no longer being used for religious purposes.”\(^{160}\)

However, another phase of tejana/o influx would soon begin and expand steadily until
1942. This flow of agricultural workers from Texas was accompanied by a wave of Mexican
nationals contracted under the Bracero Program from 1942 to 1964.\(^{161}\) By the early 1950s, the
Cleveland and Toledo dioceses identified the spiritual care of the Spanish-speaking as a
significant “problem.” In addition to the seasonal farmworkers, a survey conducted in 1953
revealed more than 3,000 Spanish speaking people had permanent addresses within the Toledo
Diocese: “Nearly all pastors reported that their great difficulty in providing for these souls was
the language barrier.”\(^{162}\) Additionally, sources reveal that by 1953, the migrant presence in the
Toledo Diocese extended well beyond the city limits of Toledo and that diocesan personnel were
growing concerned with meeting the spiritual needs of this group.

\(^{159}\) Fr. David Ramos, Letter to Chancellor of the Diocese of Cleveland, 1 June 1931, Diocese of Cleveland
Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.

\(^{160}\) Bishop Joseph Schrembs, Letter to C.S. Kelser, County Auditor, 22 October 1936, Diocese of Cleveland
Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.

\(^{161}\) David Badillo, “The Catholic Church and the Making of Mexican-American Parish Communities in
the Midwest,” 280.

\(^{162}\) Lawrence A. Mossing, S.T.D. *History of the Diocese of Toledo: The Golden Era in the Diocese of
A report by a Rev. Philip Baldonado provides a snapshot of the migrant population throughout the nineteen-county diocese and pastoral challenges of serving the population. Baldonado, a Franciscan missionary from Santa Barbara, California, submitted “the report of his work in the Diocese of Toledo from June 22, 1953 to the end of the summer. The work has been exclusively with Migrants of Spanish Speaking descent who year after year come into the diocese to work, and after work return to their homes.” Post-WWII Catholic ministry to Latinos in the Cleveland Diocese was formally begun in 1952, with La Capilla del Sagrado Corazón (Sacred Heart Chapel) founded in Lorain in 1952 serving the rapidly growing ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican populations. Also in 1952, Father Thomas Benedict Sebian was assigned to the Conversion of St. Paul Parish where he began the Spanish Catholic Mission Office in 1953 at Cleveland’s Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church.

In Cleveland, the Puerto Rican “problem” did not escape the conscience of local White Catholics. Writing Cleveland Auxiliary Bishop Floyd Lawrence Begin in 1950, a local farmer’s wife describes her observations:

There have been several hundred Spanish speaking Porto [sic] Ricans living in Lorain, Ohio for the last three years. Many live in the barracks at the National Tube…I asked if they went to church, it seems they don’t attend mass very well, at the same time we know that 90% of Porto Rico is Catholic. These men are hard working men, and most of them are very honest, at least when they first arrive here. A few have their families with them, but the majority are alone, away from home and family and what happens then, with no spiritual leadership? Some have died here, again I wonder is it possible to forgive a Spanish confession with English absolution! Perhaps I am very bold in writing this but my conscience does feel better. All I can visualize is the great comfort these poor men would receive [sic] if a Spanish speaking priest were to visit them once in a while and help them along Christian channels. If I have “spoken out of turn,” or “outstepped the role of farmer’s wife” I shall very humbly accept that criticism.165

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164 Begin would in 1962 become the first Bishop of the newly-created Diocese of Oakland, California.
165 Bernadette McAllister, Letter to His Excellency Bishop Begin, 27 September 1950, Diocese of Cleveland Archives, Cleveland, Ohio.
This letter by Bernadette McAllister and the other examples of ministerial outreach help elucidate several aspects of the religious borderlands that evolved in northern Ohio and that I seek to depict in this dissertation. The responses of white Catholics in the Cleveland and Toledo dioceses highlight the nondoctrinal religious practices of family and community evident in the devil dance, reflecting beliefs and rituals that suggest both a hybrid spirituality and a historical process of spiritual mestizaje through which folk Catholicism takes life. In a borderlands Catholicism, religious actors challenge the authority of a male-dominated Catholic institution. The influx of Latina/o im/migrants initiated such contestation in northern Ohio.

Brown Souls and Denominational Boundaries

As I have outlined, the Catholic Church in Ohio had been struggling to meet the perceived spiritual needs of Latino migrants since the 1920s. In Ohio, the arrival of migrant Puerto Ricans and Mexicans/Mexican Americans also challenged denominational boundaries as both Protestants and Catholics sought to meet the spiritual needs of each community. Concern over Protestant influence among Mexican nationals was expressed by the Catholic Church in Mexico. While Protestant churches never seriously challenged Catholic efforts in Ohio, the discourse of contestation for the souls of Latina/o im/migrants was widespread amongst Church officials, local Anglo residents, and the media, as the following quote demonstrates:

Another problem is that the Migrant Association is sponsored by the Fulton County Council of Churches, a Protestant organization. The Protestant social workers are helping migrants who are Catholic, and therefore they work along nondenominational lines.

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Initially in the 1940s, the Protestant Home Missions Council (HMC) geared its ministry to migrant workers. The HMC served migrant workers throughout the Midwest in varying capacities before the Catholic Church systematically addressed their needs. The National Council of Churches, HMC’s successor, formalized this attention with its migrant ministry program beginning in 1950. We see this carried out in the Toledo Diocese as a general report from the Reverend Michael J. Doyle, Director of The Toledo Catholic Charities reveals this more aggressive work:

The National Council of Churches has evidenced quite a bit of interest in this whole problem and has begun experimental social centers for the benefit of migrant workers…One Lutheran gentleman reported that he takes whatever migrants are willing to accompany him to the Lutheran Church. He stated, “of course, most of them are Catholics, you know, but if there is no Catholic Church nearby what are they going to do?”

Doyle reveals his assumptions about the migrants who “call themselves Texans and claim to be American and not Mexicans,” stating “The general impression I get from talking to the workers…is that the vast majority of migrant workers are Mexicans, therefore, Catholics presumably.”

Some six months later, Toledo Bishop Rehring writes to Reverend Robert E. Lucey, Archbishop of San Antonio, “In my opinion it would be an efficacious means of preserving the Faith of Mexican migrants, and certainly of protecting them against the insidious influence of the heretics, if a native Mexican priest were to be with them during their entire Mexican sojourn.”

Archbishop Lucey, the first prelate to examine the underlying problems of Mexicanos and admit the Church’s complacency in reaching out

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168 Badillo, 285.
to this population,\textsuperscript{171} and under whose leadership the Bishops’ Committee for the Spanish Speaking (BCSS) was founded in San Antonio in 1945, reveals that concern over Protestant efforts extended beyond the U.S. Catholic Church as he informs Bishop Rehring of worries by Mexican Church officials: “Recently Archbishop Jose Garibi Rivera of Guadalajara wrote to me for the Mexican hierarchy revealing that they are apprehensive of the inroads of Protestant missionaries among Mexican migrants in our country.”\textsuperscript{172}

Parishioners in the Toledo Diocese worked through other diocesan affiliates of national organizations such as the National Council of Catholic Men (NCCM). The NCCM was established in 1920 as part of the Lay Organizations Department of the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC). Its various functions included the federation of Catholic men's groups in a common agency, to be a central clearinghouse for information on lay activities, to promote lay cooperation in regard to the Church's welfare, to help existing Catholic lay organizations on the local level, to contribute to national and international movements with moral questions, and to inculcate appreciation of Catholic principles in education, social, and civil life in general. Writing in 1953 under the auspices of the Toledo Diocesan Council of Catholic Men, Walter Frederick writes to a priest, citing the organizational limits in reaching out to migrant farm workers in the “muck lands” (drained swamp land) of Plymouth, Ohio and Willard, Ohio, a small farming town founded as a junction for the Baltimore-Ohio-Chicago railroad:

…yearly the workers come up from Texas to work in the muck land during the summer and return in the winter. This muck land is in the Plymouth parish however that parish has all it can do to take care of itself; consequently I do not

\textsuperscript{171} Badillo, 115.
feel that we Catholics surrounding this area should sit idly by while our Protestant friends take over.  

Frederick goes on to lament his ability to motivate his Knights of Columbus brethren, stating, “Personally I do not think my letter will get the boys to do anything, yet it is the only thing I know what to do and I just had to do something to start or attempt to start the ball a rolling.” A month later, Bishop Rehring writes Father William Conces of St. Joseph’s Parish in Plymouth, thanking Conces for his report that “enables me now to give a satisfactory answer to the people who have inquired about the Migrants and who expressed fear that the strangers in our midst were under attack from the proselytizers and were in danger of injury to their faith.”

In the urban environment of the Cleveland Diocese, church leaders were similarly concerned with non-Catholic efforts. According to one report, “Strenuous efforts are being made by non-Catholic groups to attract the Spanish-speaking to their churches. This is as true on the Island as it is here in Cleveland. By offering them many assistances in the process of their integration into the community, proselytizers have had damaging success.” A local priest writes Auxiliary Bishop John J. Krol (1953-1961), later selected as Archbishop of Philadelphia (1961-1988), to cite the progress of Jehovah Witnesses in making “heavy inroads into the Puerto Rican families especially among the children.” The letter’s author, Father Thomas Sebian, bemoans the ills of a Protestant influence: “I fear…the velocity of loss to the Faith of these Latins here in Cleveland. They will be deluged with birth control, sterilization, and other pagan

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173 Walter Frederick, Letter to Fr. Ernst, 16 May 1953, Diocese of Toledo Archives Office, Toledo, Ohio.
175 “Re: Spiritual Care of Puerto Ricans Living in Greater Cleveland,” undated, Diocese of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.
socialistic literature, plus greater pressures from Protestant denominations to become members of their congregations.”\textsuperscript{177}

Hoping to establish better lines of communication with Puerto Ricans in the diocese, the Puerto Rican Holy Name Society of Greater Cleveland was established in December of 1953, enrolling one-hundred and thirty all male members. The Society evolved from a temporary measure in the fall of 1953 at St. Paul’s Shrine to form a group to contact Puerto Ricans “on the basis of their faith.” The Holy Name Society met at St. Paul’s Shrine every month on the first Sunday, with mass and communion taking place at 8:00am and a meeting at 2:00pm the same day. Included in a list of nine suggestions for a “program of spiritual care of Puerto Ricans living in Cleveland” was a call that “Every Puerto Rican family should be invited to participate in parish affairs and organizations. This applies to those families you may know are attending Protestant churches—many of them will come back at such an invitation.”\textsuperscript{178} Fr. Thomas Benedict Sebian was founder of the Spanish Catholic Mission in 1953 at the Conversion of St. Paul Parish, a long-time Croatian-serving church located at the corner of East 40th and Euclid Avenue in downtown Cleveland.

References to Protestant efforts in letters and progress reports from Fr. Sebian detailing the work of the diocesan Spanish Catholic Mission decrease into the later 1950s. Sebian mentions a new Protestant church in 1957: “the Assembly of God—has been opened for business…In the vicinity of Our Lady of Fatima Church…Their entire membership is Puerto Rican.”\textsuperscript{179} Formulating a counterstrategy, Sebian suggests having “Our Lady of Fatima as a center for Catholic propaganda and instruction.” Our Lady of Fatima Church was established by

\textsuperscript{178} “Re: Spiritual Care of Puerto Ricans Living in Greater Cleveland,” undated, Diocese of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.
Bishop Hoban on November 27, 1949 to serve the diverse assortment of Eastern Europeans as
well as migrants from Appalachia who lived in the Hough neighborhood of Cleveland.\textsuperscript{180}

Referencing a picture in a 1955 Cleveland Plain Dealer article on Sunday school
services for the still relatively new Puerto Rican population, Clevelander Joseph A.
Kocab writes to Archbishop Edward Hoban, “My heart was saddened by the enclosed
picture showing a group of Puerto Ricans in attendance at a protestant Sunday school. I
would like to know what provisions are being made for this new group of immigrants by
the Cleveland Diocese”.\textsuperscript{181} Kocab’s reference to Puerto Ricans as “immigrants” is
revealing as is his citing of “latent anti-clericalism” and nationalism amongst his
generation of Slavs as reasons for the failure to maintain Catholicism for members of that
group. Kocab made no mention of the article’s reference to a Latino pastor, Rev. Librado
Ramos, as the leader of the classes at the Spanish Assembly of God Church in Cleveland.

In order to deal with the shortage of Spanish-speaking priests, a plan advocated by the
Mexican Church was developed as early as 1952 whereby priests from Mexico would come to
the United States for temporary missionary duty among agricultural workers of Mexican descent.
The plan was fraught with difficulties, as outlined in a memorandum to Archbishop Lucey by a
Father Kelly of the BCSS Regional Office in Houston. These challenges included a relatively
brief window of availability of the Mexican priests (45 days), the lack of English language skills,
an inability to drive in the U.S., and inadequately screened priests.\textsuperscript{182} Given the significant
numbers of ethnic Mexican agricultural workers in the Toledo Diocese, Bishop Rehring formally

\textsuperscript{180} Once a fashionable neighborhood that was predominantly white in 1950, Hough was 74% non-white by
1960 as a result of urban renewal programs that displaced large numbers of African Americans. In the 1950s,
Fatima, unlike other Cleveland parishes that did not welcome large numbers of African Americans. In the 1950s,
welcomed Puerto Ricans who settled in Hough into the parish.

\textsuperscript{181} Joseph A. Kocab, Letter to Reverend Archbishop Edward Hoban, 24 July 1954, Diocese
of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.

\textsuperscript{182} Father Kelly, Memorandum to Archbishop Lucey, 11 January 1954, Diocese of Toledo Archives Office,
Toledo, Ohio.
requested Mexican priests. In the Cleveland Diocese, Archbishop Hoban indicated “no need at the present time for the services of a Mexican priest. I have already made arrangements for the care of these people in our Diocese.”\(^{183}\) This plan included Trinitarian priests from its missionary in Silver Springs, Maryland. An unusual number of Trinitarians were fluent in Spanish because of their founder’s connections with Puerto Rico.\(^{184}\)

Through the 1950s, the Archbishop Lucey and the BCSS would continue their efforts on behalf of farmworkers, which included opposition to the Bracero program. Lucey condemned the program as a vehicle that principally served the interests of growers and charged that it used "slave laborers" while calling for an end to it.\(^{185}\) Lucey focused BCSS efforts on the organization of a voluntary effort among Catholic parishes in the dioceses along the migrant trail. Besides assisting the farmworkers in their area, the volunteers conducted regular inspections of farm labor camps and reported any mistreatment to the authorities. This migrant ministry would give birth to a Hispanic/Latino laity in northern Ohio.

**Ministering to the Migrant**

The history of our diocese, like that of our Country, is the story of the migrant. It begins with the story of the Explorers, the Colonists and Pioneers, who were accompanied by traveling missionaries…A new and distinctive chapter is now being written in our history on the Puerto Rican Migrant.\(^{186}\)

Through the late 1950s and into the 1960s, the bishops of northern Ohio took stock of the new waves of migrants entering their dioceses. And while the introductory quote from Cleveland Archbishop Hoban declares a “new and distinctive chapter” of migration history with Puerto Ricans, this had not necessarily translated into effective support for social change as Latina/o

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\(^{186}\) Archbishop Edward Hoban, Letter to “Reverend and dear Father, “ 15 March 1956, Diocese of Cleveland Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.
migrants continued struggling under oppressive conditions. I referenced earlier Archbishop Robert Lucey’s (San Antonio) first initiative among U.S. Catholic bishops to forge a coordinated national effort in Hispanic ministry with the founding of the Bishops’ Committee for the Spanish Speaking (1945). The motivations for this included alarm over Protestant proselytizing efforts, the application of Catholic social teaching to ethnic Mexicans’ situation, and a confidential U.S. government report during World War II alleging that the Catholic Church’s neglect of ethnic Mexicans in the Southwest hindered the national war effort.187 This neglect was also reflected in the plight of Midwestern migrants, largely invisible for much of the 1960s despite their activism within and outside of the Catholic Church. In this section, I trace the challenges and increased unrest evident in Latina/o activist efforts. The great majority of Latino deacons considered in this study began as lay leaders in this period.

The migrant populations and their dispersal throughout the Cleveland and Toledo dioceses provided considerable pastoral challenges as there were few Spanish-speaking clergy/religious and insufficient resources to address the significant poverty and health needs due to poor working conditions. The Toledo diocese, with its predominantly-ethnic Mexican Latino population, included over eight thousand square miles and held both urban and rural Catholic communities. Entering the 1960s, the Cleveland Diocese required coordination of the “more than 40 parishes wherein the estimated 3000 Puerto Ricans live.” In the Toledo Diocese, efforts included encouraging companies, local priests, and parochial organizations (Knights of Columbus, Legion of Mary, Young Ladies Sodality) to work together so that “some practical program could be worked out whereby improved living conditions, reasonable working hours enabling the laborers to attend to their religious duties and instructions, could be insisted upon.

uniformly throughout the Diocese thus making it possible for instructions to be continued wherever these people may go.”¹⁸⁸ English classes were offered every Tuesday and Thursday at a cannery camp and were attended by “about 40 to 50 persons, mostly single men.” Visitation programs, movie nights at two of the larger camps, sport and recreation time for children, distribution of bibles in Spanish and English, and a particularly lively evening at which members of an Anglo farm family “helped break a pinata [sic], played games, and ate cake and Kool-Aid ‘till long after dark with the little children and young people.”¹⁸⁹

Archival documents frequently reference the poor living and working conditions in many of the towns and companies such as the Libby McNeil Cannery Camp, the Stokely Camp, and The La Choy¹⁹⁰ camp, which “apparently was removed because of its bad reputation.”¹⁹¹ The reports differentiate between migrants and settled out Mexicans, though, as Baldonado notes, “Among them, the same conditions hold as among all migrants: poor instructions, a great number of civil marriages, and grown ups without the Sacraments.”¹⁹² From 1955 to 1968, the Toledo Diocese reported an increase of from eight thousand to twenty-five thousand migrants. In 1968, the diocese reported that Spanish-speaking residents increased from seven thousand in 1963 to twenty-two thousand.¹⁹³

In the Cleveland Diocese, the Spanish Catholic Mission reports that “We now have over 200 Puerto Rican children under instruction on Sunday mornings in six different parishes.” And

¹⁸⁸ Baldonado, “Spanish-Speaking Migrant Laborers in the Diocese of Toledo.”
¹⁸⁹ Baldonado, 2.
¹⁹⁰ La Choy is currently listed as a brand of ConAgra Foods, Inc., one of North America’s largest packaged foods companies. The ConAgra Foods, Inc.corporate website reports La Choy was founded in 1922, was later closed due to World War II, with operations eventually moved to Ohio and its products sold nationally. The “Libby McNeil Cannery Camp” in Leipsic, Ohio was a supplier to Libby’s, also currently a brand of ConAgra Foods and a focal point of Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) efforts in the 1970s. The Stokely Camp referenced by the Andersons was supplier to the Stokely Canning Company, which later bought Van Camp foods to become Stokely-Van Camp, Inc. Van Camp is now a brand of ConAgra Foods and Stokely a brand of Seneca Foods.
¹⁹¹ Baldonado, 2.
¹⁹² Ibid.
while there were sixteen local seminarians with some knowledge of Spanish, Fr. Sebian states “Spanish speaking priests are needed urgently and immediately.” Fr. Sebian and other local priests were sent to study Spanish at the Universidad Catolica de Puerto Rico in Ponce, Puerto Rico. The Spanish Catholic Mission in Cleveland was working at a furious pace, yet, even as Archbishop Hoban acknowledges, “We have tried to reduce the burden of their work by having local pastors assume their pastoral responsibilities toward the Spanish-speaking people, but even the burden of coordinating the efforts of the pastors and of the parish schools is a heavy one.”

At news from Rev. Alfonso Villalba of the Society of Jesus in Ecuador that a Father Mejia from the Vice Province of Ecuador would be unable to remain in Cleveland due to the needs of his home parish, Rev. John F. Whealon, Vicar General for the Cleveland Diocese writes, “the Bishops of North America…have been told of the grave crisis existing in South America…The reason for our need of a Spanish-speaking priest is actually that with the migration of so many Puerto Ricans to this city, some of the situation and problems and conditions which you are facing have been transferred to Cleveland with their coming.”

Diocesan personnel across the Midwest were working in emergency fashion and, by 1968, the Rev. Anthony Soto of San Jose, California summarized efforts of the preceding twenty years while posing key questions for the future to a gathering of priests in Gary, Indiana:

Over the past twenty years the problem of the Span.[ish] Sp.[eaking] has been weighing heavily on the conscience of many a parish priest and bishop. Perhaps he would look out of his rectory window and see the occasional few Span. Sp. mixed in with his “regular” parishioners and realize that those were the exceptions that came. He would conduct a visitor thru the parish and point out “the Mexican section” with a sense of frustration that they were a world apart and he wasn’t a

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195 Archbishop Edward Hoban, Letter to Rev. Thomas O’Keefe, Holy Trinity Missionary, 1 April 1960, Cleveland Diocese Archives Office, Cleveland, Ohio.
part of it. Or he would hear others saying such things as “These people aren’t
good Catholics – they don’t go to Mass – they don’t support the church – they are
never active in the parish – they don’t mix well with others – they are here today
and gone tomorrow – their religion is mostly emotional and bound up with
devotional practices and some superstition – they are not really interested in
getting ahead thru education and the social ladder. They like music and fiestas and
to stay within their family life.” An occasional Span. Sp. priest would be brought
in to give a mission, to visit their “colonies” and “barrios” or migrant camps but it
was mostly to get them to receive the sacraments and especially to validate
marriages. This was true from one end of the country to another – in the large
cities as well as rural areas.”

From Soto’s perspective, increasing migration, the civil rights movement, Vatican II, and a
religious sociology “brought an awareness of such things as dominant cultures and minority
cultures and how one was imposed on the other as the price of climbing the social ladder.”
Vatican II was certainly a culminating moment in which the Church introduced relatively modest
changes to the Church that were too much for the rigid structures of nineteenth-century
Catholicism to absorb. And though what might be thought a Catholic “revolution” was likely
over by 1972, permanent change entered the Catholic imaginary and challenged personnel at
the diocesan level to respond to Rev. Soto’s question: “In other words, can the church teach the
grassroots its responsibility and develop when it has a history of paternalism.” Perhaps more
importantly, would Anglo Catholics allow themselves to be taught by brown souls?

Lay Activism & the Migrant FLOC

For the most part, the thread that has woven staff, members, and supporters
together into effective action has been the Church. With the Church there has
always been the common point of moral reference that has held us accountable for
our actions.

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1968, Toledo Diocese Archives Office, Toledo, Ohio.
200 W.K. Barger and Ernesto M. Reza, The Farm Labor Movement in The Midwest: Social Change and
Adaptation among Migrant Farmworkers (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1994): xi-xii.
In March of 2007, the late Deacon Rodolfo Lira, holding full faculties in both the Toledo Diocese and the Archdiocese of San Antonio (Lira was born in Asherton, Texas), was recipient of the fourth *César Chávez Humanitarian Award*. As reported by the Latino newspaper *La Prensa*,

Lira spoke briefly—both in Spanish and English, describing his early experiences with Chávez and the early struggles of the United Farm Workers, Chávez, and cofounder Dolores Huerta. Lira emphasized the role and power of prayer during the huelgas y luchas, or strikes and struggles. According to Lira, during numerous contacts with Chávez, they became aware that they were brothers in spirit, in blood, and in sugar—the latter remark referring to the diabetic status of both Lira and Chávez.  

Lira clearly viewed his work with migrants as an extension of that of the United Farmer Workers (UFW) and demonstrates that the Church leadership and migrant rights activism were strongly interwoven.

For Lira, this was indeed a long journey. In March of 1969, some fourteen years before he was ordained into the diaconate in 1983, and nearly forty years before receiving the *Chávez Humanitarian Award*, Rodolfo “Rudy” Lira pleaded with Reverend Thomas A. Redding to arrange a meeting with Toledo Diocese Bishop John A. Donovan. At the time, Lira, a former migrant farmworker who settled in Toledo in 1960, was Lucas County Director for the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), a social reform movement and union founded by Baldemar Velásquez in 1967 and representing migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the Midwest. According to Father Redding, “Rudy is frustrated and despondent; he has not been to Church since Christmas – Rudy who is a deeply spiritual and dedicated Catholic. Furthermore, he considers you as ‘his’ Bishop; it is inconceivable to him that he may not talk to you on a

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matter that affects him so deeply and involves so many suffering people.” In his reply to Redding, Bishop Donovan wrote, “as you undoubtedly surmise, I am not happy with Rudy Lira’s persistence.”

The frustration, despondence, persistence, and eventual recognition of Deacon Rodolfo Lira and his work in migrant ministry reflect the tumultuous and productive partnership forged between FLOC and the Toledo Diocese. While the Baldemar Velásquez quote at the beginning of this section cites the Church as a “point of moral reference,“ there is no doubt that the social consciousness of the northern Ohio Catholic community was challenged and awakened by the migrant farmworker struggle. FLOC would shape the work of the Spanish Speaking Apostolate, involving numerous Hispanic/Latino deacons in various capacities, both prior to and following ordination.

Farmworkers in the Midwest began to organize independent unions in the 1960s and by 1967, Obreros Unidos (Wisconsin) and FLOC (Ohio) had become involved in civil rights and labor activities. Organized concurrently with the civil rights movement, FLOC was modeled along the same lines as the UFW, and its philosophy included securing labor rights as the main solution to farmworkers’ problems, with an emphasis on nonviolence. The UFW had effectively merged Catholic and Mexican symbols and gave birth to a new generation of Mexican American Catholics who were much more aggressive in their relationship to the Catholic Church. A celebrated cursillista, or participant in the Cursillo Movement, UFW leader César Chávez attracted many of his first recruits for the UFW from his fellow cursillistas.

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205 Badillo, 223.
Short for Cursillo de Cristiandad (Short Course in Christianity), many Latina/o activists, lay leaders, anddeacons emerged from the Cursillo apostolic movement.

The closing of Vatican II and emergence of the UFW in 1965 merged Mexican Americans and the Catholic Church beyond symbolic references. Church support of UFW grape and lettuce boycotts extended into the Toledo Diocese and diocesan personnel were soon in the middle of the struggle. A Mrs. John F. Mathias of Findlay, Ohio writes Rev. Lawrence Devine, President of the Toledo Priests’ Senate and pastor at St. Michael’s in Findlay:

Regarding the boycott of the California table grapes endorsed by the Midwest Region of the Bishops’ Committee and the Priests’ Senate…I have a few questions. Are you completely informed on the background of Cesar [sic] Chavez and Walter Reuther who are the ‘shining lights’ behind the organization of the farm workers? Walter Reuther’s “survey” on malnutrition and starvation was as phoney as a $3 bill…As you have taken a stand on the ‘grapes’, why have you not…taken a position regarding, Polish hams; music boxes from the USSR; cigarettes containing tobacco imported from communist countries, to name only a few.206

Mrs. Mathias seems upset that, from her perspective, the Diocese has not done enough to similarly support parishioners affected by the Vietnam War and its “monstrous atheistic menace,” stating “many of whom have already lost sons or husbands in the war which we are not winning”.

At a priests’ meeting on migratory labor and FLOC in August 1969 at St. Aloysius in Bowling Green, Ohio, Fr. Ottenweller “pointed out that the farmer is caught between the migrant and the processor.”207 Rev. Fred Duschl told attendees that many of the farmers were unwilling to listen to the moral aspects of the labor organizing. Deacon Lira was also referenced at this meeting as one priest stated that the bishop was to meet with Lira, Velásquez, and other members


of FLOC. It would seem that Lira, whose frustration and desire to meet with the bishop had been conveyed by letter in March of 1969 and which I referenced earlier, was finally get his wish.

Mrs. F.A. Dohms of Curtice, Ohio, located in the eastern portion of Lucas County, writes to Bishop Donovan in 1969 after recognizing Rev. Albert H. Ottenweller participating in FLOC activities:

Today was the first day I was almost ashamed I was Catholic. To see priests and nuns in the picket line in our very own town was very disgusting. We don’t have enough sisters and priests to teach our children, yet these have time to picket and cause trouble. I would like to believe they were merely impersonating priests and sisters but I saw Father Ottenweller and I know him so I have to face facts. With the new high position he has just been given I would think he would have more duties to perform for the betterment of our dear Catholic Church. If this picketing is helping anyone, I would appreciate having it explained. All the true Catholics I’ve talked to today are not interested in this type of Catholicity. Stopping school busses – backing known Communists like Baldemar Velasquez…We, at St. Ignatius have always been proud and happy to be Catholics but do we have to continue to see Father Ottenweller’s name linked with Baldemar Velasquez?208

Ottenweller had been named Vicar General of the Toledo Diocese, a position that might be thought of as “second-in-command” of a diocese as the Vicar General is charged with assisting the bishop in governing a diocese. Ottenweller would be named Auxiliary Bishop of Toledo in 1974, and Bishop of the Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio in 1977. He was also director of the Spanish Speaking Apostolate from 1958 to 1969. As a child, Rev. Ottenweller and his family had moved from Montana to Leipsic, Ohio. Located in Putnam County in the southwestern portion of the Toledo Diocese, Leipsic was home to the Libby-McNeil, Inc. tomato processing plant and would become a hub of FLOC activity as the union declared a nationwide consumer boycott of all Campbell and Libby products.

The interconnectedness of migrant ministry, social justice, and the Hispanic/Latino diaconate is unquestionable. Diocesan approved and funded leadership programs offered by

208 Mary Dohms, Letter to Very Reverend Bishop Donovan, 8 September 1969, Toledo Diocese Archives Office, Toledo, Ohio.
social service organizations like La Raza Unida de Ohio politicized the Church (at least in the
eyes of Anglo Catholics) while sanctioning a Latino consciousness within the boundaries of the
local church. Ethno-religious groups like the Guadalupe Society and Cursillo Movement linked
local grassroots efforts with regional (FLOC) and national (UFW) movements, as migrant
ministry and lay activism produced a generation of Hispanic/Latino deacons that sought to
sustain a Catholic revolution.

The Midwestern environment and apostolic programs like the Cursillo Movement also
altered previous cultural and gender patterns in religious affairs. Women became involved in
parishes in new ways “beyond their already active role teaching catechism and prayers at home
and otherwise transmitting religious values.”\(^\text{209}\) Married men and women engaged in ministry as
couples, visiting migrant farmworker camps and coordinating Hispanic popular Catholic
celebrations such as La Virgen de Guadalupe and Posadas, and participating in Spanish language
religious folk music groups/choirs. Through the 1970s and into the 1980s, the Catholic Church
began to “recognize with gratitude what was done by farsighted men and women, Hispanic and
non-Hispanic, who, pioneers in this apostolate, helped maintain and develop the faith of
thousands.”\(^\text{210}\) The various apostolic *movimientos* (movements) helped ensure that the spiritual
needs of Midwestern Latino Catholics were addressed and contributed to the development of
grassroots Latino leadership in local parishes.

Through the 1960s and 1970s, and into the 1980s, programs such as the Cursillo
Movement, the *Encuentro* Convocations, *Movimiento Familiar Cristiano* (Christian Family

\(^{209}\) Gilberto M. Hinojosa, “Mexican-American Faith Communities in Texas and the Southwest,”
307.

\(^{210}\) *The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment*, National Conference of Catholic Bishops
Movement), *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base*211 (Basic Ecclesial Communities) served as a springboard for church involvement on the part of Latino males and, for some, a vocation in the permanent diaconate. The increasing number of Hispanic lay leaders and permanent deacons signaled that lay leadership and a new cadre of Latino male clergy from the grassroots had evolved.

**Faith, Fordism, and Masculinity**

The history of Latina/o migration and the coming of age of a Midwestern Catholic Latina/o community is directly tied to the sweeping industrialization and urbanization that forged a subaltern Latina/o working class, many of whom migrated to the Midwest in search of better jobs in industrial settings as well as to escape the racial domination many were subject to at varying levels of intensity. Perhaps the most significant event in the interwar period was the discovery of ethnic Mexicans by Midwestern and northern industry in the late 1910s and early 1920s.212 Paralleling the ethnic Mexican Midwestern experience later in the 1940s, Puerto Rican legislature passed a number of important laws ushering in Puerto Rico’s export-oriented industrialization program, Operation Bootstrap.213 And while during the post-war periods of economic prosperity and labor shortage ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans were able to better position themselves in industrial occupations, the improvement in income position from 1950 to 1970 was accompanied by movement “into jobs that were, on balance, declining in importance in the economy.”214

211 *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base* conceptually represent the important role of the local parish as a small community of personal relationships. According to the 1983 Pastoral Letter on Hispanic Ministry, the “role of the parish, in particular, is to facilitate, coordinate, and multiply the comunidades eclesiales de base within its boundaries and territories.


It is in relationship to this type of sociopolitical and economic transformation that Limón traces the metaphorical devil dance of socio-economic warfare in South Texas from a markedly rural setting, to one simultaneously marked by themes of urbanization, poverty, and postmodernity. As Limón discusses, this economic warfare is framed initially in the form of the social contract referred to as Fordism, and later in a post-Fordist economy of “flexible accumulation.” The term Fordism, roughly covering the 1914 to 1972 time period, signifies the importance that Italian communist leader and social theorist Antonio Gramsci (Selections from the Prison Notebooks, 1971) attributed to the assembly-line production, managerial hierarchy, and technical control introduced by automobile magnate Henry Ford.

Given Ford’s headquarter location in Michigan, Fordism reached a highpoint in the Midwest, with the accompanying political-economic transformation triggering and sustaining migration from the U.S.-Mexico borderlands to the north. And while throughout most of the twentieth century, the city of Detroit has been synonymous with American automobile manufacturing, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ohio innovators in Cleveland and elsewhere were at the forefront of this new form of transportation technology. Ford Motor Company, a major employer in the Cleveland area, entered the Cleveland market in 1906. Following World War II, Ford built several production plants in the Cleveland area, making it a significant base for the company's operations. Additionally, General Motors began operations in Toledo, Ohio, in 1916. Gramsci’s discussion of “Americanism and Fordism” articulated his view that the capitalist economy is embedded in broader, historically specific socio-cultural regimes, each with distinct structures and processes, dominant and subordinate strata, hegemonic and counterhegemonic blocs, and patterns of struggle.215

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According to Fernandez, in her study of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in postwar Chicago, racial and economic struggle and marginalization were not the only factors shaping Latino/a people’s lives: “Women experienced urban life in distinct ways and the intersectionality of their social identities made them sensitive to other forms of subordination.” In other words, a corporatist, Fordist model carried gendered implications as Latina “concerns, challenges, and opportunities as mothers, wives, and women shaped community relations,” with women’s gendered productive and reproductive labor shedding greater light on gender inequalities. In fact, in the agricultural labor environments of Michigan and Ohio, company houses had long followed Henry Ford’s production principles – they were all alike, furnished and positioned in a manner that reinforced gendered domestic roles.

The church was not immune from the influence of Fordist principles. Manuel A. Vasquez hypothesized that the Catholic Church, with its reliance on the parish structure, operated under an outdated corporatist, Fordist model, producing a religious economy of scale that impersonally dispensed a "one size fits all" product. Until the development of Hispanic lay ministry and leadership programs, this certainly is applicable to the northern Ohio Latino Catholic experience as Anglo priests and volunteers struggled to fit brown souls into a pre-existing model of catholicity. Additionally, as early migrant ministry efforts revealed, the agricultural and industrial companies in Ohio were part and parcel of an effort to bring Latinos into the existing social contract. Here, the Church and Fordism mirror each other as racial and social engineering forces. Proving one’s commitment to becoming a working, Christian American was reflected in a

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similar range of behaviors practiced outside of the workplace: sobriety, cleanliness, marriage, speaking English, participating in religious worship. The socio-political, economic, and religious context within which Catholic paternalism and agribusiness/industrialism functioned reveals the importance of built environments to relations of power.

The Catholic Church and other organizations whose goal was to put Christian principles into practice were instrumental in the adjustment to the new industrial environment as faith and Fordism became intertwined. Ford’s magnificent factory - The Rouge - was consecrated a “cathedral of industry,” and Ford, one of the richest and most celebrated men in history, ordained the high priest of the modern age. As Vargas points out, directed by the belief that Americanization would enhance the socioeconomic well-being of Latinas/os, the Catholic Church encouraged their full participation in this Fordist-American dream. Vargas also demonstrates the gendered nature of this venture into industrial manhood while referencing a letter sent to Henry Ford by a Mexican father:

…the father revealed that many Mexicans were redefining the concept of manliness based on factory work when he expressed his firm belief that his son would be transformed into a man in the Ford factory…“Within a few days my son, Augustin Valdéz, will arrive in Detroit to work in your highly esteemed factory. . . .I have accomplished one of my greatest aspirations—of sending my son to complete his education and build his character in the great city of Detroit. . . .I am placing my son under your care, for I know that you will turn him into a man.”

Ironically, the Mexican father lends the Motor City an aura of femininity as he expects his son to be nurtured to manhood.

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222 Zaragosa Vargas, Proletarians of the North, 6.
As a social contract, questions of sexuality, the family, forms of moral coercion, consumerism, and state action were all bound up with the search to forge a particular kind of industrial worker, a new type of Fordist man. As Gramsci explained, Fordist executives became increasingly interested in the moral and psychological state of their workers.\footnote{David Harvey, \textit{The Condition of Postmodernity} (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd, 1990).} Gramsci argued that Henry Ford’s surveillance of workers’ family life, sexuality, and other activities outside of the workplace illustrated efforts to cultivate the voluntary submission of workers to the labor discipline required by this new industrial order. Gramsci claimed that the Fordist cultural project was executed by public and religiously affiliated organizations.\footnote{Antonio and Bonanno, “A New Global Capitalism?”, 35.} I have utilized archival materials that contain interesting interview notes from deacon home visits conducted by diocesan religious personnel. These notes most frequently reference family issues, marital difficulties, challenges around alcohol consumption, bouts with depression, and commentary on home conditions in ways that resonate with the Fordist surveillance efforts.

The relationship between faith, Fordism, and masculinity is why this dissertation centers on border crossing in multiple paradigms. It is essential to focus on the Hispanic/Latino Catholic deacon as a religious actor in this historical experience rather than static spectator. Pierre Bourdieu’s essays on religion are useful here in considering relationships between social order and labor, the religious field, and religious specialists. Beyond a ministry, the migrant experience was perhaps something like \textit{habitus} for many Latino deacons – “the seat of one’s dispositions and the filter of all that one perceives.”\footnote{Terry Rey, \textit{Bourdieu on Religion: Imposing Faith and Legitimacy} (London: Equinox Publishing, Ltd., 2007), 46.} Bourdieu discussed the relationship between habitus and field, the setting in which social agents and their positions are located. In this instance, we might consider field in its most literal, agricultural form, as the setting that distinctly informed
the Ohio deacon’s perception, appreciation, and practice (habitus) – particularly in northwestern Ohio.

Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* sheds light on the significant influence of the migrant-border crossing experience as a matrix of perception for the subjects in this study. *Habitus*, understood by some to delineate an aversion to the role of conscious intention, has opened Bourdieu’s work to criticism for its supposed lack of critical depth in considering the agency of subaltern groups and individuals. This dissertation offers the Hispanic/Latino deacon as a member of a migratory subaltern whose borderlands consciousness provides an alternate way of living with and seeing contradictions in the established order – be they cultural, political, religious – while developing a capacity to critique them. Of course, the hegemonic nature of the established order can also challenge the actor’s ability to recognize some forms of power; however, a borderlands consciousness would seemingly enhance one’s chances of neutralizing the effects. Here we might return to the tensions in a contradictory consciousness, representing the “contradictions between consciousness inherited uncritically from the past and consciousness developed in the course of practically transforming the world”.226

In this way I place the *vato sagrado* in dialogue with Limón’s metaphorical devil dance and the vatos of south Texas. As Limón illustrates, the all male humor of a group of vatos might be considered a sociocultural process of resistance and positive identity, while simultaneously interpreted as a discourse that “casts these classes in the idiom of human rubbish, animality, aggressiveness, and abnormality—in the Christian realm of the devil, if you will.”227 The discourse of the *vato sagrado* might similarly function in a religious borderlands between God and the devil. For example, by officiating at the quinceañera, the Hispanic/Latino deacon

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227 Limón, *Dancing with the Devil*, 124.
positions himself within a gendered discourse of the most traditional meanings and practices associated with the ceremony (and advocated by the institutional Church), and the feminist perspective focusing on the negotiation and contestation surrounding the event.\textsuperscript{228} This bedeviled spiritual activism of the Hispanic/Latino deacon evolved from a colonial framework, informed by membership in a dominated subaltern class and by hegemonic discourses along race, class and gender boundaries. Thus, the deacon’s spiritual activism resonates with Hartley’s (2010) presentation of Anzaldúa as a “curandera of conquest,” a “healer of la herida abierta, the open wound created by the borders that neocolonialism has imposed—borders policing class, national, gender, sexual, racial, and religious divisions.”\textsuperscript{229} Developing in the throes of ethnic transformation in the Midwest manufactured by a new industrial capitalism, the Hispanic/Latino deacon’s border crossing and evolving spiritual activism is inextricably tied to the rise of an exploited migratory Latina/o working class subaltern.

CHAPTER IV. THE LATINO DEACON MIGRANT IMAGINARY

*The Serpent’s Forked-Tongue*

Entering Saint Aloysius School and Church was like entering the serpent. And the whispering, multi-lingual memories from its forked-tongue haunt me to this day. In the classroom and the pew, the serpent coiled, slithered, and writhed across this borderlands.

Anna was my only brown-faced classmate and, unlike me, spoke with a heavy accent. Her family had also migrated to and settled out in Ohio. The serpent entered our fifth-grade classroom as Mrs. Knowgood asked her to stand and read from the overhead projector. I don’t recall the content of the plastic sheet on the overhead project. Perhaps it was some lesson on the Spanish Armada or Great Lakes, but Anna opened her mouth and uttered “chipwreck.” “No, shipwreck,” Mrs. Knowgood replied. Obeying the command to repeat, “chipwreck” again came from Anna’s tongue. “No. Again. Shipwreck.” Mrs. Knowgood’s voice escalated in volume and annoyance. By the fourth or fifth command to repeat, tears were streaming down Lisa’s brown cheeks. Though it was Lisa who was being publicly tormented, I cringed and felt on display.

My parents spoke English and Spanish (seemingly simultaneously), though the accent that accompanied the former often made me wince, overshadowing the pride brought by spelling bee championships, placement in advanced reading classes, and praise for athletic prowess. I dreaded the days that dad picked me up from baseball practice in his outdated Chevy, with some *tejano* or *norteño* eight-track blaring from the speakers and my white teammates within earshot. Never was it worse for me than on those Sundays that Deacon Josè was to read the Gospel at the ‘noon English mass. The tension in our home was always thicker on those Sunday mornings, all of us much quieter as my dad conducted a final read-through of the gospel. Deacon Josè received his blessing from the parish priest, and stepped to the lectern. If he was tense at home when
practicing, I can only imagine what he was feeling in that moment. But back then, I did not care.
I was focused on my shame. As I moved into my teens, I somehow managed to convince my
mother that I needed to sit elsewhere in the church, anything to separate myself from the
serpent’s tongue. But even at the greatest distance provided, slouched in a pew in the balcony at
the back of Saint Al’s, I could not escape the serpent. Deacon José faced it with courage.

My father told me of the physical punishment that he received from teachers when he
spoke Spanish in his South Texas elementary school (at least until he dropped out after the 4th
grade). Yet several decades later, my father’s linguistic skill served the community as he visited
migrant camps, led bilingual Alcoholics Anonymous meetings at the church, baptized little
brown babies, and picked up the latest South Texas visitor at the urging of the local Greyhound
bus station owner.

These whispers that haunt me today belong both to my dad and Mrs. Knowgood. It is a
stretch to say I am bilingual. Straight “A” marks in Spanish throughout high school and college
don’t convince me to apply for jobs that call for bilingual skills. Even now in adulthood I have
noticed that when in my car listening to my father’s music, those tejano or norteño tracks now on
CD, with car windows down and stopping for a red light, I will raise the window that faces the
vehicle pulling up next to me. The serpent is always near.

_A Midwestern Devil Dance_

Building upon the archived accounts in previous chapters, I now examine and develop the
border crossing narratives of a group of Latino permanent deacons in northern Ohio whom I
interviewed between April and December of 2010. Overall, the results based on open-ended
questions from the interviews demonstrate that the respondents in this group have negotiated
multilayered, complex borderlands. These borderlands include national/transnational histories;
gender, ethno-racial, and class boundaries; and, ethno-religious affirmation and experiences of agency.

The section begins by describing the basic demographic characteristics of the group of deacons, followed by a delineation of the multiple migrant stream narratives, as well as subsequent paradoxical experiences of exclusion (based on ethno-racial identity and class) and agency. Overall, as this chapter will show, these deacons’ experiences resonate significantly with the themes of a borderlands framework. According to Segura and Zavella, there are four key dimensions of borderlands: structural, discursive, interactional, and agentic, any one of which can be a site of feminist analysis.230 This chapter will focus particularly on the structural, interactional, and agentic dimensions in analyzing the experiences of these Latino deacons.

Structural dimensions of a borderlands project critique the effects of globalizing economies, neoliberal state practices, and growing regional interdependence. These structural forces displace subjects who join migrant streams so that geopolitical borders—most often considered from the U.S.-Mexico, or Mexican-Latin American perspective—become sites containing subjects in flight, extreme exploitative relationships, and multiple dangers.231 The migration histories of the deacons in this study expose the impact of such structural forces.

Interactional dimensions of a feminist borderlands project examine the ways that exclusionary boundaries are actively produced based on race/ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality, leading to subjects who may feel like outsiders. Many of the deacons in this study have long navigated race/ethnicity and class as exclusionary boundaries. This experience continued in the realm of the religious as they negotiated negative attitudes from parish priests and parishioners. Yet in examining the Latino deacons’ experiences, we are able to identify

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constructions of identities and expressions of agency (agentic dimension) that negotiate structural, discursive, and interactional boundaries. As ordained clergy, this agency was often expressed through a spiritual authority that challenged other Catholics to authentically engage in a new era of Church life that Vatican II was supposed to introduce.

Characteristics of the Northern Ohio Latino Deacon

For this study, I interviewed a total of eighteen Latino deacons (Table 1). Of these, eight serve in the Cleveland Diocese and ten in the Toledo Diocese. The average year of birth is 1941, making the average deacon age approximately 70 years. Sixteen of the eighteen permanent deacons interviewed were born outside of, and migrated to, Ohio. These figures include six born in South Texas/Texas, five in Puerto Rico, three in Mexico, and one each in Cuba and New York. All deacons interviewed were married at the time of their ordination, with two since widowed and one having his marriage annulled. All deacons in this study have adult children.

Table 1. Interviewed Latino Deacon Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Diocese</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Settled in Ohio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anastacio</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicente</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>New York*</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidro</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzalo</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>Ohio**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domingo</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santiago</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomas</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pascual</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillermo</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Ohio*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Parents migrated from Puerto Rico  
** Parents migrated from Texas
Years of service in the diaconate range from 4 to 38 years, with an average of 23.9. Ten deacons reported either no preference regarding ethnic label, or comfort with a combination of Hispanic/Latino and their national origin. Two of the three deacons born in Mexico indicated a preference for the label Mexican. Two deacons stated a preference for Tejano or Tex-Mex, and one each for Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Latino. Hence, the majority is comfortable with multiple identity labels.

With regard to highest educational attainment, three report a graduate degree, two report a bachelor’s degree, eleven deacons have a high school diploma or GED, and two have a middle school education or less. This means that about twenty-eight percent hold a college degree, and seventy-two percent have a high school diploma or less education. According to a 2011-2012 national study of the permanent diaconate, sixty percent of active deacons have at least a college degree. In the same study, twenty percent of active deacons report a high school diploma or GED as highest educational attainment. In this study, sixty-one percent hold a high school diploma or GED. Thus the deacons in this study have less educational attainment than the national average.

All deacons stated that they do speak Spanish, with five indicating a preference for Spanish, three for English, and ten (55.5%) specifying no preference. The three deacons who conveyed a preference for English stated that they do speak Spanish primarily at religious celebrations intended for Spanish-speaking parishioners. Five of the ten deacons who said they had no preference informed me that use of English or Spanish depends on the situation. Deacon Pascual, whose wife is Anglo, replied “English at home. Depends where I am really.” Pascual will use Spanish at religious events, or in social situations, depending on the language preference.

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of others. According to Deacon Francisco, “With my sisters I mostly speak English, and with my sons and daughters too. But with my wife, she prefers Spanish. But I really don’t have a preference. Sometimes I speak, what do you call that, Spanglish.”

In a borderlands context, the linguistic practices of the deacons conjure Anzaldúa’s thoughts on a “border tongue.” Anzaldúa and postcolonial scholars discuss the linguistic shifting of border subjects and migrants. While loss (or appropriation) of language can be viewed as capitulation to the colonial imperative from a postcolonial theory perspective, Bhabha argues the need to recognize the agency involved for the colonial subject who produces a hybridized version of language (e.g., Spanglish).

Thirteen deacons (72%) reported that they are retired (with one reporting a post-retirement full-time job in his diocese), and five reported currently working full-time (three of these in administrative positions in their diocese). Eight deacons reported working as agricultural farmworkers at some point in their employment histories. In examining work histories more closely, a link may be made to the industrialization and urbanization that marked the post-WWII Midwest. Eleven of the eighteen deacons interviewed reported work histories in the auto industry (with several retired from General Motors and Ford), the steel industry, and government agencies/defense contractors. This is of particular interest as I consider the historical significance of industrial work in redefining masculinity.

And while my survey did not contain any item inquiring about military service, the interviews revealed that six (33%) of the deacons served in the armed forces. In utilizing the work of Limón within my theoretical framework, I engage with his conceptualization of war and the military in relationship to narratives of domination (often in the form of the political unconscious) or resistance amongst the Latina/o working-class sector. Beginning at a very early

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233 Interview with Deacon Francisco by Adrian Bautista, 9 June 2010, Cleveland Diocese.
age, military service becomes one of the most appealing and seemingly sure options for many
poor and working-class families. Military service can also have the effect of producing a
certain form of social/cultural capital and citizenship. There is also a physical mobility created in
military service that facilitates a form of transnational movement for those stationed at bases
around the world. Finally, military service may also advance and/or reinforce conceptions of
masculinity.

Deacon Pablo served in the Army and was stationed in Austria. When I asked Pablo
about his service, he stated, “I loved it,” and referenced the work and training aspects as well as
having a steady job. Pablo also spoke of the camaraderie and “beer drinking” with fellow
servicemen, including his superior officers. Pablo specifically mentioned that his officers often
did not require saluting, but preferred to be treated like the rest of the men. It seems that Pablo’s
experience is marked by pride in the “job” and levels of bonding and mutual respect with his
peers and officers alike. Deacon Domingo served in the Air Force for four years. When asked
about his service, Domingo reflected interestingly on family and the gender dynamics of the
experience:

Yes, I was in the Air Force for 4 years…It was hard leaving because you were
leaving family. And it was hard for the family because they were losing their son.
That’s what they felt…I went to Greenland…They told me…there’s a girl behind
every tree…So as the plane was coming down, there were no trees. I looked for
trees. And it was all men, no women. The first time I was at the PX, the grocery
store, the guy that was working the register leaned across the table and kissed the
guy on the lips. And I said, I’m in the wrong place. I am in the wrong place.

Domingo’s reaction to the intimacy between two men and Pablo’s new experience of self-worth
and male camaraderie are indicative of gender dimensions that would be both challenged and
reinforced as permanent deacons.

In examining the border crossing experiences of these deacons, I intervene in migration studies and a transnational discourse to elucidate social phenomena in the Midwest. I consider the transnational in both Mexico-Texas and Puerto Rico-mainland U.S. contexts. In this way, as Pérez discusses, migrants are treated as active historical agents as “the transnational frame provides a far more complicated portrait of migrant life, including migrants’ simultaneous participation in the economic, social, and political life of both the society from which they came and their new community of residence.”

For the deacons in this study who were born outside of Ohio, migratory patterns varied and were often informed by employment opportunities and family networks. Hence, migration was often non-linear and covered multiple geographic regions throughout the United States. The migration accounts of these deacons are multilayered, covering U.S.-Mexico, Texas-Ohio, Caribbean-Ohio, and other migratory streams. As the majority of the deacons were born in Texas and joined the significant Tejano migrant stream to the Midwest in the late 1940s and into the 1960s, I consider this additional migratory layer as I expand the borderlands discourse into the Midwest.

The Texas Migrant Stream

The stories of the deacons of Mexican descent in this study largely reflect the post-WWII narrative in which immigrants from Mexico were joined by Tejanos to work in the fields and factories of the Midwest. Six of the deacons interviewed migrated from Texas, five of these from South Texas. Two reported that they were six years of age or younger when their families

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235 Ibid, 14.
236 Dennis Nodín Valdés, “‘Not All Borders are the Same’: Immigration and the Racialization of the ‘Mexican Menace’ in the Midwest,” (Occasional Paper No. 73, March 2008) Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University.
settled out in Ohio, but maintained familial and cultural ties to South Texas. Deacon Anastacio was born in Carrizo Springs in Dimmit County, Texas. Although he settled in Ohio with his family at the age of six, Anastacio told me that he still wears a cowboy hat and cowboy boots due to his strong identification with Texas and prefers to be identified as either Mexican American, or Tejano. According to Anastacio, “When people ask me where I’m from, I tell them I’m Tejano.”

Deacon Santiago was born in Laredo, Webb County, Texas. When asked if he had any memories of his childhood in Texas, Santiago stated, “Not many. I was 3 years old when we moved to Ohio. I didn’t return until I was 14 for my grandmother’s funeral.”237 When Santiago was eighteen years old, he met his future wife, who was 14, during a summer while she and her family were working as migrant farm workers in northwest Ohio. Santiago followed her back to Texas, where they married. However, as Santiago reported, he could not find work in Texas and they came back to Ohio. According to Santiago, his wife did not want to move to Ohio permanently, but was told by her mother that she had to follow her husband.

Others reported working in the migrant stream for significant periods of time, including Deacon Luis who stated he was a migrant farmworker for nineteen years. Deacon Juan was born in Weslaco, Hidalgo County, Texas and prefers to be identified as a Tejano or as Tex-Mex. Juan reported that he and his mother migrated between Texas and Ohio from 1951 to 1964, settling out in Ohio in 1965. Juan stated that his mother never married his biological father nor did Juan ever have a relationship with his father. I asked Juan if he had any memories of his life in Weslaco and he responded, “Nah, I remember more what we were doing here.” Juan provided some insight into his and his mother’s daily life “here”:

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237 Deacon Santiago, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 15 December 2010, Toledo Diocese.
We worked for one farmer all 14 years. And when we first came up here, there was no clinic, there was no food stamps…Now we had a good man, a good farmer, he took us to his family doctor. He'd tell the doctor, these guys get sick, take care of them. He'd take us to Lindsey [neighboring town], to the grocery store there, and he told the man let them have whatever food they want. When the sugar beets are done, they'll come pay you…We worked. We worked. There were a lot of mexicanos. You go on [Ohio State Route] 590 and I could tell you where all the shanties were that had mexicanos…

Juan’s description reveals the importance of healthcare issues in migrant life as one of the first items he mentions is the lack of a healthcare clinic, and follows up that this farmer accompanied workers to the doctor. Juan’s vignette also exposes the migrant’s total reliance on the farmer, the paternalistic farmer-migrant relationship, and the farmer’s reliance on cheap migrant labor. Finally, Juan’s reference to the sugar-beet harvest reminds us of the significant sugar beet industry in the Midwest and northwestern Ohio as one of the five predominant sugar-beet zones in the Midwest.238

Deacon Pablo, born in Brownsville in Cameron County, Texas, told me that he worked for the farmer who owned the field behind his current house when he first came to the area and he went on to share more about his farmworker background:

I was a migrant, way since 1948. In '55 I stayed here…Growing up, all we did was work. We were always out in the fields. Go from Texas, go pick tomatoes and beets and all that. In Texas, go pick oranges, cotton, whatever. Finally I came to Libby’s [tomato processing plant] in the summer. And I put in an application and they hired me. And I worked ninety days there and Uncle Sam [U.S. Army] got a hold of me.239

Deacon Pablo’s wife shared that her husband’s intent was not to remain in Ohio: “He says he was going to work for only six months and go back to Texas.” Pablo followed that up with, “And I’m still here. But I’m glad it worked out because I retired from GM. Still got my benefits.”

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238 In the research report “The Southwest-Midwest Mexican American Migration Flows, 1985-1990,” (paper presented at the Rural Sociological Society’s 1996 annual meeting), Saenz and Cready cite Valdés’ (1991) work detailing the significance of the sugar-beet industry in the Midwest. According to Valdés, Michigan was known as the “Michoacan del norte.”

239 Deacon Pablo, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 22 April 2010, Leipsic, Ohio.
Pablo’s story points to the transition into the manufacturing sector (GM) as part of the settling out process, though this was preceded by non-unionized work at Libby as the mechanization of the agricultural industry continued to impact the migrant stream. Yet, as with Luis, Texas was not a place Pablo desires to return to permanently, and was driven by his ability to earn an acceptable wage:

I never wanted to go back. I was working in a field making $15 a week. My mom, my stepfather, my brothers, and I’d work. I had credit in a grocery but $15 doesn’t go too far. So when I got over here I started working at GM and I made three times as much. And I told my wife I’m gonna be here for six months. Hey, I’m still here. I told my wife I would never go to Texas again.

The Texas-Ohio migrant narrative reminds us of the transitional subaltern group of ethnic Mexicans who were incorporated into the productive process of an internal-colonial model of social existence. Employers preferred underpaid braceros to non-bracero ethnic Mexicans, who therefore were forced into the migrant stream to find jobs elsewhere. Non-bracero ethnic Mexicans also had much more mobility than braceros (who were not legally allowed to find work even on the farm next door), and non-bracero ethnic Mexicans had more job opportunities in other parts of the country. As mechanization on farms increased, ethnic Mexicans were forced into interstate migratory patterns in order to find work. For these migrants who made their way to northwest Ohio, the decision to settle out was not based solely on a desire to improve their lives and assimilate, but rather was situational as the need to earn money often outweighed the desire to return home.

Crossing the U.S.-Mexico Border

Three of the deacons interviewed were born in Mexico. Another reported being born in Texas, but emigrating to Mexico as a child and returning to the United States fifteen years later

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at the age of seventeen. Deacon Fernando was born in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico. Fernando reports migrating within Mexico to Nuevo Laredo, staying there with his family for five years “while my dad fixed the papers for all of us.”242 Deacon Fernando and his family then immigrated to the United States when he was twelve, initially to Laredo, Texas, and then to Montana, working in the agricultural industry. This would place Fernando’s family in the narrative of the Bracero Program, which contracted a wave of Mexican nationals from 1942 to 1964. Fernando reported that his mother and father had actually first migrated to Cleveland, but returned to Mexico during the Great Depression:

When he [my father] went back to Mexico, he went back during the Depression, back to Mexico. He ended up losing everything and wanted to go back. In the meantime, he was one of these guys who signed the papers for the bracero program. He would come as a bracero and go all over the United States. So he saw all the areas. And the one he picked was because the farmer that sponsored us was from Montana…It’s a beautiful country. It’s God’s country.

Although Fernando had four older siblings who were born in the United States during his parents’ time in the United States prior to returning to Mexico at the Great Depression, he reported it was much more difficult for his father to “fix the papers” for Fernando and younger siblings who were born in Mexico:

When we were there in Laredo, the five years, and my father was constantly coming over in those [bracero] programs, my mom passed away one time when I was away. She was very young. She was only 35 years old, and she already had 11 kids. So it was very, very hard for my dad, for him. And then a year later one of my older brothers got killed in an automobile accident. It was a pretty painful experience. The only ones that came across with my dad were the younger ones because my three older brothers were already living in the United States. So a lot of the credit for my upbringing I have to give to my dad because he is the one that formed us for what we are. I was 10 when my mother died. She was ill several times; she had a lot of surgeries. In today's modern world and medicine she would've had a better chance. But the medicine in Mexico was primitive at the time.243

242 Deacon Fernando, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 8 June 2010, Cleveland Diocese.
243 Ibid.
Here, Fernando recognizes the difficulties of navigating the border and the significant impact on the family as his father frequently came to the United States as a bracero. Fernando also makes a distinction in the quality of healthcare available on the Mexican side of the border. As a result of his mother’s death, Fernando’s father assumed responsibility for child rearing and childcare. This challenges the typical discourse in which working class men are said to valorize brute virility and ignore their offspring. In fact, Fernando’s father also assumed primary responsibility for teaching his children the Catholic faith:

And then my father, I told you, he was left a widower. I’ll tell you the norm in the house was okay. Everyday when he came home from work we would have supper. After supper we would say the rosary. And after the rosary he would tell us to do our homework…On some days we would go to church. There were five boys who were still at home. Every Sunday all of us would go to church…We’d come back home and eat breakfast. And during breakfast he would be drilling us about the readings, about the Gospel. He’d say, “What do you guys think was the message?” And then if we would miss something, he would explain to us. So it’s not like the faith wasn’t there. It was always there for us.

Fernando’s stating that everything – “the norm” in the house – was “okay” with his father assuming primary responsibility for the family is interesting as it infers a recognition that his dad’s assuming dual gender roles as mother and father is not typical, but was effective. Fernando reported that his dad would later remarry. Fernando, his father, and his four brothers, it seems, did not define their masculinity in relation to any women in their lives, at least until perhaps his father remarried.

Deacon Isidro was also born in Mexico, and immigrated to Wisconsin in his twenties. I interviewed Isidro and his wife Laura in their home in Toledo. When I asked what brought him to Ohio, Isidro, who speaks with a distinct accent, replied:

Immigration. I was running away from Immigration [Isidro laughs]. I met my wife at Milwaukee. I was playing soccer and immigration got me there. The

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244 Gutmann, 86.
245 Ibid.
owner of the team, he was the sheriff. He took me out of the jail. He asked for permission for me. And he gave me only three months, three months of permits. And [with] the last one he said I had to leave the country. So I have to leave the country, and my wife say, well, why don’t we go to Toledo. My [Isidro’s future] brother-in-law was living in Toledo.  

Laura had arrived in Milwaukee prior to Isidro. According to her, “I came from Texas with these people that used to live in Milwaukee. And they had two restaurants and they needed people to work. And that’s how I came and ended up in Milwaukee. I’m from Mercedes, Texas. The Rio Grande Valley.” Isidro followed up Laura’s comments with, “If I was not hungry in Milwaukee, I never met her. And I get into the restaurant and saw her and, uh-uh, this lady, uh-huh, uh-huh.” Isidro was obviously quite taken with Laura in that first encounter.

Taking flight to Ohio, Isidro revealed that his undocumented status continued to present challenges in Toledo:

Immigration got me again. But my two daughters were already born…And they took me to the jail in Oregon [Ohio]. And my wife go and make a lot of phone calls and threatened a lot of people saying “If you deport him you are going to support my family.” So Immigration said, ok, we are going to let you go. But you have to get married. So Immigration let me go out and the first thing he told me is you have to go get married. So I went home and told my wife “It’s your lucky day. Let’s go get married” [laughter]. And we go straight to the courthouse.  

It is interesting to consider Laura’s position in a moment in which she appears to hold significant power in Isidro’s fate. Having come to the United States unmarried and without her immediate family, Laura’s story seemingly contradicts the norm of contemporary Mexican society, traditions and social norms which regulate a young woman’s sexuality as family property, requiring the young woman to not leave the family until getting married.  

What were her motivations for agreeing to go to the courthouse to be married? Did gender and/or marital ideals

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246 Deacon Isidro, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 11 May 2010, Toledo Diocese.
247 Ibid.
play a role? Was this a strategic decision informed by notions of social mobility and negotiating power within the marriage? Laura’s im/migrant history complicates consideration of her decisions to become sexually active and to marry.

Deacon Pedro was also born in Mexico. Pedro reported that he was working in Mexico “for a British company that was making and selling steel cables and ropes”249 when he met two Toledo Diocesan personnel by chance who were passing through Mexico City. After a trip to visit Toledo, Pedro and his wife made the decision to immigrate and he reported receiving assistance from a priest in Toledo in getting their “papers fixed.” As a businessman, Pedro would have likely felt the effects of an erratic Mexican economy and growing neoliberal state practices in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In Toledo, Pedro continued in a similar line of work as an exporter of industrial materials.

Born in the 1930s, Pedro lived through a period when anti-clericalism and anti-Church sentiment in Mexico was still robust, with Pope XI issuing three encyclicals from 1926 to 1937 concerning government persecution of the Mexican Church. Pedro recalled his experiences as a Catholic schoolboy in Mexico City:

And either, when I was 3rd grade or 4th grade, the persecution of the Catholic Church from the government was on. So the government had inspectors to check the Catholic schools, what they were teaching about. And of course the principal knew that the inspector was coming. So he went to all the classrooms and showed his face in the doorways and said the inspector is here…What we did, and we were very well trained, everybody would pitch the catechism [books] in the garbage cans…When the inspector opened the desks, he didn’t find anything. There was a lot of persecution. The priests would come dressed as a janitor to some things, with a box of tools, then say the mass, then change back into the outfit of a mason or other thing. When my dad was younger, he would put stickers in the windows of stores to boycott the government. And he was taken to jail. My dad says he was there for a week, and every day at seven o’clock they would kneel in their cells and all say the rosary. And when he came out he said he wasn’t afraid of the government anymore, so he told a friend that he was up in arms against the Mexican army. So my dad was the one that was coordinating for that

249 Deacon Pedro, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 16 May 2010, Archdiocese of Indianapolis.
bunch of men, armed men. But sometimes they got killed. There was a friend of my dad’s who kept his picture, he was writing for the paper, but he was writing against the government. And finally they picked him up and shot him.²⁵⁰

According to Pedro, the anti-Church sentiment in Mexico “reinforces your faith as a kid, day after day after day after day.” Pedro’s story provides an opportunity to analyze social interaction within hierarchically organized settings – in this case the Mexican government and the Mexican Church. Pedro’s Catholic school experience also reveals a borderlands Catholicism experience from a very early age.

Once in the United States, Pedro and his wife continued to negotiate citizenship after ordination:

After I was ordained, they kept renewing the training permit for one year. And then we applied for permanent residency. And they gave us residency for six months. After six months, we had to apply again, and they granted it. And on, and on, and on. So year after year after year, the same thing…So, I told my wife, why do we not apply for citizenship? And then we applied for citizenship and we passed the 100 questions, like for the history of the country.²⁵¹

Here, Pedro and his wife were able to express agency as they navigated geopolitical boundaries while constructing identities as permanent residents in the United States. The annual process of renewing a training permit, and semi-annual process of applying for residency, surely complicated a sense of subjectivity and reinforced a sense of being an outsider.

A fourth deacon who resided in Mexico is Deacon Angel. While Angel reported being born near Austin, Texas, his family moved back to Coahuila, Mexico when he was young:

They tell me, my older sister told me that my dad and my mom had un convenio, un trato. A deal. Because my dad had all his brothers and sisters, they were all here in Texas. And my grandparents, my dad’s father and mother. And my mom used to have her parents in Mexico. So they made a deal when my grandparents, my dad’s parents, died they would move to Mexico to her parents’. My dad was very, he was doing very good in the United States. He used to grow cotton. Not pick cotton, but [had] his own farm. Even though the land didn’t belong to him, it

²⁵⁰ Ibid.
²⁵¹ Ibid.
belonged to gringos, and I guess they were splitting half and half of the, la cosecha [harvest]. So anyways, that’s what I heard, that was one of the reasons.\textsuperscript{252}

Angel recalls his sister’s account of their parents’ negotiation in the marriage stating that his mother was able to convince his father to move back to Mexico despite his reported success in the United States. A family network of relationships informed immigration/migration decisions and, by Angel’s account, revealed that his mother carried some sway in marital decision making. Deacon Angel immigrated back to Texas when he was seventeen. He continues his narrative of migration:

We went to Galveston because two sisters of my dad lived in Galveston. But since I couldn’t get any jobs, I remember that, or somebody told me that some person would come to contract some to work in the fields, in the states in the north. So I started thinking about coming by myself, ‘cause I knew I could start working in the fields without problem. So my dad, my brothers, and my sisters didn’t want to let me come by myself, so they came with me. And we did real good working all together…And I told my dad I would like to stay here [Toledo] so I can get a good job, a good paying job. Because I know in Texas they didn’t pay that much. And I noticed they were paying real good here. It was a great difference. So my dad didn’t wanna hold me anymore cause I was 18. So they let me stay here and that’s when I met my wife.\textsuperscript{253}

Angel’s story again reminds us of the “pull factors” attracting ethnic Mexican to the Midwest occurring in tandem with the push factors driving ethnic Mexican out of the Southwest (as well as ethnic Mexicans out of Mexico).

\textbf{Caribbean Transnational Crossings} 

There is another subset of deacons who migrated from Puerto Rico, with a single deacon immigrating from Cuba. Of the seven Puerto Rican deacons interviewed, six were born in Puerto Rico and reported that their fathers migrated to the mainland United States for work when they were children. Children and mothers remained on the island for up to several years before joining their fathers/husbands. While Deacon Jose, for example, was born in Lorain, he summarized his

\textsuperscript{252} Deacon Angel, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 6 May 2010, Toledo Diocese.
\textsuperscript{253} Ibid.
parents’ migration in the following way: “My parents were from Puerto Rico. Daddy came over probably in the early 1940s, and mom probably in the forties also…my dad was recruited here by U.S. Steel.”

Deacon Tomas was born in Coamo, Puerto Rico. He stated, “I came to Ohio in 1950. My dad came first in 1949. He started working at U.S. Steel. It was called National Tube then. And then he sent for the family.” Deacon Guillermo was born in a small town outside of Barranquitas, Puerto Rico, leaving the island for Ohio at the age of 11. Of his youth, Guillermo stated,

I remember we grew up on a parcela. You’ve probably heard of that. When Luis Muñoz Marin became governor of Puerto Rico, they started giving out parcelas, which is about a half an acre of land to people to build houses…My father, in 1951, he came to New Jersey because jobs were not really common [in Puerto Rico]. He heard about U.S. Steel, and they had sent head hunters to the island to recruit…In 1955 I came with my sister…”

As Pérez explains, during the late 1940s the Puerto Rican government initiated a culture change campaign that focused on creating Puerto Rico’s “new man” by promoting mass migration to the United States. Known as Operation Bootstrap, this initiative had gendered implications as the first wave of job recruiters actively sought young Puerto Rican men to work in specific industries and work sites.

Deacon Francisco reported that he migrated to Ohio at the age of four from Yabucoa, Puerto Rico. Francisco did not recall much from his youth on the island, stating, “Yeah, I got a little memory but not too much. I've been back a couple of times so I saw where I was born. And people around, [they are] nice, [but] it was poor.” The lack of memories due to the youthful

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254 Deacon Jose Interview by Adrian Bautista, 26 January 2011, Cleveland Diocese.
255 Deacon Tomas, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 1 July 2010, Cleveland Diocese.
256 Deacon Guillermo, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 15 June 2010, Cleveland Diocese.
257 Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side Story*, 44.
258 Deacon Francisco, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 9 June 2010, Cleveland Diocese.
age of migration is also the case for Deacon Domingo. A native of Santurce, Puerto Rico, Domingo stated that he came to Lorain at the age of four and only knows what family members have told him about their time prior to migrating. According to Deacon Domingo,

…my dad came here from Puerto Rico. Some went to New York, some to California, they went all over the place, but he came here. He was here about a year and a half before he sent for my mother and us. I have two sisters. She couldn’t have any more children, so that’s why there’s only three. Had she been able to have more, she would have.259

When asked if he remembered what it was like to live in Puerto Rico with his father in Ohio, Domingo replied, “Not really. I’m sure it was traumatic, but I don’t really remember.”

Deacon Pascual was nearly twenty when he migrated to Ohio in 1972 and thus has a clearer memory of the area around Hatillo, Puerto Rico where he grew up. Reflecting on changes in his Puerto Rican hometown since his departure in 1972, Pascual stated, “Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Everything changed. I know the place where I was born, and they have beautiful houses there now. And I say my God. There was a house here and a house there, but now it looks like a town. Beautiful, beautiful.”260 Pascual also indicated that his father migrated to the mainland prior to any other family member, and that he was the first to join his father:

My father was in New York. In those times it was hard to find jobs, you know. One day my father sent me a letter saying I have a job for you over here in the restaurant if you want to come. I remember that day, it was June 20 of 1962. My dad was a cook. My English in those times, and now it's worse [laughter]. I didn't speak any English. I remember my first check was for $60. I said my God, I've never seen that kind of money in Puerto Rico [laughter]. My dad said that's a lot of money, what are you going to do with that money. I saved it.

Deacon Felipe ('81) was born in New York City. Felipe recalled his parents’ journey:

My mother and father both came from Puerto Rico in the early thirties because they wanted a better life. My father hadn’t even finished school. I think his father committed suicide. He had gone to work for his family without finishing school. He learned English by listening to the radio, reading. Eventually he worked for

259 Deacon Domingo, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 10 July 2010, Cleveland Diocese.
260 Deacon Pascual, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 28 June 2010, Cleveland Diocese.
the post office. And my mother always told me about not having enough to eat in
Puerto Rico.

Felipe’s father and mother separated, and following a short-term relationship with another Puerto
Rican man, his mother married a Jewish American. Felipe attributes much of his success to this
as his stepfather placed him in private schools. Felipe obtained a bachelor’s degree and his
master’s degree in engineering. Felipe left New York for Ohio in 1962 at the age of 35.

Deacon Vicente, who was born in Havana, Cuba, reported that he came to Ohio in 1956
for additional medical training at The Ohio State University following completion of his Medical
Degree in Havana. In addition to his work at Ohio State, Vicente stated he completed an
internship in New Jersey. According to Vicente:

The trouble I had was the revolution in Cuba…Because the plan that I originally
had, but God had other plans, was for me to be trained as a psychiatrist and go
back to Cuba because my father was going to build me what they call here a
private hospital and we call a clinic to be a psychiatrist back home. My father was
a very wealthy man and he was in industry and cattle, and he was well renowned.
But all the plans went down the tube.

Vicente stated that he would return to Cuba periodically while in school, and that he was in
Havana when Castro took over, reporting that he was detained for several days, “not
incarcerated, but unable to leave for a few days.” Vicente told me that students were first allowed
to leave Cuba, followed by American citizens, and “then those who were immigrants working in
the States, and I had all my papers so I was able to leave.” I asked Deacon Vicente if he had been
back to Cuba, to which he replied, “I would last five minutes if I go back to Cuba. I’d end up in
front of a firing squad. When you are either a politician, or if you were an industrialist or
someone wealthy, you are what they call a persona non-grata.”

The migration histories of the Puerto Rican deacons from the Cleveland Diocese largely
fit the narrative of the Puerto Rican community in northeast Ohio, many of whom were members
of families whose fathers came to the mainland for work in the immediate post-WWII years, particularly in the industrial sector. Vicente’s migration story, while initially voluntary for educational reasons, mirrors the exile narrative of upper- and middle-class Cubans who were among the first waves to leave Cuba after the 1959 revolution.

Summary

From World War II through the 1960s Mexicans and Puerto Ricans became subjects of state-sponsored mass labor importation programs in the United States. Both served as viable labor pools to fill American economic needs in the mid-twentieth century. These same economic forces motivated Mexican Americans to travel north. In positioning these deacon narratives in the context of a borderlands paradigm, the structural dimensions of these stories reveal the various forces – globalizing economies, neoliberal state practices, and growing regional interdependence - that displaced many deacon migrant subjects and/or their families. While the Midwestern roots of these Latina/o communities sank deeply and permanently into the fertile Ohio landscape, ongoing exploitation and representations of a Latino menace/problem would set the stage for a clash of Catholic values.

The Interactional Milieu of the Latino Deacon

This section analyzes interview data that reveal marginalization of ethno-religious identity due to the exclusionary boundaries along ethno-racial and class lines. In this way, the Latino deacon experiences racism and cultural insensitivity largely at the hands of other Catholics while reminding us of the effects of hegemony in a religious context.

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One open-ended question I asked about the deacons’ paths to ordination was why they first thought about becoming a deacon. One common response included a history of serving the migrant farmworker population. Deacon Gonzalo responded to this item in the following way:

...before I became a deacon, I was involved working with the migrants in the community when there would be as many as 5,000 migrants coming and a lot of times, many, many times, none of them had access to Spanish masses, to a priest, or things like that. So that’s one of the things that got me, got my family involved in doing that...working with the people who were deprived of a lot of things because of their travel. They wanted to have their children baptized, their children instructed, and they wanted to have first communion and stuff like that.

So in his pre-ordination lay ministry, Gonzalo was already responding to the needs of migrants and those facing the most bitter of struggles. As the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on the Diaconate acknowledged in 1971, Gonzalo was ministering to a rural community estranged from the major structures of the Church.263

As I spoke further with Gonzalo, it became evident that his work in challenging inequalities was born out of personal experience that reinforced disparate treatment of Latina/o migrants. Gonzalo shared that, when he was a child, his mother was diagnosed with tuberculosis and that the family lost much of the farmland it owned to pay the hospital bills. Gonzalo felt the family was taken advantage of by the doctor. Gonzalo’s parents were settled out migrants from Texas. According to Gonzalo, “This [migrant ministry] is what got me involved from the very beginning. Very much so.” Gonzalo spoke of the difficulties for seasonal workers to access healthcare services:

Well it all started with migrants and when they would go to the hospital with an injury or whatever, a sickness, and there would be nobody there to interpret for them. And they would send them away to another hospital. The migrant or sick person was very ill and needed emergency services so we got involved in that very early in the diaconate. And making sure that hospitals had ways of making

somebody available there for them in one way or another. And that’s still a problem.  

Deacon Anastacio reflected on the migrant ministry of several deceased deacons as the definitive work of the Latino deacon:

Tito [Ollervides], and guys like your father, I consider them deacons [emphasis on word]. I wish I could have been like them. They were real servants. They ministered to people. Dad was out there constantly visiting migrants and farmworkers at the camps, doing all kinds of stuff. He worked his butt off. Him and Mr. Jose Sanchez, who was also a deacon in Fremont. Both of them are gone now. But to me, they were iconically what deacons are, servants of Christ. Or Christ the servant. They were Christ the servant. And your dad was like that too.

In the case of Deacon Pablo, his work with local migrant farm laborers had earned him the nickname “Troublemaker.” As Pablo told me, even after more than twenty years as a deacon, many parishioners shunned him as a result of his earlier farm labor organizing efforts. When I asked Pablo when and why he first thought about becoming a deacon, as well as the challenges that he faced, he replied:

Some of my challenges, in my first service, when giving first communion, some of the Anglos would go to the priest instead of coming to me. And that happened for many years, until finally, the priest wanted me to tell the congregation how I felt about being a deacon. I said good. I went ahead and told them I’ve been here for 20 years and you guys still don’t recognize me as a deacon. I’m not doing this for my fun. I’m giving you the body of Christ. And they would never choose me to baptize their kids or any other thing.

Pablo goes on to discuss why he felt the parishioners considered him a “troublemaker” and shares a story that made newspaper headlines:

The reason why, I was working for FLOC for about 20 years, organizing migrant workers, putting them in the union. They didn’t like me because I was doing that. And most of these people are farmers. They think I’m a troublemaker. And I say well, I’m just trying to defend my brothers you know. I didn’t even have much education. I went to FLOC to organize people in the union and hell, I spent time in jail for stopping the machines, the harvesters. Me and about 29 more, we stopped them. Even the little kids sat down in front in the tomato field. And they

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264 Deacon Gonzalo, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 10 April 2010, Toledo Diocese.
265 Deacon Pablo, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 22 April 2010, Toledo Diocese.
came right at them and the kids never moved. And here comes the sheriff and about 20 cops and the bosses, whatever…I had a farmer…I went to his ranch with a priest and he had the migrants where they had the cattle and pigs, they had a little joint, a little place where they sleep. And I told him this is not right you know. I’ll call the health department to take care of it. He says you come back here and I’ll shoot you. And I said I’ll be here tomorrow. And I went back and he got them out of there. And I had another guy who had younger kids working with him, and without a social security number, taking social security out of their checks. And my boy was one of them. So I went and talked to him. I says, I want you to give them their money back. What money back? The one you took out for social security. How come you’re taking social security and you didn’t even get a number. What do you do with the money? I put it in the bank. For who, you? And he got mad and said you know what, you get out of here or I’m gonna call the sheriff. And I said you call the sheriff and I’ll call the state.

While recalling this story of kids joining in the protest, perhaps risking their safety, Pablo’s voice trembled and he paused. About ten minutes later, Pablo’s wife Carmen entered the living room in which we sat talking.

Carmen: And you came to the wrong place right now because my husband, the white people around here call him the troublemaker.

Pablo: I got a whole book from the start of FLOC until we made the first agreement with Campbell’s. And people went in jail with us, they beat up our lawyer, they said it was an accident but hell they got cameras of where they took pictures of it.

Carmen: They almost ran me [over] with a truck carrying my baby 2 years old because we were helping the migrant people.

Pablo: And they used to follow us and we’d start arguing with the farmers and the kids would run out and slash their tires. And we’d get in the truck and say you son of a bitch and they couldn’t move.

Carmen: The farmers don’t care for us you know. We used to go to church every Sunday and everytime they give the peace, they don’t give you their hand. And you feel bad. And I told the priest about it and he said next time you tap their shoulder when they turn around you give them the hand. If they don’t give it to you they are gonna feel this big [holds thumb and index finger an inch or two apart].

Interviewer: Did you ever try that?

Carmen: Yes I did [Pablo laughs].

Interviewer: Did they shake your hand?
Carmen: Yes they did. But you have to suffer a lot by the time you get where you are [Carmen begins to cry].

When I asked Pablo where he learned to organize, as his efforts with FLOC demonstrate, his wife Carmen responded, “Well, at General Motor.” Pablo added, “Yeah, I was a junior steward for 11 years. [A] Representative. And like I said earlier, a representative (Carmen repeats the word ‘representative’) for the state.” As indicated by the label on the cover of the FLOC scrapbook, Pablo had been appointed to the Ohio Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs by Governor Richard Celeste. Created in 1977, this advocacy organization now functions as the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs. So with Pablo, there is an interesting relationship between his work life and the religious, as his union organizing skills in the factory carried over into the union organizing of migrants.

The experiences of Gonzalo and Pablo also reveal that class, political, and spiritual lines within the Mexicano community did not always run parallel as Gonzalo engaged in the farm worker struggle from a different position. When he was a child, Gonzalo’s family had purchased land and engaged in farming. Due to his mother’s illness, Gonzalo’s family was compelled to sell off its land to cover her healthcare costs. However, Gonzalo was able to later reengage in farming and, while later reviewing archival documents, I came across Gonzalo’s name in the document “Minutes of the Governor’s Advisory Committee on the Migrant Worker”. Created by Governor Celeste by Executive Order in 1976, the Committee had been reconstituted by Celeste in 1983. Members in attendance at this first meeting of the reconstituted Committee composed five categories: migrants, growers, migrant advocates and processors, as well

266 “Minutes of the Governor’s Advisory Committee on the Migrant Worker,” 16 September 1983, Toledo Diocese Archives.
as directors of the Departments of Agriculture, Health, Education, Industrial Relations, and Employment. Gonzalo was listed as a member under “Growers,” clearly an exception in the farm worker narrative.

This information also led me to recall in new fashion a portion of my earlier conversation over lunch with Gonzalo and his wife, Nancy. In recognizing that Gonzalo and Nancy live only about twenty minutes from Deacon Pablo’s community, I asked if they had ever participated in, or witnessed, any FLOC activities. Nancy immediately spoke up and referred to some of the organizers as troublemakers. Nancy also stated that FLOC did not represent all Latinos in the area.

Like Gonzalo and Pablo, Deacon Juan cut his ministerial teeth in a migrant farmworker community - Fremont, Ohio. When I asked Juan when he first thought about becoming a deacon, he stated, “Well, you know Father Notter. okay. Father Notter was in Fremont at that time. And before that I used to help Father Notter with the masses in the fifties in the migrant camps, myself being a migrant.” Juan’s personal history as a migrant farmworker, shared earlier in this chapter, facilitated his path to the diaconate and informed his ministry. Deacon Juan’s mentor, Fr. Richard Notter, is a key figure in the development of the Spanish Speaking Apostolate in Toledo, Ohio. Ordained in 1963, Notter began his work in migrant ministry while still in the seminary. In 2002, Father Notter received the *Archbishop Silvano Tomasi Award*, an award presented by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to individuals within the Pastoral Care for Migrants, Refugees and Travelers.²⁶⁷ Notter’s role in recruiting and/or mentoring Latino deacons in the Toledo Diocese is significant.

Through their community organizing work, we might begin to see deacons such as Gonzalo, Juan, and Pablo as organic intellectuals engaged in coordinated and strategic tactics in the contested agricultural terrain. Here, the deacons mirror the type of “spiritual authority” exemplified by Cesar Chavez in the farm labor movement. As Luis León discusses, Chavez’s Christian ethics and sacred acts (e.g., fasting) intersected with political practices that melded the personal and the political. And while León seeks to position Chavez beyond the Catholic realm, arguing for a more eclectic religious identity informed by Ghandian philosophy, deacons like Gonzalo and Pablo exert their spiritual authority as agents of the Catholic Church. Deacons certainly share sacred models with Chavez, specifically Jesus Christ, and a political philosophy of love. According to León, “Chavez himself never abandoned his foundational principal, nonviolent sacrificial love.”

The fight for farmworker rights in Ohio, like the UFW in California, shared elements of Mexican American civil religion, “drawn from revolutionary traditions yet consonant with the major teachings of the Constitution, principally freedom and liberty, but also justice, equality, and progress.” And like the UFW, Toledo organizers added the quintessential figure of motherly femininity and sacrifice – La Virgen de Guadalupe.

Mexican American civil religion, exemplified by the farm labor movement, thus represents the integration of Catholic social doctrine and political thought. These themes of social justice and common good with respect to labor, wages, education, and the dignity of Mexicans as human beings, complemented and resonated directly and indirectly with Catholic

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269 León, 872.
social doctrines. Cesar Chavez’s impoverished, migrant background and military (Navy) experience contributed to the evolution of his spiritual authority, as he was exposed to racism and suffering on a global scale in ways that shaped his commitment to universal justice.271

The experience of Deacon Tomas, who is a Navy veteran, reveals an interesting parallel:

When I was growing up, and I know some of the older guys always talk about this stuff – how poor they were and how they had to scrimp or scrape or their parents did…So I think that you remember those years when you’re older, and you feel compassion for others that are struggling that way. When I was in the Navy, especially in the Phillippines, I saw blind women begging in the streets, and children sleeping on sidewalks, and people digging through the garbage dump, you know. And that all stirs up a sense of compassion. And then when I was assigned here, poor people were coming to the door and knocking, and asking for assistance in various ways. I would just try to help them with, obtaining their prescriptions, paying their utilities, a hotel stay. And I felt, well, we have to do a little bit more. So then we started distributing food bags, and we opened a classroom. This parish is in the location in town where there are many poor people. Not only poor people, but a lot of alcoholism and drugs, and that stuff you know. It feeds on itself. So we just try to make a difference.

Tomas’ own experience of social inequality as a youth informs the way he challenges social disparity in the community and as an administrator for a homeless shelter that is owned by the Cleveland Diocese. The interactional milieu of a struggling working-class city becomes a site where the misidentification and assumed illegitimacy of another group of “forgotten Americans,” the poor and homeless, is challenged:

I like meeting with the homeless people. I like dialoging with them. There are so many colorful characters in the homeless population. And many gifted and talented as well. I like dialoging with them, I like being with them.

According to Tomas, the homeless are not a “problem,” but rather a “gifted and talented” group.

271 León, 861.
Deacon Anastacio’s reflections on this primary scene for diaconal activity, helps connect the experience of a previous generation of migrants with the more contemporary debate on immigration:

For us it’s very clear. The Church teaches, its teaching on immigration and migration is very, very clear. Some of the legislation that is out there, the Church teaches against it. We certainly have a right to protect our borders and all of that, but we also have to understand that Exodus speaks to us about taking care of the stranger and the immigrant. And so the Church’s teachings are very much there, so it’s not unusual for me to preach a homily about what we need to do in terms of human dignity and human life, and how that is affecting the immigrant. And so the teachings are very clear for me and so I hold on to those as well. I’ve not been involved, like I said, in a political way or anything like that.

The Latino deacons’ work in migrant ministry most clearly reveals the interwoven, exclusionary boundaries of race and class in the Midwestern Latina/o narrative, as well as the deacons’ culture of resistance in the contested rural terrain of Ohio. The farm labor movement revealed another of America’s great sins to itself—the national abomination that was the treatment of the farmworkers.\(^{272}\) Many deacons bore witness to this abuse and exploitation, some as former migrants and as clerics, and began to exercise a spiritual leadership and authority to contest the plight of their transitory brethren. Unfortunately, priests like Father Richard Notter were seemingly few and far between and Latino deacons were often made to feel like outsiders even within the very parishes they sought to serve.

**Clerical and Parish Boundaries**

The spiritual authority many deacons developed in contesting the racial intolerance evident through the treatment of migrant Latinas/os did not necessarily emanate from the priests standing behind the local parish pulpits, nor did fellow parishioners always appreciate it. In fact, numerous deacons cite the lack of support from the parish priest as a common obstacle. In response to a question about the most challenging part of becoming a deacon, Deacon Pablo and

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\(^{272}\) Luis D. León, “Cesar Chavez in American Religious Politics,” 863.
his wife Carmen discussed their perception of the reluctance of priests and parishioners to support Latinos who are interested in the diaconate:

Carmen: And there are some people willing to be a deacon but the priest don’t let them. The deacon and the priest have to sign it [intent to pursue diaconate] but the priest don’t want to.

Pablo: Yeah we had four candidates here in this parish and only two of us went.

Carmen: How are there gonna bedeacons if the priest won’t help them?

Pablo: They say we want leadership in the church and they have leaders right now but the priest won’t sign for them to be a deacon.

Bautista: And why do you think that is?

Pablo: Because of the farmers. They don’t want the Chicanos taking care of the church. This is my opinion because I’ve seen it for the last 50 years.

Pablo also pointed to the failure of Anglo parishioners to reciprocate and attend Spanish-language services:

It’s beautiful, you go to Texas and hear your Spanish music, in church. Singing Spanish music. We do it here too but you don’t get the Anglos. And I’ll put that out [there] you know. Why don’t the Anglos come to mass in Spanish and join us? You want us to, and we come to English mass. I come on Saturdays when there’s not a Spanish mass. One or two couples because they love the music. The Spanish songs we sing.

The Spanish mass clearly holds a special meaning for Pablo. The failure of Anglo parishioners to attend the Spanish mass in greater numbers troubles Pablo. Perhaps what frustrates Pablo is, in failing to attend mass in Spanish, Anglo parishioners forego an opportunity to engage in a type cultural exchange or innovation afforded in this moment of spiritual mestizaje.

For Deacon Angel, the attitude of a priest led he and his wife to relocate to another parish:

One of the things that was kind of a challenge for me was, we used to belong to a parish named Saint Joseph’s on the north end. And right there was a monsignor, he was the pastor of that church. And they used to tell me he was very
conservative. Especially Father Caballero used to tell me as soon as you are ordained, get out of there and register at Saint Francis, because I don’t think that priest is going to cooperate. And so we had to move out of that parish because of that.273

For Deacon Felipe, the exclusionary attitudes of priests is something he experienced even on his day of ordination:

It [day of ordination] was like a day in my life, my life would no longer be the same. That was very clear. I felt that way about marriage too, but, ‘cause I felt it was different. I also felt something that became a disappointment, because I felt that the priests were my brothers, but it became obvious they didn’t feel that way. They didn’t see it that way. I don’t know if it was a threat, a discomfort. They weren’t sure what I was.274

In discussing the relationship between deacons and priests, the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on the Permanent Diaconate identified the potential for difficulty early on, stating “There is a communications challenge here; otherwise information gaps are bound to develop, with the usual suspicion and misunderstanding.”275 Many of the deacons in this study experienced such suspicion and misunderstanding first-hand.

Deacon Luis expressed concern regarding his experience with priests who may discourage the use of the Spanish language at mass:

Especially in the Spanish Mass. A lot of times it comes from them, the English priests, because we know English, because we speak English, that we should only have the English mass. But that's not what the bishops say. The bishops from the United States say that Hispanics or the mexicanos, the Mexicans, are a blessing to the United States because we bring our culture, we bring our language.... So how can someone come and tell me that they want me to assimilate. I mean the cultura is different, the culture is different.

Here, Luis’ concerns seem to go beyond interpersonal misunderstanding or suspicion, reflecting cultural insensitivity and resonating with Pablo’s experience of white parishioners failing to engage in mutual cultural exchange. Luis goes on to discuss the influence of other parishioners,

273 Deacon Angel, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 6 May 2010, Walbridge, Ohio.
274 Deacon Felipe, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 8 September 2010, North Olmstead, Ohio.
275 Permanent Deacons in the United States, 47.
in this case the parish council who have expressed concerns about Spanish-speaking members not attending the English masses:

We have two Spanish Mass is a month. And the priest is pretty good about it, but speaking in terms of the parish council, liturgy Council, they have said well, since they know English why don't they come. But I said, I read the document made by Bishop Hoffman in the Toledo diocese plan that every group of different cultures have the dignity to celebrate in their own race, their own tongue, provided they have someone to guide the period.

A comment from Deacon Pablo highlights this and points to the position of the priest as one situated between two communities:

Yes, we had priests who were on the picket line with us. Father Ritter [was one such priest], and they told him if you go help the migrants, we’re gonna stop your church, we’re not gonna give you no donations. And he told us that he wasn’t gonna do that because the church was gonna go down because the people won’t give any donations. How can you operate a church?

Interestingly, the experience of marginalization in terms of church hierarchical boundaries is not limited to Anglo clergy. Deacon Isidro shared his experience with a Latin American priest:

And so like I told you, I've been doing the liturgy for almost 30 years, but now I don't know if I'm going to get to do it. Because like he doesn't respect your title. If you are ahead of what he then you should get to do that. No. He does whatever he wants. He changed everything…sometimes at the liturgy you get surprises because he you're not expecting things, because he makes last-minute changes…Since he came here he does not let us preach. And people ask us why don’t you preach no more? It’s the way that he is. It’s his own way that he brings from El Salvador.

Several deacons shared that the perception that the diaconate is changing requirements such that, if they were applying today, they would likely be denied entrance. According to Deacon Pascual,

Now it's harder to become a deacon, this bishop wants a lot of things. That’s why I asked you on the phone, why don’t you become a deacon. You have to go to college. You have to speak English perfect. We had a meeting with this new bishop last year, and we asked about the difference. It wasn't me, somebody else
asked. We said we get how Jesus did it, he told one fisherman follow me and another follow me. But he said yeah and now it's different.  

Deacon Domingo added the following:

Parece que los blancos [It seems like the whites] have a lot more higher education. They have their college degrees and professions and things like that. As opposed to us. And so along with that they bring the attitude that comes with that…The Hispanic is service oriented all the way. There’s no attitude because they’ve been doing it that way their whole lives. At one time we thought that, rumor had it, that the diaconate was being composed of all educated people. It seems that everybody being ordained has a college degree, with a few exceptions.  

Deacon Felipe similarly conveyed his sense that the diaconate is changing:

The Anglo deacons now are very professional people. At first, the Anglo deacons were like plumbers and working men. It made sense to me. But now the ones I see coming out are like the managers, college educated. I didn’t see that in the Hispanics except myself [Felipe has a graduate degree]…Yet we know the apostles were the most ordinary people in the world, the ones Jesus picked. Very, very ordinary. I mean we have these beautiful statues of them now, but they were jibaros, they were. They had no schooling, they smelled like fish probably some of them.

Felipe uses “jibaro,” a commonly used Puerto Rican term for mountain-dwelling peasants, to contrast the shift he sees in the type of men entering the diaconate today.

The lack of support and/or resistance from priests and other church personnel that has been experienced by the deacons in this study points to the controversial, ambiguous nature of the permanent diaconate. A clerical hybrid with one foot in the world of clergy and the other in the world of laity, many are troubled by this notion of a dual vocation. Yet the shortage of priests and diocesan restructuring has caused many dioceses to become more dependent on deacons for a growing range of parish duties. The shortage of priests has led many parishes to create ministry certificate programs with the hope of recruiting more lay leaders and future deacons. The

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276 Deacon Pascual, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 10 June 2010, Cleveland, Ohio.
277 Deacon Domingo, Interview with Adrian Bautista, 10 July 2010, Lorain, Ohio.
278 While the term “jibaro” can carry negative connotations, particularly in reference to a lack of education, it has gained a broader use and can also be associated with pride as a pioneer subject in Puerto Rico.
Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio offers a distance-learning program for the diaconate. And while the formal educational requirements for the permanent diaconate have not changed significantly, the deacons in this study perceive a change amongst their clerical peers.

**Racializations**

Racialization represents the process and mechanism by which race becomes a structuring principle in social, economic, political, and cultural relations.\(^{279}\) As a social construct, racialization represents discursive and structural elements in a borderlands project, as well as an interactional dimension as exclusionary boundaries are produced through the discourse of race. A number of deacons in this study discussed first-hand experiences of shifting and exclusionary racial-ethnic boundaries. Deacon Gonzalo recalled a painful youth, experiencing injury because of his intersecting ethno-racial and religious identities:

> We were the first Hispanics to go to school where I went to school. We were the first Catholics. We still have the scars where people would throw stones at you and stuff like that. The scars stay in your mind. How you were treated because you were Hispanic. Because you were Catholic also. When we were growing up, there were hardly any Catholics at all in the Anglo community.

Gonzalo’s experience speaks to the intersecting power relations of racial and religious ideologies, revealing both ethno-racial and religious exclusionary boundaries as his northwest Ohio community consisted mostly of a white Protestant population. As Gonzalo indicates, his injuries were both physical and psychic.

> Well there’s always a saying in Anglo communities that sticks and stones may break my bones but words, they never will. These scars that I have [Gonzalo points to his right arm to show me a scar], they don’t hurt anymore, but the words that were said, you know, they still hurt more than the scars that you have. And that kinda puts you down you know, as a Latino, as a Hispanic, it puts you down and you don’t know if you would ever build your way back up you know.

In a borderlands context, Gonzalo’s injuries conjure Anzaldúa’s notion of “la herida de colonialism.” Anzaldúa framed colonialism and the act of invasion as a trauma, “a wound which the whole country has not recovered from or attended to; it keeps bleeding in the psyches of Mexicans, Latinos, Blacks, Asians…”

Deacon Felipe and his wife Lisa also recalled experiences of racism at predominantly-White parishes:

Felipe: The rejection was very direct.

Lisa: They said, “We don’t want any Spanish people here. They’re noisy, they’re dirty, they’re…”

Felipe: Well they said that at another church we used to attend also. So we have experienced severe rejection. There was an African American bishop, he was the auxiliary bishop. He died while he was serving in Louisiana I think. He was very annoyed. He said do you want me to take this back to your bishop. But both churches that rejected us went under. Isn’t that a phenomenon?

Lisa: The Anglos wanted to work with us, they just didn’t know how. Or they wanted it by their agenda. They wanted unity, but it seemed more like uniformity. They had good hearts.

Felipe: Yeah, there was always that stereotype problem, and maybe some racism. It was there, there’s no doubt. I think the Lord prepared me for that. I had that academic background which they didn’t. It helped to break from the stereotype, that Latinos weren’t good academically. That they are lazy, unmotivated.

Felipe’s reference to “uniformity” when working with Anglos is another example of a failed attempt at the type of spiritual mestizaje that would have Anglos and Latinos engaged in a mutual cultural exchange. Faced with the prospect of “uniformity” on Anglo terms, Felipe would become a key member of a community group that would choose a different path, eventually developing a storefront church into a brand new, Latino-serving parish. Deacon Felipe discussed

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the importance of his parish as a Latina/o parish that was planned and built specifically for the
Latino community while sharing a picture that he regarded as a significant personal item:

Ok, here it is. Our church is about 10 years old. I was the building coordinator. Here the bishop is blessing the church. Why do I bring out this picture? Well the reason I felt that God called me to be a deacon in the church was because he wanted me to “move the furniture around.” Meaning, up to that point, we were second-class citizens. People claim we don’t give enough to the collection. We can do some things. We were there but not there, you know. Well when we got this, we got there. We got to “move our own furniture.” And I feel as a deacon, that was a major point in my life. Before that, we had a storefront. The reason is because we were rejected by other churches. Interesting thing, the two churches that rejected us…both of those churches were closed by the present bishop [during diocesan restructuring] because they didn’t have enough life. Had those churches accepted us, they would have had enough life. Some would call that holy justice, or something like that. So this is a key moment. Once we got this church, it meant we had our own church…So this was the end of second-class citizenship.282

Boundaries pertaining to the discourse on race and immigration also impact the work of the deacons in this study. Deacon Isidro and his wife Laura offered insight in this area when I asked if they were involved in any social justice work:

Isidro: Well just yesterday at our church, someone was asking the priest if anyone could help because his friend got picked up by immigration. And the priest said talk to him. And I have a lot of friends, lawyers, involved in immigration. So I started helping and giving the information.

Laura: He would also serve as a translator, if a migrant had to go to court and didn’t speak English. And he would translate for them.

Isidro referenced unfair housing practices and his involvement in FLOC activities to assist immigrants and migrants.

Deacon Gonzalo shared that his path to the diaconate was shaped by his work with migrants and continues with immigrants from Mexico as he seeks to assist in overcoming boundaries that prevent access to religious services: “There’s a different kind of people coming into the area. There’s no more migrants around here ‘cause there are a lot of people migrating

282 Deacon Felipe, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 8 September 2010, North Olmstead, Ohio.
from Mexico and their needs are still the same.” Gonzalo attributes the deprivation of services to the travel demands of migrant life; however, researchers and scholars have noted that a racial boundary is forming around some Latino immigrants, particularly those with darker skin and those who have more experience in the U.S. racial stratification system. Deacon Gonzalo stated that ministering to unmarried Mexican nationals with children is much more difficult at his parish:

Although the pastor we have now has different rules of baptizing and he wants the parishioners that are going to be baptized to be registered, to be Catholics in good standing and all that kind of stuff. And that’s good, that’s good that he wants that. But he asks that of only the Hispanic population. The mexicanos, the Hispanics, the Latinos that come in from Mexico, a lot of them are not married. They have children and want their children baptized because this is our belief, this is their belief. And our parish we have difficulty with our pastor with that. So we try to encourage them to prepare themselves well, to get married by the Church, but it doesn’t always work out. But this is the only conflict that we have. We will have other priests come in and say the salvation of the soul is the most important thing. And it still is. The new pastor that we have now says that the salvation of the soul is important, but we have to have the salvation of the mother and father also.

Deacon Luis spoke about the separation of masses according to language – English and Spanish – and the importance for new immigrants:

I know that these priests here sometimes think that we are dividing, but I tell them there is still a lot of people coming here who are undocumented from Mexico, to find life, to work. And they are here, and we are ministering to them, and they don't know English. So those are the people that we help.

Luis acknowledges the importance of separate English and Spanish masses, particularly for the newly arrived “undocumented” who may not speak or understand English sufficiently. Yet the discourse of immigration, couched in a framework of divisiveness, may encourage the discursive reproduction of racism.

Deacon Pablo and his wife Carmen painfully recalled how their daughter was detained by the local sheriff for punching a schoolmate in the nose after he called her a “spic.” According to
Pablo and Carmen, their children were often subjected to such reactions due to their father’s social justice work, which served to disrupt the dominant racial ideology in their community, supported by racial inequality and economic exploitation of the migrant farmworkers. Prior to the type of social justice ministry that Deacon Pablo and Carmen engaged in, secular (economic) and religious interests co-existed with minimal challenge to the prevailing power and racial hierarchy, in and outside of the church. The racial/cultural tension within Pablo’s community reveals that Anglos and Mexicans had different ideas about what it meant to be Catholic. First, being Catholic to Mexican people extended beyond the mass. Pablo as “the troublemaker” and Anglo failure to address farmworker inequality are indicative of this. Secondly, the source of tension was rooted in the power and racial hierarchy within Pablo’s agribusiness-oriented community. As Nájera notes in her study of a local Catholic parish in South Texas, “a church should function as a sanctuary from certain social problems and perhaps try to forge their solution, an ethos of segregation and, by extension, inequality was present within this local Catholic church.”

Interestingly, Deacon Luis’ wife Marta, and Deacon Pablo’s wife Carmen, mentioned a shared experience during separate interviews. According to Carmen, “Every year we have a social, and the Guadalupe Society sells tacos. But the whites don’t want us to because they sell pork and chicken. But the people want the tacos. We make a couple thousand [dollars] every year.” Carmen continues the story, referencing the anger of several Anglo parishioners, particularly after the Guadalupe Society members reduced the price of the tacos as the day ended and sold out. Pablo voices his anger over one Anglo parishioner’s attitude and described a confrontation with the man during which

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Pablo reminded him that the Guadalupe Society had purchased their supplies and were free to do what they wanted with them. During my interview with Luis and Marta earlier in the day, they had mentioned what I learned to be the same incident and how an Anglo parishioner had yelled at Marta. Luis uttered in disbelief, “Can you believe that? Yelling at a deacon’s wife.” While the story may ostensibly be about concerned parties fundraising for the church, there is an ethno-racial component as the deacons and wives clearly felt subjected to the behavior due to ethno-racial differences.

In discussing the history of the Mexican American and Puerto Rican communities in northern Ohio, this study reveals the experience of struggle against segregation and racism as well as the process of racial integration, with the local Catholic Church playing a role on both sides. For example, in addition to housing segregation and the creation of colonias in Toledo and Cleveland, separate churches were developed for both Mexican-origin and Puerto Rican communities. From the perspective of exploitation and migrant farmworkers, the experiences of the deacons might be better framed as la herida de internal colonialism as the reality of the migrant farmworker world has the general characteristics of an internal colony.\textsuperscript{284} Internal colonial models posit a direct link between the conquest and subjugation of the Third World and the unequal relations between the descendants of Europeans and Third World peoples in the United States.\textsuperscript{285} Approaches within this paradigm attempt to synthesize the economic, political, and cultural aspects of racial oppression.

Expressions of Agency

Alvarez discusses the paradox of Catholicism in an Anzalduan framework as an institution that is both agentic and marginalizing: “Simultaneously, Catholicism, as both an institution and as a marker of individuality, is also challenged and altered by Anzaldúa’s mestiza consciousness. This transformation is from a static, rigid Catholicism to liberation theology.”

The previous section highlighted the marginalizing, exclusionary boundaries. This segment will further explicate the agentic dimension of the Latino deacon “devil dance.”

In the case of Deacon Felipe, for example, the experience of feeling like second-class citizens at a predominantly-White parish led him and a group of parishioners to organize and develop a storefront Church, which eventually became a brand new parish. Deacon Pedro, in responding to a priest who openly claimed his dislike for Mexicans experienced an empowering moment of confrontation. Other deacons have experienced such moments of agency in other contexts. Deacon Tomas shared his frustration with diocesan restructuring and the subsequent decision by the bishop to close the parish at which he served as administrator. Tomas described his last mass at the now-closed parish as a final act of agency/protest as he and the parishioners walked over to a neighboring church [which was to become the new parish], considering it their act of merging with the new parish despite a lack of official approval by the Cleveland Diocese.

Deacon Isidro shared a conversation he had with his mother prior to her death when she was ill:

One time I told my mother, when my mommy was sick, I said mom, you want me to bring you a priest? And my mom said, dijo, mijo I don’t need a priest, I already talked to you. I said, well it’s different, I can’t absolve you. The priest can give you absolution. And she says well, whatever you want, but I already talked to you.

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287 Deacon Isidro, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 11 May 2010, Toledo, Ohio.
Here, Isidro’s mother shuns Catholic orthodoxy regarding the anointing of the sick while authenticating her son’s spiritual authority.

The Latino deacons in this study conveyed an ability to minister across boundaries. As Deacon Felipe stated, “Well, the church, the deacon, has his feet in two worlds.”288 Straddling worlds in this way, the deacon functions in a religious borderlands that blurs the boundaries between church, work, and denominational communities. In this way, diaconal activity expands the boundaries of the religious. Even as early as during the pre-ordination formation program, Deacon Juan recognized that the boundaries separating the English and Spanish language instruction sessions became a meeting place of spiritual joy and relationship for both Anglos and Latinas/os:

In the first three years we had formation just in Spanish. In the fourth year in English with the rest of the Anglos. But they liked ours because we, Teri Garza, she was in the administration, the staff. She would play music, play the guitar. And I would take my guitar and we'd be singing Cursillo songs. The Anglos would say you know, you guys seem like you're happy all the time.

Deacon Gonzalo offers an example in which his work as a landscaper provides the opportunity to engage in diaconal activity across denominational boundaries, reaching individuals disconnected from their current churches:

In this neighborhood, since I retired, I’m a landscaper. I mow yards, like a lot of mexicanos are…And slowly they find out that you’re a deacon, you’re a minister they call you. I’ve had several occasions when one of my customers across the street says I wanna prepare my funeral, I’m not satisfied with my minister at my church, although they’re not Catholics…It’s not so much the readings for the funeral. They leave it up to you and I’m well prepared for that. Mainly, a lot of them have been hurt because once they become homebound they don’t go to church. Their ministers don’t come to visit them…I’m in the neighborhood and I do more than just mow yards. I try to lift up their soul. But we do it together as a team. We do a lot of it as a team (looking at wife). We do a lot of it together in the neighborhood.

288 Deacon Felipe, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 8 September 2010, North Olmstead, Ohio.
In addition to crossing denominational boundaries and serving as a type of native clergy member in his neighborhood, Gonzalo’s account also reveals his appreciation of the diaconate couple model of ministry as he acknowledges his wife as an equal in a team context.

Deacon Tomas reveals the Cursillo Movement as a site where such denominational boundaries can be transcended:

I was ready to make my Cursillo. What happened there, I was working at the mill. I worked with an electrician, his name was Bob. He was a bible carrying Baptist. He would bring his bible to work and we would get into a lot of discussion about the bible, but he was much better than me because I didn’t read my bible. So his whole thought was that all Catholics were going to hell and when he said that, I didn’t like it because it included my mother, my father, and everyone else I loved. So I started reading the bible to contradict how he was interpreting. And so the more I read, the more interested I became. And he became sort of an advisor. And then I became very hungry for the word, and for the Lord. And so I was ready to make Cursillo. And he came with me. So we made Cursillo together. 289

In this example, it is in the context of the work world that the deacon navigated religious boundaries while gaining spiritual authority amongst co-workers.

Summary

The Catholic Church, despite its updating in Vatican II, is still a hierarchical, centralized, and rigid institution. 290 The Latino deacons in this study possess membership in this ethno-racial group and have migrant backgrounds; therefore, in roles as (pre-ordination) lay people and as ordained clergy, many of my participants have felt like outsiders in their environments while also constructing expressions of agency while contesting expectations about appropriate displays of inclusion.

The charge of Latino deacons to minister to the “forgotten Americans,” as well as in the area of “La Causa,” means that diaconal activity for many in this study has often occurred within a church institution plagued by the exclusionary and unnatural boundaries of class and

289 Deacon Tomas, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 1 July 2010, Lorain, Ohio.
In this way, and particularly as members of this ethno-racial group with migrant backgrounds, the Latino deacons in this study help frame an under-examined type of border-crossing subjectivity. The negative experiences conveyed during interviews were more common with the deacons in the Toledo Diocese, and were often connected to the migrant farmworker experience and efforts to improve working conditions.

From a historical perspective, the postwar Latino community of northeast Ohio positioned themselves within the emerging discourses of white racial supremacy and sexual respectability. As seen in newspaper accounts, Latinos managed to construct competing narratives of proper citizenship that celebrated the community’s civic virtue and stable home life. The majority of the Puerto Rican deacons in this study are a product of this environment, as their parents migrated to northeast Ohio in the postwar period.

Returning to the notion of frontier modernism helps to consider the “fracture” that has occurred, as a result of the cultural displacement of migrant farmworkers, along the borders of traditional Catholicism. A new, hybrid Catholic identity was emerging as a result of a migratory experience that brings together Mexican American and Anglo Catholics. For Anglos, cultural heritage in the form of Catholic religious patrimony is contested. Vatican II was supposed to bridge the fracture, to bring together the traditional church and the modern world, to reveal the promise of a church in addressing especially the plight of the poor and the marginalized. And the Latino deacon was to be an effective,

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291 I have intentionally omitted gender from this list as it will be the focus of Chapter 5.
hybrid instrument that would facilitate the type of border crossing necessary to fulfill that promise.
CHAPTER V. DANCING WITH THE DEVIL, PART 2: REDEFINING LATINO MASCULINITY

In applying a borderlands framework to the experiences of Latino permanent deacons, a goal of this study is to explore gendered, ethno-religious identities throughout the putative heartland of machismo in a Midwestern setting. And while the effects of ethno-racial and class differences may be easier to see and analyze in religions than the dynamics of gender, the Latino deacon is an interesting ethno-religious subject who presents discernible, shifting gendered boundaries in relationship to their various roles, ideologies, and practices that provide them the chance to expand the working definition of what it means to be a Latino man.

In the previous chapter, spatial, exclusionary, and agentic dimensions of a gendered borderlands framework were considered. This chapter will draw on interview data and analyze the discursive dimensions of shifting gender displays. Discursive elements of borderlands projects offer critiques of ideologies and practices related to racializations, femininities, masculinities, and sexualities to illuminate the malleability of intersecting power relations. As the data will demonstrate, diaconal activities around the aforementioned ideologies and practices become surveilled and/or contested as the Latino deacon seeks his own subjectivity.

In interpreting Anzaldúa’s mestizaje spirituality, Néstor Medina writes, “What is at stake here is the unmasking of the male-centered patriarchal scheme that caused a rift between the sexes, argues Anzaldúa.” As the interviews revealed, these Latino permanent deacons continually navigate gender binaries often associated with a male-centered patriarchal scheme.

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293 King, Gender, Religion & Diversity, 9.
By and large, in the ethnographic literature of Mexico and Latin America, drinking and drunkenness have been discussed as typical male activities. However, according to Gutmann, “In the realm of alcohol consumption, there is an even greater decentering of the perceived wisdom that associates a practice especially with men or women, a process that I refer to as *degendering*.” Gutmann argues that more women drink socially and in the company of men and family members and in the *cantina*, thus degendering alcohol consumption. My goal here is not to argue for Gutmann’s claim, but to consider my participants in the context of the space Gutmann creates in looking at who engages in alcohol consumption, how that changes, and what the gendered implications may be.

In my interviews, a pattern clearly evolved as a number of deacons expressed considerable difficulties regarding alcohol consumption in their life histories, often leading to marital and family difficulties, as well as frustrations due to expectations and perceptions of others regarding alcohol consumption as clergy members. Limón’s devil dance encompasses a complex internal warfare that Latinas/os are subjected to as alcohol consumption becomes entangled with gender expectations and norms. For the Latino deacon, alcohol consumption is a complex issue as expectations and practices shift in pre- and post-ordination life and reveal varying gender needs.

For several deacons, habits related to alcohol consumption created marital difficulties. For Luis, being a musician and performing at dances was so enmeshed with drinking that he reported it was necessary to quit the band in order to save his marriage and relationship with his

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296 “Tragos Amargos” (“Bitter Drinks”) is the title of a song by Mexican singer/songwriter Ramon Ayala, an artist quite popular for his work in norteño and conjunto music. In the song, alcohol and gendered behavior are correlated as, in this case, a man scorned by a love interest finds bitterness rather than comfort in alcohol and finds himself crying (*llorar*) and feeling like a coward (*cobarde*).

children. For Deacon Pablo, drinking alcohol with co-workers concerned his wife Carmen: “Get together five or six of us…then stop to get a beer…one or two becomes a case [24-pack of beer]…Getting home late. She [Carmen] finally says, you know what, it’s too much…you stop your drinking and take care of your family or I’m gonna leave you.298

Pablo’s alcohol consumption also created conflict between Carmen and her mother. As Pablo described it, his mother-in-law tended to him after his drinking episodes:

And that was the time when I was getting drunk and she [Carmen] didn’t want to get me breakfast. My mother-in-law would come to the table [Carmen corrects Pablo and states “come to the bed”] and I says “I love my mother-in-law.” She was so nice to me. She would take care of me. She [Carmen] got mad at me and her mom would bring me breakfast and she [Carmen] would get so mad.299

In this instance, Carmen’s mother seemed to support Pablo’s patriarchal practice (getting drunk and being out late with friends) and the gendered expectation that women should take care of the husband/men in their families. When I later asked Pablo how becoming a deacon had changed him, his response focused on his alcohol consumption: “I don’t stop in the beer joints, I haven’t stopped in a beer joint for I don’t know how long. If you wanna have a beer, I’ll have one, make a cookout and have a couple of beers.”

Several deacons also revealed interesting tensions between a desire to consume alcohol and public perceptions or expectations regarding consumption as clergy. Deacon Fernando, commenting on the effect ordination had on his marriage, stated: “She knows where I’m at and she knows instead of being in a bar, she knows I’m doing ministry. Even though sometimes I miss some of the functions that we have, she knows that.”300 Additionally, at his job site, Fernando felt under surveillance by coworkers with regard to his alcohol consumption:

298 Deacon Pablo, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 22 April 2010, Diocese of Toledo, Ohio.

299 Deacon Pablo, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 22 April 2010, Diocese of Toledo, Ohio.

300 Deacon Fernando, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 8 June 2010, Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio.
It was the thing to do when I worked in the steel mill, that every payday you stop at the bar to cash your paycheck, having a few beers, you know. I remember after I got ordained the time came for me to stop at the bar, and the guys says, "you can't stop there anymore, John. You're a deacon." And I say, "may I remind you that Jesus had wine at a wedding, that he was social." And he [friend] says, "well I guess it's okay."³⁰¹

Fernando has clearly negotiated changes in his drinking habits, both with his wife as she can perhaps be confident that he is not frequenting bars during his time away from the home, as well as with friends/coworkers who indicate that stopping at a bar after work contradicts their expectations of a cleric.

Deacon Domingo similarly discussed how he faced scrutiny of his behavior as well, revealing a tension between public notions of *ser hombre* and those of *un hombre de honor*:

Well sure, it’s the idea that you become a deacon and they see you with a collar and you become a holy, holy person. You don’t drink beer, you don’t smoke, and if they see you with a beer [Domingo makes gasping sound]. *Ay Domingo, el diacono no toma cerveza.* But I don’t recall that I received any negative feedback. I thought it was very positive. They were probably shocked more than anything. I wasn’t always outgoing like I am now. I was pretty shy. But it was positive. I think I wasn’t outgoing when it came to ladies.³⁰²

When I asked Deacon Juan how becoming a deacon had changed him, he offered the following: “People would say, as a deacon now, he shouldn’t be coming to no dances. He shouldn’t be taking a cold one because he’s a deacon…even nowadays, we went to a quinceañera Saturday, and this lady tells me, remember you’re a deacon, you’re not supposed to drink.”³⁰³ While Juan did not indicate to me that he abstains from alcohol at such social functions (and this is not requirement as a deacon), one might imagine that an awareness of public surveillance would alter alcohol consumption and/or change the experience of drinking should one still choose to drink.

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³⁰¹ Deacon Fernando, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 8 June 2010, Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio.
³⁰² Deacon Domingo, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 10 July 2010, Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio.
³⁰³ Deacon Tomas, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 1 July 2010, Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio.
When asked if family or friends treated him differently after being ordained, Deacon Anastacio stated:

 Probably I kept a better eye [out for my behavior]. There was a time that I would’ve hung out at bars and stuff like that. Well I had to be a little more careful ‘cause deacons are public people. We’re public individuals that represent the Roman Catholic Church. And so I had to be a little more careful about how I presented myself. And so I would not necessarily go into bars.304

Anastacio also shared that Latino male friends would attempt to hide their bottles of beer when he was around them. For Anastacio and other deacons, bar patronage and/or public alcohol consumption may represent a form of virility or manliness that is under the surveillance of others as the experiences of these deacons indicate that drinking is viewed as a typical male behavior, but one not suitable for an ordained cleric. The Latino deacon is thus engaged in conflict around the male ritual of drinking. Interestingly, Domingo also references his former shyness and socializing with women in the context of a discussion of alcohol.

Deacon attitudes and behaviors around alcohol consumption speak to the negotiation of gender and power dynamics within such contexts as marriage, close male friendships, and public perception. Social drinking in moderation, even where alcohol is more commonly consumed by men (e.g., the quinceañera or wedding dance site), often led to an experience of surveillance, producing perhaps an obligation to not drink. Gutmann comments on this notion of jurado – or having a pledge not to drink. This state of “estoy jurado,” or “I’m pledged,” is often related to community and religious responsibilities and, within the Mexican community considered by Gutmann, reveals the ways in which abstention from drinking is culturally sanctioned, respected, and encouraged.305 “Estoy jurado” is a pledge seemingly imposed on the deacon by Church/community members.

304 Deacon Anastacio, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 27 April 2010, Diocese of Toledo, Ohio.
305 Gutmann, 186.
The Latino Deacon as Husband, Father, and Working Man

In this section, I focus on responses to interview questions that speak to deacon roles in the domestic realm – particularly with regard to their conduct as husbands and fathers – as well as in the workplace. In each context - home and the workplace – being a man of the cloth produced both competing and complementary masculinities. On the job, the deacon might be viewed as a resource for marital counseling by co-workers. But the demands of the deacon formation program often produced conflict in the home as spousal and parental involvement (e.g., child raising, doing errands, family activities) for the deacon was negatively impacted and served to reinforce the wife’s domestic role.

Marriage

All deacons in this study were married at the time of their ordination. At the time of interview for this study, fifteen deacons remained married, two deacons identified as widowers, and one deacon indicated that his marriage had been annulled. Overall, the vast majority of deacons revealed much difficulty in balancing the responsibilities of two vocational sacraments – Matrimony and Holy Orders. When I asked Deacon Felipe how he felt on his day of ordination, his wife Lisa inserted, “How I felt, I felt he was getting another wife. That the church was his new bride.”306 With regard to two vocational sacraments – Matrimony and Holy Orders – deacons are “challenged to be faithful to both.”307 Lisa’s response speaks to the emotional expectations and challenges she has as Felipe must share his emotions with another “bride.” Felipe’s response regarding how becoming a deacon affected his marriage builds upon Lisa’s response and reveals relationship goals that transcend immediate questions of household labor and speak to larger notions of exchanges assumed in the diaconate couple model:

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306 Deacon Felipe, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 8 September 2010, Cleveland Diocese.
Because we both had a call, I was called to the diaconate, to be ordained, but she was also called and became a very good youth minister. And at one point, when the nun left...the bishop actually appointed her as part of the team. And she took over the nun’s work and became like a nun. So it challenged us both to be ministers. So it’s very hard for the wife to divorce herself from the deacon’s work. She can do it, but if you’re called to ministry, it’s really a call to both. You really can’t divorce the two things. I mean whatever role the wife plays, it can be passive or other, it’s still a call to both. And if she doesn’t feel called, then you don’t have a ministry.

Felipe’s response, highlighting “a call to both” husband and wife, summons the concept of the “diaconate couple.” While this title is not universally used, it has been used regularly in recent history by the Cleveland Diocese. In its positive sense, “diaconate couple” can be an appropriate title for a couple who ministers together or perceive themselves as a single unit. Lisa reinforced Felipe’s response regarding her ministerial leadership and role repertoire, also citing her work with the church choir.

Felipe demonstrated that he is attuned to his wife at an affective level, stating there is no ministry “if she doesn’t feel called.” Felipe’s response also demonstrated unequal status and access to church resources as he receives conferral of the Sacrament of Holy Orders as a result of being “called to the diaconate,” while Lisa “took over the nun’s work and became like a nun” without the formal title. While I did not specifically ask the deacons about the label “diaconate couple,” many deacons cited the ministerial work of their wives and Felipe’s response highlights his understanding that husband and wife must both be called to service. Felipe’s reference to Lisa’s appointment by the bishop to the youth ministry team also points to the importance of recognition at the highest level in the diocesan structure. Ultimately, while such recognition does

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308 Rebecca Anne Meehan, “The Emerging Role of the Deacon’s Wife in the Catholic Church” (PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1997).

309 Meehan’s study, which included interviews with a sample of 97 deacon wives in the Cleveland Diocese, is seen by some as one of distinction and honor, and by others as one of appeasement and pacification as wives do not have an official title of their own without attachment to their husbands.
not address issues of structural inequity, it may help avoid a negative self-concept for the wife and any subsequent strain on the marriage and ministry.\textsuperscript{310}

Deacon Domingo reflected upon his inability to balance his various roles after he was ordained. In responding to my question about the impact of the diaconate on his marriage, Domingo, whose wife Terry is Anglo, stated the following:

It had a negative effect in the beginning. The reason for that is, when you are ordained, you think that you are going to make a big difference in the world. You are going to conquer. So you think you are going to do anything and everything to make that possible. So what happens, and what happened in our case…the culture difference between being married to an Hispanic and being married to an English speaking person, there is a big difference between the two. I found that I was out there too much and I was neglecting the family and I was neglecting the wife. And that became a reality for me when she one day said to me, this is after letting me know that I wasn’t around, she said that if I continued we would end up in divorce because I wasn’t able to build a relationship.

Domingo took some time off from his diaconal duties to “dedicate” himself back to his roles as husband and father. Domingo’s language is perhaps indicative of competing gender roles. As a deacon, he thought he would go out into the world to “conquer,” with his deacon role providing a type of Catholic patriarchal privilege. Yet Terry challenged Domingo to maintain responsibilities that might be considered domestic. Interestingly, Domingo also references ethno-cultural differences between he and Terry that prevented him from doing “anything and everything” with regard to conquering activities.

Domingo went on to say that the time away from diaconal duties was a good thing for him and his marriage:

In that nine-month period (leave from program), I rediscovered what being a husband is all about. We spent much more time together, going places, talking. Communication is a tremendous [thing] in marriage. If you are not communicating, you will have issues down the road. So you have to talk about anything and everything, even things that hurt, because it’s essential for the marriage to continue.

\textsuperscript{310} Meehan, 1997.
The communication and additional time spent together would seem to reflect a new level of intimacy with his wife, with the negotiation of ethnic differences with regard to gender roles perhaps playing a significant role.

Deacon Pedro’s response regarding the impact on his marriage is different in terms of the degree to which he and his wife (Alicia) did not minister jointly:

It didn’t affect it. Because she signed the consentment, that I would be ordained. Then when I had something to do, like a funeral or taking someone to the cemetery, assisting mass, or doing baptisms, stuff like that, they called for continuing education, they said you can bring your wife. And she says, no, you are the deacon, I am not the one. You are the one ordained and I am not. And it’s true. She can give support in your marriage, but you are the deacon and they don’t have anything to do with that thing. Now they said that many deacons, they want their wife to be at their side at the altar with them. No.

Was the decision to seemingly not be as active as other wives really Alicia’s choice, or was Pedro preventing his wife from becoming more involved? Pedro distinguished himself from other deacons who wanted “their wife to be at their side at the altar.” Pedro also cited marriage as an experience that distinguishes deacons from priests. This is revealing as it exposes Pedro’s struggles in negotiating the domestic environment. When I asked Pedro if there are things that deacons can do that priests cannot, he responded: “Marriage preparation in one way. Deacons are married. The priest has theology and many other things, but no experience. The physical experience. Having a wife with him, bugging him all the time. Do this, sweep this, look this up, do dishes.”

Pedro painted an unflattering picture of marital life while disassociating the diaconal experience from that of the priest. Also of significant interest is the fact that Alicia was home during our interview, but remained in a back room down the hallway of their residence nearly the entire time. At other interviews during which the wife was home, she always participated or

311 Deacon Pedro, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 16 May 2010, Archdiocese of Indianapolis.
responded to questions at various points. Pedro’s perspective does not seem to resonate with the diaconate couple model.

That deacon wives participated in much of the formation program and/or engaged in significant “diaconate couple”\textsuperscript{312} and individual ministries without the same benefits accorded their husbands reflects an unequal position in the Catholic community while simultaneously enforcing a Catholic tradition that would lead many to believe that maleness is the essence of Christian faith and theology.\textsuperscript{313} More than one deacon indicated discomfort on the part of wives with their participation in the formation program without the benefit of ordination. Interestingly, in a separate interview, Deacon Juan referenced a moment during which Laura, the wife of Deacon Isidro, questioned a priest about this:

Some of the deacons’ wives were taking the courses. And they became, what do you call them, catechists, if they wanted to. And some of them put the question to Father Notter, why can only men become deacons…he said it came from the pope. But…Laura and some ladies put the question to Father Notter. But we were really enjoying it. The thing about it was, we clicked together, you know. We kept in touch with each other, the cursillistas. We used to go on retreats, your mom and dad, and us too. Aurelio Sanchez’s wife, and Isidro’s, we even went to retreats in Cleveland, with the deacons from Cleveland. But it was a strong unity, a strong brotherhood. Not only us, but the ladies [too].

Deacon Guillermo acknowledges some aspect of the inequity of the formation program:

I think it was very positive with my marriage. The women are required to participate in all of your classes. And 2 or 3 years ago, they allowed them to start getting credit. When my wife went through it, she didn’t get any credit. I always tell her, from a pastor’s standpoint, she’s more pastoral than I am [deacon laughs]. I’ve never been very pastoral. But because of her personality, she likes to talk to people and goes over their problems. Me, I tell you what you gotta do and go do it.

\textsuperscript{312} According to Meehan, the Cleveland Diocese officially implemented the label “diaconate couple” as a response to the emerging role status of the deacon’s wife. The title has been used for over twenty years and dioceses are not required to use it.

Guillermo reveals the inequity inherent in a system that requires women to participate with their husbands without granting equal status and credit. Interestingly, he also indicates that his wife (Esther) is more “pastoral,” pointing to a different, more collaborative leadership style, one arguably more traditionally "feminine".

When I asked Jose how becoming a deacon affected his marriage and/or relationship with his wife, his response reflected an understanding of the unequal nature of the formation program for husbands and wives, while also acknowledging access to, what might be considered, a spiritual resource by deacons and their wives:

I would say it was positive. Because to become a deacon, your wife has to accept it. She has to come on board with it. And we went through the program at a time when the wife and the husband kind of went through it together. And the reason for that is, they said that, you of course are the only one that is going to get ordained. She is going to come to class with you, but you’re going to get ordained. But that allows her to be on a spiritual level with you. To know what you went through and the things you studied, and that kind of stuff. So she’s in that same community. As deacons we have a community of deacons, but we also have a community of deacon wives. When we come together, we know each other and so do the wives.

In addition to citing the individual communities of deacons and wives, Jose states that his wife is “in that same community,” indicating some level of mutual membership.

As was the case with Deacon Pedro and his reference to Alicia signing a “consentment,” effectively providing her permission for her husband to pursue ordination, other deacons often mentioned “support” their wives provided and the need for their wives’ “consent” to become a deacon. Deacon Tomas stated, “I think our relationship was not really changed in any way, but, I know the reason I am able to do the things I do and have done is she is willing to accept and support me, and also willing to assist me. She was very instrumental in many of the ministries here in the parish.” Deacon Angel’s response is similar: “My wife’s always been a real support
for me. And I’ll tell you it has to be the best support, your partner, when you have a commitment like that.

Pablo acknowledged the impact that the formation program had on his wife in the following way:

At the beginning it did affect it a little because I was away from home every weekend for 2 years once a month. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Didn’t get home ‘til about Sunday evening. Then wife take care of the kids and everything. It made it a little bit hard. But she never gave up…She said why don’t you stay home, help me out. I said well, when I signed my agreement, you and your kids agreed that I had to go through it.

Pablo also referenced the agreement that the deacon’s wife must sign in order for her husband to be ordained. This agreement or granting of permission by the wife is referenced in the national deacon formation guide and references the importance of ongoing deacon-wife communication and the importance of balancing family and religious responsibilities:

Although the wife of a married deacon has already given her permission before her husband’s ordination to the demands of the diaconal ministry, nevertheless she should be “kept duly informed of [her husband’s] activities in order to arrive at an harmonious balance between family, professional and ecclesial responsibilities.”

One way to read the deacon responses is that the wife continued a pattern of performing a female domesticity as a “dutiful” spouse in support of her husband. This would seem to reinforce traditional gender roles within the marriage. Yet the deacons also acknowledge the ways marital relationships changed and how wives took new leadership roles in the parish and in the marriage. A number of deacons and some of the wives discussed a period of time during which deacons and wives met together on a monthly basis as a way of addressing a range of issues and revealing

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that “consent” and support did not mean that the wives had no concerns. Deacon Pablo and Carmen talked about the monthly meetings and the problem-solving ability of the group:

Pablo: The only thing is you don’t feel the same way being with a group of Hispanics as being with a group of Anglos. We used to, your dad, myself and the other deacons, 29 of us, once a month we’d get together and discuss what is our problems in the parish, what can we do to solve it.

Carmen: And we used to get together as couples. And we’d talk. Everybody brings their problems and we’d pray. And that’s what I miss, we don’t do it anymore.

Interestingly, Pablo highlights the camaraderie amongst the men while Carmen focuses on the role of the group in providing a space to share problems.

Archival documents elucidate the content of the deacon and wife meetings. The minutes from these meetings are interesting and indicate that the wives of deacons did not necessarily adhere to the traditional stereotype of Latina femininity. The first gathering of Hispanic deacons and wives was held on April 19, 1986 at Saint Aloysius in Bowling Green, Ohio. According to the record, Deacon Pablo and the wife of Deacon Jose Bautista were both in charge of the gathering. Following an opening prayer and gospel reading, those present split into groups by gender. When the groups reconvened, a list of points from each was reviewed. The list from the women’s group contained the following:

1. Deacons must remember that the family comes first.
2. Know your limitations especially if you have medical problems.
3. Take time for yourself.
4. Priests must be conscious of the working deacon.
5. Priests should periodically meet with deacon for spiritual direction. Wife could be included, too.
6. Remember that if a deacon dies, that position can be filled by another deacon but no one can take your place in your family.
7. Don’t let outside problems interfere with family meals, get together, etc. unless it’s an emergency.
8. Be conscious of what kind of example we are setting for our family. Are we spending enough time with them?
9. Communicate between wife and deacon. Make time!
10. Deacon should understand and support wife’s ministry.
The list is interesting as it combines points that could be categorized within the traditional cultural value framework of familismo, containing a female-matriarchal language. Yet a point such as #3, “Take time for yourself,” reveals a level of independence and self-affirmation not traditionally associated with Latinas, particularly in the generation that the deacon/wives generally fit into. The wives also called on their husbands to enhance levels of communication. And particularly interesting, from a spirituality context, the wives demanded that their husbands “understand and support” their ministry (#10). The deacon wives also address the hierarchical structure of the church, calling on the parish priest to support both the deacon and wife (#4 and #5).

My interview with Deacon Juan provides additional insight into the nature and purpose of the support meetings. I shared with Juan that some of the deacons’ wives have told me about the deacon/wife meetings and I asked him to tell me more about them:

Juan: Yeah if somebody we knew was having problems we get together and asked how can we help, how can we make it work.

Interviewer: And what were the difficulties that you would discuss?

Juan: We really enjoyed the deacon and wife retreats, that was good, real good. But it was very, very helpful to all of us, because most of us came right out of the ranks. And for not being educated you know we showed that we could do it.

Interviewer: And was that a new thing for your marriage. To be doing this as a couple?

Juan: Well it made it stronger. It made us understand that the first thing that as you get older is to form respect. And that's what marriage is about, respect her wife. A lot of times they would say when you were young couple the man has to respect the wife, because nowadays men and women both have to work you have to respect her give her some space. Sometimes you might be having a rough time and you don't feel like talking, you have to tell your wife to respect, leave me alone for a little while, you’ll get out of it. And a half hour you might come back and say you want to go eat, you want to go do this or do that. But the key is that you would form a unity, a unity between the couple. And we were together, the locos, como los locos. Not only us but the women. They got along really well. So that helped us out a lot.
Juan’s perspective counters an image of the macho patriarch. In his account, the Latino deacon seems to challenge the patriarchal framework of gender oppression and religious leadership by presenting the deacon and wife as a singular ministry partnership and calling for mutual support between cleric and wife.

The deacon and wife meetings and diaconate couple ministry concept help us rethink representations of Catholic Latinas as devalued and weak, while the men’s participation counters a female-gendered notion of Catholicism. In highlighting the wife’s increased role in the church, the deacon may acknowledge a new dynamic in the marriage, though perhaps one representative of a type of difference-based equality that prioritizes the deacon’s male leadership with minimal challenge to the inequality inherent in this structure. The deacons' responses may also reflect rhetorical devices to address the difficulties in balancing roles as deacons, fathers, and husbands by focusing on the wife’s support of her husband’s male spiritual obligation rather than deferring to his male privilege in assuming a leadership role in a patriarchal hierarchy. Whose wife is not going to “consent” to her husband becoming an ordained clergy member and therefore disrupt the moral/social order?

In Chapter 4, I shared a portion of the (im)migration story as told by Deacon Isidro regarding his marriage to Laura as a condition to remain in the United States following his release by Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) in Toledo. Though Isidro and Laura had considered themselves Catholic, it was the fear of deportation rather than values related to pre-marital sex and masculine honor that defined, shaped, and controlled their gendered roles as husband and wife. Marriage also had the effect of bringing Isidro and Laura into good standing with the church, thus paving the way for his path to the permanent diaconate. Deacon Isidro and his wife, Laura, recognized that his ordination may have signaled a shift in previous expressions
of machismo in their marriage. In discussing how the diaconate has changed him, Isidro and Laura directly referenced “macho” behavior:

Isidro: Oh yeah I changed a lot. One little example, well maybe not so little…I used to get mad with my wife and I'd say I'm going to take my underwear and go with my mom [laughter]. Now I don't do that. Now I try to solve things.

Laura: He’s changed a lot. One thing is that he's changed a lot in the way he used to express himself toward being a macho man, to a soft man. Before he was this and this, you know. The rules and stuff. And then he was getting softer and softer.

Isidro: She take advantage [laughter].

Laura: No, no, no. But he has changed a lot.

Laura’s reference to “rules and stuff” reveals that Isidro may have held significant more power than his wife in terms of decision making in their marriage.

The causal chain of events in the emergent cultural practice of diaconate couple ministry contains a similar pattern for many deacons in this study. The list from the deacon and wife meetings reveal the types of issues that became a source of ongoing tension in the marriage. Many of the deacons continually referenced the consent of the wife required by the diocese in order to pursue ordination and the importance of ongoing support. While actions like the deacon and wife meetings may have empowered women to convey concerns that may have resulted in changes in the marriage, the privileged position of the deacon is also revealed as they seemingly are able to utilize the signed consent form in a manner that justifies, in some instances, increased levels of disengagement from the domestic environment.

**Family & Fatherhood**

In this section I focus on the significant difficulties many of the deacons interviewed have experienced with regard to balancing diaconal and parental responsibilities. All of the deacons interviewed were asked when they first thought about becoming a deacon. Interestingly, several
deacons indicated that they had an interest in becoming a priest many years prior in the adolescent years; however, such wishes were often in direct conflict with expectations placed on them by a parent.

Deacon Juan revealed how the pressure to fulfill family responsibilities was placed upon him at a very early age when he told his mother he wanted to be a priest:

It was just me and my mother. And every day just before I went to bed I had to pray for the whole neighborhood. Every night...every night, I would be kneeling over in the corner. When I was 12 years old I told her, mom, I'd like to study to become a priest. And she said no. She said you're my only child. Who's going to take care of me? But I have always had a calling. I always felt God was calling me, was calling me in some way or another.315

Juan’s story serves as an example of familismo – or deeply held loyalty to family members – specifically as the lone male in the immediate family. In this instance, Juan’s role as son is prioritized over his aspirations to become a priest. Juan would later share with me his mother’s concern that, as a priest, he could have no children to carry on the family name. Several deacons in addition to Juan told me that their mother, or mother-in-law, lived with them after the passing of the father.

Deacon Fernando similarly wanted to become a priest when he was a child. According to Fernando:

I would go home and I would set up my own little altar, okay. I would get some sliced bananas and make them as hosts. And I would play the priest. And my brothers and sisters would participate. I don't know if that was willingly or my parents would tell them to go ahead. So it was in the making all this time.

Fernando cited his mother’s death when he was ten years old as well as the passing of a brother as factors that impacted the family and his work responsibilities as well as his path in life. Fernando also indicated his growing interest in women as a teenager as an influence in his vocational choice:

315 Deacon Juan, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 2 June 2010, Diocese of Toledo, Ohio.
To me it's humorous now because I was growing up and I did always want to be a priest. I was always around the church. And some people would ask if I want to be a priest. And yes, I wanted to be a priest. And I thought to myself, I want to be a saint. But then as I got into my teen years I started to notice more and more the girls. I figured I would never be able to be faithful so I said forget it. As a matter of fact I think my dad was very surprised when I became a deacon.

Fernando juxtaposes his growing (sexual) interest in women with his interest in becoming a priest and ability to be faithful (celibate) to God.

Deacon Francisco spent time in a seminary studying to be a priest. According to Francisco, “I went to the seminary also when I was 18. I was there for a year and I met my wife. I told God I ain't coming back.” Francisco’s wife Sandra also spent time in a convent in preparation to become a nun. While neither Francisco nor Fernando indicated any social pressure that might have dissuaded them from the priesthood, one might wonder how they weighed the world of the (celibate) Catholic priesthood with the conventions (marriage, family) of the secular.

The permanent diaconate calls for deacons to refocus one’s thinking from an individual-centered approach to a family-centered approach, and when asking participants about the greatest challenges faced during the formation program, the vast majority cited the difficulty in balancing the rigors of the diaconal formation and study process with familial roles. According to Deacon Pascual, “A year before the ordination, I said, I’m going to quit. My wife says why? I said it’s too hard. I have to study too much. The job, the kids, the house, the studying. I said man, this is too much. She says, no, let’s close the door and pray.” Deacon Francisco discussed the difficulties in balancing his responsibilities as a father:

Because my children would say dad you're always in church. And sometimes I try to meet, like one was in karate and had matches. I would try to attend. And the other one was in boxing. I tried to be there but I couldn't be there all the time because of meetings and stuff. One of them, the oldest one, started getting into
drugs. Marijuana and stuff like that. I thought it was because he did not have support like before. I wasn't with him.

In responding to my question about the challenges at becoming a deacon, Juan shared, “Most of us like your dad and myself, we had young ones. So we had to be very grateful to our wives for taking care of the kids while we went on to become a deacon.” In his response to the same item, Deacon Tomas mentioned the studying and time from his family:

The studies. The other challenge was that I worked at the mill 6 days a week, 10 hours a day. And then I had to go to the seminary Wednesday evenings and Saturdays…But I really felt that, my boys, I thanked them all the time because they did without some of my time because I was busy with this.

Here we again see the deacon struggling to fulfill family, religious, and work roles. I later asked Tomas to tell me about a time when his faith was challenged. He discussed the death of his son, who was killed in a car accident, and the feelings of guilt over the time missed due to his deacon formation and training: “Although I didn’t lose my faith, I felt very distant from him [God] and the church. I think the whole idea of spending a lot of time in formation, and missing some of his activities, that sort of thing, was very, very present in my mind.” Here again the response reinforces that the majority of deacons spent a greater number of hours away from the home and family, leading to greater responsibilities for the wife/mother and a sense of disconnection from the household.

**Workplace**

Diaconal practices at the workplace focused on a range of issues – marriage, family, drinking – that harken my discussion in Chapter 3 on Fordism and the Church as social engineering forces that encourage a particular set of employee behaviors as good, hardworking Christian Americans, as reflected through marriage, sobriety, and participation in religious worship. In this way, diaconal ministry on the job might reinforce a type of Catholic paternalism.
Deacon responses also revealed interesting dynamics between roles as employee/worker and cleric with a gendered character. When I asked Gonzalo about how co-workers perceived him on the job, he offered the following:

I worked at General Dynamics in the assembly line...they call me a minister but I’m a deacon you know. They know that they can come in on Monday morning, they’ve had a bad experience over the weekend with their family, with her spouse or her children or whatever. And a lot of times on the assembly line you have that chance to talk to people. And being in that assembly line, being with the public, this is where I did my second most ministry, on the assembly line.

I asked Gonzalo to share more about the issues that co-workers brought up to him on the job:

It was mainly marriage things, difficulties they were having. And it was a lot of money issues that were involved too. But mainly it was the marriage things. Being away from home you know. We have a lot of people that come from Fostoria and they’re working twelve hours a day, seven days a week. And that doesn’t give much time for family and stuff like that you know. But it was mainly family issues that they came to you for. I did [officiate] some marriages. They wanted me to do marriages in other denominations, but I’m not allowed to do that. I can be there, but I’m not going to do a marriage in other churches.

For Deacon Juan, the intersection of roles occurred formally as he was named the Catholic chaplain for the GM plant at which he worked. Juan cited his experience as a married person as particularly helpful as many co-workers wanted to discuss and/or sought guidance on a range of personal issues, including family and marital difficulties. As Deacon Felipe discussed his day of ordination and the opportunities created as a deacon, his wife Lisa stated, “Also your work...He gave classes to some of the engineers there.” Felipe offered more on the blurred boundaries between faith and work:

Well...the deacon has his feet in two worlds, the church and the world...I used to give lessons at [government employer name], which the U.S. government might want that tape there [points at my recorder], because of the separation of church and state. But I would do preparations for lessons right there at work, preparations for being a godparent. I would say at the end of the day just come to my office and I would give them there. So that’s one reason why the church needs deacons, so that it’s visible in the workplace. The church is not isolated but visible in the
workplace. And that’s a biggie, the church being visible in the world. I would advise people at work – you’re accessible and available.

Deacon Isidro offered a different work-related issue with self-conceptions around masculinity in relationship to his career as a jeweler:

I started working this job in Mexico City, but I didn’t think it was for me. I was thinking it was for ladies. Working with the little things like ladies do. And I thought no. I worked for about a month, with chains, and thought this isn’t for me. I want something rough, like being a truck driver, or something like that. And I used to like jewelry. And one time, one of my *compadres* from Mexico, he was working as a jeweler. And I ordered from him a bracelet. And I was going to the store where he worked, and I was working at a leather store, and I told him when he finished my bracelet, you think I could work in this. And he said you have experience, so if an opportunity comes, I will tell you.316

I unfortunately did not ask Isidro why he changed his mind about becoming a jeweler. Perhaps the fact that his *compadre* engaged in such work gave it credibility. Or maybe Isidro recognized his talent and pleasure in such work. There may have also been a financial motive. Whatever the reason, Isidro clearly drew a connection between certain types of employment and gender.

Several deacons shared stories that indicated differential treatment and surveillance at work with gendered connotations. According to Deacon Jose, once he was ordained, co-workers began treating him differently:

I think my hardest transition was taking my diaconate ministry and taking it with me to work. That was probably the hardest. And as people there found out that I was a deacon, they were, hey that’s great. And some were like, you’re what? And then you’re scrutinized. I’ve had people come up to me, joking, and make a comment, you shouldn’t be around here, you’re a deacon. And I’ll say that’s right, I’m a deacon. I accepted a call. It doesn’t make me a saint. I’m a sinner just like you are.

Deacon Pascual also referenced jokes that co-workers played on him once his status as a deacon was discovered. According to Pascual, “Some people tried to put dirty pictures in my locker. I turned it in. The next day they came and tore it down and painted over these dirty drawings in the

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316 Deacon Isidro, Interview by Adrian Bautista.
bathroom. I knew who it was but I didn’t say anything.” For Pascual, and perhaps more implicitly in Jose’s case, status as a deacon produces “joking” behavior from co-workers that is gendered/sexualized in nature, reinforcing the gendered nature of the workplace. For Jose, whose company provides products and services largely for the automotive and aerospace industries, there seems to be an implied message regarding his fit in an industrial, masculinized work environment. As was the case with alcohol consumption, the deacon seemingly experiences a dynamic of surveillance, this time with regard to masculinity and the workplace.

* A Gendered Latino Catholic Borderlands

Gloria Anzaldúa’s insights into the ethno-religious construction of Latina femininity and Latino masculinity reveal gendered attributes, behaviors, and roles through such religious symbols and events as Our Lady of Guadalupe, the quinceañera, the Cursillo Movement, and perspectives on sexuality. As clergy whose pastoral agreements reflect expectations to officiate/participate in the aforementioned ethno-religious functions, the Latino deacon plays a significant role in the negotiation, contestation, and/or reinforcement of gendered ideologies.

In this section, I argue for a gendered Catholic borderlands in the changing narrative of Latino men as borderland gendered subjectivities. Many of the deacons in this study shared encounters both on the path to and as members of the diaconate that reflect profound and transformative experiences of religious ecstasy, male social bonding, and spiritual activism. Here I have in mind Luis León’s notion of a religious erotics as “a revolutionary and liberating religiosidad, creating what I call a theology of religious erotics, especially the beginnings for an ethics of Latino masculinity.” This sort of religiosity included new levels of intimacy with men, particularly at the Cursillo retreat, as well as encounters with sacrality based on mutuality, deep friendship, and love. For some, the Latino diaconate experience has been liberating because it
allows these men to explore new gendered realities while transcending gendered shackles and become better men without the sociological trappings and limitations of gendered expectations.\textsuperscript{317} In this section, I argue for a gendered Catholic borderlands in the changing narrative of Latino men as borderland gendered subjectivities.

**The Quince**

The *quinceañera* is a traditional celebration of life and gratitude to God on the occasion of the fifteenth birthday of a young Hispanic woman. The ritual emphasizes her passage from childhood to adulthood. The family usually requests a Mass or a blessing to be held in the Church. The rite is frequently celebrated in several countries in the Americas, including Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean. It is frequently requested by Hispanic Catholics in the dioceses of the United States of America. Within the public discourse, the quinceañera is regarded in three ways: as an extension of particular Catholic sacraments, as a rite of passage, and as a practice that has historical continuity or “tradition.”\textsuperscript{318} The ritual involves girls learning about gender identity and the construction of the female body.\textsuperscript{319} As clergy who often coordinate and officiate this ethno-religious ritual, Latino deacons play a key role in conveying messages with gendered implications.

I asked all deacons to share their thoughts on the meaning of the *quinceañera* for the Latina participant. Deacon Juan offered the following about the message he delivers to girls celebrating their quince:

> Your responsibilities are stronger and harder now because you're not a little girl anymore. You're a young lady, you're supposed to wash dishes, clean up, pickup,

\textsuperscript{317} Kristy Nabhan-Warren makes this point specifically with regard to the Cursillo experience in her article “’Blooming Where We’re Planted’: Mexican-descent Catholics Living Out Cursillo de Cristiandad,” U.S. Catholic Historian, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Fall 2010): 114.


and do part of your duties in the family. So you know I put all that together and talk to them like I'm talking to you. I have the microphone and I'm talking to them and sometimes they get a little teary-eyed but when they go take the flowers to the Virgin, that's when they cry it out.320

Juan’s message seemingly upholds traditional gender roles in which the Latina is a submissive and servile figure.

Deacon Francisco responded to the same question in this way:

My message is always the same, now that you are a woman. The woman doesn't come just to do whatever you want to do. It comes with responsibility and dignity and saying yes to the right things and no to the wrong ones. You are to inspire the other youth to follow Jesus and to do good…but some kids think, "Oh, I can do whatever I want because I'm a woman." The shoes represent this; they take off their girly shoes and put on their woman shoes.321 But I always remind them that it comes with responsibility, because I'm sixty-one and still can’t do whatever I want to do. I have to do what's right. So that's my message most of the time.322

Francisco’s response reinforces the notion of the quinceañera as a rite of passage for the young woman into adulthood, a stage at which she must exhibit a new level of responsibility that is appropriate for an adult woman. Adulthood, however, is not a generic stage of the life cycle, but one that is embedded in Catholic expectations of a woman.323

Deacon Felipe and his wife Lisa discussed the quinceañera and the “hard message” that must be delivered to the young woman:

Felipe: I love quinceañeras. We don’t do them here so much, but when we had the storefront,324 I did a lot of them. There was only one negative to it, but I loved doing it. The negative was that the señorita, who now thinks she is a lady, might end up pregnant a year or two later.

Lisa: You have to prepare for college. Don’t rush your life too much.

320 Deacon Juan, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 2 June 2010.
321 The quince ceremony often includes a presentation of the female’s first pair of high-heeled shoes.
322 Deacon Francisco, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 9 June 2010.
324 “Storefront” refers to a storefront church, located in a storefront building in an urban setting (Cleveland in this case) and reflective of a community whose socioeconomic status is not conducive to building a larger church building. Originally more common in the African-American religious experience, storefront churches have increased in Latino and Asian American urban communities.
Felipe: But it turns out, that was culturally a way to prepare to get married. And so they would get married when they were 15. So it was a natural progression. But you can’t do that in this society. So at 15 instead of getting married, they are having babies. That was a negative, but it is a beautiful thing. But they spend a lot of money. Oh like what’s her name, you went to her baby shower. I did hers and now she’s pregnant. I did hers two years ago.

Lisa: She did graduate from high school.

Felipe: But she was going to college. She was a bright girl. It’s a hard message. I don’t wanna scream at them or anything. But that is the painful part.

According to Felipe and Lisa, the quinceañera has seemingly become a moment when in which the young woman negotiates her female sexual body outside the context of married life.

Deacon Domingo differentiated his message from that of other deacons:

To me, the quinceañera is all about the girl. I can forget about everyone else, including the parents, in that church because I’m talking to her. I’m talking to her and her peers…So I’m a little bit looser than what other deacons might be. But I want her to understand, this is your moment. This is where you stand out. And her promise, you heard it [interviewer had attended the evening prior a quinceañera at which Domingo officiated], it’s not weak, it’s a strong promise to God, to Mary, and to her Church…She says it’s up to me, to get that relationship with God in order. It’s up to me to get that relationship with Mary. It’s up to me to take charge of my faith and to show that to everybody, especially my peers. It can’t just be said, it has to be seen. Pretty much, my focus is the same.325

Domingo’s message to the Latina to “take charge” differs from the messages offered by deacons Juan and Francisco. The quince woman is encouraged to take on responsibility by Domingo, but in an independent manner that does not necessarily promote subservience or subordination to her family or the Church. Domingo’s response reveals the ways in which the Latino deacon can deliver a message that is more affirming, contesting the ideological notion of the quinceañera “tradition.”

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Divine Worship, “In a culture where machismo is still evident, the choice

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325 Deacon Domingo, Interview by Adrian Bautista 10 July 2010, Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio.
of a young Hispanic woman to celebrate her fifteenth birthday in the Church offers a host of possibilities for her and the parish.\textsuperscript{326} The Committee also states that the Virgin Mary “is a model for women of every class and age group.” In holding up the Virgin Mary as a model, the Church (and deacon) is nearly explicitly stating that one responsibility of the young woman is to preserve her sexual purity. And for the Church, embedded within their image of a selfless daughter is the codification of Catholicism’s heterosexuality—delayed until marriage but nonetheless compulsory.\textsuperscript{327} As the USCCB quote suggests, the Catholic Church hopes the quince ritual compels a young girl to pursue heterosexual relationships but to delay sexual contact until marriage.

In addition to the quinceañera, marianismo in the form of Guadalupan devotion also provides insight regarding church and gender hierarchies. In the Roman Catholic tradition, the Virgin Mary appeared to the indigenous peasant Juan Diego in the form of the brown-skinned Lady of Guadalupe near Mexico City in 1531. Devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe has also developed over centuries, including its expansion to what is now the United States beginning in the Spanish colonial era and the most widespread parish devotional tradition for the Guadalupe feast is las mañanitas (literally “morning songs”), a tribute offered before daybreak that often leads into the celebration of Mass.\textsuperscript{328}

In citing the USCCB’s holding up of the Virgin Mary in the form of Our Lady of Guadalupe as a model for Latinas of all ages, we are reminded of the quintessential Catholic model of womanhood and the role marianismo plays in the lives of Latino men and women. Latina/o scholars have discussed the cultural implications of Guadalupan devotion, which

\textsuperscript{327} Davalos, 121.
include a model of a submissive, all-accepting mother reflecting a Catholic Latino patriarchy, as well as symbol of civil disobedience as Guadalupan imagery was utilized and transformed in the Chicana/o civil rights movement. Additionally, there is a panethnic dynamic as Guadalupe, certainly Mexico’s most popular religious and cultural icon, has parallels in other Latino national groups.329 Interestingly, several of the non-Mexican deacons in my study also displayed strong connections to Our Lady of Guadalupe both personally and within their parish communities.

In my interviews, I also asked deacons if their parishes celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe as well as about any personal connection to Guadalupe. Deacon Francisco, for example, stated:

You know, you think I would be more connected to the Puerto Rican one [Our Lady of Divine Providence], but I don't. I really feel more connected to the Guadalupe because, like I said, I was raised here and a lot of my friends are Mexican and we were always at Cinco de Mayo and things like that. I had a better connection through a friend, Hortensia, she's Mexican. So I got more with the Mexican stuff. I like the Guadalupe image better, she is prettier. The Providencia, she don’t look that pretty.

Interestingly, Francisco finds Guadalupe to be “prettier”, a sign that he perhaps holds La Virgen as a standard of beauty for Latinas as well. Deacon Tomas, who is also Puerto Rican, told me that he prays to Guadalupe regularly. Deacon Jose discussed the importance of his Lady of Guadalupe stole and the admiration it garners from parishioners. It should also be noted that in those instances in which I conducted in-home interviews all the houses I visited contained images of Guadalupe inside either hanging on the wall or as part of a home altar, with some also having statues of La Virgen (and other saints) in the yard outdoors.

When I asked Deacon Domingo (who is Puerto Rican) about the meaning of Guadalupe for him, he shared the following vignette:

329 Our Lady of Charity/Our Lady of El Cobre is the national patroness of Cuba, and Our Lady of Divine Providence is the patroness of Puerto Rico.
I haven’t paid a lot of attention to Mary until the last couple of years because of the Mexicanos that have been coming in. And the Guadalupano has become more evident. So I have a tremendous respect and belief in her. For example, in the quinceañera, I always insist that they visit Mary. I had a lady over here one time, this just floored me. A Mexicana, with her daughter, we were the only ones in the whole church. I asked what she was doing. And she said I came to fulfill a promise. And I said ok, what might that promise be if I may ask. I made a promise to her [the woman said], she never told me what the promise was, but she [Mary] came through. And she made a promise if this came true, then she would walk on her knees from the back of the church [Domingo begins to cry]…and so her little daughter, she [mother] says honey you don’t have to do this if you don’t want to. I was toward the altar, and she got down on her knees over here con una flor, for Mary. And her daughter got on her knees too.

Domingo clearly sees the unwavering faith of the mother and daughter in Guadalupe and finds admiration for them as strong (Mexican) women. And by acknowledging the influx of ethnic Mexicans into northeast Ohio, many of whom are undocumented, Domingo is moved and inspired by this Guadalupan devotion as she continues to serve as a source of faith and strength in the im/migration journey.

Cursillo, Machismo, and Spiritual Borderlands

The premier apostolic movement among Hispanics is the *Cursillo de Cristiandad*, or “short courses in Christianity,” referenced more frequently with the shorter “Cursillo.” A movement founded in Spain in the mid-1940s, for purposes of developing and training Catholic lay leaders, it took on impetus in this hemisphere with the spiritual and structural Church renewal of Vatican II. An intense weekend program of training that emphasizes personal spiritual development, Cursillo retreats are followed by structured group reunions called *ultreyas* (Spanish for “onward”) to extend the sharing of spiritual insights and experiences. Since the post-Vatican II period of Catholic Church renewal, a number of scholars have noted the influential role of

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Cursillo in the development of a Latina/o Catholic laity. However, far less has been written about the role of Cursillo in the historical development of a Latino permanent diaconate.

Sixteen of the eighteen deacons interviewed completed at least one Cursillo weekend (it is important to note that Cursillo is not a requirement for ordination into the permanent diaconate). In this section, I account for and examine responses in my interview data that link notions of machismo with the Cursillo experience. A number of the deacons told me that they were quite hesitant to participate in Cursillo, having heard about its emotional/ecstatic character from male friends. Such was the case for Deacon José, who told me that he was so hesitant to attend Cursillo that his wife had to stop him from sneaking out of their home just a few minutes before he was picked up by his Cursillo sponsor. José’s fear was that the experience would “turn me into some kind of Jesus freak or something.” He also described a spiritually deficient pre-Cursillo life when I asked him when he first thought about becoming a deacon:

Well, the whole conversion process started right after Cursillo. When I went to Cursillo, I was not a practicing Catholic. I was actually not going to any church. I was married. I had three children. My life consisted of me going to work, coming home and doing what I wanted to in the garage. I didn't care about anybody or anything else. I would play with my kids and stuff like that, but to me I didn't care, it was all about me.

José acknowledges his performance in the masculine roles of husband, father, and worker, but admits to a lack of passion about the people in his life and little desire for a relationship with God. He indicates his retreat to the male-coded space of the garage. I asked José to further describe his impressions of life. He responded with the following:

We all have dreams. And we all have, growing up as a kid, [dreams] that your life is going to be like this or that. And you want it to be successful, not to have to ever have to worry about nothing. So I’ve always known about God. But it’s like one of those things, I put it on the back burner. I sat him on the shelf somewhere...And I think that a lot of that had to do with I wasn’t happy with myself. Two, I wasn’t happy with the situation I was in, maybe my life. Maybe the house I lived in. I didn’t drive the car I wanted.
José describes feelings of discontent in his pre-Cursillo life, perhaps deriving from a perceived lack of power in controlling and/or obtaining the material resources that a hegemonic masculinity might symbolize.

In discussing power and masculinity, Kaufman stated, “Men have come to see power as a capacity to impose control on others and on our own unruly emotions. It means controlling material resources around us.” However, as Kaufman further comments, “in societies based on hierarchy and inequality, it appears that all people cannot use and develop their capacities to an equal extent.” José seems to have come to the realization that, despite the exercise of masculine roles – father, husband, worker – he has limited control or power.

Interestingly, José’s garage, which for so long was a place of retreat and isolation, served as the location where he was approached about Cursillo by a neighbor who participated in his wife’s prayer group:

And right across the street from me was one of the guys that was part of that group. Well he took it upon himself to, like, become good friends with me and get me to do jobs for him because I did bodywork and painting on the side. So I was doing work for him and stuff like that. It wasn't until later that I figured it out, that the only reason he was doing that was that it gave him reason to come in the garage and talk to me about stuff. Him and another gentleman down the street are the ones that got me to do Cursillo.

José’s garage, as a site of male bonding, also brought access to the spiritual, facilitating discussions with male friends that led to his participation in Cursillo.

As we began the interview, I reminded Deacon Luis that in advance of my visit I had invited him to share a personal item. Luis asked me to follow him upstairs to a study that was once his sons’ bedroom. Luis directed my attention to a wall that held several group pictures

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from Spanish-language Cursillos. Luis pointed to one of the participants and told me that he had delivered a *rollo* (structured talk) about his mother that made all of the men emotional. “Man, he got to them every time,” Luis stated. In another picture, Luis was wearing an apron and he told me that the men in aprons did the cooking over the retreat weekend and were referred to as “*chachas*” (abbreviated from “*muchachas*”) in joking fashion by the other men. This mutual mocking experience harkened Limón’s discussion of male self-deprecating humor in terms of gender, indicating that normative notions of masculinity were transgressed as well as replicated and maintained.

In response to my pre-interview request to bring a person article of significance, Deacon Pablo presented two items: an album holding pictures from the many Cursillo weekends he had attended, and a scrapbook that contained hundreds of FLOC newspaper clippings, flyers for union activities, resolutions, and marketing materials. Grasping the Cursillo photo album, Pablo directly attributed his status as a deacon to his participation in Cursillo: “I worked in 39 Cursillos. I made mine in ’69 and seven years later I was a deacon...If I hadn’t made a Cursillo, I don’t think I would’ve been a deacon.” I asked Pablo why he felt this way and he added,

> When I was younger I didn’t care about going to church that much. Maybe once in a while my mom would make me. But I was always Catholic. Finally, one of my friends invited me to go [to Cursillo]. I made my plans to go and I got sick. But I wasn’t really sick, I didn’t wanna go. So I kinda lied. Second time, the same thing. The third time I got sick again and there were no more Spanish Cursillos so I had to go in English. I was the only Hispanic who made a Cursillo in English at that time.

As was the case with Deacon José, Pablo’s church participation was infrequent, and he was also hesitant to attend Cursillo. Pablo went on to discuss an evolving fraternity of Latino deacons, formed largely through participation in Cursillo: “We had twenty-nine Hispanic
deacons at that time... When you see one of your buddies, ‘De Colores hermano,’ he’s your brother in Christ. It helps remind you, even if they’re not Cursillistas, they’re still your brothers. It makes a strong community.” Pablo and a number of other deacons I spoke with cited Cursillo as a new experience of male bonding and intimacy, with subsequent and ongoing characteristics of loyalty and fellowship that transcended a paradigm of brotherhood or comradeship.

The “Shadowy” Cursillo Space

According to Marcoux, Cursillo remains aligned with traditional Catholicism by being couched “in the shadow of an authorized Catholic experience.” Marcoux intimates that Cursillo is on the fringes of Catholicism, criticized as merely “inciting an emotional conversion, not a deeper and more lasting conversion that encompasses the intellectual, moral, faith, and affective dimensions of the person.” Anzaldúa describes life on the borders as “life in the shadows,” and Carrasco and Sagarena argue that these “shadowy places in Anzaldúa’s thought deserve critical exploration.” These scholars build upon the shadowy qualities of Anzaldúa’s borderlands to frame ethno-religious experiences that contain tremendous personal suffering, sustained ecstasies, and moments of “illumination and healing.”

In this section I argue that the Cursillo occurrence is a transformational, gendered border-crossing experience marked by ethno-religious legitimation of emotion and ecstatic moments. According to Carrasco and Sagarena, these ecstatic states have been largely ignored by scholars of borderlands work. This Latino ecstatic religiosity has ample manifestations and can include encounters with sacrality based on mutuality, deep friendship, and love – all often experienced in

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333 “De Colores,” Spanish for “in or of colors,” is a song widely used in Cursillo. Though conveying a sense of sadness by melody, the lyrics express joy through the notion of colors in the vibrancy of God’s creation. This song was also associated with the United Farm Workers Movement.

334 Marcene Marcoux, *Cursillo*, 72.

335 Timothy Matovina, *Latino Catholicism*, 224.

336 This quote is located on a first, unpaginated page of the “Preface” of *Borderlands/La Frontera*.


338 Carrasco and Sagarena, 225.
Cursillo, where new levels of intimacy with or between men are achieved. Deacon Domingo shared highlights of his first Cursillo experience with me:

The greatest experience for me in Cursillo was the table, the table I belonged to. As I have said before when I’ve given talks at Cursillo, everything that happens, happens at that table…the intimacy is at that table. That’s the group of guys that you share the most with. Our group went into the chapel…We got on our knees, five or six of us. We were on our knees and holding hands before [Domingo pauses and begins to cry]…before Jesus.

What followed was one of the longest pauses in any of the interviews conducted. Domingo’s soft crying turned into heavier sobbing. I reached across the table and placed my hand on his shoulder. After a few moments Domingo continued,

It was a great experience, I’m telling you. Having the strength to reach out. Having the freedom to pray what you needed and to talk to God and to open your heart and your mind. And to have those guys there support you and hugging you. And for me to be able to do the same thing for them.

For Domingo, Cursillo was a profound experience in the way he encountered God with a group of men. It was an experience of male bonding not previously experienced, particularly in a religious context. Domingo’s experience reveals Cursillo as an intimate ethno-religious site where machismo, masculinity, and Latina/o spiritual and religious values are questioned and re-worked.

In responding to my question about his Cursillo experience, Deacon Anastacio’s reply effectively reveals an ecstatic quality in the experience of another deacon who happened to be my father:

And then your dad did it to me. He did it to me big time. He didn't say anything, all he did was look at that crucifix. He held that prayer book in his hands. And I said what the hell is he looking at? What does he see that I can't see? And that taught me that Jesus loves me, that God loves me. Your dad was a pachuco [Anastacio laughs]. He had the long sideburns and the mustache…I knew he drank, well I drank too. I was a bad dude at one time too. But what was he seeing that I can’t see? And I asked God in prayer those days, those evenings, as I looked at him sitting in that cot. And he was looking at that crucifix and looking at that
pilgrim’s guide, smelling it and touching it, like it was something he had never known in his life. And the way I describe it, God touched him. And it wasn't the stuff I was studying. It was God touching him because God touches every one of us.

Anastacio observed in Deacon Bautista (born in 1939 in Sandia, Texas) a shattering of the macho/Marian binary he knew, his witness of the transformation of a vato, in fact, a former “pachuco,” in a moment of religious ecstasy, caressing a crucifix while being “touched” by God. The pachuco, a political cultural icon, and symbol of Latino masculinity and deviancy, is converted to a religious-political figure who now exists in blissful union with God, knowing and loving God and his Cursillo brothers.

Here we reconnect with the deacon as border crosser through the pachuco figure, whose style originates in being neither Mexican or American, but representing both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, and who has migrated north to the Midwestern United States. The fetishistic attitude toward clothing, drinking or other deviant habits, and border language of the pachuco shifts in a hybrid fashion: an identification of virile Latino persona now transformed as the sacred joins the profane: “Border crossing becomes a religious ritual, patterned by Christ himself.”339

For the Latino deacon in this study, Cursillo is a gendered ethno-religious experience where machista narratives are confronted and/or reinforced, often marking the first time he is able to express emotions without restraint, to escape gendered expectations and “experience an emotional borderland where there is room for experimentation.”340 In Cursillo, the hegemonic masculine discourse that rigidly defines relationships between men is less policed, and gender

roles less sharply polarized. The intimate male experience shapes social and spiritual consciousness.

Sexuality

The permanent diaconate also calls upon candidates to engage more attentively, and display greater consciousness toward, their sexuality. According to the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, a married deacon, with his wife and family, are responsible for “conforming their lives to the Church’s teaching on marriage and sexuality.” This would cover Catholic Church teachings on abortion, divorce, homosexuality, masturbation, the ordination of women, and transsexual/transgender/gender identity topics.

Deacon Juan shared a story that demonstrated a fellow parishioner’s uncertainty regarding a married deacon’s sexuality. In responding to an interview item asking for examples of times when friends or family treated him differently following ordination, Juan stated, “As a matter of fact, I don’t know if you should have that [points at digital recorder] on or not.” Juan then motioned to me to turn off the recorder and proceeded to tell me a story about a female parishioner who approached his wife one day after church and asked if he could still have sex as a deacon. Juan’s story is interesting as it reflects both a lack of understanding on the part of the church member, as well as the sensitivity on the part of the deacon to share a story on the topic of his sexuality (even though he is married). It also serves as a reminder that discussions over the restoration of the permanent diaconate at Vatican II were highly contested, particularly with regard to the topic of celibacy. Cardinal Antonio Bacci pleaded with the Council, “With
trepidation in my soul I beg you, venerable council fathers, do not inflict a wound on the sacred law of celibacy.” In this manner, the church struggled to engage with the modern world.

Sexuality and family planning are also issues that deacons and the deacon couple deal with. Deacon Felipe and his wife Lisa discussed their use of the calendar-based contraceptive approach commonly known as the rhythm method, traditionally supported by the Roman Catholic Church as a morally acceptable method. Their discussion below reveals a conflict between adherence to Church teaching, and views on reproduction in Felipe’s workplace, an aeronautics and space flight research center. Referencing the opportunities he had at the workplace to provide counsel, Felipe and Lisa shared the following:

Felipe: Yeah, that’s true. I would advise them [co-workers] on the contraception, because that’s a biggie for married people. I’m not sure I got that right. In our own case [laughter by Lisa], this is on tape…

Lisa: Yes. [continues laughing]

Felipe: This is an interesting phenomenon, I’ll bring it up because it’s kind of important. We did try to follow the Church’s approach to birth control, which is the rhythm method. It didn’t work for us because we actually had nine children.

Lisa: Well, we followed it, [laughter] it just didn’t work. Every year and a half we had another one.

Felipe: The biology they assumed didn’t apply to us. I even, as an engineer, kept track of the records and everything, but it doesn’t work.

Lisa: But this is what God wanted, he wanted us to have nine children.

Felipe: So Father, just recently I found out the reason and Father confirmed it, he said it didn’t work because that is what God wanted for me. It’s amazing. Yeah, that’s makes sense.

Lisa: Crazy charts [referencing charts created by Felipe].

Felipe: Because the biology of it was a whole different…I mean we’d go to conferences with young people bragging about it and how it works…

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Lisa: Well, they weren’t as fertile as we were [laughter].

Felipe: And remember, I’d get frustrated. But it was quite a phenomenon. But now we have all these grandchildren and that’s why we keep coming back.

Lisa: To be in the ice and cold...[reference to couple’s lifestyle of living in Florida during winter months, and returning to Ohio for remainder of the year]

Felipe: And then to stay here, because what a great blessing [children and grandchildren] God gave us. I didn’t know it ‘til now, when it’s over...’cause that’s where the action is, life. And Hispanics know that, by the way, even though they struggle with it. That’s where the action is. And we must know it because at quinceañeras, I’ve seen some very poor people put on quinceañeras, and I’m like where in the world do they get the money. Of course what they do, when they have the meal, they chip in. But that says to me that their focus is not in the stock market, but on people.

Lisa: You’d always say that. Because at the lab there were some pretty well-off people because they only had their one or two kids.

Felipe: Well, they’re engineers besides.

Lisa: Yes, and your savings and your stocks, we hardly had any of that. And he would say, we would say, we invest in livestock [laughter].

Lisa’s statement that “they weren’t as fertile as we were” is interesting as her female sexuality cannot be racialized in a Latina context as she is Anglo. Nor can the presumed fertility of Latinas in a “culture of poverty” discourse apply as her husband’s occupation (engineer) places Lisa, presumably, in middle-class income status. And as a middle-class white woman, Lisa certainly does not fit the Puerto Rican/Latina “welfare queen” stereotype.342

If we are to attribute Felipe’s perspective on contraception to traditional Catholic values in Latino culture (in Felipe’s case Puerto Rican), then what are we to make of Lisa’s strong values as an Italian-American Catholic? At the conclusion of the interview, with the recorder off, Felipe and Lisa took me into their bedroom to show me a variety of pictures and religious items. As we walked in, Lisa, commenting on a two or three foot statue of Jesus at the foot of their bed,

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stated, “Can you imagine, a couple with a statue of Jesus right next to their bed!” I jokingly responded, “Perhaps that is a more effective means of contraception,” and we all laughed.

Another aspect of limited celibacy is the notion of chastity, the conforming of one’s sexual actions with the moral law (in this case Catholic teaching) within the context of one’s state in life. Deacon Pascual describes disbelief on the part of others that his wife was the only woman he had been intimate with, while referencing drinking and going to bars as “bad”:

Just when I was younger I wasn’t that close to God. But I never did anything that bad, like go to a place with women. Or smoke marijuana. I remember in the sixties, lots of people were doing it, but I never did. The only bad thing I used to do was maybe go to a bar and play some pool and drink some beer. Hang out with friends, in my younger times. Some people say, come on, don’t tell me you were never with women or other things. But no, never. My wife was my first woman of my life. You don’t have to be a man to say how many women you’re sleeping with or go to the bars.

Pascual’s admission that he was a virgin until he married might be thought of as a “dissenting masculinity” as he challenges the traditional notion of hegemonic Latino masculinity. A study of masculinity and sexuality among Puerto Rican blue-collar workers describe dissenting masculinities in a way similar to how I understand the masculinity of the Latino deacons in this study: “Men who incarnate dissenting masculine identities promote non-hegemonic traits such as compassion, affection, kindness, cooperation, and homoeroticism. In their everyday lives, dissenters do not reproduce hegemonic masculine ideology and practices.”

Two deacons alluded to situations involving priests and sex scandal. In discussing whether or not deacons wear the white collar during their pastoral work, Deacon Fernando stated,

When the sex abuse thing first got a hold of Cleveland, this deacon friend of mine was sent by his pastor to the nearby hospital to minister there. He was doing his

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ministry, going to the hospital, so he wore his collar. He was walking because he was close to home, and when people saw him they cussed and spit at them. Do you think we like wearing that collar? It can be a blessing. It can also be a curse.

Deacon Pedro, who currently serves in an archdiocese in another state, referenced an Anglo priest he knew during his time in the Toledo Diocese:

But, poor guy. He wind up demoted and with very serious accusations about pedophile. That’s because he was hating Mexicans. He was always drunk. It’s not a secret. Everybody knew that. Because I am not spreading something that is not true. I do not know what he’s doing now.

Deacon Francisco, who at one time was in the seminary and married a woman who had left the convent, referenced sexuality as a contributor to marital difficulties early in his marriage:

No, she had gone to the convent. Maybe this will make it clear why the first five years were bad. She was in a convent four years before I knew her. But right after she came out she had a boyfriend, her first boyfriend. And they went out for three years. They decided to get married. So two weeks before the wedding she caught him cheating. So the wedding was off. She was crying and stuff. And when I left the seminary my father told me Margarita is back. And when I saw her, that was not the Margarita I knew. She was nine when I last saw her and then she was 22. So then it was love at first sight. I said to my father, I need to find an apartment because she lived at our house and I didn't want any temptations. I kept on talking to her, she loved talking to me. But she, this was the trouble, she still had a hurt. She was confused. She looked to me like a brother, not like a boyfriend. But then you know how guys are, pushing. And she married me. She told me she knew that one day she would love me but it wasn't there then. When we got married there was a hard time because she thought she was going to bed with her brother. That had a lot of effect. But after that retreat we got over it. But what did I know about it then. Now when I give advice I tell people please don't jump from one relationship into another. You have to have the one heal.  

Francisco’s desire to be loved by a woman instead became an experience of being loved by a sister-like figure.

Summary

In this chapter, I have described attitudes and behaviors that reveal a relationship between the permanent diaconate and gendered activities/behaviors in the lives of Latino  

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344 Deacon Francisco, Interview by Adrian Bautista, 9 June 2010, Cleveland, Ohio.
deacons. In earlier sections, I offer interview data on alcohol and home life in an effort to show the Latino deacons as subjects whose lives, like the subjects in Gutmann’s *The Meanings of Macho*, “may at first glance appear too mundane to merit attention but in whose everyday activities, if we look closely, we might just glimpse the creative efforts of people coping with gender relations they have inherited from past generations while simultaneously striving to fashion new approaches as best they can.”

As a male sexual being and cleric, the Latino deacon simultaneously affirms and challenges the traditional hegemonic discourse of sexuality. As an agent of the patriarchal Catholic Church, the deacon can reinforce the traditional discourse in upholding teachings and beliefs around human sexuality (procreation, heterosexuality). Yet, in the example of the Cursillo, the deacon can experience moments best described as religious eroticism that spark a spiritual ecstasy and personal transformation. The social and political implications of the sexual and emotional lives of Latino deacons are indeed significant.

Responses by the deacons in this study would seem to challenge the notion of a unitary “maleness” as respondents dealt with/performed/enacted multiple, perhaps competing, masculinities in roles as clergy, fathers, husbands, and working men. Ordination into the diaconate seemed to produce moments when certain practices associated with maleness – drinking, dancing – were under surveillance by others.

Many of the deacons in this study shared encounters both on the path to and as members of the diaconate that reflect profound and transformative experiences of religious ecstasy, male social bonding, and spiritual activism. Here I have in mind Luis León’s notion of a religious erotics as “a revolutionary and liberating religiosity, creating what I call a theology of religious

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345 Guttmann, 10.
erotics, especially the beginnings for an ethics of Latino masculinity.” This sort of religiosity included new levels of intimacy with men, particularly at the Cursillo retreat, as well as encounters with sacrality based on mutuality, deep friendship, and love. In this section, I argue for a gendered Catholic borderlands in the changing narrative of Latino men as borderland gendered subjectivities.
Deacon José Francisco Bautista utilized the backyard of his rural Bowling Green, Ohio home in a manner that must have seemed strange to his Anglo neighbors. He constructed a chicken coop with occupants who produced a healthy amount of brown eggs that, quite frankly, seemed inedible to the Bautista children who had grown accustomed to the “Grade A” eggs from the local Kroger grocery store. Just behind the house, José maintained a garden that produced a fair amount of calabasas, peppers, and tomatoes that made it to the dinner table. José kept his garden tools in a shanty that he had acquired from a local farmer. The shanty had previously served as a “residence” for seasonal migrant workers at a local campsite.

For the Bautista children, these backyard items were eyesores, serving to differentiate their home environment from those of the Anglo families in the neighborhood. The other non-Anglo families in the area mainly consisted of the seasonal migrant farm workers who visited northwest Ohio in the warm months to labor in the tomato and pickle/cucumber fields. Deacon José and his wife, Alicia, enjoyed visiting the migrant camps, sharing their Catholic faith with their South Texas migrant brethren while spreading the word about the Spanish language masses they organized at Saint Aloysius. Over the years, the migrant dwellings evolved from the shanty-style that Deacon José reappropriated, to mobile homes and eventually apartment buildings, accommodating a dwindling farmworker community.

I have memories specific to particular camps. At one in the Village of Pemberville, I saw a dog vomiting tapeworms. At the Wagner camp, in the neighboring Village of Luckey, I first heard Van Halen’s “Runnin’ with the Devil,” thanks to the Saldaña brothers, and developed a teen crush on their sister Claudia. In the Foos family fields at the outskirts of Bowling Green, the
Bautista family earned some extra cash in the summer, though the fields surrounding our home more often served as a playground for youthful tomato-throwing battles, spirited bouts of hide-and-seek among the stalks of corn, and the homerun fence for our baseball games (with many dents on the white aluminum-sided north wall of our house). Michael Loose was a fellow classmate at Saint Aloysius, often teased for the natural odor of farm life that permeated his clothing. It was from his younger brother John that I first endured the label “spic.”

**Final Theoretical Reflections**

According to Tweed, “Dwelling…is homemaking. In other words, as clusters of dwelling practices, religions orient individuals and groups in time and space, transform the natural environment, and allow devotees to inhabit the worlds they construct.” Natives of South Texas, my parents’ efforts at homemaking were inextricably tied to the fields of northwest Ohio and the spiritual engagement with their migratory South Texas brethren. Hence, my youthful environment was a cultural construct shaped by life experiences and differing with a range of variables, including class, ethnicity, gender, and religion. Additionally, the environment was shaped by my father’s efforts to seemingly reconstruct the rural elements of his South Texas homeland and re-conquer the unsettling Ohio environment. The Bautista home was therefore a socially constructed environment, “a product of cultural responses to specific historical circumstances which give rise to shared sets of imagined landscapes.”  

Deacon Bautista’s efforts at homemaking were not limited to our backyard, nor were the religious aspects constrained to the various devotional images and artifacts that adorned the inside of our house. Neither was Deacon Bautista alone in this ceremonial act of homemaking. Despite the consternation of our parish pastor, Josè and Alicia initiated Spanish-language masses

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for their migrant brethren in the summer months. “De Colores,” “Cordero de Dios,” and “Alabare” rang out from the windows of Saint Aloysius. The local Greyhound bus station owner knew to call my dad whenever a brown face arrived with no place or home to go. Dad coordinated weekly bilingual Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in a classroom at Saint Aloysius. And an image of La Virgen de Guadalupe was soon dedicated and hung in the main church lobby.

The devil dance that brought Deacon Bautista to the fertile black swamp territory of northwest Ohio was indeed part of “a religious-nationalist historical narrative”347 of homemaking. The breadth of this devil dance reveals the complexity of the Latino deacon and the various boundaries – ethnic, gender, religious – crossed on a daily basis. And while Latino Studies and Latino/a Religious Studies/Theology have not always walked on the same path,348 a borderlands theoretical lens is needed to understand the multidimensional nature of the Latino deacon’s historical narrative as he navigates real and imagined landscapes and boundaries. As a Latina/o studies “bible,” Borderlands/La Frontera enunciates the pain and agency of living in a set of geographic and physical spaces, as well as within psychological, gender, and religious borders. But some would assert that Anzaldúa remains in the intellectual-abstract sphere, making it difficult to connect a borderlands consciousness, as the promotion of multiple identities, to a specific historical grounding.349

In this final chapter I want to weigh in on some theoretical considerations, using my fieldwork to ground what might otherwise be considered the “intellectual-abstract.” In applying a

347 Tweed, Crossing and Dwelling, 81. Tweed, mistakenly in my opinion, insists that his model “only helps if we have aquatic and not terrestrial analogies in mind.” Additionally, though Tweed’s use of “crossing” and “dwelling” to build this religious theory conjure a borderlands/border crossing experience, not once does he reference or mention Anzaldúa. I find this most curious.
348 Peter Casarella, “From the Guest Thematic Editor: True Interdisciplinarity,” Diálogo, Volume 16(1), Spring 2013: 3.
349 Néstor Medina, Mestizaje, 81.
borderlands framework to the Latino deacon experience, I seek to expand consideration of
Anzaldúa’s vision to a Midwestern setting to develop a historically specific, ethno-religious
border crossing narrative. Interestingly, a number of the deacons in this study can be considered
Anzaldúa’s South Texas contemporaries, at once fellow subaltern *mexicanos*, but also
beneficiaries of a hegemonic discourse in which “The culture and the Church insist that women
are subservient to males.” It is this sort of contradiction that the Latino deacon embodies,
providing a practical lens through which to view Anzaldúa’s complex borderlands concept. What
follows is a summary of the borderlands dimensions considered in this study as well as a range
of assertions that support the application of the theoretical framework to the Latino deacon.

**Geospatial Considerations: Ohio as Borderlands**

Early in the month of June
People from the Lone star state come
Rushing to the fields of different Ohio farms.

I wonder if this man standing there “in the middle” of Cleveland, of Puerto Rican Cleveland, of
Latin-U.S. American culture, of North-American culture, experiences a “gentle coming
together,” or mostly a defeat, a life of paralyzing ambiguities…

According to Anzaldúa, the mestizo has “a tradition of migration, a tradition of long
walks…This time, the traffic is from south to north.” In reclaiming Ohio’s frontier history
within an ethno-religious migrant narrative, this journey is accentuated in Limón’s South Texas-
rooted metaphor of the devil dance, and this study traces the devil dance north to the Midwest.
Extending a borderlands paradigm into Ohio is a risky endeavor. Yet Anzaldúa’s border
subjectivity and conceptualization of frontier history took on unique, unconventional forms.

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350 Anzaldúa *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 17.
353 Anzaldúa *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 11.
Hence, this study makes the case for a borderlands Catholicism in an unconventional setting – northern Ohio. To this end, I return to, and answer affirmatively, a central question offered by Saldívar and posed in my introduction: “Is it possible today to imagine new cultural affiliations and negotiations in American studies more dialogically, in terms of multifaceted migrations and across borders?”354 Tracing the Latino deacon’s devil dance and placing him in dialogue with the historical Latino subaltern subject serves to reimagine a multifaceted migration experience. In the context of Ohio’s new frontier, the cultural dislocation of these deacons – through the “devil dances” of war, domination, and the contradictions of capitalism – connects the borderland, hybrid experience to Homi K. Bhabha’s postcolonial notion of the “unhomely,” a moment that “relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence.”355 Interestingly for this dissertation, Bhabha argues the case for the theoretical primacy of cultural and historical hybridity, as well as the importance of making the “unhomely” visible, through analysis of the literary work of Toni Morrison, a Lorain, Ohio native: How is historical agency enacted in the slenderness of narrative? How do we historicize the event of the dehistoricized? If, as they say, the past is a foreign country, then what does it mean to encounter a past that is your own country reterritorialized, even terrorized by another…This temporality finds it spirit of place in the ‘not-there’ that Toni Morrison memorializes in her fiction…The community Morrison envisages is inscribed in that slenderness of narrative where social solidarity is wrought through the crises and contingencies of historical survival… The Latino deacon in this study is a reterritorialized subject, swept by a devil dance (or “yanked” like Morrison’s slave subject) to produce “a community-in-discontinuity, historical revision in diaspora”356 to a Midwestern fracture in Nuestra América.

354 Saldívar, 11.
355 Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture (New York: Routledge, 1994), 11.
356 Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture, 199.
Deacon Luis offered an interesting perspective during our interview. In a room in his home that served as a sort of study/office, Luis showed me a cotton plant sitting on a desk. Dangling from the plant were two rosaries and two identification cards from the automobile company from which he retired. Luis also showed me a large sack that he kept in the study that his family used to gather cotton when they worked in the fields in South Texas. Luis went on to tell me that his earliest memory was “opening up my eyes at two or three years old…the only thing I saw that I remember is my mom and dad picking cotton. See that is something, I don’t wanna forget where I came from.”357 Luis also went on to tell me that “his bellybutton is in Texas,”358 but he has developed a sense of “home” in the Midwest that seemingly takes priority over that of the maternal connection. According to Luis,

We’ve gone to Texas a lot and a week or two I want to come back. Myself, my spirit, I think feels better here. Down in south Texas, El Valle,359 it’s so crowded. And with drugs and all that going on right now, it’s not a pretty place to be... So most of my family members and her family members are in Texas, El Valle.

Luis went on to tell me that he has known a number of ethnic Mexicans who have decided to move back to Texas after some time in Ohio, but they inevitably return within a few months. I asked Luis why he thought this happened:

I love to be outside, we love to be outside, my wife and I, doing our ministries and all that. Down in Texas you can’t be outside with 105, 110 degrees. I guess your body gets accustomed to an area, people, a center, you know, your house. It doesn’t matter what home you have, it’s home sweet home, your chair, your tv, your privacy. When you go visit your compadres, the hermanos, and tios, it’s not the same.

As Luis stated, although his “bellybutton” and most of his family members are in Texas, and that he keeps the cotton plant in his home to never forget where he comes from, his “spirit” feels

357 Deacon Luis Interview by Adrian Bautista, 22 April 2010, Toledo Diocese.
358 Deacon Luis Interview, 22 April 2010.
359 The Rio Grande Valley, or El Valle, consists of four counties that make up the southern most tip of South Texas.
better in Ohio. Luis specifically cites the diaconate couple ministry that he and his wife engage in, and how it is hindered in Texas. For Luis and Marta, I contend that the diaconate couple ministry represents a type of postcolonial agency that is most expressed at “home” in Ohio. As a subject in motion, the hybrid deacon asserts a creative and performative agency.

Interestingly, I discovered in archival documents that several deacons had canonical appointments in Ohio and elsewhere. A note in the “Diocese of Toledo Deacon Record for Rudy Lira” indicated “Ordained for the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas, but served the Diocese of Toledo since being ordained in 1983.” Deacon Candido Deanda served the Diocese of Toledo and at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Alice, Texas until his death in 2008. Deacon Felipe and his wife serve a predominantly Latina/o church in Florida during the winter months, and return to the Cleveland Diocese in the spring to serve another Latina/o parish.

I am arguing here that, for the Latino deacon, hybridity creates openings for agency and, like Bhabha, I choose to take a stand on the shifting margins of cultural displacement and ask “what the function of a committed theoretical perspective might be, once the cultural and historical hybridity of the postcolonial world is taken as the paradigmatic place of departure.”360 Perhaps parallel to Morrison’s notion of historical agency in a “tortured history of Abolitionism,”361 the Latino deacon’s place is in a tortured history of displacement, migration, and Catholicism. Yet the Latino deacon subject creates his own spirit of place, creating a collective agency within the “perplexity of the unhomely.”362

In summary, I seek to retrieve Ohio’s borderlands/frontier history while incorporating an Anzalduan perspective to examine cultural interaction resulting from post-WWII Latina/o migration to Ohio, as well as to explain and to make sense of non-physical borders. In addition to

360 Bhabha, 21.
361 Ibid., 199.
362 Ibid, 11.
the gendered, ethno-religious boundaries discussed, it is important to consider what state
business and government interests refer to today as the Ohio Third Frontier. Recently, in the
midst of a global recession, Ohio voters approved a $700 million, bi-partisan extension of the
state's Ohio Third Frontier, a technology-based economic development initiative intended to
change the trajectory of the state’s economy in the throes of a post-Fordist reality. This reality is
about the putative transition from one dominant phase of capitalist development in the post-war
period to another cycle of development based upon very different economic, societal and
political norms.  

The Brown Problem

As a feminist borderlands project, this dissertation has examined the ways that
exclusionary boundaries are actively produced for the Latino deacon based on class, ethnicity,
and religious practices, leading to subjects who may simultaneously feel like outsiders while
contesting expectations in an effort to negotiate second-class status. Additionally, a borderlands
project will also focus on subjects’ constructions of identities and expressions of agency that
negotiate structural and discursive boundaries. The Latino deacon data I collected and
analyzed reflect social interaction within multiple hierarchically organized sites, including the
church setting, as well as along shifting ethnic-class boundaries in such settings as migrant
farmworker camps and inner-city environments.

In a study about the experience of segregation and the process of racial integration within
a local Catholic church in South Texas, Jennifer Nájera cited two elements causing racial/cultural
tension within the parish community she examined. “The first was that Anglos and Mexicans had
different ideas about what it meant to be Catholic…the second source of tension was power and

racial hierarchy.”³⁶⁵ My interviews revealed that the Latino deacons in this study were fundamentally drawn to the diaconate as a result of their pre-ordination social justice ministry experiences with migrant farmworkers and other communities who experienced oppression due to their racial, ethnic, or class status. In the case of Ohio Latina/o Catholics, this shared experience has produced contradictory experiences of Latinidad, ranging from an agentic political consciousness expressed through the church, to the problematic, including an early Church response of labeling the influx of “new immigrants” to northern Ohio as the “Mexican problem” and the “Puerto Rican problem.”

This latter dynamic conjures a notion of Latinidad closer to José Esteban Muñoz’s conceptualization of “feeling Brown,” “an ‘apartness together’ through sharing the status of being a problem.”³⁶⁶ Unfortunately, the discourse seems to have changed little with regard to Latinas/os. Some continue to see Latinas/os as recent arrivals, newcomers needing assimilation, or, at worst, illegitimate members of American society, “illegal aliens.”³⁶⁷ Yet today, U.S. Catholicism is increasingly shaped by Latina/o immigration. About a third of all Catholics in the U.S. are now Latinos, and the study projects that the Latino share will continue climbing for decades. This demographic reality, combined with the distinctive characteristics of Latino Catholicism, ensures that Latinos will bring about important changes in the nation’s largest religious institution.³⁶⁸ As Matovina highlights, a variety of factors continue to inhibit mutual enrichment between Latina/o and non-Latina/o Catholics: “Ethnic tensions and suspicions between English- and Spanish-speaking parishioners pose barriers…cultural differences, anti-

³⁶⁷ Lilia Fernandez, Brown in the Windy City, 268.
immigrant attitude, and disagreements about what constitutes authentic integration in shared parishes.”369 In other words, Latina/o Catholics in the United States continue to be framed as a problem.

**Expanding a Spiritual Mestizaje**

As Theresa Delgadillo points out, “A new mestiza consciousness cannot be achieved without it, yet ‘spiritual mestizaje’ is named only once in Gloria Anzaldúa’s seminal work *Borderlands/La Frontera.*”370 In applying Anzaldúa’s feminist borderlands framework to the deacon experience, I expand consideration of the Latino male Catholic perspective within the religious vision of Anzaldúa. This too is challenging terrain given the longstanding, rigid Church binaries of women/men, virgin/whore – “What is at stake here is the unmasking of the male-centered patriarchal scheme that caused a rift between the sexes, argues Anzaldúa.”371

Experiencing contradictory moments of privilege and oppression, inclusion and exclusion, I seek to shed further light on the evolution of a complex ethno-religious masculinity in the Latino deacon that both troubles and reinforces a traditional religious-gendered discourse.

In discussing Paredes’ work on an evolving border masculine heroics, Rosaldo notes, “The change from the warrior hero to other forms and figures of resistance has evolved a good deal since the late fifties.”372 Yet Saldivar reminds us of the inexplicable link between traditional male culture and the spiritually-influenced 1960s Latino civil rights movement: “To understand how this 1960s liberatory Chicano idealism was at best limited, we need only recall that many Chicano murals of the period reflected the male utopian carnalismo philosophy contained in

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manifestos such as ‘El Plan spiritual de Aztlán’ (The Spiritual Plan of Aztlán).” In addition to the reclamation of an indigenous Aztec ancestral heritage, Chicana/o activists in the 1960s and 1970s reappropriated Our Lady of Guadalupe as the divine mestizo symbol par excellence that announces emancipation.

In tracing the deacon’s dance with the devil, I argue that the church serves as a site for both remaking cultures of resistance, and reinforcing hegemonic discourses. It is within this religious borderlands that the Latino deacon, with varying relationships to a dominating masculinity, becomes a new type of protagonist as he seeks a different way of being amongst multiple subjectivities and shifting cultures. Thus, the Latino deacon experience offers several interesting examples of navigating “sacred fronteras,” spiritual borderland spaces in which the Latino male experiences “transformative renewal of one’s relationship to the sacred through a radical and sustained multimodal and self-reflexive critique of oppression in all its manifestations and a creative and engaged participation in shaping life that honors the sacred.”

From a U.S. Hispanic theological perspective, it is interesting to consider what it means for the Latino deacon to engage in simultaneous and significant modeling/devotion to the figures of Jesus Christ, son of God, and Mary as mother of God, particularly in the form of Our Lady of Guadalupe. According to Goizueta, It is possible to speak of the plural Jesuses of U.S. Hispanic popular Catholicism, since, in fact, U.S. Hispanics relate to Jesus not as an abstract, other-worldly spirit but as “el niño Jesús [baby Jesus],” or “Jesús, hijo de María [son of Mary],” or “Jesús, el peregrine [pilgrim].” Yet from among all these Jesuses, one stands out by virtue of both its pervasiveness throughout Latino communities and the centrality of it role in those

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373 Saldívar, Border Matters, 116.
374 Medina, 69.
375 Theresa Delgadillo, Spiritual Mestizaje, 1.
communities...During Holy Week, the Jesus of U.S. Hispanic popular Catholicism is revealed as, above all, the crucified Jesus.\textsuperscript{376}

Goizueta highlights the multiple, gendered identities of Jesus as infant, son, martyr, and pilgrim. The “crucified Jesus” is particularly remembered during a Holy Week in which the passion of Jesus – in the form of physical, spiritual, and mental suffering – is celebrated. This Jesus also provides a most sensual experience, as Catholics recall the Last Supper, Agony in the Garden, and Jesus’ washing of the apostles’ feet. The crucified Jesus summons contradictory notions of a macho Jesus who endures a scourging and beating at the hands of Roman soldiers while maintaining a high level of self-mastery\textsuperscript{377}, and a relational, loving, self-sacrificing Jesus experienced with an intimacy that evokes the religiously erotic. In modeling himself after Jesus, the deacon – perhaps more for those around him than for himself - exemplifies the contradictory image of Jesus the macho and Jesus the servant.

Similarly, the Latino deacon’s devotion to Guadalupe represents a dichotomous female deity, one which Anzaldúa engaged with and critiqued, particularly the patriarchal version which is a result of the displacement of women from the religious traditions of the people, dating as far back as the great Aztec-Méxica civilization.\textsuperscript{378} She recognizes that her ancestry runs through Guadalupe and Catholicism, that Guadalupe is representative of the spiritual mestizaje that she inherited, representing survival and resistance against subjugation.\textsuperscript{379} For the Latino deacon, Guadalupe has similarly served as an image of resistance, carried by some during the farmworker boycotts and diversifying parish activities (to the dismay of some Anglo members)

\textsuperscript{377} Koosed and Schumm discuss the “Super Jesus” in “From Superman To Super Jesus: Constructions Of Masculinity And Disability On The Silver Screen,” \textit{Disability Studies Quarterly}, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Spring 2009).
\textsuperscript{378} Medina, 124.
\textsuperscript{379} Delgadillo, 24.
under the auspices of the Sociedad Guadalupana, supporting diaconal ministry while opening leadership opportunities for the deacon’s wife.

The “diaconate couple” model of ministry similarly represents a gendered, contradictory aspect of a borderlands Catholicism, an interesting chapter in what has been a history of the exclusion of women from church leadership roles. It was only after Vatican II concluded in 1965 that women were admitted to schools of theology for ministerial preparation. And while Vatican II and the revision of church law that permits (non-ordained) female pastors have opened new roles for women in the church, Pope John Paul II reiterated the Catholic Church’s official position regarding the ordination of women:

Wherefore, in order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32) I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful.380

Ordination into the permanent diaconate is no exception. More recently, Pope Francis raised eyebrows by his recent comments on the role of women in the Church, asserting that their status does not depend on ordination, and calling for a “theology of women.” He noted that the existence of a male-only priesthood does not diminish the role of women, adding that the “Virgin Mary was more important than the apostles and bishops and deacons and priests,” and that the feminine Church, as the Bride of Christ “is more important than the bishops and priests.”381

My deacon interviews reveal something of a contradiction in the experiences of deacons and their wives. Through ordination, these deacons gained some greater positioning in a hierarchical, patriarchal church (as well as in their communities). According to Meehan, the wife

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of the ordained deacon is a person who assists the church by furthering the diaconate ministry and by facilitating her husband’s more complete participation in the ministry. This exclusionary participation in the patriarchal church might also be understood as reinforcement of a normative, hegemonic masculinity. While the deacon wives participated in much of the formation program, and engaged in significant “diaconate couple” ministry, their exclusion from the title reflects an unequal position in the Catholic community while simultaneously enforcing a Catholic tradition that would lead many to believe that maleness is the essence of Christian faith and theology. Additionally, being married to a deacon, a clergy member who holds a lower “rank” in the clerical hierarchy further underscores the wife’s unequal status.

In examining gender divisions in North African Islam, Rey cited a discussion by French sociologist/philosopher Pierre Bourdieu in which he argues that such divisions “may actually function to enhance feminine power and autonomy: ‘The separation of masculine and feminine societies is almost total (a veil that only reveals one eye; reserved place in the mosque, etc.), but does not go without conferring [to women] a certain autonomy’. The space of this autonomy is found ‘in the margins of the official religion that is the affair of men’.” The Latino deacon’s wife similarly finds autonomy in a fundamentally religious space. And like the husband, the deacon’s wife functions in a space of margin of the “official religion.” How should such autonomy be weighed in consideration of its source?

382 Rebecca Anne Meehan, “The Emerging Role of the Deacon’s Wife in the Catholic Church” (PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1997).
383 According to Meehan, the Cleveland Diocese officially implemented the label “diaconate couple” as a response to the emerging role status of the deacon’s wife. The title has been used for over twenty years and dioceses are not required to use it.
The diaconate couple model of ministry reveals a different type of marital perspective as well as divergent role behaviors for the husband/deacon that more often than not have been defined by individual independence and personal autonomy. The deacon’s path is different and harkens Octavio Romano’s empirical model “consisting of those traditional behavioral directives which govern the life of the South Texas Mexican-American (Communality vs. the Atomistic Social Order), and under which the role of healer is generically defined.” Romano posits a masculine behavior culture operating between two mutually exclusive poles - communality and independence – while presenting a gendered “healing hierarchy” in which women appear to occupy the lower levels, and men the upper levels. His work is useful to this study in several ways.

First, I have attempted to provide greater insight into normative Latino male behavioral patterns and how a Latino male religious figure can complicate binary, mutually exclusive gender behavioral poles. Secondly, by positioning the Latino deacon as a type of healer as I did in Chapter 3, I enter into dialogue with Romano’s gendered healing hierarchy. Additionally, I complicate Romano’s model by offering the Latino deacon as a model of healer that orients the Latino male toward communality, toward more complicated male behavioral guidelines, while working side-by-side with the wife and expanding her sphere of influence.

Romano, and subsequently Limón in Dancing with the Devil, focused on the figure of Mexican curandero Don Pedro Jaramillo (1829-1907), who achieved folk saint status through his healing work in South Texas. According to Limón, “We must recall the manner in which Don Pedrito Jaramillo’s social existence and practice are interestingly gendered…wholly bound over to a nurturing, communitarian social existence rather than to the more decisively ‘masculine,’

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387 Limón, Dancing with the Devil, 190.
atomistic, uncooperative…to this communitarian ethos, we add Jaramillo’s nonmarriage, his labor alongside women”. The Latino deacon is also interestingly gendered: married and laboring alongside his wife; communally-oriented, yet navigating in back-and-forth fashion between the poles of masculine behavioral culture. It would seem that most men “rarely venture into this ideal terrain except, and only sometimes, older men who acquire the honorific title of respect, don, and who at moments extend themselves beyond the kin-friendship network to the larger community…The large clear exception to this otherwise normative male behavioral pattern is the male curandero or folk healer”.

Summary

A goal of this study is to contribute to the understanding of Latino masculinity and the shifting nature of gender categories for Latino men. In citing the work of Néstor García Canclini, Gutmann reminds us that the intellectual work of gender reconstruction must account not only for differences among men, but should address questions of inequality, identity, and power. A feminist borderlands framework empowers scholars to imagine new ways of describing, interpreting, and explaining cultural emergence and variation in unconventional settings.

Unconventional in a borderlands framework, the Midwestern Latino experience reveals such themes as significant and multidirectional human/cultural flows; the transgression of physical, psychic, and social boundaries; marginalization along racial and class lines; engagement in active resistance to discriminatory practices; the formation of new and imagined cultural communities; integration into a new U.S. industrial nation-state; and, paradoxical lives

388 Limón, 193.
389 Ibid., 190-191.
390 Gutmann, 13.
reflective of the ethnic, cultural, and political “border-crossing” on a daily basis. However, there does not appear to be a full study that explains Latina/o migration to the Midwest as a border narrative. According to Vila, authors “tend to homogenize the border, as if there were only one border identity, border culture, or process of hybridization.” While focusing on the U.S./Mexico border, Vila’s ethnographic study argues for multiple constructions of the border and border identities. I expand this discussion by considering the Latino deacon’s “devil dance” through the migration of two Latino border-crossing narratives to similarly complicate homogenous approaches to border narratives, expanding conceptualizations of borderlands in *el norte*.

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APPENDIX A:

Invitation Letter

Date

Dear Mr. Reverend _________________________,

My name is Adrian Bautista and I am a doctoral student in the American Culture Studies Program at Bowling Green State University. For completion of my doctorate, I am conducting a research study to learn about the experiences of Hispanic/Latino deacons in the Cleveland and Toledo dioceses in Ohio. This is also a subject of personal importance as my father, José Francisco Bautista, was a deacon in the Toledo Diocese (1982-2001). I am hoping that you will consider participating in my study.

I plan to interview about twenty Hispanic/Latino deacons from the Cleveland, OH and Toledo, OH dioceses. Interviews will last about 1½ hours, take place at a location we both agree upon, and will focus on your experiences as a deacon.

Information you provide will remain confidential and your identity will not be revealed. All recordings and documents that include your name or other identifying information will be kept safe. Your participation is voluntary and you can stop participating at any time. The risks of participating in this study are minimal, no greater than those you come across in normal daily life. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your relationship with your parish or diocese.

I hope you are willing to help me with this important study. The experiences of Hispanic deacons are a valuable part of Latino and Church history. I am eager to learn about your histories and hear your stories about being a deacon, your relationship to the Catholic Church, and life in Ohio.

If you would like to participate, please complete the enclosed reply form and mail it to me in the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope. If you prefer to call or email me, please feel free to do so.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, you may contact me at 440-258-5276 (cell phone) or by email at abautis@bgnet.bgsu.edu, or my project advisor Professor Susana Peña at 419-372-7117 or susanap@bgnet.bgsu.edu. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Adrian Bautista
Bowling Green State University
APPENDIX B:

Participant Reply Form

If you are interested in being a participant in this study, please complete this form and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you have any questions about this form or this study, please feel free to call Adrian Bautista at (440) 258-5276 (mobile) or at (440) 775-5364 (office).

Please keep in mind that your return of this form does not obligate you to participate in the study. Your return of this form simply indicates your willingness and offer to participate.

Deacon Contact Information

Name:______________________________________________________________

In order to schedule an interview, may I contact you by:

Telephone:_______________________________________________________
(Please write your telephone number)

Email:___________________________________________________________
(Please write your email address)
Month/Day/Year

Dear Mr. Reverend <<Name of Deacon>>,

Thank you very much for your interest in my study. I am writing to confirm our interview appointment as discussed during our telephone call:

Date of Interview:__________________________

Interview Time:______________________________

Location: ________________________________

I am asking each deacon I meet with to please bring an item that has some personal significance for you for us to discuss at the beginning of our interview. This could be a photograph, religious item, or something else that has some importance for you.

I am grateful for your willingness to participate and for your assistance in completing my doctoral studies. I am looking forward to our conversation. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Respectfully,

Adrian A. Bautista
(440) 258-5276
APPENDIX D:

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in the dissertation research project of Adrian Bautista, a doctoral student in American Culture Studies at Bowling Green State University. The purpose of this study is to come to a greater understanding of the experiences of two groups of Hispanic/Latino permanent deacons in the Cleveland, OH and Toledo, OH dioceses, specifically your stories as a deacon, your relationship to the Church, and your life in Ohio.

This study will contribute to our understanding of your experiences as a deacon and how your faith and ministry influence your life. Your participation includes completion of a brief survey and an interview that will last about 1 1/2 hours. The interview will be audio taped and transcribed (typed). I will also observe deacons at church activities and record date for this project.

Information you provide will remain confidential as your real name will not be used and your identity will not be revealed. All documents that include your name or other identifying information will be stored in a locked file cabinet. The interview recording will be stored on my personal computer and erased once the study is complete. Also, all computer files will be password protected. Only my advisor and I will have access to the transcript of the interview. I will present the histories I collect in this study in my dissertation and in future publications and presentations. However, I will never reveal your identity.

You do not have to agree to participate. It is completely your choice. Also, if you agree to be in the study now, you can change your mind later without penalty or explanation. The risks of participating in this study are minimal, no greater than those you come across in normal daily life. If at any time during the interview, you do not want to answer any question asked or you want to stop participating in the study, that is OK. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your relationship with your parish or diocese.

The shortage of priests in the Catholic Church has increased the visibility and importance of the diaconate. However, the diaconate is an under-reported story in the Roman Catholic Church (Figueroa Deck, 2008). While there are no direct benefits to you, the potential benefits of this study include filling the gap in the literature while further documenting the histories of Ohio’s Latino communities.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, you may contact me at 440-258-5276 (cell phone) or by email at abautis@bgnet.bgsu.edu, or my project advisor Professor Susana Peña at 419-372-7117 or susanap@bgnet.bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair, HSRB at 419-371-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu with questions about participating rights.

By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study having read, understood, and agreed to the above terms.

__________________________________________
Deacon’s Signature

Date

__________________________________________
Researcher’s Signature

Date
APPENDIX E:

DEACON STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

I. GREETING

A. Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study of Hispanic/Latino deacons.

B. Purpose: As you know, I am interested in learning more about your experiences as a deacon – what/who has influenced you, the ministries you’ve been most active with, your relationships with other deacons and priests, and about how you/your family came to settle in Ohio.

C. Procedure: I’ll be asking you a number of open-ended questions. I am recording these interviews and taking notes while we talk so that I can represent our conversation accurately. If you would like to say something but would prefer it not be recorded, just let me know and we can turn off the recorder. If there is a question you’d prefer not to answer, that is perfectly fine also.

D. Do you have any questions for me before we start?

E. Ask them to review consent form. Go over major points in consent form verbally.

F. Ask if there are any questions about the consent form?

G. Review and sign two consent forms; give one to participant.

H. Make sure audio recorder is on!
II. SURVEY (Check box with “x”)

1. Year Born: ______________________

2. Place of Birth: ______________________
   (Do you have any certain memories of this place?)

3. Preferred Ethnic Label (check all that apply):
   □ Hispanic       □ Latino       □ Mexican-American
   □ Puerto Rican   □ Other: ______________________

4. Highest Educational Level (other than Deacon Formation):
   □ Elementary/Middle School  □ High School Degree  □ GED
   □ Bachelor’s Degree  □ Graduate Degree  □ Other: ______________________

5. Work Experience:
   □ Currently Full-Time (Type of Work: ______________________)
   □ Currently Part-Time (Type of Work: ______________________)
   □ Unemployed  □ Retired

6. Now Are you:
   □ Married       □ Never Married  □ Widower (Wife Deceased)  □ Divorced

7. At the time you became a deacon, were you:
   □ Married       □ Never Married  □ Widower (Wife Deceased)  □ Divorced

8. Do you speak Spanish?  □ Yes  □ No

9. What is your preferred language: ______________________

10. Ministry Work (check all you are/have been involved with):
    □ Alcohol/Drugs  □ Cursillo      □ Home Visitation  □ Migrant Ministry
    □ Prison        □ Social Justice □ Marital        □ Elderly
    □ Youth/School Services  □ Hospital
    □ Other(s): ______________________

11. Where else have you lived beside Ohio?

12. [If born outside Ohio] How long have you lived in Ohio?
### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>When we scheduled this interview, you were asked to bring a personal item that holds some significance for you. Could you tell me about the item you brought?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I’d like to start by asking when and why you first thought about becoming a deacon. PROBING: What do you remember most about the day of your ordination?</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>[If married before becoming a deacon] How did becoming a deacon affect your marriage and/or your relationship with your wife? PROBING: What were the greatest challenges you faced in becoming a deacon?</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Can you give some examples of times when friends or family treated you differently after you became a deacon?</td>
<td>GB</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>There have been many issues that have impacted Latinos in this area such as migrant farm work, immigration, housing/job discrimination. Can you tell me about your involvement in any of these social justice issues?</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Tell me about a time when you and your parish priest disagreed about something.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>What do you think the attitude of the parish community is toward you as a deacon?</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Could you tell me about a time that your faith as a Catholic was challenged, or when you felt at a great distance from God and/or the Church?</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>What are your favorite duties to perform as a deacon? PROBING: Do you prefer to do these in English or Spanish?</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Can you describe a time when you wished you weren’t a deacon, or regretted becoming a deacon?</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Does your parish celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe? Could you describe this? Is there an image of La Virgen in your parish? PROBING: Do you feel a special connection to Our Lady of Guadalupe? How so?</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I understand that deacons are to model their lives after Jesus’ example as a servant. How have you done this? PROBING: Did this require any significant changes in your life?</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>What has been your experience officiating a Quinceañera?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>[If active in Cursillo] What would you describe your experience with Cursillo? PROBING: What concerns or hesitations did you have about Cursillo?</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Why do you think the Church needs deacons? PROBING: What can a deacon offer to parishioners that a priest cannot?</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>What does being part of a community of deacons mean to you?</td>
<td>GB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Are there differences between Hispanic/Latino deacons and Anglo/White deacons? If so, what are they?</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Are there differences between Catholic Mexicans/Puerto Ricans/Latinos depending on where they live? If so, what are they? (Adapt to nationality of deacon)</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>How has becoming a deacon changed you?</td>
<td>GB</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
III. FINAL/SUMMARY QUESTION(S)
   A. What have I not asked you that I should have?

IV. CLOSING STATEMENT
   Thank you for your time and for sharing with me your experiences as a deacon. If you have any questions or something else to share after this, please feel free to contact me.
March 3, 2011

TO:       Adrian Bautista
          American Culture Studies

FROM:    Hillary Harms, Ph.D.
          HSRB Administrator

RE:     Continuing HSRB Review for Project H10D239GE7

TITLE:      Vasos Sagrados: Northern Ohio’s Spiritual Borderlands, 1946-1996

This is to inform you that your research study indicated above has received continuing Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) review and approval. This approval is effective March 3, 2011 for a period of 12 months and will expire on March 2, 2012. You may continue with the project.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. Consistent with federal OHRP guidance to IRBs, the consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the only valid version and, on March 3, 2011, supersedes all previously approved versions. You must use copies of the date-stamped document(s) in obtaining consent from research subjects.

Please communicate any proposed changes in your project procedures or activities involving human subjects, including consent form changes or increases in the number of participants, to the HSRB via this office. Please notify me, at 372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu, upon completion of your project.

Good luck with your work. Let me know if this office or the HSRB can be of assistance as your project proceeds.

Comments:
Stamped consent form is coming to you via campus mail.
Reviewer Comment: You are almost at the limit of number approved for enrollment - be sure to request a modification if you plan additional recruitment beyond the 20 approved.

C: Dr. Susana Pena