Beyond 'Bad Apples':

Understanding Clergy Perpetrated Sexual Abuse as a Structural Problem & Cultivating Strategies for Change

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Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

CLERICALISM IS OFTEN CITED as a key factor contributing to clergy perpetrated sexual abuse (CPSA) in the Catholic Church. But while commentators—from journalists and scholars to Pope Francis himself—acknowledge its influence, definitions of clericalism vary widely, clericalism is usually characterized as an individual phenomenon, and empirical assessments are few.

Rather than describing clericalism as an individual reality—a problem of 'bad apples'—this study maps clericalism as a structural reality shaped by the interaction of three forces: ***sex***, ***gender***, and ***power***. We define clericalism as:

<div style="color:#b01c3e; text-align:center; font-weight:bold;">
a structure of power that isolates clergy and sets priests above and apart,
granting them excessive authority, trust, rights, and responsibilities
while diminishing the agency of lay people and religious.
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Clericalism operates throughout the Church by offering incentives and enablements that enhance the agency of some while restricting the agency of others. It is embodied and performed by many priests and can be internalized by lay people and religious. Certain models of the priesthood, for example, enable priests to manage institutions in an authoritarian manner that suppresses the agency of lay people and religious and dissuades them from raising concerns. Anyone (ordained, religious, or lay) can be clericalist, and anyone can be anti-clericalist. Critiquing clericalism need not oppose priesthood nor demonize priests.

Our principal claim is that clericalism is best viewed as a structural reality rather than an individual vice. This report offers a comprehensive theoretical lens for analyzing clericalism as a structure and discusses findings from an original survey of ecclesial ministers, whose insights enable us to describe how clericalism functions in ecclesial life. Our approach is rooted in sociological theories of power, gender, and sexual violence. This literature points away from individual pathologies and toward analyses of *cultures and environments* that contribute to sexual violence, including CPSA. Addressing sexual violence in the Church requires that we analyze and dismantle structural clericalism in its essential elements: sex, gender, and power.

<div style="text-align:center; font-weight:bold;">Our key findings are as follows:</div>

1. With respect to *sex*, clericalism is enabled by a lack of healthy sexual integration and inadequate sexual formation in schools of ministry and compounded by a culture of silence and repression. According to our data, a lack of adequate human formation impedes development of healthy sexual integration for priests and lay people. Because of this lack of sexual integration, many priests are unable to connect in authentically vulnerable ways and sometimes neglect appropriate boundaries. This constitutes a *de facto* setting apart of the priest because of a gap in his ability to navigate his existence as a celibate, but sexual, person. A lack of spaces for open discussion of sexuality compounds the problem and extends its reach in ecclesial spaces.

2. With respect to *gender*, clericalism manifests through the performance of harmful forms of masculinity, which research links to domination and violence. According to our data, consciousness of gender construction is generally low, and many still presume a view that perpetuates male privilege. Priestly formation programs rarely provide opportunities for meaningful interaction with lay people and religious, especially women. Priests also receive little education in gender studies and lack familiarity with constructions of masculinity that isolate them and restrict their ability to authentically connect with those they serve.

3. With respect to *power*, clericalism operates as an invisible backdrop for ecclesial life that sets clergy above and apart from non-ordained members of the Church. According to our data, the clericalist exercise of power manifests both in authoritarian and disorganized management styles and in theologies of the priesthood that center on the perceived authority and status of ordained ministers. It manifests to a lesser degree in theologies that view priestly authority as service of the Church. It is enabled by priests' limited training and their lack of experience working alongside and empowering lay people.

4. Clergy sexual abuse cannot be attributed to some "bad apples" and must be analyzed in relationship to the whole of ecclesial life (e.g. using structural analysis). Though our study cannot show that clericalism causes CPSA, our nearly 300 respondents (a unique group of priests, deacons, women religious, and lay ecclesial ministers with decades of experience working in Church settings) stated that CPSA is rooted not in individual pathologies but in systemic problems related to sex, gender, and power. Jesuit institutions generally appear to be ahead of diocesan seminaries and can provide healthier models for formation and ministry.

5. Alternatives to clericalism—what we term "anti-clericalism"—include collaborative approaches to ministry that empower lay people to use their gifts and talents, and strategies that foster healthy sexual integration and raise consciousness about harmful forms of masculinity and femininity linked to patriarchal constructions of gender. Rooted in the Gospel and contemporary theologies of the priesthood, anti-clericalism is already being practiced among some priests and lay people and offers hopeful signs of resistance and transformation.

WHILE EFFECTIVE STEPS have been taken to create safe environments, educate adults and children, and improve reporting in Catholic institutions, structural work to address the root causes of CPSA remains to be done. Our report concludes with recommendations for developing alternatives to structural clericalism, which we hope will contribute to a reduction in CPSA.

Background:
Why This Study?

THE PRIMARY AIM OF OUR STUDY is to examine the 'whys' and 'hows' that enable clergy perpetrated sexual abuse (CPSA) to endure in the Catholic Church. We aim to move beyond hypotheses of "bad apple" perpetrators and investigate *structural* factors that perpetuate CPSA.

To achieve this aim, we first present research on what social structures are and how they operate, and—recognizing that CPSA is a specific form of sexual violence—how sexual violence operates as a structural phenomenon. This research provides a lens that enables us to see the relationship between clericalism and CPSA and provides the basis for discussing **sex**, **gender**, and **power**, the three prongs of our approach. We then apply this lens to the data we gathered through a survey of nearly 300 people (lay, religious, and ordained) working in ministry to illustrate concretely how structural clericalism works and how it creates conditions predisposed to the possibility of sexual violence.

By synthesizing structural analysis with data as equal parts of an overarching theory, this study offers a comprehensive exploratory primer on structural clericalism and CPSA. This work is practical at its core, oriented toward the transformation of ecclesial structures and institutions through practices of anti-clericalism.

This introduction leads to our primary question: how does structural clericalism generate a "field of play" in which CPSA continues, and what alternative frameworks might help us build a safer, healthier Church? Before we offer our own answer to this question, it is important to review prior efforts to articulate the causes of CPSA.

Limitations of Existing Research on CPSA

Existing studies tend to focus on individuals who engage in abuse due to personal weakness, psychosexual vulnerabilities, the influence of broader historical movements, or poor theology and training. However, evidence to support these frameworks is weak.

Some analyses of the crisis describe sexual misconduct as sin and link it to liberalizing social and theological norms which shaped the Church in the post-Vatican II era.[1] However, abuse has declined in recent decades despite increasingly liberal sexual norms. Theories blaming gay priests for abuse have also been proven false, as gay men are no more likely to abuse than straight men, heterosexual men have always been responsible for the majority of sexual abuse, and the gender of victims is irrelevant for most perpetrators.[2]

Many analysts assume that socio-historical factors led to a spike of abuse in the 1970s and 1980s, but sexual abuse of children has declined since 1970s for a variety of reasons.[3] Clergy sexual abuse of minors has also declined. Even though credible accusations against Catholic priests continue to emerge, new evidence fits the historical pattern.[4] We know very little about the prevalence of CPSA before the 1970s. The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) claims that abuse was hardly ever reported in the early

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1 Benedict XVI, "The Church and the Scandal of Sexual Abuse," *Catholic News Agency*, April 10, 2019, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/08/23/sexual-abuse-and-culture-clericalism.

2 Thomas G. Plante, "Clergy Sexual Abuse in the Roman Catholic Church: Dispelling Eleven Myths and Separating Facts from Fiction," *Spirituality in Clinical Practice* 7, no. 4 (2020): 220–229; Karen J. Terry, *Sexual Offenders: Theory, Practice, and Policy*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Cengage, 2012), 168-172; *John Jay College Research Team, The Causes and Contexts of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2011). While the percentage of gay men in the priesthood is widely acknowledged to have increased in recent decades, abuse has continued to decline.

3 David Finkelhor, Kei Saito, and Lisa Jones, "Updated Trends in Child Maltreatment," (2016), http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/Updated%20trends%20 2014.pdf.

4 CARA, "Pain Never Disappears from Unhealed Wounds," 1964, http://nineteensixty-four.blogspot.com/2018/08/pain-never-disappears-from-unhealed. html?m=1. CARA data shows the decline of abuse since the 1980s, but the long history of violence against women and children calls their "spike" narrative into question. See, among others, historian Steven Mintz, "Placing Childhood Sexual Abuse in Historical Perspective," *The Immanent Frame*, July 13, 2012, https://tif.ssrc.org/2012/07/13/placing-childhood-sexual-abuse-in-historical-perspective/ and Annie Cossins, *Masculinities, Sexualities, and Child Sexual Abuse* (New York: Springer, 2000). Accounts of child abuse can be found as early as the 1800s, but attention to abuse has varied over time. Mandatory reporting laws for were not enacted in the U.S. until the 1970s. Through the early 20th century, sex with girls 16 and under was common for adult males. The rights of children to bodily autonomy were only recently established. Similarly, the movement to protect women from rape dates to the 1970s, though awareness of the problem stretches back to the earliest days of the country. Abuse has a long history, especially in institutions and cultures marked by inequality.

decades of the 20th century but rose steadily until beginning to decline in the 1980s. However, historians point out that only relatively recently was sexual abuse understood and therefore identifiable. Though U.S. immigrant communities of the early and mid-20th century may have had particular vulnerabilities, it is probable that abuse has always been a problem but only recently was named as a violation of bodily rights, talked about, widely viewed as socially unacceptable, and criminally prosecuted. Underreporting obscures both the scope of the historical problem and the ongoing problem. Given limited data on the scope of abuse over time, the historical thesis should be viewed with appropriate skepticism.

Other analysts blame individual factors, such as genetics, psychological disorders (i.e. pedophilia), or childhood experiences of abuse. While these factors may be correlated with abuse, no research has found any one of these factors in a majority of abusers. Rather, "what the biological-based research would suggest is that complex human behaviors, including violence, are invariably multi-causal and that any biological propensity or predisposition toward violence or aggression in males, including sexual violence, is mediated by the social context and other individual factors."[5] Research linking exposure to domestic or sexual violence in childhood to becoming an abuser is also inconclusive.[6] While some perpetrators suffer from psychopathologies, these pathologies *alone* cannot explain why the majority of perpetrators abuse.[7] Screening to keep disturbed individuals

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5 Christine Ricardo and Gary Barker, "Men, Masculinities, Sexual Exploitation, and Sexual Violence: A Literature Review and Call for Action," (November 2008), https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Men-Masculinities-Sexual-Exploitation-and-Sexual-Violence.pdf, 26.

6 Ricardo and Barker, "Men, Masculinities, Sexual Exploitation, and Sexual Violence," 25-26; Mary Gail Frawley-O'Dea, *Perversion of Power: Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church* (Nashville: Vanderbilt, 2007). In addition, Mary Gail Frawley-O'Dea notes that some studies show that some accused perpetrators manufacture histories of abuse in order to gain sympathy. See see Mary Gail Frawley-O'Dea, "The John Jay Study: What It Is and What It Isn't," *National Catholic Reporter* (July 21, 2011), https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/examining-crisis/john-jay-study-what-it-and-what-it-isnt.

7 Thomas G. Plante, "Psychological Screening of Clergy Applicants," in Thomas G. Plante and Kathleen McChesney, *Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church: A Decade in Crisis, 2002-2012* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), 200-201; Terry, *Sexual Offenses and Offenders*, 195-204.

"For our good and the good of all God's holy Church": An Introductory Note

Our desire to analyze and challenge clericalism is in no way directed against clergy or against the Church. Over the course of our careers as theologians and pastoral ministers, we've both had the privilege to work with wonderful priests, bishops, and deacons, and we do not question the vital and wonderful role that the ordained priesthood plays in ecclesial life. Any concerns we raise flow from a desire to see the reality of CPSA—and the culture of silence and cover-up that has accompanied CPSA—come to an end. Even more importantly, for the most part our study has very little to do with individual ministers. Our study does not attempt to offer resources for "diagnosing" clericalism in individual priests, bishops, or deacons. We are not suggesting that our data can show whether one person is "more clericalist" than another.

Rather, by studying clericalism as a *structural* reality, we are aiming to identify how clericalism is baked into ecclesial life like cinnamon in a cinnamon roll, and is embodied and lived out by ordained ministers and lay people alike. In sum, we argue that structural clericalism is an ever-present force that shapes ecclesial life, often in ways that are predisposed to the possibility of CPSA. While pervasive and harmful, structural clericalism is not inherent in Christianity. Clericalism stands in conflict with the heart of the Gospel proclaimed by Christ Jesus. This gives us hope. For while the challenges surrounding structural clericalism and CPSA are great, we firmly believe that the Church can change, and we sincerely hope that our work can contribute to building a holier, more authentic Church that is grounded in the Gospel and oriented toward the common good.

out of the priesthood is important, but psychological screening will not root out all the causes of abuse. Any serious effort to understand sexual violence also requires attention to structural factors.

The largest and most comprehensive analyses of abuse in the Catholic Church to date, the John Jay studies, revealed CPSA to be a crime of generalists who took advantage of opportunities to abuse, choosing victims to whom they had access.[8] Though limited by reliance on self-reporting from Catholic organizations with a history of hiding abuse, they establish that a lack of transparency and consistent reporting procedures was pervasive in Catholic institutional culture and was compounded by limited "human formation" in seminary education. This study led to important reforms in creating safer environments for minors and better (though still uneven and imperfect) reporting of incidence of abuse and handling of accusations. Researchers, however, did not investigate systemic factors in ecclesial culture which are associated with abuse itself, such as clericalism.

Moreover, the John Jay studies are limited to minors, and so, too, are ecclesial reform efforts in the U.S., including the Dallas Charter of 2002 and the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.[9] This limitation obscures the scope of the problem. Priests also take advantage of other men, lay women, and women religious. The John Jay report noted that eighty percent of accused priests investigated had also violated adults.[10] The McCarrick report gives one suggestive account of abuse of seminarians.[11] Research has also established the prevalence of clergy abuse of women.[12] While major studies are lacking on the abuse of women religious, there is growing evidence of a wider problem.[13] We note the recent move by the Vatican to expand attention to abuse of "vulnerable persons" and assume this broadened view of the sexual abuse crisis in our study.[14]

A few researchers point to interrelated factors including gender, clericalism, theologies of priesthood, and distribution of power.[15] We align ourselves with these analysts and seek to build upon their work by considering sex, gender, and power as key elements of structural clericalism, mapping clericalism as a structure, and investigating the connection between clericalism and abuse.

8 The term "generalists" describes perpetrators who choose victims based on availability rather than gender. Two studies were commissioned by the USCCB and conducted by researchers from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice: *The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States, 1950-2002* and *The Causes and Contexts of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010*, https://www.usccb.org/offices/child-and-youth-protection/research. For a critique of neglect of clericalism, see Claire M. Renzetti, "An Introduction to Social Science Perspectives on the Problem of Clergy Sexual Abuse," in *Clergy Sexual Abuse: Social Science Perspectives*, eds. Claire M. Renzetti and Sandra Yocum (Boston: Northeastern UP, 2013). For a broader critique, see Frawley-O'Dea, "The John Jay Study."

9 The 2019 report shows a quadrupling to more than 4000 reported cases, 37 of which involve current minors: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *2019 Annual Report: Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (June 2020), https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/2019-Annual-Report-Final.pdf.

10 The report says that 80% of priests in treatment engaged in "sexual behaviors in violation of the commitment to celibacy" with adults (3), but we concur with the sexual abuse literature identifying *any* sex involving secrecy and power imbalance as inherently violating and note that the association of priests with the sacred creates another layer of violation. CARA researchers confirmed that these incidents have never been reviewed (Interview, May 4, 2021).

11 *Report on the Holy See's Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick*, https://www.vatican.va/resources/resources_rapporto-card-mccarrick_20201110_en.pdf. See also, Frederic Martel, *In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019).

12 Mark Chaves and Diana Garland, "The Prevalence of Clergy Sexual Advances toward Adults in Their Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 4 (2009): 817-824. This leading study of sexual abuse of women found that 3.1% of churchgoing women experienced sexual exploitation by clergy, which makes it more pervasive than abuse of children. See also, Kathryn Flynn, "In Their Own Voices: Women Who Were Sexually Abused by Members of the Clergy," *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 17, no. 3-4 (2008): 216-237; Kathleen Sands, "Clergy Sexual Abuse: Where Are the Women?," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 19, no. 2 (2003): 79-83; Valli Boobal Batchelor, ed., *When Pastors Prey: Overcoming Clergy Sexual Abuse of Women* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2013).

13 An early breaking of the story is John Allen and Pamela Schaeffer, "Reports of Abuse: AIDS Exacerbates Sexual Exploitation of Nuns, Reports Allege," *National Catholic Reporter*, Mar. 16, 2001, https://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2001a/031601/031601a.htm.

14 Francis, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, 2019, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20190507_vos-estis-lux-mundi.html.

15 See especially Marie Keenan, *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender, Power, and Organizational Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Angela J. Hattery and Earl Smith, "The Catholic Church," in *Gender, Power, and Violence: Responding to Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence in Society Today* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 151-182; Jane Anderson, "Socialization Processes and Clergy Offenders," *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 25, no. 8 (2016): 846–65. doi:10.1080/10538712.2016.1241333; and Frawley-O'Dea, *Perversions of Power*.

Our Approach:
Structural Analysis

OUR HYPOTHESIS is that structural clericalism shapes ecclesial contexts in ways that enable the continuation of CPSA. We understand clericalism as *a structure of power that isolates clergy and sets them above and apart, granting them excessive authority, trust, rights, and responsibilities and diminishing the agency of lay people and religious*.[16]

Though many argue that clericalism as an individual vice or aspect of the institution of the Church is a root of CPSA, we contend that clericalism is best viewed as a structural reality.[17] We take this position for three reasons. First, treating clericalism as a vice centers attention on individuals in a way that raises questions like "Is he a good priest or a bad priest?" rather than "What are the *underlying reasons* that this priest is acting in this way?" This is especially important in discussions of sexual violence because sexual violence is rarely an act of individual aggression alone. Sexual violence results from a combination of individual, cultural, and structural factors. Treating CPSA solely as an individual phenomenon may lead us to miss important structural factors that enable abuse.

Second, viewing clericalism as a structural reality allows us to map connections between clericalism and **sex**, **gender**, and **power**—the three prongs of our approach. These connections rarely appear in existing literature on CPSA. Seeing clericalism as a structural reality thus allows us to get beyond "bad apples" narratives of good priests and bad priests and explore more fully the underlying reasons that CPSA continues.

Third, this broader view also allows us to ponder how lay people and religious are implicated in clericalism. In focusing only on priests, the "bad apples" theory of clericalism fails to consider how other members of the Church enable the clericalist exercise of priestly status and authority. Structural analysis allows us to see clericalism as a reality in which the whole Church participates, consciously and unconsciously, positively and negatively.

Our research leads us to think that structural clericalism includes the confluence of several factors that can be linked to abuse:

1. lack of sexual integration, widespread sexual repression, and a culture of silence linked to celibacy and homosexuality;
2. toxic forms of masculine and feminine identity and gendered exclusion linked to problematic theologies of gender;
3. hierarchical understandings of power linked to the perceived status and authority of ordained ministers, which stem from certain theological models of priesthood.

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16 Definitions of clericalism vary widely, but most include priests being set above and apart from lay people. See, e.g., Marie Keenan, "Hindsight, Foresight and Historical Judgement: Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church," in *The Routledge Handbook of Irish Criminology*, eds. D. Healy, C. Hamilton, Y. Daly, and M. Butler (Routledge, 2015), 525-540: "Clericalism was premised on the idea of clergy as an elite, who are set apart-from and above the laity and are closer to God by virtue of their calling and ordination."

17 Clericalism is understood as a key cause by many who study the crisis closely. See, e.g., Sarah Salvadore, "Clericalism Cited as Root Cause of Sex Abuse Crisis," *National Catholic Reporter*, Feb. 4, 2020, citing Hans Zollner, SJ., president of the Center for Child Protection at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, https://www.ncronline.org/news/accountability/clericalism-cited-root-sex-abuse-crisis; Cindy Wooten, "Clericalism: The Culture That Enables Abuse and Insists on Hiding It," *Crux*, Aug. 23, 2018, quoting Pope Francis, Natalia Imperatori-Lee, Kathleen Sprows Cummings, the Australia Royal Commission, and Marie Collins, all agreeing on clericalism as key root cause; Jason Blakely, "Sexual Abuse and the Culture of Clericalism," *America*, Aug. 23, 2018, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/08/23/sexual-abuse-and-culture-clericalism. Major figures analyzing clericalism include: Donald B. Cozzens, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection on the Priest's Crisis of Soul* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2000); Thomas P. Doyle, "Clericalism: Enabler of Clergy Sexual Abuse," *Pastoral Psychology* 54 (2006): 189-213; Marie Hildago, *Sexual Abuse and the Culture of Catholicism: How Priests and Nuns Become Perpetrators* (NY: Haworth, 2007); Thomas G. Plante, "Clericalism Contributes to Religious, Spiritual, and Behavioral Struggles among Catholic Priests," *Religions* 11, no. 5 (2020): 1-8.

     Pope Francis's discussion of clericalism treats it primarily as a vice but includes systemic elements. See Paul-André Durocher, "Clericalism," in *Pope Francis Lexicon*, eds. Cindy Wooten and Joshua L. McElwee (Collegeville, MD: Liturgical, 2017), 21-24. Katarina Schuth defines clericalism more as a vice or "an attitude embraced by priests and bishops in which they see themselves as special or superior to others. Those who believe they are entitled to this elevated status claim certain prerogatives and feel exempted from accountability for their behavior," in "Seminary Formation: Addressing Clericalism and Sexuality," *Asian Horizons* 14, no. 2 (2020): 421-430. Hans Zollner describes clericalism as "excessive deference [and] a presumption of moral superiority. It is an attitude of being 'above the law' and 'no one can tell me what to do; I can take whatever I want,'" quoted in Gia Meyers, "Fr. Hans Zollner: Clergy Sexual Abuse Has Damaged the Church …," *America* (Feb. 6, 2020), https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/02/06/fr-hans-zollner-clergy-abuse-has-damaged-church-more-damage-has-been. Zollner distinguishes clericalism from paternalism, but we understand paternalism as inseparable from clericalism. See John Allen, "Top Anti-Abuse Expert Says 'Paternalistic' Attitude Is Worse than Clericalism," *Crux* (Mar. 13, 2020). Similarly, James Keenan has recently argued that hierarchicalism is more significant than clericalism, which he claims has been adequately addressed (James F. Keenan, "Hierarchicalism," *Theological Studies* 83, no. 1 (2022): 84-108), but we argue that hierarchy is inseparable from clericalism and show that it remains invisible to many and has only just begun to be uncovered and analyzed.

Three Guiding Themes: Sex, Gender, & Power

Three overarching themes guide our analysis of clericalism and anti-clericalism.

The first theme, *sex*, concerns how theorists think about sex and sexual violence, not only in the context of the Church but also as functions of particular social factors that render sexual violence as an act of power. Analysis of this theme helps us to understand the dynamics of sexual identity and orientation, sexual repression and integration, and priests' sexual formation and celibacy.

The second theme, *gender*, concerns how theorists understand masculinity and femininity as socially-constructed categories that are performed by people throughout their lives. Analysis of this theme helps us understand the intersection of patriarchy and toxic masculinity, which manifest consistency with the misuse of authority and exploitation of positional power that are markers of clericalism and sexual abuse.

The third theme, *power*, concerns how authority is constructed and exercised in the Church in relation to sex, sexual violence, sexuality, and gender. Analysis of this theme helps us understand how clerical power is utilized and exploited, as well as how it is perceived and experienced—in particular by those engaged in professional ministry.

The intersection of sex, gender, and power provides the basis for our analysis of the relationship between structural clericalism and CPSA.

Our data also motivated us to seek practices and strategies that interrupt the clericalist status quo and contribute to a healthier Church with fewer incidences of sexual abuse. We locate these practices and strategies under the umbrella of "anti-clericalism." Anti-clericalism[18] includes:

1. sexual integration reflected in positive theologies of sex;
2. healthy models of masculine and feminine identity and gender inclusivity;
3. a relational understanding of power and theologies of the priesthood oriented toward lay empowerment.

The Theory of Structures that Guides our Analysis

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND what structural clericalism is and how it operates, we need a clear understanding of what structures *are* and what they *do*. To develop our theory, we turned to several key thinkers in the field of sociology and some theologians who have contributed important insights to how we understand structures. In various ways, these thinkers help us to understand the ways that structures govern *agency* by *incentivizing*, *enabling*, and *restricting* attitudes and behaviors in a particular context—what we might imagine as a "field of play." By *agency*, we mean a person's ability to move freely and make free choices within the field. People with higher levels of agency face fewer restrictions and exercise their agency more freely; they can speak more openly, assert greater influence, and more easily navigate the field. People with lower levels of agency consistently experience limitation, or *constraint*. They encounter more significant restrictions on their freedom, have a limited voice, limited influence, and a limited ability to move on the field of play.

From the perspective of structural analysis, the dynamics of agency and constraint are governed

18 The term anti-clericalism has historically indicated a general opposition to clergy, but we understand it instead as theoretical and practical opposition to structural clericalism which impedes realization of authentic vocation in clergy and lay people. It might be compared to the term "anti-racist." According to Ibram X. Kendi, "the opposite of 'racist' isn't 'not racist.' It's 'anti-racist.'" See Kendi, *How to Be an Anti-Racist* (London: One World, 2019).

Structural Theory: A Closer Look

Our theory of structures comes largely from Bourdieu. But Bourdieu is not without his critics. William Sewell describes Bourdieu's approach as "agent-proof,"[1] and Margaret Archer describes his approach as "deterministic."[2] Both thinkers hold that Bourdieu puts too much emphasis on constraint, and they aim to make more room for the possibility of change. To wit, Archer's "reflexivity," or the exercise of conscious, self-aware decision making, describes the capacity to choose outcomes different from those that structures would 'naturally' produce.[3]

In a theological key, Daniel Finn argues that while structures have causal impacts, these impacts are not deterministic, "as any agent can ignore opportunities, resist restrictions, or act counter to the incentives the agent faces."[4] In Finn's terms, opportunities, restrictions, and incentives shape but do not determine a person's agency. Thus, while he acknowledges the causal influence of structures, he emphasizes how agency operates relative to the restrictions, enablements, and incentives at work in a particular "field."

We agree that one can read Bourdieu in ways that make freedom seem like an illusion, and we want to leave ample room for agency and the possibility of change. Still, we also hold that agency operates under constraint and recognize that in hierarchical institutions like the Catholic Church, constraints can easily become embedded in ecclesial consciousness, restricting our perceptions and imaginations and enabling the status quo to operate unquestioned. We think these restrictions have a great deal to do with the perdurance of CPSA. At the same time, we believe "reflexivity" offers a much-needed resource for raising awareness and fostering anti-clericalist practices that can contribute to the reduction of abuse.

1 William Sewell, "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation," *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 1 (1992): 2.

2 Margaret Archer, "Introduction: The Reflexive Return" in *Conversations About Reflexivity* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 7.

3 Margaret Archer, "Introduction: Reflexivity as the Unacknowledged Condition of Social Life" in *Making Our Way Through the World: Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 6.

4 Daniel Finn, "What is a Sinful Social Structure?" *Theological Studies* 77, no. 1 (2016): 154.

by what we might call "the rules of the game." These rules are typically invisible and are rarely talked about; in most cases, they are unconsciously assumed and accepted as the status quo: they're "just the way things are." These rules distribute power and govern agency by ***incentivizing*** and ***enabling*** attitudes and behaviors that align with the status quo, while ***restricting*** attitudes and behaviors that challenge the way the game gets played. Structural analysis offers tools for interrogating *why* the rules are the way they are, *how* they got that way, and *who* is predisposed to win or lose on the basis of the rules of the game.

In more academic terms, we might say that the influence of structural factors on agency means that agency is not just exercised as a capacity to which everyone has free and equal access but that agency is *produced*, usually unconsciously, by an array of interlocking factors and dispositions, which sociologist Pierre Bourdieu names *habitus*. These factors and dispositions include virtually everything: education; upbringing; social and economic status; religious belonging; moral and political views; race; whether a person comes from a background that is marginalized within a particular context; whether a person has traveled or speaks multiple languages; sex, gender, and sexual identity; level of comfort with sex, gender, and sexual identity; mental health; ability and disability; one's hopes and fears; and so on! Agency is always being produced by sets of incentives, enablements, and restrictions in a particular field of play. This theory provides the lens through which we view clericalism and the basis for our structural analysis of clericalism.

Further, because structures shape agency unconsciously, and in ways that are beyond anyone's control, Bourdieu highlights the need for consciousness-raising strategies that make the influence of structural factors conscious. Consciousness-raising practices have the potential to bring about a "revolution of the gaze, the rupture with the preconstructed and with everything that buttresses it in the social order."[19] This revolution

19 Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 252.

brings to light the harm and injustice wrought by the rules of the game and will provide the basis for our discussion of anti-clericalism.

Structural Analysis & Sexual Violence

EXPERTS FROM A RANGE OF DISCIPLINES have established that sexual violence is incentivized and enabled by structural factors. While we cannot show that CPSA is *caused* by structural factors, the literature leads us to contend that just as certain structural factors are associated with and likely enable sexual violence outside of the Church, factors linked to structural clericalism are associated with and appear likely to enable CPSA.

In literature on sexual violence, the characteristic most significantly correlated with sexual abuse of children, teens, and adults is gender. Men are responsible for the vast majority of sexual violence.[20] The broader literature on sexual violence is thus extremely helpful to those seeking to understand and eliminate CPSA and that literature points us toward analysis of structures. To the take the most extreme case, child rape is often associated with deviance, but, according to a recent meta-study, the sheer scale of the problem indicates that it

> is not a fringe activity of a small number of psychologically disturbed men or [men who could be clinically diagnosed as] pedophiles … [T]here are underlying social forces 'that, if not legitimating, at least provide space for these activities.'" Researchers lament that, "the complex dynamics

of power, status and gender socialization are rarely included in analyses of the issue, nor are the ways these forces intersect with individual psychology … to create conditions of risk for child rape [explored].[21]

But these forces need to be examined because all sexual violence is not about "bad apples" but about ordinary persons shaped by structures of sex, power, and gender.

Though sex is a stable feature of personhood for most people, gender is shaped by culture, develops over time, and can vary significantly from person to person. Some gender theorists go so far as to completely sever sex from gender. Catholic theology takes a more moderate view. According to Pope Francis, sex and gender are related but distinct, "masculinity and femininity are not rigid categories," and adopting a rigid approach to gender can impede the development of children and get in the way of appropriate flexibility of gender roles.[22]

Masculinity varies across cultures, but is usually characterized by strength, dominance, assertiveness, and virility.[23] Boys often attempt to prove masculinity through fighting with each other, bullying, and exercising dominance over girls in a variety of ways. Pope John Paul II called attention to the distorted masculinity of "machismo."[24]

Sexual violence can be an extraordinary way of enacting masculinity. Research shows that sexist views and hypermasculinity are associated with sexual violence.[25] All men are influenced by the

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20 Cossins, *Masculinities, Sexualities, and Child Sexual Abuse*, 91. Ninety to nine-five percent of perpetrators of sexual violence are male.

21 Ricardo and Barker, "Men, Masculinities, Sexual Exploitation, and Sexual Violence," 22. On the extent of the problem, see, e.g., Michael H. Keller and Gabriel J. S. Dance, "The Internet Is Overrun with Images of Child Sexual Abuse. What Went Wrong?," *New York Times*, Sept. 29, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/28/us/child-sex-abuse.html.

22 Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (2016), §285, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html.

23 In *Consent on Campus: A Manifesto* (New York: Oxford, 2018), Donna Freitas notes that hook-up culture takes "the worst traits of stereotypical masculinity" (impenetrability, lack of empathy, lack of desire for intimacy) and tells men they must prove themselves by enacting this script, 103-104.

24 John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), §25, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html.

25 Nicole Bedera and Kristjane Nordmeyer, "An Inherently Masculine Practice: Understanding the Sexual Victimization of Queer Women," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36, no. 23-24 (2020), 3-4.

dominant culture, though of course the majority are not abusers.[26] Gender norms of male superiority and dominance give men privilege and can enable them to associate "affirmation of a man's identity with the extent and frequency of his (hetero)sexual experiences."[27] Structures of masculinity incentivize males to express masculinity through sexual activity, and sexual violence is a way some men express a warped version of masculinity through domination.

Gender is operative whether the victim of sexual violence is male or female, adult or child. This is why a masculinity lens is helpful, even though the majority of clergy sexual abuse of minors is same-sex abuse. Abuse of a child by an adult, whether same or different sex, can be understood as gendered because cultural scripts of masculinity exert power over the imagination in ways that transcend sex. Paradoxically, because children and teens are perceived as more feminine and are less powerful and less likely to articulate their sexual desires, sex with them becomes a way of enacting masculinity, regardless of gender identity.[28] In male-female sexual violence, male power and privilege (as well as its flipside, female internalized pressure to be submissive and silent) are central. But this kind of dynamic can also be seen in encounters between same-sex adults. Sexual violence that occurs between men in war is no less gendered than male-to-female violence, for it "is rooted in power and humiliation … [It] 'strengthens the perpetrator's masculinity through weakening that of the victim.'"[29] In a groundbreaking study of sexual abuse of queer women by a range of perpetrators, researchers argue that "masculinity still plays a central role."[30] Regardless of sex or sexual orienta-

tion, narrative accounts of survivors show that in acts of sexual violence, gaining status over others is key. "To gain ascendancy in the gendered hierarchy, men … must … have their performances of masculinity validated by other social actors."[31]

Though the focus of structural analysis of sexual violence is gender, we cannot separate gender from sex or power. Most researchers agree that abuse is not about sex, if by "about sex" we mean that it is primarily a way perpetrators attain sexual satisfaction. Nor is it just "about power," as there are other ways of exerting power over others (e.g., emotional abuse, stalking, physical abuse). Acts of sexual violence are instances of sexual domination carried out primarily by men seeking confirmation or extension of their masculinity. The research on sexual violence draws us away from a focus on "bad apples" toward analysis of patriarchal cultures and environments where abuse thrives.

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS of sexual violence may shed light on CPSA, as male clergy by definition lack traditional ways of living out their masculinity. Social scientists find that "Men's willingness to use sexual violence as a means of securing masculine status is especially pronounced when they are relegated to a 'subordinate masculinity'—or a non-dominant and less powerful masculinity—and their place in the hierarchy of hegemonic masculinity has been threatened."[32] The study referenced above found that all of the violence experienced by queer women "had some connection to masculine gender expression" but those whose masculinity was more contested went further and "used their subordinated identities to justify the violence they committed."[33] The authors of the

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26 Ricardo and Barker, "Men, Masculinities, Sexual Exploitation, and Sexual Violence," 4.

27 Ricardo and Barker, "Men, Masculinities, Sexual Exploitation, and Sexual Violence," 19.

28 Cossins, *Masculinities, Sexualities, and Child Sexual Abuse*, 127-131. See also, Ricardo and Barker, "Men, Masculinities, Sexual Exploitation, and Sexual Violence," on the prevalence of same-sex abuse by males identifying as heterosexual when access to females is limited (e.g., families, religious institutions, schools, prisons, and the military) 23, 29-32.

29 Ricardo and Barker, "Men, Masculinities, Sexual Exploitation, and Sexual Violence," 30.

30 Bedera and Nordmeyer, "An Inherently Masculine Practice," 3. The researchers studied survivor's accounts of perpetrators, which they argue are reliable and potentially more credible, given the propensity of perpetrators to deny and excuse their abuse, 8.

31 Bedera and Nordmeyer, "An Inherently Masculine Practice," 3.

32 Bedera and Nordmeyer, "An Inherently Masculine Practice," 3-4.

33 Bedera and Nordmeyer, "An Inherently Masculine Practice," 9, 13.

study suggested that the "righteous masculinity" of men who lack traditional channels of expressing gender may be especially dangerous.[34] It is possible, then, that cultural scripts of toxic masculinity combined with the hypermasculine orientation of many theologies of the priesthood could incentivize and enable CPSA for priests who exploit their power and for those who feel powerless.

SEX, GENDER, AND POWER are inextricably linked in acts of sexual violence. Gender shapes, enables, and justifies the sexual assertion of power over another that characterizes sexual abuse. Only males occupy priestly roles, and within that role masculinity has the potential to be exploited or be perceived as threatened and therefore in need of proof. Male priests forgo sex, marriage, fatherhood, provision, and protection, leading some to feel isolated in male-dominated structures that afford them few avenues for performing masculinity. The literature on masculinity and sexual abuse shows why we see more abuse in male-dominant cultures and gives us insight into how male perpetrators justify abuse and what they gain from it.

Research on sexual violence also shows the importance of recognizing gendered space as a dangerous environment. We know that spaces where adults have access to children (home, school, camps, and youth activities such as scouts, sports, and the arts) are the spaces where most abuse occurs. Research on sexual violence on college campuses places all-male sports and fraternities at the center of a deeply problematic structure.[35] Theological ethicist James Keenan argues that women's absence in ecclesial spaces seems linked with the cover-up of abuse, as women were the whistleblowers in many high-profile sexual violence cases in and outside of the Church.[36] To be sure, women also collude with abuse and cover-up, but research shows that male-dominated spaces are more dangerous, especially when they are hierarchically organized.[37] Thus, it matters that women are excluded not only from the priesthood but also from most seminaries, the sanctuary, high-power committee meetings, the halls of most dioceses and religious orders, and the living spaces of most priests. Their absence opens the door for toxic forms of masculinity, enables abuse, and encourages silence.

Men sometimes utilize their power in subtle ways. Research on sexual abuse in Protestant churches shows that clergy perpetrators gain powers of trust, accessibility, and a presumption of moral blamelessness, which allow them to violate boundaries with females in their congregations.[38] Diana Garland argues that even in so-called consensual relationships between male clergy and adult women, sexual activity should never be labeled "an affair" because people with authority over others are always abusing their power when they cross sexual boundaries. In her extensive research, Garland found that clergy sexual misconduct was common.[39] Perpetrators are so blinded by their privilege that they are unable to experience empathy for their victims, and their sense of entitlement leads them to expect deference. Victims give perpetrators the deference they think they owe and are unable to critically assess what is being done to them. While this research may seem less relevant to our context, any accounting of CPSA

34 Bedera and Nordmeyer, "An Inherently Masculine Practice," 19.

35 Along with Donna Freitas, see Lisa Wade, *American Hookup, The New Culture of Sex on Campus* (New York: Norton & Norton, 2017).

36 James F. Keenan, "The Gallant: A Feminist Proposal," in *Feminist Catholic Theological Ethics: Conversations in the World Church*, eds. Linda Hogan and A.E. Orobator (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014), 219-231.

37 For an excellent synthesis of recent studies, see Marianne Cooper, "The 3 Things That Make Organizations More Prone to Sexual Harassment," *The Atlantic*, Nov. 27, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/11/organizations-sexual-harassment/546707/.

38 Diana Garland, 'Don't Call It an Affair: Understanding and Preventing Clergy Sexual Misconduct with Adults,' in *Clergy Sexual Abuse: Social Science Perspectives*, eds., Claire M. Renzetti and Sandra Yocum (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2013), 118-43.

39 The recently released, "The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee's Response to Sexual Abuse Allegations and an Audit of the Procedures and Actions of the Credentials Committee," May 15, 2022, analyzes decades of abuse in one Protestant denomination, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6108172d83d55d3c9db4dd67/t/628a9326312a4216a3c0679d/1653248810253/Guidepost+Solutions+Independent+Investigation+Report.pdf.

must include adult victims, many of whom are female. Worldwide, CPSA may well involve a greater proportion of women, as allegations from women religious in India, Vietnam, and the Philippines show. In all of these contexts of abuse, masculinity is enacted via sexual grooming and the power of persuasion, and victims are incentivized to go along with male clergy they can only see as holy, despite their pain and confusion.

The cover-up of abuse can also be understood in relation to sex, gender, and power. When male clergy choose secrecy over exposure, they are protecting male spaces of knowledge and power. Frederic Martel's book claiming to pull back the curtain on gay sexual activity in the Vatican may be salacious and lacking in hard evidence, but most reviewers found it difficult to dispute its portrait of the inner-workings of networks that hid male sexual secrets to protect male power.[40] Moreover, though all U.S. bishops were aware of the clergy sexual abuse problem by the 1980s and committed to the principles outlined in the 2002 *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young*, the 2011 John Jay Report found that implementation of new protocols was inconsistent because the bishops were so committed to tightly controlling information.[41] Though the situation has improved since the protocols established in Dallas in 2002, according to whistleblower and canon lawyer Jennifer Hasselberger, accountability and transparency are far from normative because male clergy have not been willing to yield power to others.[42] Just as networks enable men in entertainment, sports, and politics to protect male power and privilege while disadvantaging their female colleagues, clerical networks protect men who abuse both minors and adults.

In sum, the literature on sexual violence shows that while some individual pathologies are associated with men's use of sexual violence, sexual violence is tied to broader social norms related to masculinity, which are in turn part of the structures of patriarchal power. This suggests that any serious effort understand and eliminate sexual violence in the Church requires attention to how sex, gender, and power are embedded in ecclesial structures. Our survey of nearly 300 current and future ministers aimed to illustrate these relationships with concrete data about ministry and ecclesial life.

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40 Martel, *In the Closet of the Vatican*.

41 John Jay College Research Team, *The Causes and Contexts of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010*, 119.

42 Jennifer Hasselberger, speaking at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA, in response to Peter Steinfels, 7 May 2019. According to canon law, bishops have power to manage their dioceses and thus far national conferences of bishops have only rarely required bishops to adopt new protocols. For instance, participation in the annual audit of abuse cases in the U.S. is not required and some dioceses have never participated. Dioceses can choose their own safe environment programs, methods of record keeping, policies, and even whether to receive a report written by the auditors.

Data & Analysis:
Sex, Gender, Power & Structural Clericalism

Method

IF STRUCTURAL CLERICALISM is not a set of attitudes and behaviors learned in seminary but a system of incentives, restrictions, and enablements that is 'baked in' to every aspect of ecclesial life, we thought we would be able to see and describe it better if we talked to people who were deeply involved in the Church.[43] With that in mind, we designed a survey that combined quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (narrative) items to gather data about clericalism and sexual abuse.

In developing our instrument, our working assumption was that the data we gathered would enable us to demonstrate an observable level of consistency and coherence between structural clericalism and the conditions that enable sexual abuse. Our interpretive keys for forging this connection include our theory of structures, research on sexual violence, and relevant theological understandings of ministry, sex, and gender.

To be clear, our study does not claim to demonstrate correlation or a causal relationship between clericalism and CPSA. Rather, we aim to demonstrate a correspondence of contexts, attitudes, and behaviors that interdisciplinary research shows to enable sexual abuse with contexts, attitudes, and behaviors that characterize the clericalist exercise of power.

After a trial run with 15 respondents and some consultation with our advisors, we began to recruit lay, religious, and ordained ministers trained in seminaries and schools of ministerial formation. Our recruitment included outreach to six bishops, rectors of Jesuit communities and diocesan seminaries, and deans and directors of Jesuit theologates and graduate programs in ministry. We originally hoped to recruit 600 respondents, divided proportionally among lay, religious, and ordained ministers. But we quickly learned that this goal was unachievable. Though some of the 'gatekeep-ers' we contacted were receptive to our work (especially in Jesuit contexts), we received a positive response from only one bishop. Another bishop declined to participate. We received no response from the other dioceses we contacted. Only one diocesan seminary rector shared the survey with his seminarians; the others that we contacted declined or did not reply. As a result, we had no success recruiting diocesan seminarians and received only a handful of responses from diocesan priests.

In keeping with previous research on CPSA, the *quantitative* portion of our instrument utilized several existing psychological measures to look for factors such as narcissism, authoritarianism, masculine and feminine gender role stress, and dogmatism. We hypothesized that some combination of these factors might reveal the contours of structural clericalism (e.g. narcissism + dogmatism + gender role stress = clericalism). However, our respondents did not demonstrate significant levels of these characteristics. This outcome led us to set psychological factors aside and to focus on sociological analysis of structures and sexual violence. In addition, we created an original series of questions about sex and sexuality, seminary formation and graduate education, and sexual abuse.

Our quantitative items used a 7-point scale (1=low; 7=high). After some initial data analysis, we dichotomized answers, collapsing 1-2 into "disagree" or a similar answer and 6-7 into "agree" or a similar answer; mid-range responses were omitted. We worked with data from individual questions. Our quantittative data helped us to map the connections between sex, gender, power, clericalism, and CPSA and provided context for our interpretation of the qualitative data we gathered.

The *qualitative* portion of our survey contained numerous open-ended questions, which invited respondents to comment on the relationship between clericalism and sexual abuse in terms of sex, gender, and power.

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43 See, e.g., calls for attention to better seminary formation in the following studies: Schuth, "Seminary Formation;" Gerald D. Coleman, "Seminary Formation in Light of the Sexual Abuse Crisis," in *Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church: A Decade in Crisis, 2002-2012*, eds. Thomas G. Plante and Kathleen L. McChesney (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011).

Overall Population

By Role in the Church

Role	Percentage
Lay	48.8%
Religious	22.2%
In Formation for Diaconate	1.7%
Deacons	2.4%
Diocesan Priests	2.7%
Ordered Priests (SJ, OFM, etc.)	16.0%
In Formation for Diocesan Priesthood	0.0%
In Formation for Ordered Priesthood	6.1%
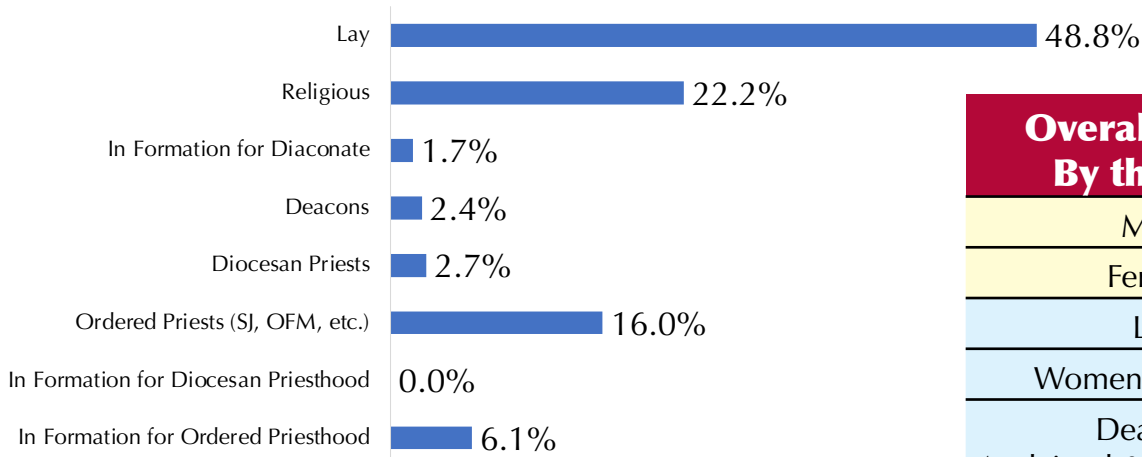
Overall Population By the Numbers

Male	123
Female	170
Lay	143
Women Religious	65
Deacons (ordained & in formation)	12
Ordered Priests	47
Diocesan Priests	8
Jesuits in Formation	18
Diocesan Seminarians	0
Jesuit-educated	207
Not Jesuit-educated	86

By Age

- 21-30: 5.5%
- 81+: 8.9%
- 41-50: 11.6%
- 31-40: 14.0%
- 51-60: 18.4%
- 61-70: 19.8%
- 71-80: 21.8%

By Sex

- Male 42%
- Female 58%

Educational Background

- Not Jesuit-educated 29.25%
- Jesuit-educated 70.75%

By Sexual Orientation

Orientation	Percentage
Prefer not to answer	2.40%
Other	1.00%
Bisexual	5.80%
Homosexual	13.30%
Heterosexual	77.50%
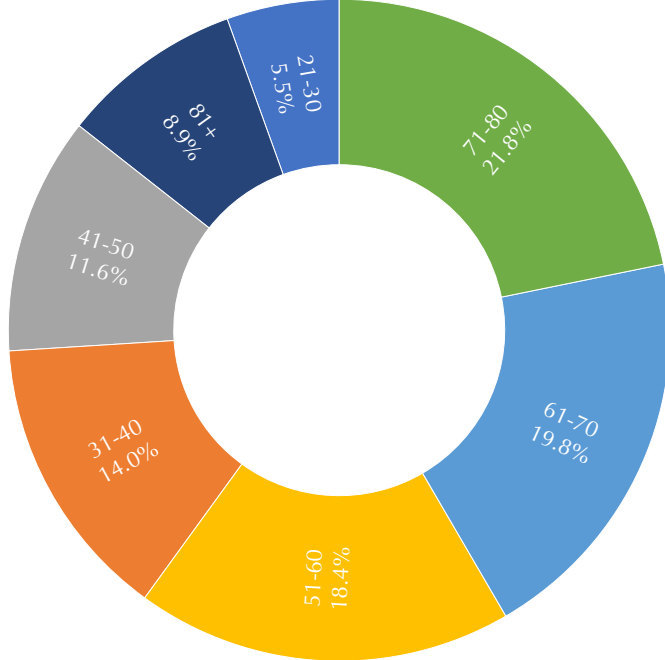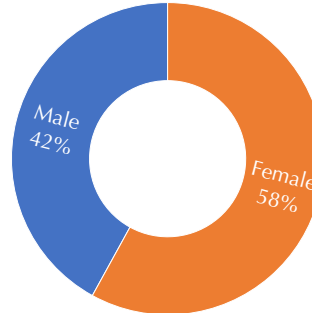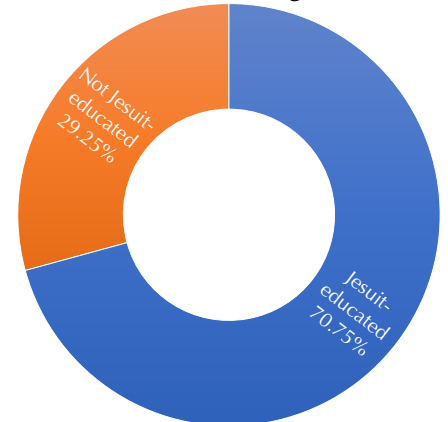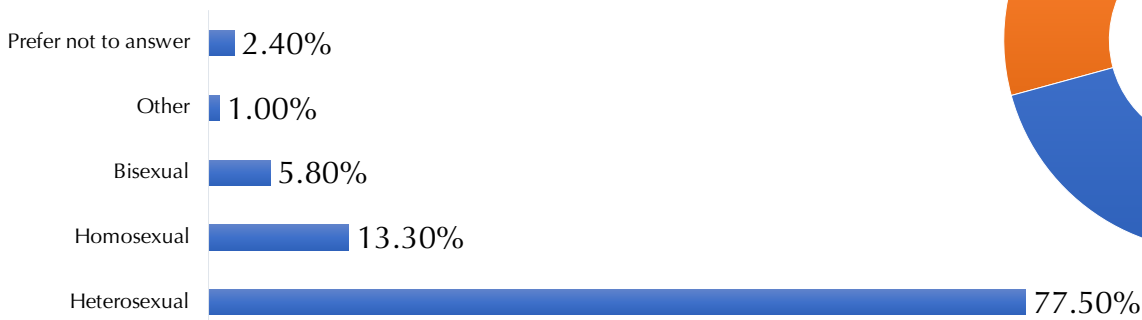
Key Demographics | Lay & Religious

By Sex

Male 18.3%

Female 81.7%

By Sexual Orientation

Other 1%

Prefer not to answer 1%

Bisexual 4%

Homosexual 9%

Heterosexual 85%

Educational Background

Not Jesuit-educated 36.1%

Jesuit-educated 63.9%
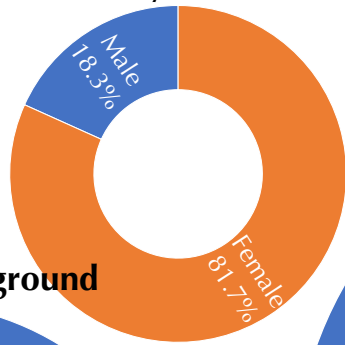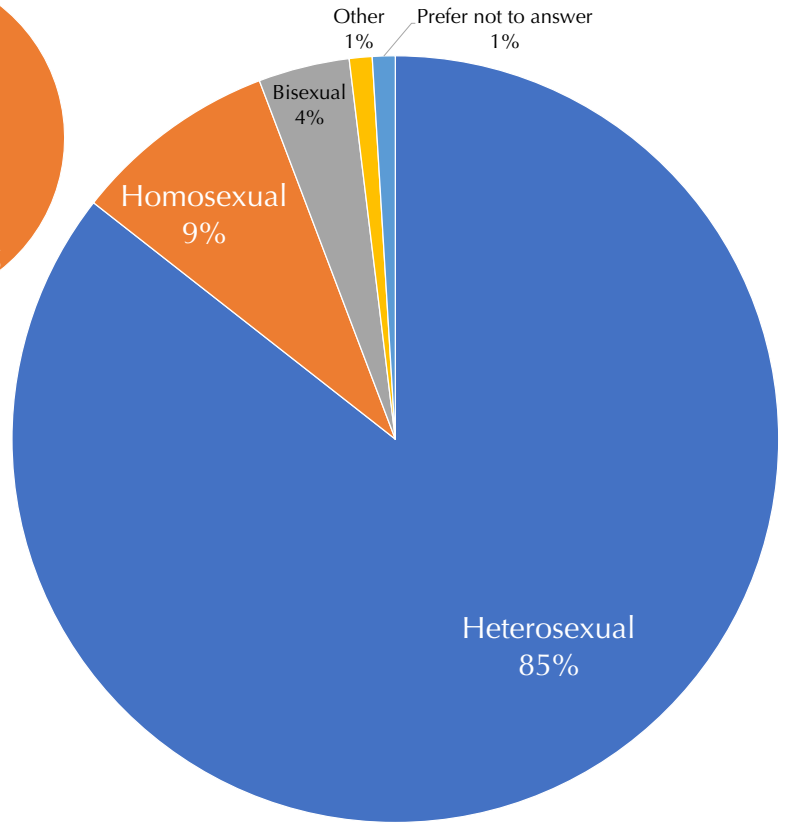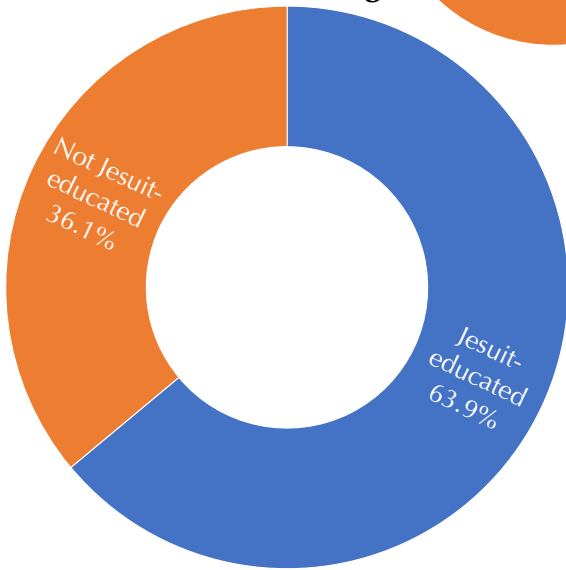
Key Demographics | Clergy (Ordained & In Formation)

By Sexual Orientation

Other 1%

Prefer not to answer 6%

Bisexual 10%

Homosexual 25%

Heterosexual 58%

Educational Background

Not Jesuit-educated 12.9%

Jesuit-educated 87.1%
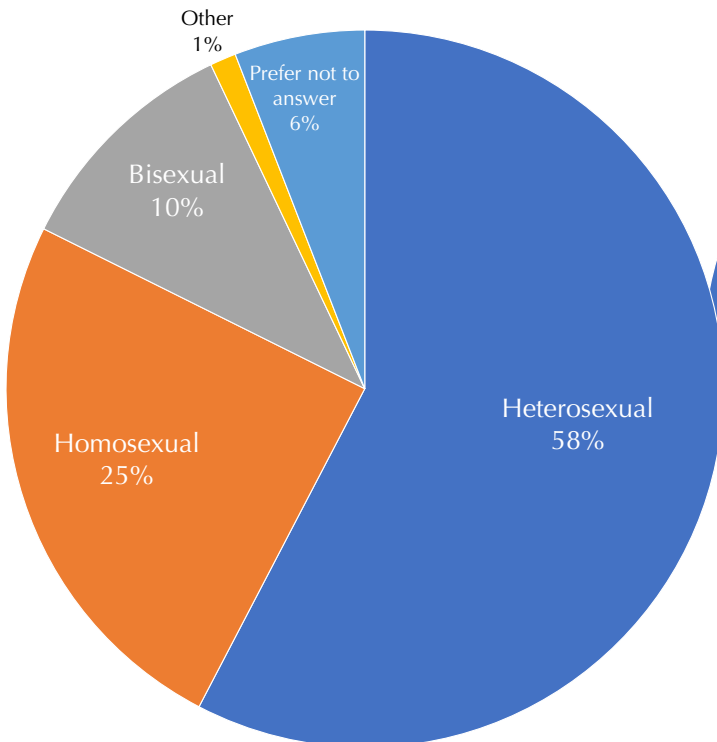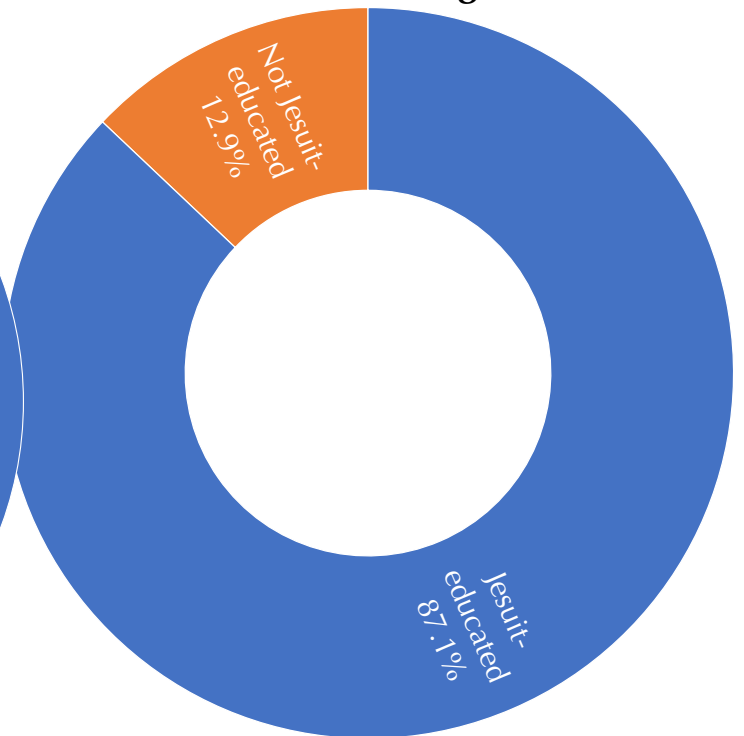
We analyzed this data in three phases. First, using a method known as *thematic analysis*, we read our narrative data carefully to surface key themes and concepts that appeared frequently in survey responses. These themes and concepts helped clarify our theory of clericalism and to better articulate the relation between clericalism and CPSA vis-a-vis sex, gender, and power. The first set of codes corresponds with our analysis of clericalism and power; the second set describes individual and structural factors that contribute to sexual abuse. These data put meat on the bones of our theory of clericalism and illustrates what anti-clericalism looks like in practice. (*The table on the next page contains the codes that emerged from our thematic analysis.*)

Second, using a method known as *content analysis*, we assessed the degree to which respondents saw a link between sex, gender, and power and CPSA. We coded responses using a threefold schema (significant link, some link, and no link). Those coded as seeing a *significant* link demonstrated a comprehensive, nuanced grasp of the relationships between sex, gender, or power and abuse, in keeping with the best insights from contemporary scholarship on these themes. Those seeing *some* link demonstrated a solid baseline grasp of these relationships but lacked a more nuanced understanding of their complexity. Those finding *no* link demonstrated negligible critical awareness of these relationships and often simply described the status quo of ecclesial life.

Third, in a second round of content analysis, we coded each response as *clericalist* or *anti-clericalist* on the basis of our theory of clericalism. In the end, however, we abandoned this line of inquiry because it diagnosed clericalism more as an individual behavior than as a structural reality.

The following sections detail key insights on the relationship between sex, gender, power, structural clericalism, and CPSA.

Levels of Awareness

WE CODED SURVEY RESPONSES for their level of awareness with respect to the link between *gender, sex, and power as components of structural clericalism and CPSA*. This coding helped us cull responses that offered especially clear or nuanced illustrations of the issues our study addresses. While our analysis revealed consistently low levels of significant awareness, higher levels of awareness emerged much more frequently among Jesuit-educated respondents. This suggests that while there is work to be done across the board, Jesuit formation programs are ahead of the curve on these issues.

Sex	
No link	18%
Some link	61%
Significant link	21%

Gender	
No link	18%
Some link	66%
Significant link	16%

Power	
No link	30%
Some link	55%
Significant link	15%

Of those showing significant awareness on *sex*:
85% were Jesuit-educated

Of those showing significant awareness on *gender*:
93% were Jesuit-educated

Of those showing significant awareness on *power*:
85% were Jesuit-educated

Of those showing some <u>or</u> significant awareness on any point:
75%+ were Jesuit-educated

Main Code	Subcodes	Frequency	Definition
Qualitative Analysis Coding Schema			
Priest's Management Style			*How priest interacts with staff and parishioners in administrative settings*
	Authoritarian	112	Authority flows from the top down; may consult, but priest still has final say
	Collaborative	103	Shared power and decision-making authority
	Disorganized	25	Lack of coherent structure for planning and decision-making
Priest's Pastoral Style			*How priest interacts in pastoral and social settings*
	Connecting	60	Shows concern for parishioners' lives; good listener, engaging, friendly
	Vulnerability	43	Openness to forming authentic relationships
	Boundaries	35	Respects appropriate professional boundaries
Theology of Ministry			*Theological understanding of priestly authority*
	Ordination	**117**	Power and status flow from sacred office, perceived closeness to God
	Empowerment	52	Priest cultivates others' gifts; empowers others
	Service	85	Priest serves the People of God; priest is over and apart but in service of
Sexual Abuse Factors: Individual			*Individual factors contributing to sexual abuse*
	Homosexuality	11	Homosexual priests commit abuse
	Immorality	27	Lack of virtue causes abuse
	Mental Illness	32	Psychological disorders; poor mental health
	Pedophilia	6	Abuse perpetrators are pedophiles
	Misuse of Authority	**120**	Use of priestly authority or status to exploit or abuse
	Sexual Development	**183**	Lack of sexual maturity, including understanding of one's own sexuality
Sexual Abuse Factors: Structural			*Structural factors contributing to sexual abuse*
	Culture of Silence	67	Lack of transparency and accountability in reporting abuse; cover-ups
	Patriarchy	48	System of power that privileges male, expressed in heternormativity and toxic masculinity
	Positional Power	**177**	Authority and influence granted by ordination
	Sexual Formation	83	Inadequate seminary formation pertaining to sex/sexuality
	Celibacy	4	Lack of preparation for celibate life (e.g. isolation, lack of intimacy) and/or sexual abstinence itself
	Sexual Repression	48	Lack of openness about sex in church; denial of sexual identity; sublimation of sexual desire
	Secular Influence	2	Breakdown of traditional models of sex and gender; distancing of understanding of gender from God's intentions; sexual permissiveness; cultural acceptance of gender fluidity

Structural Clericalism & Sex

AMONG THE THREE PRIMARY ELEMENTS of structural clericalism (sex, gender, and power), sex is perhaps the most difficult to understand structurally. By sex, we mean both sexual identity (sometimes called "sexual orientation") and sexuality (how one lives as a sexual person). Like gender and power, sex is both unique to an individual and structurally conditioned. It can move in healthy and unhealthy directions.

According to our data, sex is a part of structural clericalism, a component of a system keeping priests above and apart and potentially enabling abuse. Our respondents named several factors related to sex: **homosexuality**, **celibacy**, **positional power**, **sexual development**, **sexual formation**, a **culture of silence**, and **sexual repression**. Our respondents' descriptions of these factors helped us to map the many ways sex connects with clericalism and CPSA, especially insofar as healthy **sexual integration** is often restricted in ecclesial environments.

A common term in seminaries, **sexual integration** means connecting sexuality to all aspects of one's personhood and state of life.[44]

"Sexual integration to me, means all parts of the person are acting in unison regarding a person's feelings, actions, beliefs, etc. If a person is well sexually integrated and decides to become a priest and take a vow of chastity, then they will be able to live out this role with dignity and happiness."
—*Priest respondent*

Healthy sexual integration allows priests to function well in their roles without fear or anxiety. They can understand themselves as sexual persons with normal sexual desires who live in fidelity to

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44 Gerdenio Sonny Manuel, *Living Celibacy: Healthy Pathways for Priests* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2012), 11.

Perpsectives on our Hypothesis

WHEN OUR STUDY BEGAN, we were uncertain about whether respondents would see CPSA as more than an individual problem. Yet our respondents showed strong disagreement with the idea that CPSA is about individual perpetrators alone, with extremely low levels of agreement. They also expressed moderate levels of agreement with the idea that the whole Church is accountable for CPSA.

Only individual perpetrators are responsible for CPSA.

	Agree	Disagree
Priests	7%	76%
Deacons	7%	67%
Lay/Religious	8%	76%

The whole church is accountable for CPSA.

	Agree	Disagree
Priests	40%	6%
Deacons	60%	20%
Lay/Religious	58%	15%

A Note on Frequencies and Qualitative Data

IN THEMATIC ANALYSIS, it isn't common practice to focus on how frequently particular codes occur. Thematic analysis is more concerned with *what* respondents say than *how many times* they say it. That said, our most frequently-occurring codes correspond with our hypothesis that structural clericalism and sexual abuse are linked by the interplay of sex, gender, and power. The table on the previous page highlights four such codes: ordination, misuse of authority, sexual development, and positional power. Consistent with the quantitative data above, these frequencies indicate that our respondents are less likely to attribute sexual abuse to factors like homosexuality, immorality, or pedophilia and more likely to connect abuse with factors involving sex and power.

their celibate vocation. Sexually-integrated priests acknowledge their need for intimacy and seek out relationships with appropriate boundaries with other priests and lay people. They see their commitment to celibacy as parallel to single Catholics' commitment to chastity and married persons' commitment to fidelity, rather than as something that sets them above and apart from lay people. They are comfortable with themselves, allowing them to be vulnerable in their relationships.

Yet an adequate structural analysis of sex must also account for restrictions on and possible challenges to sexual integration. In our survey data, **homosexuality** and **celibacy** were identified as vulnerabilities with respect to healthy sexual integration. Large majorities in our study concurred with the best CPSA research in rejecting simple correlations between homosexuality or celibacy and CPSA. Only 11 respondents named homosexuality, and only 4 named celibacy as a factor in CPSA. But while they hold that neither homosexuality nor celibacy makes a priest more likely to abuse, our respondents helped us to understand how sexual orientation and celibacy function in ecclesial environments and how they may create conditions that enable CPSA.[45]

For example, despite ecclesial statements limiting priesthood to heterosexual men, it is worth noting that in our survey, 40% of priests and men in formation for priesthood identified as homosexual or bisexual.[46] The concentration of gay men in the priesthood cannot be overlooked because most priests are not able to be open about their sexual orientation, and some may consciously or unconsciously seek out priesthood as a way of avoiding or repressing their sexuality, making healthy celi-

bacy extraordinarily difficult.[47] Narrative responses to our survey confirmed this view.

"I don't think sexual abuse is caused by homosexuality. I think the Church has been a safe haven for men who have not dealt with their sexuality or have tried to repress it or hide from it. I think the power and authority that priests had/have had (i.e. clericalism) has contributed to the mishandling of the abuse crisis. I do not necessarily think celibacy requirements caused the sexual abuse. But I do think the formation of priests has been severely lacking in topics of healthy sexuality."
—Lay respondent

As in this response, our respondents consistently identified **positional power**, or the use of authority and influence gained through ordination, as a key factor in CPSA. As we showed in our review of the sexual violence literature, studies of victim/survivors in and outside of ecclesial contexts reveal widespread patterns of sexual domination and submission. Notions of self-sacrifice and powerlessness are common in narratives of a range of victims: male and female, children, adolescents, and adults.[48] Victim narratives have to be read in a larger context of a social construction of sexuality in which sexual domination and lack of vulnerability are normative for men, and sexual submission is normative for women and other victims.[49] Priests, like other powerful men, sometimes use their power to exploit others.

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45 Hidalgo, *Sexual Abuse and the Culture of Catholicism*, 46-48.

46 The presence of men with "deep-seated homosexual tendencies" in seminaries and the priesthood is a perennial concern in recent statements on formation. The 1974 "Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy" states,"In order to talk about a person as mature, his sexual instinct must have overcome two immature tendencies, narcissism and homosexuality, *and must have arrived at heterosexuality*" (p. 72, no. 21, emphasis added). More recent documents describe homosexuality as a problem of "affective maturity," which puts gay men "in a situation that gravely hinders them from relating correctly to men and women." These teachings may contribute to fear and isolation among gay men seeking ordination.

47 Thomas G. Plante, "Clergy Sexual Abuse in the Roman Catholic Church"; see also Martel, *Inside the Vatican*.

48 Bedera and Nordmeyer, "An Inherently Masculine Practice"; Donna Freitas, *Consent on Campus*.

49 Keenan, *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church*; Cossins, *Masculinities, Sexualities, and Child Sexual Abuse*; Diana R. Garland, "When Wolves

"Priests have a position that brings with it respect and authority. That can easily be used to dominate someone or to compel sexual favors—or even to make it seem that 'God' would approve."
—Religious respondent

Case studies of sexual abuse in the Church bear this out. Former Cardinal McCarrick used his power over young seminarians to insinuate himself into their space and command sexual favors.[50] Similarly, though married, liturgical musician David Haas continually preyed on female victims by asserting his power over them in sexual ways, seeking not intimate, vulnerable, mutual relationship but satisfaction of his own desires. Arguably, Haas absorbed and utilized the power of structural clericalism as a lay male liturgical "rock star," enacted that power through acts that seem to come straight from scripts of sexual domination, and gave these acts religious justification.

However, our respondents—many of whom spoke from personal knowledge of perpetrators and victims—also noted that not all abusers exploit from a place of power. Some feel powerless and resentful of the sacrifices their vocation entails.[51] They exploit their power out of a lack of integration.

"The combination of exploiting their authority, suppressing their vulnerability and need for intimacy, and resentment that flourishes in the years of suppressing is what has caused the sexual abuse."
—Lay respondent

In sum, our respondents worry about homosexuality and celibacy not because they believe that vulnerability to becoming an abuser is linked to celibacy or homosexual orientation *per se*, but because they see isolation, a lack of intimacy, and feelings of powerlessness or heightened power linked to a sense of moral superiority as potentially dangerous, abuse-enabling factors.[52]

Many of our respondents identified a cluster of issues related to **sexual development** as even more concerning in relation to CPSA: a **culture of silence** (a lack of transparency and accountability), inadequate **sexual formation**, and **sexual repression.** They spoke of a lack of openness about sex in the Church, denial of sexual orientation, encouragement to sublimate sexual desires, and inadequate preparation for celibacy as structural factors contributing to CPSA. These answers help us to describe structural clericalism as it exists in ecclesial life and bear notable similarities to the environments the sexual violence literature identifies as especially vulnerable to abuse.

Perhaps because they see a culture of silence as a significant factor in CPSA, the overwhelming majority (92%) of our respondents told us they support full transparency in relationship to CPSA. As one lay respondent stated, "Silence breeds secrecy and makes abuse possible." Yet here, the ideal and the real appear to diverge. When asked if transparency was an important value in their formation program, only 32% of Jesuit-educated and 25% of non-Jesuit-educated respondents agreed.

Respondents also saw **sexual repression** as a significant factor in CPSA and ecclesial life, which is concerning given that studies of sexual violence confirm the association of repression with sexual violence.[53] 49% percent of priest respon-

Wear Shepherds' Clothing: Helping Women Survive Clergy Sexual Abuse," *Journal of North American Association of Christians in Social Work* 33, no. 1 (2006): 1-35; Kathryn Flynn, *The Sexual Abuse of Women by Members of the Clergy* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003).

50 *Report on the Holy See's Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick.*

51 Statements on the priesthood raise concerns about the loneliness and isolation priests often face, especially due to celibacy. *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 22 states that priests may "feel like strangers in this world," especially given contemporary values and norms around sex.

52 Anderson, "Socialization Processes and Clergy Offenders."

53 Barker and Ricardo, "Men, Masculinities, Sexual Exploitation, and Sexual Violence"; Anderson, *Priests in Love*.

dents and 73% of those in formation stated that repression or sublimation were presented to them as strategies for dealing with their sexuality; this number increases to 83% among non-Jesuit-educated priests. 70% of those in formation and 51% of priests said they found it difficult to talk about their sexuality, while over 75% of all respondents agreed that the Church would be a healthier institution if priests spoke openly about their own sexuality. Lay people expressed the highest level of agreement with this statement (78%). Notably, Jesuit-educated respondents agreed with this statement at a significantly higher rate (72%) than non-Jesuit-educated respondents (60%).

One response is representative of our respondents' views on the link between sexual repression, positional power, and CPSA:

"I believe repressed sexuality and lack of attention to sexuality leads to abuse along with misuse of power."
—Religious respondent

Another respondent, a priest, lamented about many seminary classmates who had been accused of abuse, admitting that "something went awry" in seminary formation on sexuality. Time and again, our respondents emphasized that "The utter lack of attention to the psycho-sexual development of candidates for ordination has resulted in destructive acting out in sexual abuse" (priest respondent) and that many priests enter ministry "without the necessary skills to develop intimate (without sexual encounters) relationships in a safe way leading towards abuse" (lay respondent). Nearly all of our respondents (92%) stated that emphasizing healthy sexual integration in seminaries would make the Church a better institution.

65% of respondents—including 86% of priests—agreed that poor sexual integration of priests contributes to CPSA. This may indicate that priests have a clearer sense of the challenges associated with sexual integration and the relationship between unhealthy sexual integration and abuse.

Even more significantly, only 50% of priests and those in formation stated that their formation program gave them the tools they needed for living a celibate life without denying their sexuality. Of this 50%, all were Jesuit-educated; 0% of our diocesan priest respondents agreed with this claim, and half of our diocesan priests entered a "1," indicating the lowest possible level of agreement.

My formation gave me tools for living a celibate life without denying my sexuality.

	Agree	Disagree	Mean
Jesuit Priests	54%	11%	5.17
Jesuits in formation	67%	8%	
Diocesan Priests	0%	67%	2.33

These statistics also correspond with the narrative responses we received:

"This is what I have read and corresponds to my personal experience. I had to figure out this sexual integration on my own after ordination. There were few if any helps available to me during formation. Sex was just a big NO. I had left that behind, Well, not true. There were challenges, relationships in which I and others were wounded, this was the price in my experience of poor sexual integration."
—Priest respondent

Together, these data indicate that positional power and poor sexual development can be understood as symptoms of structural clericalism. The synthesis of these factors separates clergy and places them above lay people in ways that all too easily satisfy the conditions under which sexual violence occurs. As two respondents explain,

"Abuse happens when people who are not well integrated and psychologically mature are put in positions of power (which is enhanced by notions of superiority of clergy) and others are all too ready to defer to them and not hold them accountable because of clericalism that is supported through a gender-based exercise of power."
—Lay respondent

"People who are not sexually integrated ... can act out in ways that are immature and inappropriate. They tend to lack a healthy understanding of boundaries. And they are not capable of healthy adult relationships."
-Priest respondent

In sum, pervasive sexual repression, cultures of silence, exploitation of positional power, and a lack of sexual integration are aspects of structural clericalism. When sex is not openly discussed and tools for sexual integration are not provided, clergy are isolated and set apart. Their sexuality is not recognized. Respondents, especially priests, who stressed the need for better formation for celibacy and greater transparency around sexuality describe a structural problem and explain how it contributes to CPSA.

Structural Clericalism & Gender

THE CHARACTERISTIC most significantly correlated with sexual abuse of children, teens, and adults is gender (see p. 11). Men are responsible for the vast majority of sexual violence and women are the majority of the victims. In their use of sexual violence, Catholic priests are more like than unlike other men: *their gender matters*. All sexual violence is shaped by structural inequality related to gender.[54] Clergy-perpetrated sexual abuse is no exception. As such, interrogating how gender is negotiated in ecclesial institutions is crucially important to understanding the connection between gender and CPSA.[55]

Only 48 of our respondents named **patriarchy** as a significant factor in CPSA, and very few respondents discussed the role of gender in answer to the question, "What is the relationship among gender, sexuality, and sexual abuse in the Church?" Yet some responses showed significant awareness of the relationship between gender and power with respect to CPSA. One respondent wrote, "gender is related to institutional priesthood and clericalism, and clericalism is related to abuse of power. In addition to all the ways that society affords men more power over the vulnerable, the Church affords priests an inordinate amount of power over non-ordained men, women, and children."

Research shows that sexual violence is more prevalent in *institutions marked by male domination* (especially in leadership roles) and *hierarchy* (especially with unchecked power).[56] Nearly all seminary pro-

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54 The literature is extensive. For a major literature review of studies examining "sexual violence as a mechanism through which social constructions of masculinity are produced and reproduced," see Anjuli Fahlberg and Mollie Pepper, "Masculinity and Sexual Violence: Assessing the State of the Field," *Sociology Compass* 10, no. 8 (2016), 673-683. See also, Carrie Yodanis, "Gender Inequality, Violence Against Women, and Fear: A Cross-National Test of the Feminist Theory of Violence Against Women," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 19, no. 6 (2004), 655-675; Kerrsti A. Yllo, "Through a Feminist Lens: Gender, Diversity, and Violence: Extending the Feminist Framework," in *Current Controversies on Family Violence*, ed. Richard Gelles and Donileen Loseke (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2005), 19–34. Gakahu Nancy Wanjiru, "Sexual Violence and Gender Inequality," *African Ecclesial Review* 53, no. 1 (2011).

55 In one major South African study, some seminarians' constructions of masculinity were found to privilege "dominant, hierarchical and patriarchal masculinities," while others thought of masculinity as "patient, strong, serving, and enduring and sacrificing," but in all cases priesthood and masculinity were entangled. Unfortunately, multiple forms of masculinity can undergird violence. See Khwepe Nontsokile Maria Emmanuela, "The Construction of Masculinity by the Seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church: A South African Study," Master's Thesis in Social Science in Clinical Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. September, 2016, http://ukzn-dspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/15208/Khwepe_Maria_N_E_2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y .

56 For a summary, see Cooper, "The 3 Things That Make Organizations More Prone to Sexual Harassment." Cf. Hattery and Smith, *Gender, Power and Violence*, which examines institutions where violence is prevalent, including the military, sports, and the Church.

grams are still marked by all-male leadership and most isolate men preparing for priesthood. Some respondents noted this was a problem, especially in diocesan seminaries. One lay respondent said, "priests should have more exposure and training with women and family during training." A woman religious said, "their training and lack of experience with women does not prepare them well." Still another stated, "Seminaries and new priests are kept as far away from women as possible."

According to our data, Jesuit schools of theology and ministry are like diocesan schools in leadership and housing structures, but they differ from their diocesan counterparts in offering more opportunities for interaction between clergy and lay persons.[57] Their graduates are more likely to have mixed-gender academic and social experiences.

A little over 50% of our Jesuit-educated respondents and about 40% of non-Jesuit-educated respondents said that men and women participated equally in their academic classes and were shown equal respect. About two-thirds at Jesuit schools and a little less than 50% at non-Jesuit schools reported equal respect for female professors.

Nearly 80% of Jesuit-educated respondents said they socialized with those seeking ordination and those studying to be lay ministers during seminary or graduate school. In diocesan settings, this number is significantly lower, at 54%. Importantly, however, while 95% of men in formation and 83% of priests stated that they socialized with lay people in graduate school, only 67% of lay respondents agreed. Lay people indicated that they did *not* socialize regularly with clergy (especially in non-Jesuit educational settings) and were more likely to disagree with the statement; among non-Jesuit-educated respondents, 18% disagreed. These data illustrate the 'above and apart' nature of much of priestly formation and illustrate markedly different perceptions among clergy and lay people/religious, especially in diocesan settings.

In seminary/graduate school, I socialize(d) both with those seeking ordination and those studying to be lay ministers.

	Agree	Disagree	Mean
Priests	83%	2%	6.22
Jesuits in formation	95%	0%	6.80
Lay people	67%	12%	5.57
Religious	77%	14%	5.74

If problematic constructions of masculinity are linked to sexual violence, then critical analysis of gender constructs is important. This, of course, is a difficult thing to measure. We suspect that studying gender and sexuality in mixed gender settings enables men and women to question patterns of male dominance associated with sexual violence, while the lack of such study restricts critical questioning and leaves problematic cultures in place. Yet when we asked participants whether they had encountered gender or sexuality studies in an academic setting, fewer than 30% agreed. Jesuit-educated respondents were more likely to have had conversations about constructions of masculinity and femininity or have formal study of sex and gender, but our data demonstrate a pervasive lack of attention to sex and gender in seminary education on the whole.

Some of our respondents saw this gap as problematic. One stated, "Quite possibly sexual abuse by priests is due to a failure to educate about gender in seminaries," while another said that "A poor understanding/formation of gender and sexuality can lead to sex abuse." One response offered an especially comprehensive grasp of the issues around gender and abuse:

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57 It should also be noted that before studying for the M.Div. degree, Jesuits spend many years working and studying alongside lay people.

"Misunderstandings of gender and sexuality, along with personal dysfunction, lack of personal integration, and psychosexual psychosis in personal development, contribute to sexual abuse. Seminary formation must be sophisticated, open, and intentional to educate and develop ministers in healthy ways."
—*Priest respondent*

When we tried to assess respondents' knowledge about gender by asking specific questions about qualities often associated with masculinity and femininity, our respondents gave a variety of answers. Some simply repeated stereotypical lists while others expressed profound discomfort with the question and described gender as a social construct. Specific questions about qualities associated with masculinity and were more revealing.

Perhaps the characteristic most closely associated with masculinity is strength, and its flipside is vulnerability, often associated with femininity. When asked about the mode of interaction that characterized priests in social and pastoral settings, most of our respondents chose words we coded as "connecting" (shows concerns for parishioners' lives, friendly, good listener) rather than "vulnerability" (open to authentic relationships). If clericalism sets clergy "above and apart," these descriptions provide evidence of that reality in ecclesial life. One respondent wrote, "How can priests be relational and vulnerable when they are put on a pedestal and aren't in normal contact with women?" To be sure, as another respondent noted, clergy "strive to be relational ... but many of them fear vulnerability." "The less direct contact the clergy has with its flock the harder it will be for them to experience relationality." Others wrote that clergy wear "masks" and "rarely if ever admit fault, rarely reveal personal feelings or worries."

While very aware of the importance of professional boundaries, many lay ministers in our study contrasted their own mode of interaction with that of most clergy they knew well. One female lay minister said, "Relationality and vulnerability are very closely interlinked, because it is only through vulnerability that one can be in deep relationship with self, others, and God. They are foundational to my ministry, as I believe Jesus was both a relational and vulnerable person and that is what we are called to as well." Structural clericalism, as described by our survey respondents, seems to restrict priests from imitating Jesus in this way, incentivizing instead a gender-related distance between them and the people they seek to serve.

Finally, given the narrow conceptions of masculine and feminine roles found in dominant theologies of the priesthood, exposure to feminist theology and to critical analysis of women's roles in the Church is important for future ecclesial ministers. We were surprised to find that 75% of our respondents said they encountered the work of women theologians in graduate school (79% Jesuit-educated and 64% non-Jesuit-educated). We suspect that women theologians identifying as feminist or raising critical questions about Catholic teaching and practice with regard to gender were more often studied in Jesuit settings, though we cannot be sure. Sustained study of feminist theology is rare even in Jesuit settings where, even now, full courses on the topic are not regularly offered.[58]

In sum, our respondents showed us the gendered segregation and hierarchy still dominant in seminaries and commented on the pervasive lack of attention to gender and sexuality and limited attention to feminist theology in formation programs. They discussed gendered modes of interaction in pastoral settings that limited the ability of priests to relate to lay people in authentic ways. Our data enable us to describe how gender functions as a part of structural clericalism in ecclesial spaces, and their responses appear concerning in light of research on gender and sexual violence.

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58 Feminist theology was not taught as a standalone course at the Jesuit School of Theology (Berkeley) until 2019. Searches on the websites of Regis College (Toronto) and Boston College School of Theology and Ministry yielded no courses with "feminist" in the title.

Structural Clericalism & Power

ACCORDING TO OUR RESPONDENTS, the link between structural clericalism and power emerges most clearly in priests' ***management styles*** and in ***theologies of the priesthood***, which provide the basis for how priestly status and authority are understood.

Structural clericalism is most visible in ***authoritarian*** and ***disorganized*** management styles. "Authoritarian" management styles are characterized by top-down decision-making with an absence of adequate qualifications/training; little to no consultation, or performative consultation; lack of openness to feedback; and resistance to collaboration. In many cases, authoritarian management styles offer priests almost unlimited enablements to act as they please, with few restrictions.

A series of responses from clergy, lay, and religious respondents illustrates various versions of authoritarian management, all of which are linked by an excessive exercise of positional power: "The pastor is in charge; Top down—in almost every ministry I have served, the priest has had overarching control, even when the professional managers hired for the particular ministry disagreed with the priest's point of view; Important decisions are top down only. Minor decisions are left to parish council; Autocratic; Very clerical and hierarchical. I would love to see a better balance of administrative support to free ministers to minister well, freedom to be a prophetic voice for change, and more inclusion of diverse voices."

Other respondents described various "disorganized" management styles, as in one lay respondent's description of her priest's management style as "benign neglect tending toward chaos and toxicity" and another's description of the pastor as "Laissez faire. Conflict avoidant."

A disorganized management style can be characterized by a lack of coherent structures for logistics or decision-making; a chaotic or inconsistent manner of engagement with staff and stakehold-

ers; and neglect of duties or performative delegation. Some responses bridged authoritarian and disorganized styles of management, with an eye toward their implications for ecclesial life:

"Ohhhhhhhh where to start. Part of me wants to say "What management style?" Meetings pretend to be collegial discussions, but ultimately decisions are made top-down; Direct confrontation is avoided in favor of passive-aggressive emails; Feel I need to be given permission to proceed on projects but responses to my requests/queries/proposals don't come easily - so sometimes I go rogue; Don't feel that gifts of individual ministers are identified and fostered."
—Lay respondent

The relationship between structural clericalism and power also appears in theologies of the priesthood and theological understandings of priestly authority that emphasize the authority of ordained ministers as spiritual guides and executors of the sacraments. Clericalism may also appear in the inadequate attention given to lay-clergy collaboration we observed in seminary curricula.

Several respondents—both lay and ordained—assumed and articulated these theologies in their descriptions of priestly ministry. For example, a lay respondent stated, "The priest is a vessel that can translate God's presence into the holy Eucharist. The priest also is an authority in catechism and Church teaching so that they can help guide the parishioners or whoever they serve to become closer to God." Another wrote, "The priesthood is the authority reflective of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is blessed with the sacrament of the Holy Orders. He is charged with leading and administering the Church's administration in good faith and in accordance to God's laws as well as celebrating the Holy Eucharist with the parish members along with a host of other job responsibilities. His ethi-

cal and holy orders ordination gives him the power to lead God's flock to heavenly grace through, mercy, forgiveness and building spirits." (See p. 33 for a discussion of the history of these theologies.)

The codes "ordination" and "service" emerged as descriptors of theologies that most commonly underpin the clericalist exercise of power. "Ordination" describes theologies in which the priest-pastor is given status and authority (e.g. decision-making, management, spiritual matters, theology, biblical interpretation) on the sole basis of his ordination—as in one lay respondent's description of the priest as "the spiritual leader of the parish, in addition to being the CEO."

In practice, these theologies typically suppress the gifts of lay people and religious, with a particular impact on those who may be more qualified to speak authoritatively on aspects of ecclesial life (e.g. budgets, management, strategic planning). Respondents consistently noted significant negative impacts of these theologies in ecclesial life:

> *"While uninformed on many topics and unversed in the arts of running a workspace or supporting staff, [the pastor] insists that he has the final say on any matter. In response, we have driven away families from all of our various constituencies, destroyed the morale of the staff and caused this deacon to doubt his vocation."*
> *—Deacon respondent*

In a more moderate response, a lay respondent observed, "Priests have an authority in sacramental matters. I do not believe they have authority in other matters related to the supervision of their ministries. They have little training or skill in administrative, planning, human resources, budgeting, and to an extent pastoral work." A woman religious offered a similar view, with a strong critique of the contrast between the Gospel proclamation of loving presence and a clerical "caste":

> *"I believe that Holy Orders does set a person aside for the service of the Church. I believe the Church has created a caste system, which all too often seems to separate the clergy from the message of Jesus, that of a loving presence at the service of those entrusted to his care. I believe that priests easily forget they have been called forth from the community... not just 'put in charge' of a parish community. They confuse the roles of administration and ministry."*
> *—Religious respondent*

Such situations manifest structural clericalism when the assumption of priestly authority takes precedence over and suppresses the gifts of others, quietly reinforcing the assumption that priests should hold power on the basis of ordination.

While it may seem counterintuitive, clericalism may also appear in **service-oriented theologies**, wherein the image of the **shepherd** carries a paternalistic character reminiscent of "benevolent patriarchy." In these scenarios, the priest-shepherd exercises authority in the mode of service, but with the understanding that the flock needs careful management and may go astray without the priest's careful guidance. One response's image of the priest leading people to Christ illustrates this point of view, "Priests have a sacred power (authority) to serve and to lead people to Christ through the Word of God, the Eucharist, and sacraments."

In sum, these theologies of the priesthood restrict the agency of lay people, religious, and deacons, render priests impervious to criticism (even when criticism may be justified), and generate cultures of silence that can incentivize abuses of power, even leading to sexual abuse. One respondent makes the point well:

"I think that in cases where there is an unrealistic-unbalanced-unhealthy understanding of the authority that flows from ordination (on the part of the clergy or victim) expectations tied to the power of God can be manipulated. If one believes I am god-like because I am ordained and can do whatever I want because I am like God distortion can take place. Reality and boundaries get lost. Delusion reigns. People can be coerced to do what God commands/wants/expects."
—*Lay respondent*

The relationship between clericalism, power, and abuse also appeared in our quantitative data, manifesting most clearly in a set of differences of perception between clergy and non-ordained ministers. These differences further illustrate the tendency of many theologies of the priesthood to position the priest "above and apart" from other members of the Church.

First, we asked respondents about the extent to which non-ordained ministers have autonomy in their places of ministry. This question aimed to assess whether and to what extent professional ministers who are not ordained (e.g. lay people and religious) are empowered to make decisions, manage programs, and perform other responsibilities without oversight from an ordained minister. Responses revealed a notable difference between the perceptions of priests and other respondents. Fewer than half of priests (46%) stated that ministers have high levels of autonomy in their work. This number is very low, but deacons (33%) and lay people (36%) reported even lower levels of autonomy. Moreover, while only 10% of priests stated that ministers have low levels of autonomy, 22% of lay people/religious and 27% of deacons stated that they have little autonomy. In sum, priests were more likely than every other group to state that non-ordained ministers possess high levels of autonomy and face few restrictions in their work.

These differences appear even more clearly in questions on how receptive clergy are to constructive criticism about their preaching and how much priests respect the authority of experience that lay people possess (as workers, parents, partners in marital-sexual relationships, and so on). When asked if they welcome constructive criticism about preaching, 80% of priests and 87% of deacons expressed agreement.

But lay and religious respondents expressed a markedly different view. Only 9% of lay and religious respondents (19 people!) agreed that clergy are receptive to criticism, while 52% *disagreed*. This difference manifests a huge gap in perception between priests and deacons, who state that they are open to constructive feedback, and lay people and religious, who do not perceive their clergy as being open to such criticism.

I welcome constructive criticism about my preaching.

	Agree
Priests	80%
Deacons	87%

Priests and deacons welcome constructive criticism about their preaching.

	Agree	Disagree
Lay & Religious	9% (19/208)	52% (107/208)

Here again, we suggest that the positional power that accompanies ordination often shields clergy from criticism and maintains a status quo characterized by silence, even when clergy understand themselves to be open to others' opinions. This dynamic is reinforced by the internalized clericalism of lay people and religious, who may have important perspectives to offer but remain silent because they do not think their clergy are actually receptive to feedback.

Even more striking is the across-the-board lack of agreement with the idea that priests respect lay people's authority of experience. When asked

whether priests respect the authority of experience that lay people possess, only 20% of priests and 33% of deacons agreed, while 13% of priests and 27% of deacons disagreed. This data indicates low levels of agreement *and* disagreement, with most responses falling somewhere in the middle range. However, levels of agreement drop and levels of disagreement skyrocket among lay people and religious, with only 8% stating agreement and 48% disagreeing with the idea that priests respect their experience.

Based on our data, these differences of perception are reinforced by gaps in formation. When asked whether they believe lay people can contribute to their understanding of how to be a good minister ("I think lay people can teach me a great deal about how to be a good bishop, priest, or deacon."), 84% of clergy agreed. By a significant margin, Jesuit-educated clergy were more inclined to agree (90% vs. 74% among non-Jesuit-educated respondents. However, when asked whether they *had actually learned* skills for ministering alongside and empowering lay people, agreement dropped to 55%, with little difference among populations.

Lay people can teach me a great deal about how to be a good bishop, priest, or deacon.

	Agree
All clergy	84%
Jesuit-educated	90%
Not SJ-educated	74%

In my education or formation program, I developed skills for empowering lay people.

	Agree
All clergy	55%
Jesuit-educated	57%
Not SJ-educated	49%

Like our data on preaching, this differential leads us to conclude that while there is significant desire among clergy for constructive relationships with lay people and religious, the skills necessary for forming these relationships are rarely learned in formation programs. While desire is good, it is not sufficient to transform the clericalist status quo; practical skill-building and a genuine commitment to collaboration are also necessary to challenge the assumption of clerical power and privilege.

Taken together, these data may indicate that priests are relatively unaware of the culture of deference that surrounds ministry contexts. They may think that they allow lay people and religious to use their gifts freely, and in many cases this may be the case. Yet from the standpoint of structural analysis, the primary issue is not whether individual priests allow other ministers autonomy. In fact, the assumption that priests must give their approval or permission to others' decisions is an indicator of clericalism as we understand it. Further, even if a priest creates spaces for equitable collaboration, he cannot assume that his efforts will offer a sufficient remedy to the *internalized assumption* of priestly authority and the sense of deference toward clergy that many non-ordained ministers and lay Catholics hold as a result of the clericalist status quo. Two responses capture this reality well:

"I am in a small rural parish which is still priest centered with dedicated parish council officers but who tend to acquiesce to the decisions or words of the priest ... the priest is highly respected here, often regardless of his performance of his "work". A lot needs to be done to foster a more collaborative working relationship among leaders themselves as well as to the other members of the church."
—*Lay respondent*

"It is collaborative. They want me to make all the decisions. I delegate responsibilities. It all works out though sometimes not the way I would do it but that is fine. I give people a long leash. That may sound condescending but I am working with young people who are learning how to make good decisions. They think "Father" has all the power and I keep trying to give them some."
—*Priest respondent*

These responses suggest that the status quo is still infused with clericalism: whether or not priests desire it or demand it, non-ordained professional ministers still defer to the positional power of priests, presumably even when they possess greater expertise. If structural problems require structural solutions, then priests and lay people must work together to deconstruct the positional power and privilege held by priests and the hierarchicalist culture of deference that pervades ecclesial life.

This point is especially important given the ways priestly authority can be exploited in sexual abuse. When clericalist models of priestly authority are consciously and unconsciously internalized in the Church, the priest becomes increasingly set "above and apart" and gains positional power that can be exploited in ways that make abuse possible, especially when factors such as sexual repression and inadequate human formation are in play. This dynamic can take shape in two ways. First, as one lay respondent observed, internalized clericalism can render victims "more compliant because of the authority of the ordained minister who is making the request, directing the situation, manipulating the behavior." Clericalism also operates in relationship to CPSA when a lack of sexual integration meets an excessive concentration of priestly status and authority. "The need for power and an unintegrated sexuality are a breeding ground for sexual abuse," as another lay respondent stated. These statements are consistent with widespread

agreement with the idea that clerical authority is in play in situations of abuse:

I believe that the authority that flows from ordination is often exploited in situations of CPSA.

	Agree	Disagree
Priests	71%	4%
Deacons	63%	7%
Lay/Religious	80%	3%

Rooted in theologies of the priesthood that exalt clerical authority, the dynamics of structural clericalism and power manifest in the internalized assumption of clerical authority and in the exploitative use of clerical status, satisfying the conditions that make CPSA possible.

Structural Clericalism & Clergy Perpetrated Sexual Abuse

SEEN THROUGH THE LENS of structural analysis, our data enables us to map clericalism as a self-replicating system of bias and structure of power that normalizes the unequal distribution of power in the Church. As such, clericalism is much more than a "bad attitude" or set of "bad behaviors" seen among "bad apple" priests; it pervades every nook and cranny of ecclesial life.

As a power structure, structural clericalism sets clergy above and apart (whether or not they like it or want it), granting them excessive authority, trust, rights, and responsibilities, while also diminishing the agency of lay people and religious. Moreover, structural clericalism quietly enshrines this unequal distribution of authority as the status quo—as something to be taken for granted. In doing so, it consciously and unconsciously governs the agency of clergy, laity, and religious through a system of restrictions, incentives, and enablements that privilege some and diminish others.

Thus, while clericalism often shows up in attitudes and behaviors of clergy—such as when a priest or bishop exercises leadership in a way that exploits others or embraces his standing above and apart from his parishioners—lay people may also accept

and internalize the excessive status and authority granted clergy as part of "the way things are." With deep roots in Church history, this power dynamic is so 'sedimented' in ecclesial consciousness that it typically goes unquestioned, restricting our ability to imagine alternative ways of thinking about sex, gender, and power in the Church.

Our respondents' descriptions of priests who struggle with sexual integration or exercise their priestly authority in an authoritarian or disorganized manner attest to this typically-unquestioned assumption of priestly authority. Even a priest who is known to be lacking in aspects of human formation or who is ill-equipped to manage a parish holds power on the basis of his ordination. Coupled with the absence of women from high-level leadership positions and seminary contexts and a general lack of exposure to studies of sex, gender, and feminist theology, the systems of privilege and isolation that govern ecclesial life are rarely interrupted and continue to operate unquestioned.

Think of a parishioner who is frequently offended by the homilies in his parish but does not feel that he can approach his pastor, or a religious sister who may question her views because she was raised with the idea that "Father knows best." In cases like these, choosing not to speak up and feeling as if one cannot speak up both manifest the *restrictions on agency* that characterize structural clericalism. In practice, not speaking up reinforces the unequal distribution of power that diminishes the agency of lay people and religious and further enshrines the perceived status and authority of priests, all of which maintains a clericalist status quo.

Here, however, it's still important to distinguish between ordination, which we see as a gift to the Church, and clericalism. Taken on its own terms, the ministerial priesthood serves a unique and indispensable function in the Church. Called by Christ and by and from the faithful, every priest has the potential to serve as an agent of the Spirit's lifegiving, empowering work; the same is true of all members of the Body of Christ, each in their own way. To be clear, then, we contend that *it is not*

Historical Perspectives on Structural Clericalism

THOUGH RARELY DISCUSSED in Vatican documents on the priesthood, clericalism has a history.[1] Clerical identity and authority flow from a set of interlocking factors that includes: 1) the hierarchical structure of the Church; 2) celibacy; 3) what *Lumen Gentium* terms "sacred power"; 4) the priest's work as minister of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist; and 5) relationships with the laity and other clergy.

Theologies of the priesthood and formation programs have evolved greatly since the Second Vatican Council, giving us much healthier ways of conceiving priestly ministry. But changes in teaching and formation do not always translate into changes in attitudes and assumptions about clerical power. In fact, the belief that a new statement on the priesthood or a new formation program will address clericalism may actually reflect the kinds of authoritarian assumptions that characterize clericalist systems; a Vatican declaration is only one of many factors influencing the ecclesial "field of play." One statement is unlikely to change the Church's consciousness on a structural level because as our theory of structures shows, structures are deeply ingrained and typically operate on an unconscious level. From a structural standpoint, teachings on the priesthood are only one of the many enablements, restrictions, and incentives that govern agency in the Church. On the ground, priests, theologians, formators, lay ministers, and all God's people are consciously and unconsciously embodying and perpetuating certain theologies of the priesthood while resisting and rejecting others.

Signs of clericalism appear throughout historical statements on the priesthood. For example, Pius XI's influential 1935 encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* states that the priest possesses an "indelible character" (22) rooted in the "Person and Priesthood of Christ Our Lord Himself" (9). This character manifests most fully in the Eucharist, wherein "the ineffable greatness of the human priest stands forth in all its splendor; for he has power over the very Body of Jesus Christ, and makes

1 Ecclesial statements on the priesthood since 1935 contain only one reference to clericalism, in Congregation for the Clergy, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (2016), http://www.clerus.va/content/dam/clerus/Ratio%20Fundamentalis/The%20Gift%20of%20the%20Priestly%20Vocation.pdf.

It present upon our altars" (16). This language of the priest having "power over the real Body of Christ" corresponds closely with the relationship between the priest and the laity: "The Christian . . . at almost every important stage of his mortal career, finds at his side the priest with *power received from God*, in the act of *communicating or increasing that grace* which is the supernatural life of his soul" (17, emphasis added). Further emphasizing this point, Pius XI writes that the "priest [occupies] a place midway between God and human nature." (29). The priest clearly stands above and apart.

Pius XI is not introducing new teaching; he is codifying a theology that had been articulated, embodied, and practiced for centuries. Such genealogical analysis invites us to ponder how this model of priesthood continues to shape ecclesial consciousness, as well as how it incentivizes and enables clericalist attitudes and behaviors that restrict the agency of the non-ordained.

Further, in contrast to later documents that define the priesthood in terms of service, Pius XI's encyclical clearly characterizes priesthood as an institution of power.[2] When this emphasis on power is internalized, it influences the Church in profound ways, disempowering some and offering tremendous advantages to others. In other words, if "clericalism flourishes in contexts where the lay faithful are excluded or marginalised and adopt a posture of subservience," as *Light from the Southern Cross* states, then *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* provides a theological basis for these contexts.[3] Moreover, as Alexander Schmemann states, given that such models of priesthood impart "a slight connotation of mystical awe" to the clerical state, it is hard to deny that the power and prestige that accompany this model of priesthood might draw some men—especially those disempowered by economic status or sexuality—to seek out a role characterized by such a great degree of positional power.[4] We must acknowledge the possibili-

ty of what Schmemann names a "pastoral pathology," wherein "some 'clerical vocations' are in fact rooted in a morbid desire for that 'supernatural respect,' especially when the chances of a 'natural' one are slim."[5]

MORE RECENT STATEMENTS on priesthood and priestly formation move away from the hierarchical and separatist language of *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* in favor of a more relational theology of priesthood. This relational orientation functions in two "directions": in the priest's relationship to Christ, and in the priest's service of the lay faithful. For example, *Lumen Gentium* (*LG*) defines priestly authority, which it names "sacred power," in terms of service to the People of God. "For those ministers, who are endowed with sacred power, serve their brethren, so that all who are of the People of God, and therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, working toward a common goal freely and in an orderly way, may arrive at salvation" (*LG* 18). According to the *Rites of Ordination*, this relationship appears clearly in the Eucharist, which priests offer "united to the sacrifice of Christ" and "in union with the faithful," following "the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve" (*Rites of Ordination* 123).

These documents emphasize that the priest acts in union with the people in the Eucharist—a marked contrast with *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii.* This principle of liturgical unity sees the priest as one who speaks on the Assembly's behalf, not as an intermediary between the assembly and God, as liturgical theologian Aidan Kavanagh explains. "When it gathers, the assembly stands in worship before the Creator as sacrament and servant in Christ of a new-made world. This is serious business. The liturgical minister, being part of the assembly ... presides not over the assembly but within it; he does not lead it but serves it; he is the speaker of its house of worship."[6] Similarly, John Paul II's 1992 apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (*PDV*) states

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2 Notably, the word service appears only five times in the encyclical, while power appears thirty times in reference to God's power and the power of the priest, which *ACS* imagines as directly linked. Pius XI, *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* (December 20, 1935), https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19351220_ad-catholici-sacerdotii.html.

3 *Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-Responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia*, 1 May 2020, https://www.associationof-catholicpriests.ie/2020/06/the-light-from-the-southern-cross/.

4 The 2016 *Ratio Fundamentalis* expresses this concern explicitly in conjunction with clericalism. "Consequently, future priests should be educated so that they do not become prey to 'clericalism', nor yield to the temptation of modeling their lives on the search for popular consensus" (33). Later, the document cautions priests against falling into "the allure of power and riches" and "giving undue priority to one's own needs and seeking out forms of compensatory behaviour, thus hampering priestly fatherhood and pastoral charity" (37).

5 Alexander Schmemann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 2018), 92.

6 Aidan Kavanagh, *Elements of Rite: A Handbook of Liturgical Style* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 12-13.

that priesthood flows from God's Trinitarian life and so possesses a "fundamentally 'relational' dimension," such that "the ecclesiology of communion becomes decisive for understanding the identity of the priest, his essential dignity, and his vocation and mission among the People of God and in the world" (*PDV* 12). As "servants," "Priests are there to serve the faith, hope and charity of the laity" (*PDV* 17). Or as Pope Francis puts it, priests must "smell like their sheep."[7]

Though his perspective is not represented in official teaching, Jesuit Michael Buckley's influential essay, "Are You Weak Enough to Be a Priest?" echoes and intensifies this orientation. Reflecting on the characteristics of a good priest, Buckley asks, "Is this man deficient enough so that he cannot ward off significant suffering from his life, so that he lives with a certain amount of failure, so that he feels what it is to be an average man?" Knowing the hardship of everyday life fosters relationality and empathy that, Buckley writes, "relates [priests] profoundly with other people. It allows us to feel with them the human condition, the human struggle and darkness and anguish that call out for salvation."[8] Far from separating the priest from the cares of the world or imputing exaggerated spiritual powers to the priest, Buckley writes that the priesthood is anchored in the priest's ability to relate to others.

Another important set of developments concerns the relationship between ordained and lay ministry. Whereas ordained ministers exercise "sacred ministry," *Lumen Gentium* and later documents describe lay people as possessing a "secular nature" (*LG* 31). *Presbyterorum Ordinis* states that this sacred-secular distinction orients the laity toward "temporal affairs," while those called to ordination must "mortify the works of the flesh in themselves and give themselves entirely to the service of men [so] that they can go forward in that holiness with which Christ endows them to perfect man" (12). A similar tension manifests in the distinction in both "degree" and "essence" that John Paul II makes between the baptismal and ministerial priesthood (17). Given all this, one might ask whether the association of the "sacred" with priests and the "secular" and "worldly" with the laity does not tacitly imply that priests possess greater holiness, or at least greater access to the holy.

In sum, despite their relational orientation and emphasis on service, recent documents on priesthood maintain a strictly hierarchical account of clergy-lay relationships. For example, despite its emphasis on the universal call to holiness, *Lumen Gentium* still speaks of the priests being placed "over" the laity (37). Likewise, John Paul II's Instruction, "On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests" (*OCQ*) deploys the sacred-secular distinction to justify a hierarchical rendering of clergy-lay relations, describing the Church as "a living hierarchical communion" ("Conclusion"). On this basis, John Paul II calls for "particular care to safeguard the nature and mission of sacred ministry and the vocation and secular character of the lay faithful," recognizing that even in emergency situations lay people must serve "appropriately and within their proper limits" (*OCQ* 3). The document grounds this hierarchical orientation in the "apostolic mission" of Christ (*OCQ* 3), such that even if all are equally called to holiness, ministry subsists within a hierarchical framework that diminshes and restricts lay agency.

None of this is to deny the great sacrifices and commitments—from celibacy to daily prayer—priests make as part of ordained life; priesthood entails a wonderful, willing surrender to God. Nor is it to deny that priesthood provides a foundation for key aspects of ecclesial life. Still, we must be careful not to confuse a commitment to the sacred with a greater share in personal holiness that sets the priest over the rest of the faithful. If the call to holiness is truly universal, as *Lumen Gentium* argues, then holiness is to be held in common and nurtured in community. Seen in this light, the priest's commitment to the sacred exists in mutual, reciprocal relationship with the holiness of all people; as Buckley might have it, priestly holiness is nourished and nurtured by the common faith of the whole community for the good of the whole community, not possessed by the priest alone. In all this, the tension of the relational and the hierarchical continues to shape and influence ecclesial life in innumerable ways, including how structural clericalism has been formed within ecclesial history and how it continues to shape ecclesial life.

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7 Francis, Homily at the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday (Rome, March 28, 2013), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130328_messa-crismale.html.

8 Michael Buckley, "Are You Weak Enough to Be a Priest?," in *To Be a Priest: Perspectives on Vocation and Ordination*, ed. Robert Terwilliger and Urban Holmes (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 127-128.

ordination but clericalism that enables clergy to exploit their office and restricts the agency of lay people and religious. Thus, while we agree with Jane Anderson's definition of clericalism as a system that "is principally concerned with maintaining the distinction between clergy and laity and putting the interests of celibate priests before others in the church ... [and] denies alternative perspectives and loathes criticism, leaving it defensive and self-protective," our data clearly demonstrates that as a structural reality, clericalism is everywhere.[59] Whether positively or negatively, consciously or unconsciously, everyone participates in clericalism. It is 'baked in' to ecclesial life like cinnamon in a cinnamon roll.

Our responses also show that the influence of structural clericalism may vary in different contexts. As one respondent wrote, "In the parish: top down, pastor is king/boss; In the nonprofits, it's much less hierarchical." In other environments, not clericalism but anti-clericalism may hold sway: "Management in my most recent ministry placement was horizontal. People were encouraged to express their views, had access to the president (who's a priest), and were respected as professionals with something to contribute to the organization's mission." Still, structural clericalism is dominant, and it is most evident in seminaries where ministers train and in parishes where they serve.

HOW DOES THIS RELATE to clergy perpetrated sexual abuse? *Structural clericalism* generates contexts that satisfy the conditions that enable CPSA through the interplay of sex, gender, and power. In parallel with sexual violence research, we contend that structural clericalism operates in gendered terms (e.g. isolation of an all-male clergy, lack of critical awareness of gender constructs), and cannot be separated from sex (e.g. lack of healthy sexual integration in relation to celibacy and sexual orientation, sexual repression, violence, and domination) or power (e.g. leadership and management styles, systems of privilege and positional power). At the same time, we know that sexual violence cannot be reduced to any one of these factors.

Still, if structural clericalism characterizes the status quo of ecclesial life, then the "default setting" of the Church is predisposed towards granting clergy excessive positional power. When linked to issues like sexual repression, threatened masculinity, and cultures of silence, and coupled with restrictions on the ability of lay people to speak and act in ways that challenge the clericalist exercise of power, clericalism thus creates contexts that can all too easily allow for exploitation and abuse to occur. Structural analysis of sexual violence sheds light on the dynamics how sex, gender, and power intersect when sexual abuse occurs.

59 Jane Anderson, *Priests in Love: Roman Catholic Clergy and their Intimate Relationships* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 79.

Anti-Clericalism:
Strategies of Resistance & Transformation

Understanding Anti-Clericalism

OUR STUDY CONCLUDES by lifting up strategies for resisting and transforming clericalism, toward a stance of what we call "anti-clericalism." To be clear, "anti-clericalism" does not mean "anti-clerical," or "anti-priest"; anti-clericalism opposes the harm caused by the *-ism*—the structure of power—not by individuals or institutions.

On analogy with anti-racism, anti-clericalism is a moral stance that can be embraced by anyone with critical awareness of a structural problem (an *-ism*) in which they are implicated and for which they want to take responsibility. As historian Ibram X. Kendi argues, someone who is racist believes "that Black people are inferior, that something is wrong with Black people," while an anti-racist holds that "there is nothing wrong with Black people ... all racial groups are equal."[60] Kendi disputes the common assumption that racist thoughts lead to racist policies, insisting instead that racist policies drive racist thinking; ideas constructed to defend policies that privilege whites have played a significant role in restricting resistance to racism in U.S. history.[61]

Although Kendi finds anti-racist ideas among intellectuals and activists in U.S. history, he labels as racist many who might have seen themselves as contributing to the cause of Black liberation. For instance, those who opposed slavery or argued for Black suffrage but held "assimilationist" stances such as "uplift suasion"—the idea that the Black race was naturally held back from equality with whites but could be educated—do not pass muster as anti-racist. Such views were often accompanied by a "gradualist" approach to social change.[62] Assimilationists believe that the main problem is "individual racism," which can be rectified via

persuasion or the sacrifice of privilege. Anti-racists believe that the main problem is "institutional racism" that "only power could remedy."[63]

Similarly, as a holistic orientation for ecclesial life, anti-clericalism understands clericalism as *structural* and fosters a commitment to opposing it through the disruption of the clericalist status quo and the development of anti-clericalist practices that restructure the Church, allowing power to be shared more equitably.[64] Rooted in the Gospel and the best of contemporary theologies of ministry, anti-clericalism seeks a mode of ecclesial life characterized by sexual wholeness, healthy models of masculinity and femininity, and healthy paradigms for the interaction of women and men, gender inclusivity, collaboration, and power-sharing.

Anti-clericalism begins when we attune our hearts and minds to everyday "prophets" who make the unconscious conscious in word and deed, calling out harmful aspects of the status quo and proclaiming new ways of being community—in our case, new ways of being Church.[65] This change opens our imaginations and may generate cultures of resistance driven by the exercise of both individual and collective agency in response to CPSA.

These anti-clericalist consciousness-raising strategies may draw on the tradition, seeking out examples of anti-clericalism in Christian history toward a renewed understanding of priestly status and authority. Such renewal will cultivate authentic reflexivity and agency for all God's people and has the potential to contribute to the reduction of sexual violence in the Church.

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60 Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Bold Tape Books, 2016), 10–11.

61 Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning*, 9-10.

62 Kendi places both William Lloyd Garrison and W.E.B. DuBois in this category.

63 Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning*, 400, discussing the Black Power movement.

64 Kendi and others understand anti-racism in an intersectional way. Our theory can also be seen as intersectional in that it includes gender and power, though low racial diversity in our sample did not allow us to analyze data across racial, ethnic, or cultural differences.

65 On prophets, see Pierre Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," *Comparative Social Research* 13 (1991): 1–44.

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY in resisting and transforming structural clericalism if CPSA is to end, and awareness of clericalism as a structural problem is a crucial starting point for this work. To that end, we see a need for consciousness-raising strategies that empower all members of the Church—whether lay, religious, or ordained—to **describe** clericalism when they see it, **interrupt** the clericalist status quo, and **announce** new ways of being Church.

We began our study with the hope that we would find evidence of anti-clericalist practices that are already disrupting structural clericalism, and we were not disappointed. After coding for descriptions and awareness of clericalism, we asked what our data could tell us about anti-clericalism. We found evidence of anti-clericalism in narrative responses demonstrating:

1. positive alternatives to repressive and isolating visions of sexuality;
2. less restrictive ways of thinking about gender rooted in greater awareness of gender constructs;
3. alternative models of power in the Church and theologies of the priesthood that emphasize lay empowerment, with respect for experience and expertise.

The uniqueness of our sample of ecclesial ministers, which we strongly suspect has greater knowledge of the Church and a deeper critical awareness of structural clericalism than a general sample of Catholics, allows us to lift up "everyday prophets" of contemporary ecclesial life, highlighting their ability to claim agency, disrupt the clericalist "field of play," and enable alternative ways of being and becoming the Body of Christ.

Anti-Clericalism & Sex

Our data shows that most ecclesial ministers are critical of structural realities they understand to be harmful. With regard to sex, many of our respondents lamented that priests "aren't allowed to talk about their sexuality … they aren't allowed to

be or [be] viewed as people with a sexual nature" (lay respondent). Priest respondents also linked sexual repression and poor sexual integration with abuse and worried that problematic ways of living celibacy might made priests more vulnerable to being abusers.

> *"Repression of sexuality is a big problem. This does not mean full genital expression vs. celibacy. I think ignoring the sexual development of the individual can lead to a repressed sexuality and ultimately to inappropriate and dangerous expression of sexuality. This is the pathway to abuse."*
> —*Priest respondent*

As our analysis of power shows (p. 28-32), respondents saw this vulnerability compounded by priests' standing "above" lay people, making lay persons more vulnerable to being abused. One lay respondent observed, "If a priest is disconnected from his sexuality, [he] is more likely to act out & exert his power. It could be through manipulation or implied authority. The victim would not question his authority." While some respondents focused on individual dysfunction, many understood the structural nature of the problem.

Alternatives to the current structure were also evident. One lay person described their efforts to reform seminary culture, including a "program on celibacy trying to help seminarians learn more about their sexuality, human development, appropriate boundaries, etc. We tried to identify and work with those that had trouble relating with women for any reason, or had poor self-image, were rigid, manipulative, sexually unintegrated."

Others reflected on their own ministry in answering our questions we asked about relationality and vulnerability. In contrast to what they told us about the inability of many clergy to relate in authentic ways to lay people, these lay ministers described healthy relationships.

"You cannot have true relationality unless you possess vulnerability. If you are not authentic, you cannot truly build relationship. This was essential in my ministry as a youth minister. If I was not honest and authentic … I would not have been able to connect with them. I would have been a hypocrite if I was not open about who I am and what I believe."
—*Lay respondent*

As lay people operating within the structure of clericalism, our respondents illustrated how they engage in reflexivity and use their agency to construct alternative models of ministry and Church. Their descriptions show what anti-clericalist ecclesial life looks like. Instead of "above and apart," we see accompaniment. One lay minister wrote, "I specifically use vulnerability or encourage vulnerability in my work in Pastoral Care. It is essential for people to connect on emotional issues as it is in our brokenness that we see each other as fellow children of God." This response demonstrates awareness of how vulnerability in the minister is necessary for vulnerability in those who are ministered to, and thus to effective ministry. There is a willingness to acknowledge a common brokenness and a radical equality of persons before God.

In answering these questions, few respondents specifically referenced sexual integration. Still, responses criticizing cultures of sexual repression that restrict sexual development, contribute to silence about sexuality, and enable abuses of power are noteworthy because they indicate a high level of integration that allows for comfort with the vulnerability necessary for effective ministry. We believe that such integration and vulnerability provide a model for excellent priestly ministry as well.

Anti-Clericalism & Gender

Just as our study uncovered ways gender is a part of structural clericalism, it brought out several key ways of resisting gendered aspects of clericalism:

(1) Recognition of sexism, (2) critical awareness of gender constructs including gender complementarity, and (3) a commitment to gender inclusivity.

1. Recognition of Sexism

We asked participants, "If someone were to say to you, 'The church is sexist,' how would you respond?" Anti-clericalist responses acknowledged the structural reality of sexism in the Church. Many gave concrete examples. One lay person said, "In our church we operate under a stipulation that women can participate up to a certain point. Our lectionary keeps stories of women optional or marginalized. The labor of women (lay and religious) has been undervalued and underpaid." Another wrote, "The separation between men and women in the church is very deeply ingrained and oftentimes people don't recognize the sexism they are spreading and encouraging," showing awareness of how people's views are shaped in subtle ways despite their good intentions. With evident frustration, these respondents understood sexism as part of structural clericalism.

"Even among clergy of good will, men have been 'in charge' for so long, the clergy leadership is incapable of seeing what an inclusive church would look like. The structures are inherently sexist. The average church member who has continued to attend church after the upheavals of the past 40 years is basically OK with this male dominated construct as well."
—*Priest respondent*

2. Critical Awareness of Gender Constructs

Some anti-clericalist answers to the question on sexism in the Church also showed awareness of gender constructions. One respondent said, "People often qualify sexism by stating 'women have a unique role that men can't fulfill' which can be true in some contexts, but ignores that there are

large disparities between sexes." This respondent questions the claim that ecclesial structures are *not* sexist because some roles in the Church are only open to women on the basis of their particular strengths, causing large power differentials between men and women and implying that the emphasis on uniqueness is overstated.

We also found critical awareness of gender constructs when we asked people what the words "masculinity" and "femininity" brought to mind. Many simply gave us standard lists of qualities culturally associated with men or women. Some did so while showing some awareness of the asymmetry between the sexes and the ways gender restricts their agency: "masculinity- leader, protection, confidence, doer, presumes the world will run his way, blind to the situations of others who are not male, the system works for males, privileged, emotionally stunted; femininity- care, openness, has to do more to be recognized, less authority, the system restricts roles for females, more aware of pain and suffering" (lay respondent).

Others went further, "My first thought goes to the extremes of toxic masculinity and oversexualized femininity and I cringe at these categories. I feel gender is a construct and the most healthy people I have met have expressed a full range of emotions and attitudes, embrace all parts of their experience whether it's deemed masculine or feminine" (lay respondent). This respondent understands gender as a construct that does not capture the fullness of a person. Others noted that these constructs can be oppressive:

"Social and historical constructions of masculinity and femininity, often experienced as a binary and oppressive dichotomy. I would define masculinity as 'those traits, characteristics, behaviors, and was of being that are stereotypically associated with

maleness/men within a given cultural context' and femininity as 'those traits, characteristics, behaviors, and was of being that are stereotypically associated with femaleness/women within a given cultural context.'"
—*Lay respondent*

Pressures to adhere to a particular gender script may be particularly strong for priests, whose masculinity, as research on sexual violence shows (see p. 11-14), can be understood as "contested." Seminary formation may be especially problematic when men are instructed to cultivate a masculine priestly identity. In at least some places, seminarians are told to "dress and act 'like men,'" and activities that carried supposedly-homosexual overtones (like gathering in groups to draw or paint) were forbidden.[66]

Across the board, anti-clericalist respondents showed awareness of the power of gender constructs to negatively impact ministry and ecclesial life, and they did not hesitate to call them out.

3. Commitment to Gender Inclusivity

While clear about sexism in the Church, anti-clericalist responses to the question on sexism in the Church also insisted that Catholic tradition and Catholics themselves are complex, offering both darkness and light. One lay respondent characterized the complexity this way, "The Church as a cultural and historical institution is deeply sexist, and seems determined not to come to terms with the emergence of women in society. However among the individuals I have worked with and served, there is widespread acknowledgment of this institutional sexism." Others also insisted on defining "the Church" broadly and seeing it in its diversity. "First, 'the church' means all the baptized people, and I don't think that's true of them all. But it's definitely true of the structures/insti-

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66 Paul Blaschko, "Inside the Seminary," *Commonweal Magazine*, February 17, 2015, https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/inside-seminary.

tution. And yet there are so many paradoxes, like many women who were encouraged and educated and supported as leaders in church institutions when this wasn't happening widely in society. Life is full of paradoxes. Always a both-and."

This response implies that there are resources within the Catholic tradition that point toward greater inclusion. As one priest put it:

> *"Yes. There are fundamental structures in place which preclude women from having a full voice in the direction of the Church. Despite the failure of the institutions, however, women, through the power of the Spirit, have made extraordinary contributions which have altered the course of Church history."*
> —*Priest respondent*

Drawing on this complex tradition, and in step with our understanding of anti-clericalism, many respondents expressed a desire for greater gender inclusion in a set of questions about women in the Church. First, when asked if the Church offers ample opportunities for women to use their gifts, only 10% of lay people, 17% of priests, and 27% of deacons agreed; a significant group disagreed.

I think the church offers ample opportunities for women to use their gifts.

	Agree	Disagree
Priests	17%	44%
Deacons	27%	20%
Lay/Religious	10%	66%

Among our priests and deacons, around 50% of responses fell in the middle range, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this statement. This distribution likely reflects that while respondents are aware of women's presence in many ministerial roles, they also recognize their absence from crucial, powerful positions.

These anti-clericalist views appeared even more clearly in two questions on the ordination of women. When asked whether the 'natural resemblance' between Christ's body and the priest's male body is a reason that women should be excluded from the priesthood, our respondents expressed low levels of agreement and high levels of disagreement.

The 'natural resemblance' between Christ's male body and the male bodies of priests is an important reason that women cannot be priests.

	Agree	Disagree
Priests	6%	77%
Deacons	20%	60%
Lay/Religious	2%	92%

Similarly, a solid majority—especially of our lay respondents—disagreed with the claim,

God instituted the priesthood for men only.

	Agree	Disagree
Priests	13%	67%
Deacons	33%	60%
Lay/Religious	9%	86%

Given the relationship between gendered role restrictions and sexual violence, our respondents' anti-clericalist views might also contribute to a reduction in CPSA. As one respondent put it, "Both sexism and suppressed sexuality can contribute to sexual abuse, but sex abuse seems also very much about power possibly more than sexuality ... So, maybe sexism is the biggest issue (i.e., ordain women and have them as leaders), though sexual integration is super helpful also."

In sum, our respondents offered great insights into what an anti-clericalist future might look like with respect to gender. Summarizing the sentiment of many of our respondents, one priest respondent wrote, "Yes, the church can be sexist. And that is a sin. We need to challenge the church's sexist history and views in order to help the church resemble more the value and the message of Jesus." Another priest simply said, "You're right, but let's see what we can do together to change that."

Anti-Clericalism & Power

If clericalism appears in authoritarian and disorganized management styles and theologies that set clergy above and apart, then anti-clericalism appears in management styles that challenge the assumption of priestly authority and in theologies that emphasize priests' standing with the rest of the Church as co-members of the Body of Christ. We coded responses that emphasized the need for power-sharing and collective decision-making in ecclesial life as "collaborative," indicating a generally anti-clericalist position with respect to management style. We coded responses that described priesthood as a charism oriented towards the cultivation of others' gifts as "empowerment."

In contrast to contexts characterized by top-down management and the suppression of lay voices, collaborative contexts include many voices and seek to foster collective discernment for the good of the whole community. Our respondents described what such anti-clericalist models of power might look like in practice. One lay respondent wrote, "I would describe the management style of the institution where I minister as collaborative and transformational. The voices of many are included in most decisions."

At their best, situations marked by authentic collaboration are also grounded in theologies of the priesthood that see the priest as a team member and cultivator of gifts who shares his power with a team of qualified ministers, each of whom serves a vital function in parish life. Several lay respondents described scenarios like these. One noted a "Pastor who is team oriented, ministers who are qualified and passionate about their call to build the Kingdom." Other lay respondents spoke of "authentic, transparent, and fun" work environments, in which the pastor shows "trust in the competence and ability of each person on staff."

Many priests also spoke of collaboration and empowerment as the basis for their ministry. One priest said that, in his view, ministry is all about loving relationship with God and others:

"I believe I am called to ministry by virtue of my relationship to God. Due to this relationship … And the abundant love and goodness of God, experienced in relationships from birth to the present I am called to connect with others, to share this abundance through my actions and dispositions. Ministry is that reaching out and sharing in whatever form I am able to. I can and hope to love because I have been loved and ministered to."
—*Priest respondent*

In keeping with their calls for authentic relationship and vulnerability with respect for boundaries, our respondents frequently stated that loving relationship, connection, and inclusion provide the basis for the proper exercise of priestly authority. One lay person wrote, "[Priestly authority] looks like COLLABORATION! It looks like LISTENING. It looks like being open to Mystery. It relies on DISCERNMENT and a spiritual practice that takes one to a deeper place. It looks like LOVING ENGAGEMENT. It does not look like rigidity and rule-based authority and party-line answers to difficult life struggles and questions."

In a similar vein, a priest stated, "The priest represents the church's lived faith so any authority that he has by virtue of ordination flows from the church itself. Responsible exercise of this authority means authentically listening, discerning with others, public and private prayer, action, and openness to reform." Here, as in many other responses, we find an emphasis on openness to new possibilities under the rubric of listening and discernment. In contrast to theologies that place the priest above and apart from the rest of the Church and so ground authoritarian management styles, anti-clericalist theologies emphasize openness to many voices and a recognition that ministry begins with authentic listening. As one woman religious respondent wrote, "The best priests have true humility and understand that the authority

they have is not their own and are able to set aside their own ego and quiet its demands in order to let God be God for the sake of the common good." And as another religious respondent wrote, when priestly authority is exercised correctly, the priesthood becomes more fully an instrument of grace, which "encourages others to become who they were created to be."

In view of structural analysis, these responses can be understood as anti-clericalist insofar as they disrupt and challenge the paradigm of positional power and privilege typically associated with ordination. Whereas authoritarian management styles tend to concentrate decision-making to the priest, regardless of his qualifications, management styles characterized by collaboration seek out and trust the expertise of those who are best-equipped to address a particular problem. In so doing, they open ecclesial life to new possibilities that simply were not on the table when the priest—with all his giftedness and limitation—operates as a sole-decision marker, effectively silencing the voices of non-ordained members of the Church and closing off the possibilities for new life and growth that might emerge if other voices were heard.

Furthermore, by including the experience and expertise of non-ordained members of the Church in management and decision-making, a collaborative style of management implicitly challenges the internalized clericalism of lay people and religious by showing in practice that their perspectives are vital to ecclesial life. In an anti-clericalist Church, no one should be afraid of expressing concern about a problematic homily or a questionable budgetary decision because authentically anti-clericalist spaces are always and already characterized by power-sharing and an openness to these voices. Moreover, when collaboration happens with empowerment as its endgame, there is a natural divestment of power from the individual priest to the community as a whole. In such a scenario, the flourishing of the whole Church becomes the benchmark for the success of ecclesial life. This is already happening in many places, as our respondents attest:

"The pastor of my parish is very laid back and not ego-invested. He always considers what is best for the parish community, rather than placing his own needs or the needs of the priests at the forefront. He trusts and empowers his subordinates to lead their particular ministries or areas, and provides supervision and oversight as necessary. We are striving to create a team-based approach to ministry, where each staff member supports the activities of the others."
—*Priest respondent*

Responses like these give us great hope for the future of the Church. But there is much work to done. While the responses we highlighted here are striking, it's important to note that "collaboration" appeared much less frequently than the "authoritarian" code; the same goes for "empowerment," which occurred much less frequently than "ordination" and "service." Yet we trust that with the Spirit's guidance, the Church can move ever closer to becoming a true discipleship of equals, with ordained, religious, and lay members of Christ's body working in harmony for a good that transcends any one person's position or point of view.

Recommendations for Ministerial Formation & Training

OUR SINCERE HOPE is that the work we have done to understand and map structural clericalism in relationship to clergy perpetrated sexual abuse may contribute to a healthier future for our Church. Trusting in the Spirit that makes all things new, we conclude this report with a series of recommendations for ministerial formation, sexual violence prevention training, and ecclesial life. We hope these recommendations might assert some small influence on the formation of future priests, deacons, and lay ministers, driving the Church away from the evils of structural clericalism and fostering new ways of being the Body of Christ that are consistent with the Gospel proclamation of life, love, and liberation for all God's people.

1. Provide spaces for open discussion of sex and sexuality and facilitate the development of sexual integration for all. Across the board, our respondents tell us that spaces for discussion of sex and sexuality are lacking. The literature on sexual violence shows a connection between repression and violence. Catholics need spaces where honest struggles can be acknowledged and real-life paths of virtue in sexual ethics can be identified. Such discsussions will also contribute to sexual integration and flourishing, not only for priests but for all Catholics, married and single. Acknowledgment of sexual integration as a shared goal will also help disrupt the over-idealizing of celibacy that sets clergy above and apart.

2. Encourage intimacy and vulnerability within appropriate boundaries. Much formation and training in response to sexual abuse focuses on boundaries, most often with regard to adults and children. Our data suggests that vulnerability and intimacy are also important qualities to cultivate, and boundaries between adults (especially where there are power differentials) need frank discussion, as does the undeniable tension between these goods.

3. Identify and critique sexual domination in cultural scripts. Sexual violence literature identifies cultural scripts of sexual domination as key factors in sexual abuse, but this reality is rarely acknowledged in Catholic spaces. Training and formation should include analysis of these scripts (e.g. in pornography, TV and movies, fiction, language) in comparison to narratives of sexual abuse in the Church. The Catholic ideal of sex as an expression of intimate partnership needs elevation and discussion as an alternative.

4. Include material on toxic forms of masculinity and femininity. The literature on sexual violence shows that effective formation to combat sexual abuse must include attention to gender, but our data shows a lack of critical awareness in Catholic spaces. Even while respecting Catholic understandings about sexual difference, there is room for critique of socially constructed, problematic, and influential notions of gender.

5. Create spaces and systems that foster gender inclusion and integration. The inclusion of women in seminary classrooms and on seminary faculties and the study of feminist perspectives on the Catholic faith are necessary to disrupt environments of male dominance and the perpetuation of male power. We also recommend greater inclusion of women in leadership roles throughout the Church.

6. Provide analysis on gender and violence. The reality that CPSA in the Catholic Church is perpetrated by men must be acknowledged and taught in connection with data showing that the overwhelming majority of perpetrators of sexual violence are male and the majority of victims are female.

7. Identify strategies for lay empowerment. Our data provides evidence of structural disempowerment of lay people, including lay ministers, and the rarity of "empowerment" management styles among clergy. Schools of ministry should provide opportunities for future lay ministers *and* clergy to learn skills for empowerment for themselves and those they will serve alongside. Parishes need structures that empower lay people to take greater responsibility in the Church.

8. Develop frameworks for collaboration and power-sharing that respect the expertise and experience of lay people and religious. Given the prevalence of authoritarian management styles and discussions of the exploitative use of positional power in our study, there is a clear need for new frameworks through which the expertise of lay people can be utilized, especially in parishes and seminaries. Because hierarchical environments are associated with a higher prevalence of abuse, leveling the playing field in ecclesial life is a part of constructing safer environments where sexual abuse will be less likely to occur.

9. Center theologies of the priesthood that emphasize the Spirit's guidance of ministry and collective discernment rather than the authority of the ordained. Our anti-clericalist respondents give voice to the best of contemporary theologies of the priesthood and put those theologies into practice in their ministry, but structural clericalism persists because those theologies remain marginalized. New models of priesthood focusing on lay empowerment, mutual care, transparency, openness, and vulnerability are crucial to preventing sexual violence in the Church.

10. Contemplate how our liturgical practices enshrine priestly authority and seek practices that interrupt the idea that the priest stands over the assembly in the Eucharist. Because most people learn about priesthood through liturgy, liturgical practice is of central importance. Structural clericalism should be resisted through liturgical practices that highlight priest's position as the presiding member of the assembly, center the assembly's prayer (priest and people), and joyfully encourage the full, conscious, and active participation of all God's people.

Directions for Future Research

THIS STUDY PROVIDES a detailed description of structural clericalism and its perdurance in the contemporary Catholic Church through a synthesis of sociological analyses of structures and sexual violence, theological analysis of priesthood and ministry, and an empirical study of nearly 300 ecclesial ministers. Looking at clericalism through the lens of structural analysis allows us to see clericalism as a complex phenomenon that involves three key components: sex, gender, and power.

Reading our findings in dialogue with the broader literature on sexual violence, we conclude that structural clericalism contributes to the continuing reality of CPSA by establishing environments that fulfill the conditions for abuse. Our survey of anti-clericalist efforts already underway leads us to recommend that future Catholic responses to CPSA include efforts to interrupt and dismantle structural clericalism.

Future social scientific research might use our data as a starting point toward constructing a measure of structural clericalism for use in Catholic institutions. Subsequent studies could then further examine the relationship between structural clericalism and incidences of CPSA.

Based on the successes and struggles we faced in undertaking our study, specific directions for future research might include:

- **Working to create a standalone measure of structural clericalism.** This measure might map the prevalence of structural clericalism or clarify how structural clericalism produces internalized views of priesthood that correspond with the exploitative use of sacred power, especially with respect to CPSA. The key here is to keep structural analysis at the forefront and to avoid treating clericalism as a "bad apples" phenomenon.

- **Gathering data from a larger and more diverse audience.** Our respondents offered great insights into what structural clericalism is and how it operates. However, our population was imbalanced in several ways. First, our respondents were approximately one-third clergy and two-thirds lay. A larger sample of clergy would certainly enrich our understanding of clericalism, especially as sex and gender are concerned. Second, the great majority of our sample was Jesuit-educated. We suspect that a larger sample of non-Jesuit-educated respondents might produce different results. Third, we received 0 responses from diocesan seminarians and fewer than 10 responses from diocesan priests. We suspect that a higher number of diocesan respondents would produce significantly different results, and we hope future researchers will find ways to engage these groups.

- **Analyzing how structural clericalism works in specific ethnic and cultural contexts.** Although we collected extensive demographic data from our respondents, there was not enough diversity in our sample to allow us to study how responses vary across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines. Recognizing that clericalism will not look in the same in every culture or context, we hope future research will include culture-specific studies of structural clericalism and CPSA.

- **Studying on-the-ground examples of anti-clericalism in parishes and institutions.** Our data indicates that anti-clericalist practices are already shaping many local ecclesial contexts. More extensive study of these contexts (e.g. through interviews and analyses of parish programs, liturgies, etc.) would expand our understanding of anti-clericalism and offer practical models for cultivating anti-clericalist views and practices in and beyond ecclesial contexts.

Appendix:
Origins of the Study & Development of Method

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OUR STUDY ORIGINATED from an invitation to contribute a project to *Taking Responsibility: Jesuit Educational Institutions Confront the Causes and Legacy of Sexual Abuse*, a major grant initiative co-sponsored by Fordham University's Department of Theology and Francis and Ann Curran Center for American Catholic Studies. Julie had already been part of a team at JST that <u>conducted an informal study</u> on their school's complicity with and resistance to clericalism. To our knowledge, this study is the only seminary study on clericalism in the world. We proposed a study that would explore the links between clericalism as a *structural* reality and clergy perpetrated sexual abuse (CPSA). Our early hope was that our study could achieve three interrelated goals: 1) to understand what clericalism is and how it structures ecclesial life; 2) to develop an instrument for measuring structural clericalism; 3) to articulate strategies and develop tools for confronting the legacy of clericalism in relation to CPSA, what we term "anti-clericalism." All these goals flow from our deep love of the Church and a common commitment to making the Church a safer, healthier home for all God's people.

The first challenge we had to tackle was how to make structural clericalism visible. After reviewing existing research and meeting with Thomas G. Plante and Gerdenio (Sonny) Manuel, SJ—two longtime leaders in the study of CPSA—we began to develop a survey instrument that we hoped would allow us to identify and measure structural clericalism. In keeping with previous work done on CPSA, our instrument integrated psychological measures of characteristics we hypothesized might be associated with clericalism (i.e. narcissism, dogmatism, lack of empathy). We thought integrating these factors with our study of sexual integration and formation would allow us to measure and understand clericalism in relationship to CPSA.

Our instrument included seven psychological measures:
- Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (1960; 13-item Reynolds short form)
- Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (Eisler and Skidmore, 1987; 16-item short form)
- Feminine Gender Role Stress Scale (Gillespie and Eisler, 1992)
- Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale (Plante/Mejia, 2016)
- Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (Schutte, 1998)
- Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin and Terry, 1988; 16-item short form)
- Updated Dogmatism Scale (Shearman and Levine, 2006)

The items from each instrument were randomized for participants and disaggregated for analysis.

In addition to these measures, we created a 34-item quantitative instrument with questions about sex and sexuality, seminary formation, celibacy, socialization, exposure to women theologians and theories of the construction of gender, and related factors. We hoped this measure would function as a standalone measure of structural clericalism.

Our survey also included open-ended questions that allowed respondents to reflect in narrative form on their experience in ministry. We developed these questions over a lengthy period of discussion with our research team (Crystal Catalan, Jeffrey Dorr, SJ, Leah Harris, Ellen Jewett, Barbara Anne Kozee, and Madeleine LaForge). Then, after a trial run, we sent our survey out to deans, bishops, provincials, and other "gatekeepers" of seminaries and schools of ministry to recruit participants for our study.

As stated in the study, our recruitment efforts were met with modest success. In trying to recruit participants, we felt acutely the restrictions associated with structural clericalism in the recruitment process. In most cases,

the "gates" were tightly kept, and we were denied access to valuable potential respondents. This outcome marked an important early finding for us, in that the restrictions we encountered appeared consistent with our theory of clericalism. In clericalist contexts, those holding power would lack incentive to take actions that might invite people in formation for ministry to consider questions that could disrupt or challenge the status quo. We also suspect that many people might not want to be associated with our study for fear of being labeled as clericalist or being exposed along the lines of the questions we asked about gender and sexuality or one's understanding of the priesthood.

Further, the fact that over two-thirds of the almost 300 responses we received came from ministers educated in Jesuit institutions likely means that our respondents are biased towards agreement with our theory of clericalism. While there is work to be done across the board, our data shows that Jesuit-educated ministers are more likely than non-Jesuit-educated ministers to speak in anti-clericalist terms. Our inability to access dioceses and diocesan seminaries may mean that our data leans in one direction.

Despite these limitations, our respondents' critical awareness enabled us to go deeper into clericalism and anti-clericalism, providing a solid basis for future research. And so, working with Dr. Jasmín Llamas of SCU's Counseling Psychology Department, we began to analyze the responses we received. Our quantitative items employed a 7-point Likert scale, with the low pole (1) representing strong disagreement and the high pole (7) representing strong agreement. After reviewing responses, we determined that our most meaningful data emerged when we dichotomized our data, simplifying high-end responses (6 and 7) into "agree" and low-end responses (1 and 2) into "disagree," and omitting mid-range responses (3-5).

As our quantitative analysis continued, two important conclusions quickly emerged. First, we did not find a strong connection between clericalism as we understood it and the psychological factors we measured. Across the board, our respondents demonstrated relatively high levels of compassion and empathy and relatively low levels of narcissism, dogmatism, and gender role stress, leaving us with very little to work with on the psychological front. Moreover, as we clarified our theory, we concluded that even though these factors are socially shaped, they are ultimately individual, not structural, factors. We ultimately decided to leave these measures aside and took up the sociological approach that guides our report.

Second, our attempt to create a standalone instrument to measure structural clericalism was unsuccessful, as statistical analysis showed that our instrument lacked internal coherence. Working with our statistician, we attempted to find coherence among sets of questions on specific themes (e.g. sexual integration, education). These subgroups demonstrated modest levels of coherence, but they still failed to demonstrate an adequate level of statistical coherence. These outcomes led us to abandon our quest for a standalone measure of clericalism and to analyze our data on a question-by-question basis.

In the end, we came to see this limitation as an important success. Since this study marks the first of its kind, we needed data to flesh out our theory of clericalism. Interpreting our data on a question-by-question basis allowed us to do this well. We began to interpret the data we received from individual questions through the lens of gender, sex, and power—the three factors that ground our theory of clericalism. Guided by Dr. Llamas, we performed in-depth statistical analyses on our quantitative data to track trends and identify significant findings. One of the most important outcomes of this work was the discovery of statiscially significant differences between the responses of people educated in Jesuit institutions and those educated in non-Jesuit settings on several important issues.

We also coded the huge amounts of narrative data we received. The coding process clarified the themes, concepts, and concerns our respondents emphasized, provided a means for measuring respondents' awareness of the three themes of our study (gender, sex, and power), and allowed us to measure the prevalence of clericalism and anti-clericalism among our respondents.

This analysis took place in two phases. First, using thematic analysis, we read our data carefully, searching for themes and 'code words' that captured the core ideas our respondents brought forward (the key to thematic analysis is to avoid imposing one's theory on the data and to let the data speak for itself). The coding schema on p. 20 details the codes that emerged from our analysis. Once we set and defined our codes, we divided the data and coded individually before coming back together to discuss the results of our work. This process helped us identify key themes and to find quotations that illustrate key aspects of our theory.

Second, using content analysis, we coded our data to assess each respondent's critical awareness of the link between sex, gender, and power, clericalism, and CPSA. In content analysis, researchers bring a set of well-defined codes to the data and apply those codes on the basis of key words or phrases in a respondent's answers. After defining what "significant," "some," and "no" awareness of each link looks like, we handed the coding off to two of our research assistants, who coded a subset of our data. We reviewed their coding for consistency, refined our definitions, and repeated the process. Once their coding appeared consistent, they coded the entire data set. Letting our research assistants handle this work ensured higher levels of objectivity, since our proximity to the data might make us biased toward or against particular responses.

Once this work was finished, we used content analysis once more, coding each respondent as "clericalist" or "anti-clericalist" in keeping with our overarching theory. We ultimately decided not to use this coding in our report, as it tended toward seeing clericalism as an individual, "bad apples" phenomenon.

This work provides the basis for the analysis offered in our report.