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How gender transforms, yet persists in shaping sacred authority: The case of the Episcopal Church U.S.A.

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology (Science Studies)

by

Catherine Crowder

Committee in charge:

Professor Mary Blair-Loy, Chair
Professor John Evans
Professor Martha Lampland
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Professor Robert Westman

2022

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University of California San Diego

2022

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, conversations with whom shaped me in ways I am still discovering. Some conversations get interrupted, but their influence remains. And to my grandmother whose stories of working as a sociologist fascinated me.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ECUSA	Episcopal Church U.S.A.
ACNA	Anglican Church in North America

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Special thanks to Will for translating my sketches of monsters into clear figures.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

How gender transforms, yet persists in shaping sacred authority:
The case of the Episcopal Church U.S.A.

by

Catherine Crowder

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology (Science Studies)

University of California San Diego, 2022

Professor Mary Blair-Loy, Chair

My dissertation's story begins in 1976, when the General Convention of the Episcopal Church U.S.A. (ECUSA) voted to approve the ordination of women to the priesthood, which had previously been closed to women. In the years since, both women and men have been ordained to the priesthood in ECUSA and empowered to hold the sacred authority to consecrate

sacraments. This drastic shift in the practices of sacramental ministry is a meaningful change to the material and immaterial dimensions of religious practice, and gender as a lived reality for ECUSA adherents. In this study, I examine the reverberations of the changes associated with women's ordination, drawing on interviews with ECUSA clergy and laity to examine how these respondents are still wrestling with questions of meaning and practice. I offer a theoretical formulation of gender not as one social structure, but rather as a multiplicity of social structures bound together by their common origin in the social organization of reproduction. Each instance of gender as a social structure, including sacramental ministry, is open to change, following the process I show unfolding in ECUSA: changing practices, discarding old schemas, making meaning by importing meaning from other instance of gender as social structure, and building new schemas which oppose one another therefore constructing two new instances of social structure where previously there had been one. My primary theoretical contribution in this dissertation is to propose a new model, The Hydra Model, which illustrates this process of social change to gender, and which I argue can be applied to other instances of change to gender as social structure. Empirically, I contribute a case study of how such changes unfold, showing what happens to the meaning of sacraments, to the immaterial dimension of sacred authority, when the gender of sacramental ministers broadens to include women as well as men. Understanding how meanings change in structures as apparently eternal as gender and religion equips social analysts to contend with the reverberations of changes like the approval of women's ordination, and to anticipate how such changes to practice might be visible in meanings and deeply-held beliefs.

Chapter One: The Hydra

When do societies reproduce themselves, and when do societies change? How can we understand the relationship between social stability and social change? In particular, what is the relationship between social stability and social change in those areas of social life that are very slow to change, those that appear especially durable? Gender is one such dimension of social life that is usually incredibly slow to change. Another is religious meaning and practice. In American social life, both gender and religion are viewed as very slow to change. Both gender and religion show remarkable stability, often remaining largely unchanged for centuries at a time. Yet, despite their remarkable stability, neither gender nor religion are eternal, and in fact do change. In the context of the religious institution examined in this dissertation, gender's meaning and its role in shaping religious practices has changed quite dramatically in the past fifty years. How then to explain moments when an area of social life as stable as gender, within the context of the presumed stability of religious meaning and practice, changes?

This dissertation's story begins in 1976, when the General Convention of the Episcopal Church U.S.A. (ECUSA) voted to approve the ordination of women to the priesthood, which had previously been closed to women. In the years since that vote, women and men have both been ordained to the priesthood in ECUSA and the consecration of religious sacraments in ECUSA is performed by both men and women, in contrast to centuries of an all-male clergy. Such a drastic shift to the practices of sacramental ministry is a meaningful change to religious practice and the associated meanings for ECUSA adherents. Similarly, women being allowed to not only inhabit the pews but also to stand at the altar in ECUSA churches represents a significant change to gender, as gender no longer shapes women's sacred lives as it had for centuries. These changes impact both the material and immaterial dimensions of religious practice and gender as a lived

reality for ECUSA adherents. In this study, I examine the reverberations of the changes associated with women's ordination, as ECUSA clergy and laity are still wrestling with questions of meaning and practice. Insights gained from ECUSA adherents' experiences are a valuable source of information about how people navigate stability and change.

Theoretically, I answer the question of how social change to such an enduring social structure as gender unfolds, using gender in ECUSA religion as my case. By tracing what ECUSA adherents say about their understandings of gender and sacred authority in their religious lives, this dissertation illuminates how social actors navigating social change make new practices meaningful. I show how actors discard old meanings that are no longer operative as schemas in the social structure undergoing change, and import meanings from other structures to make sense of the new forms of practice they encounter. When actors import new meanings and develop new schemas to make practices meaningful to them, the result is a splintering of the previously-stable social structure into two new forms, which include new schemas that are dialectically opposed to one another. I offer a theoretical formulation of gender not as one social structure, but rather as a multiplicity of social structures bound together by their common origin in the social organization of reproduction. Each instance of gender as a social structure is open to the change process I have described: changing practices, discarding old schemas, making meaning by importing meaning from other social structures, and building new schemas which oppose one another therefore building two new instances of social structure where previously there had been one. My primary theoretical contribution in this dissertation is to propose a new model, The Hydra Model, which illustrates this process of social change, and which I argue can be applied to other instances of change to gender as social structure.

Empirically, I contribute a case study of how such changes unfold, using The Hydra Model to frame my findings as to how ECUSA adherents understand gender matters to sacred authority now. I tell the story of what happens to the meaning of sacraments, to the immaterial dimension of sacred authority, when the gender of sacramental ministers broadens to include women as well as men. ECUSA is a unique case because it is a Mainline Protestant denomination which places the consecration of sacraments at the center of its regular religious practice: the question of who can legitimately hold sacred authority comes up every week at Sunday services. While other foundational studies of women's ordination have examined how gender shapes the career outcomes of clergy men and women, this study is unique in its focus on the meanings adherents make of gender and sacred authority. In recent years, the global Anglican Communion (of which ECUSA is a member church) has been roiled by internal disputes over questions of how gender and sexuality matter to sacred authority. This study of ECUSA adherents' beliefs about the meaning of gender to sacred authority contributes an important story of how these meanings can change over time, splitting and evolving. Understanding how meanings change in structures as apparently eternal as gender and religion equips social analysts to contend with the reverberations of changes like the approval of women's ordination, and to anticipate how such changes to practice might be visible in meanings and deeply-held beliefs.

All recent presiding bishops of the ECUSA have visited the U.K. and participated in liturgies in their capacity as head of a national church within the global Anglican Communion (the international church body made up of churches descended from the Church of England). Only one recent presiding bishop of ECUSA was asked not the wear their mitre, the hat reserved

only for bishops and worn when vested as symbol of their office. The difference between that presiding bishop and all the others before and since was her gender.

In June of 2010, Katharine Jefferts Schori was presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, having been elected to the position in 2006. She was the first woman to serve as presiding bishop, and the first woman to serve as a primate, or head of a national church anywhere in the Anglican Communion. In June of 2010, Jefferts Schori was invited to participate in services at Southwark Cathedral, in the U.K. Upon arriving at Southwark Cathedral, Jefferts Schori received a communication from the archbishop of Canterbury informing her that she was not to wear her mitre[1] in Southwark Cathedral. This was highly unusual, as bishops generally wear their mitres when vested. Jefferts Schori instead carried her mitre under her arm in procession. The event was widely considered by the press a significant snub to Jefferts Schori (Brown, 2010; Burke, 2010; *Female US bishop forced to carry mitre in 'snub' by Lambeth Palace*, 2010; Muir, 2019).

The archbishop of Canterbury had concerns that Jefferts Schori wearing her mitre would cause discomfort among members of the Church of England, and the broader Anglican Communion, who did not yet approve women's election to the role of bishop (some national churches still barred women from ordination to the priesthood). And so, the outward signs of her clerical rank were to be minimized at the event. This request had not been made to visiting primates from other national churches, but Jefferts Schori's visit to Southwark was unique in that Jefferts Schori was not a man. Why, if a woman is properly ordained and elected to her role as

[1] Preliminary analysis of my interview data suggests that norms of clerical dress and vesture (wearing vestments when performing sacred rites) are influenced by a clergy person's gender, and I suspect that in future work I will find further evidence supporting The Hydra Model by drawing out how gender performance, personal identity, and norms of clergy dress vary across my respondents' experiences. Scholarly work on the subject is not yet well-developed, one exception is Page (2013) "The Scrutinized Priest".

presiding bishop would signs of her office cause discomfort? What's so threatening about a woman bishop?

Concurrently, in the U.S., Jefferts Schori's tenure as presiding bishop was marked by numerous acrimonious lawsuits between ECUSA and congregations and diocese who sought to break away (Masci, 2014). At issue for most breakaways was one of two central concerns around gender and sexuality in the church. First, several of these congregations and diocese did not accept women's ordinations as valid, including Jefferts Schori's own ordination as a priest. This meant that these congregations and dioceses thought it was impossible for her to be presiding bishop as her election to that office, or to the episcopate at all, depended on her status as a priest, and they did not accept that a woman could be ordained a priest. Second, many of the breakaways rejected the ordination, and full inclusion in church life, of LGBTQ+ Episcopalians. Tensions and dissent around gender and sexuality that bubbled over since the 2000s; as of 2011, Pew reported that four dioceses and "numerous parishes" had broken with ECUSA. The resultant legal battles, in which cases were brought in 20 states (Lupu et al., 2011), over whether a congregation or the national church body held ownership rights over the church buildings and properties point to the continued relevance of understanding debates around women's ordination, even nearly fifty years after ECUSA first approved women's ordination in 1976.

Though women's ordination has been approved since 1976, and though women are nearing parity in the ECUSA clergy, and are continuing to make gains across levels of church hierarchy, including record numbers elected as bishops in recent years (Schjonberg, 2019), gender, and by extension sexuality, are still salient issues in ECUSA church life. This project is undertaken to understand how gender persists in shaping ECUSA, despite considerable shifts to

make institutional practices fully inclusive of women, and more recently LGBTQ+ adherents, in church life.

In this dissertation, I consider what gender means to contemporary adherents of ECUSA, and what this case means for the broader study of gender and social change. In *Renaissance Revivals*, Griswold offers an example of a study that showcases the usefulness of an original heuristic by using it to explicate a compelling empirical case (Griswold, 1986). Griswold posits The Cultural Diamond as a heuristic for the analysis of cultural objects as they are both archive and activity in social action (Griswold, 1986). I draw on her example, laying out my empirical case to present the usefulness of The Hydra Model, which I offer as a tool for analysts of gender seeking to understand how change in gender as social structure occurs, and how such change can be expected to be constrained. The Hydra Model is a model because it not only offers a chart for analysts to follow when examining instances of change in gender as social structure, but it also posits a causal direction by showing how any such change is constrained by the social organization of reproduction, the source of all gendered meanings and practices in society. In addition to the theoretical contribution of The Hydra Model, this dissertation also offers an important empirical contribution by showing how gender as social structure can and does change, using the case of how gender has mattered, and does matter, to the legitimacy of the sacred authority of ECUSA clergy. Women's ordination to the priesthood in ECUSA offers a fascinating window into how gender can be removed as a barrier to professional attainment, but the meanings that actors make of gender can still matter tremendously to social life.

In this introductory chapter, I preview the case, give foundational theory underlying my approach, and introduce both my study design and The Hydra Model. First, I will explain why

women's ordination in ECUSA is a rich case for exploring change in gender as social structure. Second, I will trace gender as a theoretically important concept in social theory. I will draw inspiration from Cecelia Ridgeway's arguments about gender's persistence, and will pay particular attention to how Barbara Risman, has approached gender as social structure. In defining social structure, I will build from William Sewell's work. Third, I will argue that a new model is necessary to adequately consider questions of how gender as social structure changes over time, and I will posit that The Hydra Model is well suited to analysis of such cases. Fourth, I will outline my research design and methodological approach. Fifth, and finally, I will provide an overview of the arguments of each of the chapters of this dissertation.

Women's Ordination

ECUSA is among many Mainline Protestant denominations in the U.S. that began admitting women to ordained ministry in the second half of the 20th Century. Before 1976, ECUSA's institutional logic included a form of gender essentialism that required excluding women from priestly ordination until 1976. Currently, gender cannot be considered as a basis for evaluating potential ordinands in ECUSA. Did the form of gender essentialism that infused ECUSA until only a few decades ago endure in the beliefs and practices of Episcopalians, and if so, how? If the previously powerful form of gender essentialism was removed from Episcopalians' thinking entirely, then what does gender mean for religious practice and sacred authority in ECUSA now?

Studying gender and ordination in ECUSA as a case of a profession that has recently (past 50 years) gender integrated gives insight into what happens when the relationship between meaning and symbol (in this case gender and the priest) are changed in the practices of a cultural

group bound together in an institution (Episcopal Church U.S.A. – ECUSA). Before 1976, only men could hold sacred authority as an ordained clergy persons[2] in ECUSA, but in the intervening decades women have been ordained as priests, elected as bishops, and served at every level of the church's hierarchy. The practices governing sacred authority held gendered meanings before 1976 that served to exclude women, so understanding what meanings are in place now justifying sacred authority can help illuminate how meaning systems change when the gendering of practices change (Wuthnow, 1987). This case is made more interesting by both ECUSA's status as an elite and historically influential church, and the sacred dimension of these deeply held beliefs about gender and authority.

When women began to be ordained as priests, ECUSA's practices changed. The question motivating this project is, given these changes in practice, what happened to the meaning system (the arrangement of symbols and meanings, part of a worldview often specific to an institution (Wuthnow, 1987)) that had previously necessitated women's exclusion from ordination? How do people active in ECUSA today understand gender to matter to the sacred authority of clergy and to church life more broadly?

[2] There are three orders of ordained clergy ministry in ECUSA. Deacons, priests, and bishops are all ordained in sacred rites. Only the roles of priest and bishop were specifically all-men before 1976. However, women who were deacons were separated from men who were deacons in a women-specific order called the Order of Deaconesses. The Order of Deaconesses was not consistently employed as clergy people across ECUSA, their roles varied substantially across time and place. Men who were deacons were overwhelmingly ordained as deacons as a precursor ordination to their ordination as priests. In the years since 1976, The Order of Deacons (now gender-integrated) has been increasingly formalized and the role of deacon is increasingly considered its own clergy vocation, separate from that of priest. This dissertation is concerned with priestly ordination throughout because priests are empowered to consecrate, while deacons are not. This means that priests can perform Eucharist. Much of the important debate around gender and ordination centered on the correctness of women holding the sacred authority necessary to consecrate, and so the scope of this project is gender and priestly ordination.

Theorizing gender

Gender plays a central role in organizing social life. One puzzle of particular interest to scholars has been gender's endurance and relative stability despite considerable change in post-industrial societies. The nuclear family ideal built around a married man and woman persists, alongside cultural norms that presume men should inhabit the world of work, and women the domestic sphere. Many institutional forms appear shaped around this presumed normal form for intimate life. This family arrangement is not necessarily the most efficient, or the best for promoting human flourishing, yet it endures. Cecilia Ridgeway has suggested that the cisheterosexual nuclear family is itself the basis for the persistence of gender bias and gender-based inequality, and calls for attention to family life as the primary site of gender reproduction, and possible disruption. Barbara Risman's gender structure theory posits that gender's endurance and stability are due to its structural features: its ability to appear as natural because of its embeddedness across social life, and its presence across multiple analytic levels of social life – the individual, the interactional, and the institutional. In her formulation of gender structure theory, Risman also posits that individuals hold agency within this structure, and suggests that attending to how individual actors exercise their agency is important for understanding change processes. Structural change, in William B. Sewell's view, is a change to the interplay of the material and immaterial dimensions of social life, which he develops as resources and schemas. I build from Sewell's work on culture and cultural change an analysis of change in an institution where how gender matters to the allocation of resources, and how gender's meaning in institutional schema has shifted. I argue that gender is a collection of many social structures bound together by their common foundation in the social organization of reproduction, and open

to change as individual actors wrestle with questions of meaning as they engage in normalized practices.

Gender is foundational to social organization

In *The Division of Labor in Society*, Emile Durkheim sets out to explain how societies hold together (Durkheim, 1893). He draws a distinction early in the text between those societies held together by mechanical solidarity, on the basis of similarity between individuals' social positioning and roles, and organic solidarity, on the basis of difference between individuals' social positioning and roles, with societies bound by organic solidarity those he deemed more advanced, calling them "the most cultured people" (Durkheim, 1893). The most fundamental form of organic solidarity, according to Durkheim, is marriage. According to Durkheim, cisheterosexual marriage as the only acceptable institutional context for sex and procreation is foundational to any society held together by organic solidarity, for it is within marriage that human actors are confronted with, affectionate toward, and dependent upon, the other. Marriage being the central organizing institution for individual's intimate lives means that members of these societies are constantly interacting across a socially-significant difference when engaging with their opposite-gender spouse. Thus, for Durkheim, marriage becomes the prototypical relational model for organic solidarity.

Durkheim leans heavily on marriage as both a metaphor and an idealized example of organic solidarity to further his claims about what constitutes a developed society. Though he is clear that people can organize sexual behavior and reproductive labor in other ways, Durkheim argues that societies that are not organized around marriage are less complex, less advanced, and less cultured. Durkheim's examples of so-called less cultured societies include those of North

America, Samoa, Hawaii, and New Zealand, suggesting this his argument is at least at some level seeking to assert the superiority of his own society. He points to high levels of sexual dimorphism between men and women as proof both of a society's adherence to marriage norms consistent with his view of organic solidarity in reproductive life, and of a society's complexity and advancement (low levels of sexual dimorphism, by extension, are presumed to signal primitivity). Durkheim's theory of the division of labor begins from an assertion that the division of reproductive labor according to the rules of patriarchy is fundamental to a societies' members joining the ranks of "the most cultured people" (Durkheim, 1893). Much from *The Division of Labor in Society* has been critiqued in the 130 years since its publication, and rightly so. But what if, setting aside his questionable ranking of more and less cultured societies, Durkheim is correct that a critical foundation of Western society is its particular social organization of reproduction? What if the resiliency of gender in the face of social change in wealthy, industrialized, Western societies has less to do with the particular forms of gender made meaningful in social structure, and more to do with the way those meanings can change significantly while still preserving the patriarchal compulsions that organize reproduction at its core?

Analytically describing gender

In *Framed by Gender*, Cecelia Ridgeway begins her argument explaining the persistence of gender inequality with an assertion that gender's persistence ultimately stems from the commonplace elision of sex and gender when individuals seek to self-identify, or to categorize others (Ridgeway, 2011). Ridgeway builds from Lorber's work on the distinction between sex – which is the physical observable differences between male and female bodies – and gender –

which is the social identity and accompanying set of expectations associated with each prototypical sexed body as either a man or woman (Lorber, 1994; Ridgeway, 2011). Because sex/gender is so commonly used interactionally to set expectations for how individuals will relate to each other, Ridgeway writes that its influence extends far beyond the portions of social life directly engaged with reproduction, which is the dimension of social life most directly shaped by sex difference between bodies. She writes,

> The everyday use of sex/gender as a basic cultural tool for organizing social relations accounts … for why cultural meanings associated with gender do not stay within the bounds of contexts associated with sex and reproduction. Instead, the use of gender as a framing device spreads gendered meanings, including assumptions about inequality embedded in those meanings, to all spheres of social life that are carried out through social relationships. (Ridgeway, 2011)

Because gender is a nearly universal reference point when defining a social interaction, its influence is expansive, and the universality of expectations about individuals based on gender ensures that these expectations become applicable in social situations that have nothing to do with sex/gender. According to Ridgeway, this ease of movement across social situations leads to gender inequality's broad presence in social life. She writes, "Through gender's role in organizing social relations … gender inequality is rewritten into new economic and social arrangements as they emerge, preserving that inequality in modified form over socioeconomic transformations." (Ridgeway, 2011). In other words, Ridgeway expects that gender inequality will persist despite significant social change, providing that social change does not dislodge the nuclear family.

In her consideration of how change to gender could unfold, Ridgeway summarizes her argument with particular attention to what social changes would result in the destabilizing of gender as an organizing frame for social life. Ridgeway reiterates her argument that gender rises to salience at certain moments in social life, and that in such moments, a frame that combines

beliefs about sex and beliefs about gender becomes the dominant frame through which people understand a situation. She uses this idea of gender as a frame to explain why some social situations come to be heavily influenced by gender, while others do not. She points to gender's inescapability in the organization of home and family life as an important source of its persistence despite broader social change. Her account ends with,

> …the contemporary heterosexual family, then, finds itself in a kind of ground zero in the current struggle over change and persistence in gender inequality. For both men and women in these families, the material incentives for women to increase their achievement in the labor force are only increasing. Yet to really release women to realize their full potential in the labor force while giving children the care they need requires changes in both the household division of labor and the world of work that challenge traditional beliefs about gender difference and gender prerogatives. Men must take over a more equal share of duties at home, and workplaces must become more family friendly. (Ridgeway, 2011)

Ridgeway sees the inequalities between men and women in cisheterosexual nuclear families as the basis for broader gender inequality. In this view, without changes to how care work is distributed according to gender, broader moves to shift how gender frames social interactions may be impossible. This observation may help to ground calls for men to reconsider the arrangement of their time and attention, but it does not help sociologists explain cases in which change to what gender means to framing an interaction have shifted significantly despite the broad persistence of the nuclear family. From Ridgeway, I keep her astute observations as to how gender's influence on social life is rooted in the structures that organize reproductive life. In contrast to Ridgeway, though I too find that gender is remarkably persistent, I focus on an instance of remarkable change to what gender means for the meanings and practices of an institution. Changes to gender, like those seen in ECUSA, are difficult to fully describe using the model of gender as a frame, leading me to develop and employ the Hydra Model. In the Hydra Model, I incorporate a form of Ridgeway's prediction that the social organization of reproductive

life will serve as the basis for stability in gender as social structure, and offer an empirical illustration of how that process can unfold.

Gender as a social structure

Barbara Risman developed gender structure theory as part of her analytic project to make gender visible to analysts as a social structure, on the level of other major social structures as economics, politics, race and class. She argues that sociologists must consider gender as a social structure in order to properly understand its persistence, its profound influence in individuals' lives, and its potential openings for change. Risman positions her theory as part of "the more recent integrative approaches" which "treat gender as a socially constructed stratification system." (Risman, 2004). For Risman, gender is socially constructed and is a consequential social structure, shaping social life with similar impact to political economy.

Gender structure theory contends that gender is a social construction, that it is intended to justify inequality, and that it operates across social dimensions. Risman too builds from Lorber, who clearly laid out how gender is built from, but distinct from, embodied sex differences (Lorber, 1994). Though actors may observe anatomical differences between men and women, those differences – sex – are not sufficient to justify the differences experienced as part of gender. Gender is a social construction, based on sex, that supposes men and women are fundamentally different sorts of humans. Lorber puts it, "the continuing purpose of gender as a modern social institution is to construct women as a group to be subordinate to men as a group." (Lorber, 1994). For Risman, gender's purpose is to justify inequality, and that goal is accomplished across dimensions of social life, implying that gender is operative across dimensions of social life and not only as an identity or a socialized sense of self. Seeing gender

as a social structure enables Risman to argue that differences between men's and women's social actions has to do with structural position, not just with individual personality alone.

Rather than positioning gender as solely an individually-experienced identity, or as solely an institutionally-enforced category of difference, Risman sees gender as structuring social life across analytic dimensions. She writes, "The gender structure differentiates opportunities and constraints based on sex category and thus has consequences on three dimensions: (1) At the individual level, for the development of gendered selves; (2) during interaction as men and women face difference cultural expectations even when they fill identical structural positions; and (3) in institutional domains where explicit regulations regarding resource distribution and material goods are gender specific." (Risman, 2004). The differences in experiences and life outcomes between men and women are therefore shown to be produced by the presence of gender as a social structure at every dimension of social life. Following Risman, viewing gender as a social structure allows researchers to anticipate that gender will be operating at these different levels of social life, and so gender's impact on social outcomes can be investigated everywhere it might be present. For Risman, the persistence of gender, despite its implication in many negative outcomes, is in its naturalizing of difference and its embeddedness in the selves of social actors. She explains, "As long as women and men see themselves as different kinds of people, then women will be unlikely to compare their life options to those of men. Therein lies the power of gender. In a world where sexual anatomy is used to dichotomize human beings into types, the differentiation itself diffuses both claims to and expectations for gender equality. The social structure is not experienced as oppressive if men and women do not see themselves as similarly situated." (Risman, 2004). Without attributing agency to gender, its power in organizing social life is visible in how intimately actors' senses of self are shaped by gender, and

how susceptible that makes them to inequality as any differences in outcomes can be naturalized as congruent with the self.

However, change does happen in social life, including change in gender as a social structure. Risman's description of social change with respect to gender hinges on the potential avenues for individuals to act against the rules present in gender as a social structure. She writes, "Furthermore, gendered institutions depend on our willingness to do gender, and when we rebel, we can sometimes change the institutions themselves. … How social change occurs is an empirical question, not an a priori theoretical assumption. … We need, however to also study change and equality when it occurs rather than only documenting inequality." (Risman, 2004). Gender structure theory is not intended to be a theory of change, but rather to be a theory that sets out some analytic guidelines for the study of change.

Risman's theory does not prescribe how change to gender as a social structure unfolds; she does not present rules or patterns for such change. Rather, she encourages researchers to seek out sites of potential change and investigate how change to gender as a social structure can be accomplished. Of change, she writes,

> Once institutional changes occur, they reverberate at the level of cultural expectations and perhaps even on identities. And the cycle of change continues. No mechanistic predictions are possible because human beings sometimes reject the structure itself and, by doing so, change it. Much time and energy can be wasted trying to validate which dimension is more central to inequality or social change. Instead, the feminist project is better served by finding empirical answers to particular questions and by identifying how particular processes explain outcomes in need of change. If our goal is to do scholarship that contributes to transforming society, the identification of the processes that explain particular outcomes is the first step in effectively changing those processes and subsequently the outcomes themselves. (Risman, 2004)

Change, according to Risman, is likely to echo across dimensions of social life, and the impacts of changes across dimensions cannot be predicted from observations of the persistence of gender

as a social structure. Change should therefore be investigated on a case-by-case basis, with analysis focused on tracing how change at one level of analysis will impact other parts of social life. Risman positions her theory as part of a broader feminist project to seek changes to gender-based inequalities, and suggests that seeing gender as a social structure can aid in investigating where and how efforts at change should be directed. Scarborough and Risman pick up this theme, writing, "By conceptualizing processes of inequality with gender structure theory, we can be better positioned to identify the opportunities for progressive change and the areas where we will see resistance." (Scarborough & Risman, 2017). What gender structure theory cannot easily contend with is instability in gender as a social structure, and how to understand incomplete change, or the splintering of institutions prompted by gender change. Building on Risman's original formulation of gender structure theory, I will argue that gender should be considered not a single social structure, but rather a group of structures of common origin, each comprised of their own schemas and resources.

Structure: Resources and Schemas

Gender structure theory enables the analyst to move between levels of analysis, looking at individual's senses of self, interactions between individuals, and macro-level institutions, as necessary. However, structure is not unitary at any of those levels of analysis, but is, instead better thought of as itself an interaction between available resources and schemas that dictate their proper usage. Sewell writes that "Structures, then, should be defined as composed simultaneously of schemas, which are virtual, and of resources, which are actual.
If structures are defined in this sense, then it must be true that schemas are the effects of resources, just as resources are the effects of schemas." (Sewell, 1992). Resources and schemas

mutually entail one another, necessitating and justifying the particular forms social life takes in social structures.

In describing how resources and schemas are related to each other in social structure, Sewell references several times the example of a Roman Catholic priest performing mass. This example turns out to be especially fruitful for this project, given the sacramental similarity between the Roman Catholic mass and the ECUSA mass – though ECUSA is not definite on the subject of transubstantiation the mass is considered a sacrament, can only be performed by ordained priests, and is central to Sunday services. Sewell uses this example to point out several key features of social structures.

First, resources are both material and immaterial. Though it is more straightforward to posit that resources are the material features of social life, and schemas the immaterial, the reality is more complex. Resources can include immaterial things like knowledge, meaning, emotions, and relationships. Sewell explains, “By definition, human bodies, like any other material objects, cannot be virtual. But what about knowledge and emotional commitments, the mental aspects of human resources? Examples might be the Roman Catholic priest’s power to consecrate and hear confession, children’s sense of obligation toward their mothers, or the fear and reverence that subjects feel for their king.” (Sewell, 1992). The power to consecrate is shown here to be a rich example for how immaterial resources can be mobilized to enact schemas and uphold social structure.

The priest's ability to mobilize resources depends on his[3] position with respect to standards for professionalization and sacred authority, which Sewell sketches as two schemas both operative in the performance of the mass.

> It is not unreasonable to claim that human resources are the products of schemas. … The priest's power to consecrate the host derives from schemas operating at two rather different levels. First, a priest's training has given him mastery of a wide range of explicit and implicit techniques of knowledge and self-control that enable him to perform satisfactorily as a priest. And second, he has been raised to the dignity of the priesthood by an ordination ceremony that, through the laying on of hands by a bishop, has mobilized the power of apostolic succession and thereby made him capable of an apparently miraculous feat – transforming bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. … Human resources, these examples suggest, may be thought of as manifestations and consequences of the enactment of cultural schemas." (Sewell, 1992)

Professionalization has granted the priest resources that he can use to perform the mass, many of which are consistent with expertise. The second schema Sewell points to, that of apostolic succession as a basis for legitimizing the sacred authority of the priest, is particularly germane for this project. Apostolic succession, as an agreed-upon basis for the legitimacy of a priest's sacred authority, powerfully connects the present moment of consecration with the entirely of Christian history back to the person of Jesus himself in the minds of adherents. When the sacrament of communion is consecrated and then distributed to the people, their reception of the offered wafer, and their concurrent experience of mystical connection or spiritual awareness is proof of the successful co-constitution of resource and schema. Sewell writes, "Communion therefore demonstrates to the communicants the reality and power of the rule of apostolic succession that made the priest a priest. In short, if resources are instantiations or embodiments of schemas, they therefore inculcate and justify the schema as well." (Sewell, 1992). Schemas

[3] Roman Catholicism still does not recognize the ordination of women, so the gender in this example holds in the particular case of that church.

can become manifest in physical instantiations of the meanings they set forth, becoming resources in the process, and the mutual reinforcement of resources and schemas is accomplished.

For Sewell, change is possible because structure must constantly be accomplished. Resources and schemas co-construct social structure through social action – nothing about social structure is a foregone conclusion impervious to change. He writes, “Schemas not empowered or generated by resources would eventually be abandoned and forgotten, just as resources without cultural schemas to direct their use would eventually dissipate and decay. Sets of schemas and resources may properly be said to constitute *structures* only when they mutually imply and sustain each other over time.” (Sewell, 1992). Structures are stable mutual entailments of resource and schema, and when that stability is disrupted, structures can change. Sewell summarizes, “Structures, then, are sets of mutually sustaining schemas and resources that empower and constrain social action and that tend to be reproduced by that social action. But their reproduction is never automatic.” (Sewell, 1992). Disjointed or incomplete change in a social structure, then, can be seen as evidence for change in the relationship of resources and schemas, or for change in the distribution of resources, or in the power of schemas to compel action. Investigators of social change should, per Sewell’s view of structure, look to the interplay of resources and schemas in social action.

Building from Sewell’s articulation of structure as resources and schemas in mutually reinforcing relationships enacted by agentic actors, and from Blair-Loy’s outlining of schemas constructed in opposition and mutual entailment to each other in the work-family nexus (Blair-Loy, 2003), I offer the Hydra Model as a model for analyzing instances of change in gender as

social structure. Following Sewell, I will treat structure as the mutual reinforcement of schema and resources.

Proposing a new model

Sociologists of gender lack a model for analyzing gender that can easily explain how change to gender as social structure happens, able to contend with both gender's remarkable persistence in shaping social life, and its openness to change. Imagining gender as a single social structure cuts short analysis that might untangle how gender adapts, reshapes, and in some cases even changes its fundamental meaning within an institution while maintaining coherence at other levels of analysis (the individual). Gender structure theory is very helpful for discerning how and when gender is operationalized in social life, but it cannot easily explain why change takes the shape it does. Attending to the schemas and resources operative across levels of analysis, as gender structure theory suggests, can easily result in an account that is so specific in its rendering of how gender structures social action in one particular case that the generalizable features of that case may be obscured. What I propose is a new model that can consider gender as an adaptive collection of social structures, especially useful for predicting how schemas might relate to one another, and for investigating changes in how gender structures social life. In developing this model, I attend to the following questions: How does gender change? In the example of the priest performing communion, does communion still get consecrated if the gender of the consecrator changes? Has the social structure of sacramental ministry changed? Has an instance of gender as social structure changed?

Though the theoretical approaches explicated above offer important insights into how gender remains a powerful force in social life, some gaps point to the potential usefulness of the

hydra model for analyzing change to gender as a social structure. Ridgeway's insistence on sex/gender's ubiquity in framing social interaction is well-founded, but this approach has trouble explaining instances where gender's meaning and practice in a social setting – here, a church – change despite broader societal practices around reproduction remaining constant. Risman's gender structure theory appears to relegate culture to the realm of the interactional, potentially neglecting culture's impact on both macro-level institutions and the micro-level of the individual self. Gender is often made meaningful and impactful through culture, in the schemas that justify and necessitate particular patterns of action. Gender structure theory is well-drawn to consider that individuals might, through their personal actions, challenge broad social structures, but it is not readily attuned to how gender might persist in shaping social life after long campaigned-for changes to advance gender equality have already been achieved. In the case of women's ordination, what Risman might consider acts of rebellion did lead to institutional changes, in 1976, but gender persists in shaping church life suggesting that the social structure was changed but not dismantled.

Sewell's approach to structure, which attends closely to resources and schemas, is an important influence on the work in this study. What Sewell does not consider, very obviously in his example of the priest consecrating communion, is that gender is likely to be somewhere among the multiple schemas at work concurrently in a given social structure, though gender might be so taken-for-granted and naturalized that even the careful analyst could miss its impact on how resources and schemas are organized. In addition to schemas that Sewell notes pertaining to professionalization and apostolic succession, there is another schema dictating who can stand in the position of consecrator, which is a schema for gender and sacred authority. Gender, as it matters to sacred authority and ordination, is not necessarily gender as it matters to setting ideal

worker norms, nor is it necessarily gender as it defines nuclear family life. Rather, each of these instances of gender as a social structure is distinct in the schemas and resources mutually enforcing a particular social reality. Sociologists seeking to study change in gender as social structure, need a model that allows for this multiplicity of structure while still recognizing their common basis – in gender's case, in the social organization of reproduction. When investigating the potential for, and ultimate shape of, change in social structures, gender takes on additional importance because of its ubiquity and its invisibility in many social structures. Women's ordination in ECUSA is a moment that the invisible gendered dimensions of a church institution became visible, and remain visible and actively contested nearly 50 years later.

The Hydra Model

What if the analyst considered that gender might structure social reality, but may not be a unitary social structure? What if contingencies accrue to such a degree that gender's salience, though often rising to the point of determinative impact on social action, is dispersed enough to negate its coherence as a single social structure? I propose that gender is not a social structure, but rather many structures throughout the social world that are bound by their common foundation in the social organization of reproduction: it is many social structures bound together by a central organizing theme and concern.

Therefore, change in gender can never be universal across gender as a single social structure operative at every dimension of social life. Instead, change occurs here and there and the direction of change is underdetermined. Fundamentally, following Lorber, gender is about reproduction. But, as Ridgeway and Risman both show, gender is dispersed and decentralized, despite this core foundation in the social organization of reproduction. Gender's decentralization makes analysis of any particular instance of change in gender as social structure potentially

opaque even to a careful analyst, because current theories do not provide comprehensive analytic tools to connect specific instances of gender as social structure to the foundational level of the social organization of reproduction. How are analysts to investigate instances of structural change in gender, especially those that reflect incomplete or contested change?

To address this analytic need I propose the Hydra Model. The Hydra Model is inspired by the myth of The Hydra of Lerna, a monster of Greek mythology, slain by Hercules in his second labor (Bullfinch, 2004). As a mythical monster, the hydra has several important characteristics that make it a useful heuristic for understanding change in gender as a social structure.

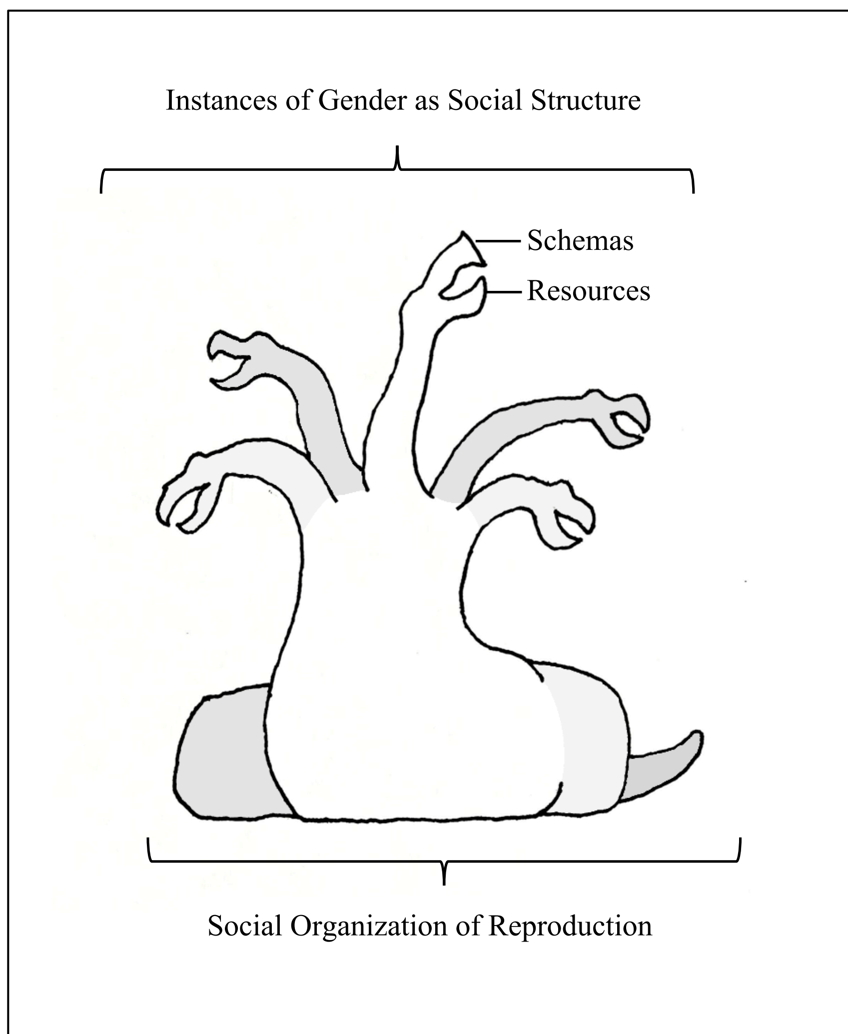

Figure 1: The Hydra

First, the hydra has many heads.

In the myth, the hydra has nine[4] heads to begin with. For my purposes, the number of heads is less important than their multiplicity, which is useful for understanding gender as social structure because it allows analysts to consider multiple instances of social structure that are analytically difficult to cast as the same structure as bound together because of their

[4] In Figure 1, and all other figures illustrating the Hydra Model, I have not included nine. The number of heads is reduced to ensure figures are easy to read. I do not specify how many instances of gender as social structure exist in contemporary U.S. society, surely that number is not exactly nine. The number of heads is not important, the multiplicity is.

incorporation in one monster. Gender as it structures family life need not be identical to gender as it structures work life or gender as it structures religious life: in this model, each instance of gender as social structure can be considered its own structure analytically with its own relationship of resource and schema. However, all of these structures, because of their foundation in the social organization of reproduction, are part of gender.

Second, the hydra can be decapitated.

Each head of the hydra represents a synthesis between schema and resources that forms a stable social structure. These structures may be visible at multiple levels of analysis, but they may be analyzed separately from the entirety of gender. This approach enables the isolation of specific mutual reinforcement of schema and resource for analysis, so that analysts can peel back and see how gender actually changes.

In any individual instance of gender as social structure, when schema and resource become uncoupled, a decapitation event may unfold. The defining characteristics of a decapitation event are 1) the uncoupling of schema and resources in a previously stable structure, and 2) the erecting of a moral boundary to exclude the previously stable schema, or elements of it, from social life.

Third, a period of latency follows decapitation.

Latency refers to the period after decapitation, when the metaphoric hydra head has been severed, and a neck stump remains. In this period of latency, actors hold significant agency over the structural forms that will emerge in regeneration. When a previously stable instance of gender as social structure has been destabilized, and when the previous schema for understanding what gender meant to the associated set of practices has been excluded by a moral boundary,

actors will experience tension and uncertainty when seeking to make sense of their experiences. During latency, meaning is contested and no clear alignment of schema and resource has yet emerged. Individuals engaging with the site of the formerly stable structure may disagree about how to conduct social life, and practices may vary considerably in local contexts that previously maintained similar practices. In these unsettled times, actors may still believe that gender matters, but the interplay of resource and schema is unpredictable, and individuals have relatively more agency to dictate that relationship, cobbling together meanings to make sense of unsettled times.

Fourth, the hydra regenerates.

Regeneration is new heads popping up, each representing what could be considered an emergent ideology, but each could also be considered a nascent social structure. When the allocation of resources according to emergent schemas becomes self-evident to social actors, a new form of gender as a social structure has developed – a new head of the hydra. During regeneration, each new head of the hydra will contain a schema. That schema will be built from the cultural resources available in the surrounding society at the moment of decapitation and through the latency period. But its additional and specific ingredients will come from the resources that are released in decapitation. The necks of the hydra function like black boxes (Latour, 1987, 1999), holding sets of meanings that have been worked together into a coherent schema which necessitates and justifies the allocation of resources that is made real in the working and reworking of the structure the head represents. Each new head's organizing schema will contain ingredients and elements of the previous synthesis, alongside additional ingredients present in actors' toolkits (Swidler, 1986, 2001). Thus, it can be expected that emergent schemas will be related to one another by their common engagement with the meanings unleashed by

decapitation, and by their opposition to each other as divergent interpretations that entail one another. Emergent schemas are oppositional and entail each other, their emergence is part of a dialectic process of change to meaning systems.

After a decapitation event, the meanings held together in that previous synthesis are released and social actors exercise agency in crafting new schemas from those ingredients, alongside additional ingredients made available by the particular positions in time and space that social actors occupy at just after decapitation, and during latency. Adopting the metaphor of the hydra thus enables the social analyst to take history seriously and consider how social structures of gender change over time – what was in the synthesis? A major and important contribution of the hydra model is that it allows analysts to see forward and backward in time around moments of structural change.

Fifth, the hydra is durable

In the myth, Hercules struggles to slay the hydra, and though the mythic specificities of the monster's eventual undoing are not germane to this study, its fundamental toughness is. Indeed, decapitation and regeneration of one of the hydra's heads does little to diminish the monster's power overall. Gender as social structure can change dramatically without gender's overall persistence in shaping social life diminishing, because of the relative stability of the social organization of reproduction. The central causal direction supposed in the Hydra Model is that gender is built on the social organization of reproductive life. If reproduction is to be within cisheterosexual marriage relations, as is the case with the contemporary U.S. and many societies, then gender consists of all the structures erected and maintained to enforce that model for reproduction. The social organization of reproduction is the foundation of all gender, therefore, the source of the hydra's durability.

The Hydra Model is intended to guide investigations of change to gender as social structure, particularly those instances of change that are incomplete or contested. The Hydra Model further encourages analysts to look at moments of unsettled times, when practices are unsettled, as there will be emergent ideological heads of the hydra for the analyst to seek out and understand, and these will provide information about the potential directions of change to gender in social life.

Research Design and Methodology

This project takes as its starting point the notion that material practices and immaterial meaning systems are co-constructing in social life: practices are justified and necessitated by beliefs based in deeply-held patterns of meaning. When women began to be ordained as clergy in ECUSA, their ordination represented a significant change to a long-standing practice. Now, decades later, women are routinely ordained to the priesthood and elected as bishops in ECUSA; the practices of excluding women from ordained ministry have been discarded. However, women clergy under-attain similar men in their careers as clergy people, suggesting that barriers to women clergy's equality persist. Understanding how the meaning system justifying and necessitating ordination practices in ECUSA has shifted to accept women's ordination while still allowing their under-attainment can help sociologists better understand how deeply held beliefs about gender persist and continue to shape life chances long after women's equal opportunity has been declared.

Research Design

To answer these questions, I have conducted 53 in-depth semi-structured interviews with clergy and lay people active in the Episcopal Church, primarily in The Episcopal Diocese of The West[5]. All names are pseudonyms and I have changed some details to protect confidentiality. Clergy respondents are primarily ordained priests (two are bishops, one is a deacon), and as such can be guaranteed to have been active in the Episcopal Church for years prior to the interview. Lay respondents must have been active in the Episcopal Church for at least five years prior to their interviews. I use two different interview schedules: one for clergy and one for laity, both are divided between questions seeking to understand the essential qualities and characteristics of a priest, and questions about how gender matters to priests' ministry. Both interview schedules cover topic areas including: (for clergy) their own experience of their vocation; (for laity) their personal history in the church; (for both) the personal qualities they think are necessary for priests in parish ministry, including the consecration of sacraments; how parish ministry is like or unlike other forms of leadership; their preferences for clergy dress and title; and finally, a set of questions about how they see a priest's gender mattering to his or her ministry. I have been able to draw from this data set some common views of clergy in parish leadership positions and shared explanations as to why clergy men and women may experience different career

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[5] I also contextualized these data with observations from Diocesan events and historical information found through searches of local news sources, and diocesan history available online. I have note cited the sources of historical research as doing so would unmask The Diocese of the West, and respondents were promised confidentiality as a condition of their participation. The most generative data came from interviews and interview data serves as the empirical backbone for this dissertation. I did participant observation at three multi-hour public events pertaining to the diocese's search for a new bishop. The insights gleaned from those observations duplicated insights gained through analysis of interview transcripts in which respondents discussed their thoughts and feelings on the bishop search, as such, I have treated my participant observation data as background and have focused on the interview data.

trajectories. I have also considered variation in answers to both sets of questions by gender and by ordination status (clergy or lay). I finished conducting interviews in October 2019.

My research design is within the grounded theory tradition[6]; I have sought to employ a constant comparative method while conducting this research, following Glaser and Strauss. In advocating for a unified research process for the development of grounded theory, which includes both data generation and theory generation, Glaser and Strauss urge researchers to embrace their constant comparative method of qualitative analysis, which requires the researcher to analyze across comparison groups at every stage of the research process, from the initial formulation of the study design all the way through to the final writing up of findings and formalizing of theoretical insights. This approach offers guidance for sampling, analysis, and writing. Glaser and Strauss write, "A discovered, grounded theory, then, will tend to combine mostly concepts and hypotheses that have emerged from the data with some existing ones that are clearly useful." (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Thus, one axis of comparison will be between data generated as part of the current research project, and data that pre-exists in the sociological literature and may have bearing on the questions under examination – in my project this includes previous work on gender in the professions, feminist theory (including in STS), and historical treatments of gender in Western Christianity, and primary sources from ECUSA and Anglican Communion sources. Other important comparisons are across sampling groups: women and men, clergy and laity.

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[6] I also draw on interview methods as outlined by Gerson and Damaske in *The Science and Art of Interviewing* (2021). I am particularly influenced by their explanation of the depth interview. I primarily employ interview methods in this project, choosing to focus on a methodology that allows comparison across respondents. I take grounded theory's emphasis employing a constant comparative method, and combine it with Gerson and Damaske's depth interviewing to build an approach that relies on interview methods to build rich comparative data.

According to Glaser and Strauss, each sampling group, which will provide new data for the analyst to compare, should be selected because of that group's potential to offer new data that is likely to be theoretically relevant and analytically powerful – in other words, a group that is socially-positioned in a way that is interesting for the current best data should be sampled in hopes that the data generated will provide a basis for extending and expanding sociological theory. This notion of a group's social positioning signaling the theoretical power of data generated from their study is their "theoretical relevance" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In my study, I sample women and men, lay and clergy, because the gender difference, and the ordination status difference are theoretically relevant for my study of how and why gender essentialist ideology persists in ECUSA as an example of U.S. Mainline Protestant denominations. This first comparative axis across sampling groups is gender, as men and women may have different experiences and conceptions of how gender matters to ECUSA church life and clergy authority. The second comparative axis across sampling groups is by ordination status: clergy are the church's experts, holding sacred authority, and by virtue of their ordination holding an elevated position in the church institution's hierarchy; laity, by contrast, make up the church's donor base, clientele, and in parish vestries act as non-profit directors.

During data collection, clergy women were sampled in more depth than other categories of respondents (lay women, clergy men, and lay men). According to Glaser and Strauss, "All categories are obviously not equally relevant, and so the depth of inquiry into each one should not be the same. *Core* theoretical categories, those with the most explanatory power, should be saturated as completely as possible." (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Clergy women are the sample group best representative of my core theoretical categories. They are the respondents whose personal experiences make them least situationally likely to embrace gender essentialism as an

explanation of gender differences in men's and women's experiences of religious life. These women have experience both as ordained leaders of the church and holders of sacred authority, and as women in an institution that officially barred them from leadership until as recently as 50 years ago. Because of their positioning and theoretical relevance to the core concerns of this project, I have sampled clergy women in more depth than other comparison groups.

Introducing the case

Data for this study is drawn from 53 interviews with both clergy and laity in the Episcopal Diocese of The West conducted between early 2018 and late 2019. 30 respondents are clergy, and 23 respondents are lay people. Clergy respondents are primarily priests (two are bishops, one is a deacon), and as such can be guaranteed to have been active in the Episcopal Church for years prior to the interview, and to have considered the qualities important to parish ministry and leadership during their seminary studies, and in their own lives. Lay respondents must have been active in the Episcopal Church for at least five years prior to their interviews, this requirement ensures that lay respondents are familiar with parish ministry and have considered questions about what makes a clergy person fit to lead. Respondents are both men and women, though women are slightly oversampled because of their theoretical relevance. Women are nearing parity in the ordained ministry of the Episcopal Church and are well-represented in the ranks of lay leadership (Darves-Bornoz et al., 2012; Hurst et al., 2021), but their full inclusion in church life has been recent (Prichard, 2014). Respondents were not chosen based on racial or ethnic background. Racially, the Episcopal Church's membership is on average whiter than the U.S. population, so it is likely that respondents in this study are more likely to be white than if a random sample were taken from the population of the city within

which The Diocese of the West in situated. Though it is possible that race/ethnicity may matter to how clergy and lay people experience gender mattering to ministry, the scale of this study did not support seeking out the sample size that would be necessary to interrogate how the meanings of gender and leadership would vary across such lines. What this study provides instead is in-depth information about the experiences and values of its respondents: how gender matters to parish leadership and resonates on a deeply personal level (Weiss, 1994) – the full story of a few respondents, rather than the partial story of many.

The Diocese of the West covers a large geographic area and includes 41 congregations (most of these are independent parishes, a few are missions more directly controlled by the diocese). The Diocese of the West includes parishes that do not accept women's ordination, though such parishes are in the extreme minority. The Diocese of the West is also home to more women in solo or lead priest positions than the national average (Schjonberg, 2019). Women clergy lead some of the large and wealthy parishes in the diocese as rectors – this is historically uncommon in ECUSA, though women clergy appear to be making gains in recent years. The Diocese of the West was in the process of calling a new bishop when I conducted interviews, and whether gender should matter to the calling of a new bishop was discussed around the diocese at the time.

In the recent history of The Diocese of the West, questions of gender and sexuality's relationship to sacred authority were used as grounds for local splintering within the diocese. Several[7] parishes left the diocese over the tenure of the previous bishop's leadership. The bishop

[7] 8 or 9: this number has been tricky to nail down given how messy a split can be, i.e., is a parish split from the diocese if the clergy leave? Do parishioners have to leave as well? What percentage of a parish's congregation must leave before the parish is considered to have left? Is it only a split if quarrels over church property ensue – is a legal battle required?

who led The Diocese of the West immediately prior to data collection was seen by many as a liberalizing force in matters of gender and sexuality. Previous to their tenure, The Diocese of the West had been fairly conservative, but during their years as bishop LGBTQ+ people were more openly welcomed and accepted, including local ordinations of LGBTQ+ clergy. The previous bishop's tenure also coincided with national foment within ECUSA around gender and sexuality and ordination. Spurred by the General Convention's 2003 vote to recognize the election of New Hampshire's new bishop V. Gene Robinson, and then by General Convention's 2006 vote to elect Katharine Jefferts Schori as the first woman to serve as presiding bishop, conservative parishes and clergy people across the U.S. split from ECUSA. Legal battles over church property followed these moves, including a few cases locally within The Diocese of the West. These legal battles were a source of acrimony, and bitterly remembered by respondents. The Diocese of the West at the time of my interviews was generally a place seeking to actively liberalize in matters of gender and sexuality, and in matters of equity and justice more broadly. Because of the inescapability of considering gender and sexuality in church life in recent years locally, respondents were primed to discuss these matters in the interviews.

Table 1: Respondents, gender and ordination status

	Men	Women
Clergy	12	18
Laity	9	14

Total n = 53

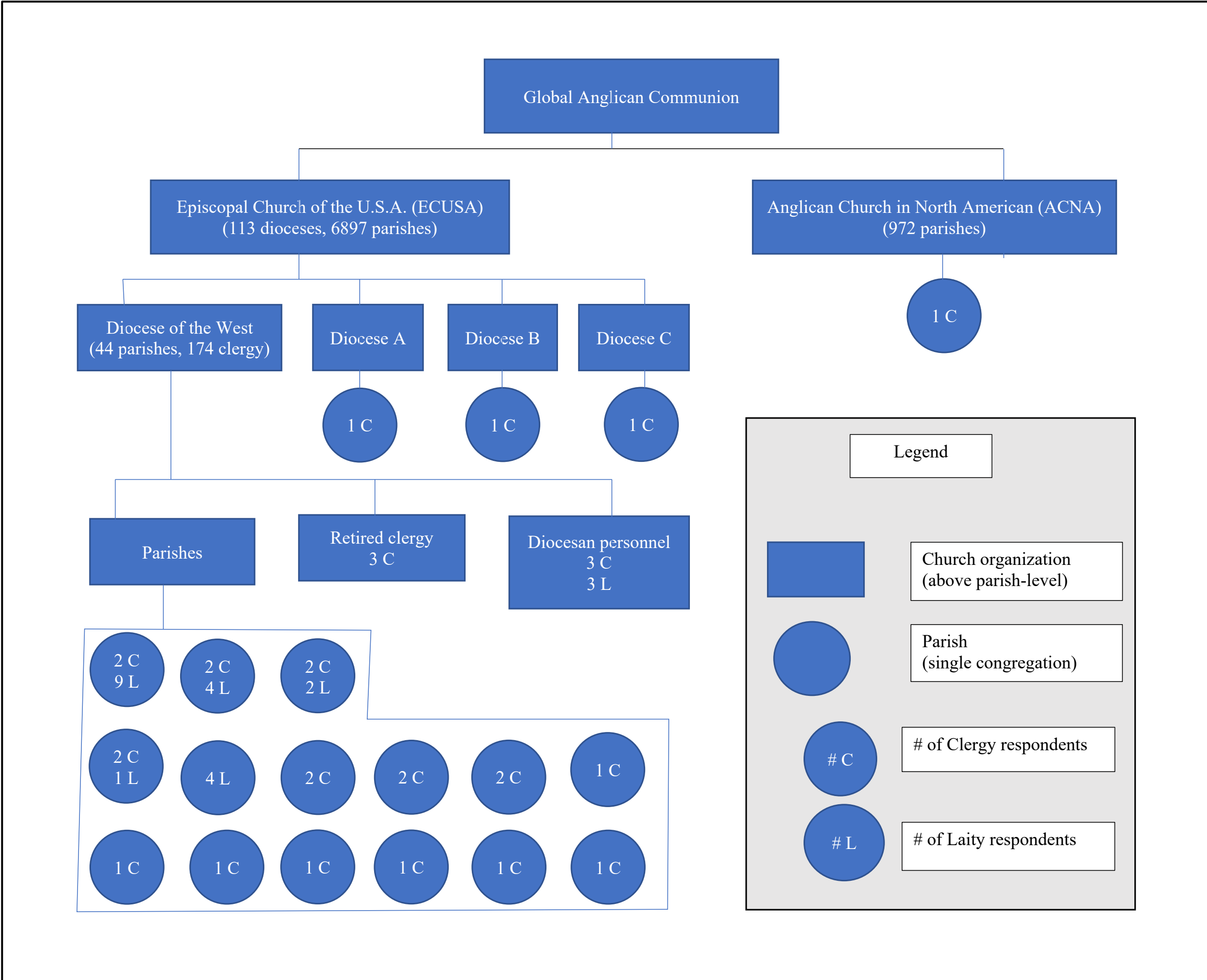

Figure 2: Respondents, institutional relationships

Methodology

The interviews were in person whenever possible, as face-to-face interaction is important to a discussion of something so personal as experiences of religion and how gender matters to them. Given that gender and sexuality have been flashpoint issues in the recent history of the Episcopal Church, and in the local history of The Diocese of the West, it is unlikely that any respondent will not have discussed these issues before. I hoped to get beyond any calculated response or simple articulations of gender egalitarian views, and instead look at the underlying meaning respondents have made of how they have seen and experienced gender mattering in

clergy's parish ministry and leadership. In order to establish rapport in the hopes of accessing these personal reflections, I believed that these interviews should be in person and should be semi-structured in-depth interviews. I wanted the freedom to follow a respondent's train of thought or reasoning should it vary from the interview schedule in the interest of accessing what they think comes to bear importantly on the issue at hand. In fact, two questions were added to the interview guide after the first three interviews when all three respondents were curious about the same issues not already covered by the interview guide.

Respondents were recruited with the help of the staff of the diocesan offices of The Diocese of the West, and then through snowball sampling. The previous diocesan bishop has agreed to aid in making contact with potential respondents, and was generally supportive of this project being undertaken within the diocese. I also established contact with and gained support from the Canon to the Ordinary and the diocesan registrar. I recruited individuals to be interviewed by reaching out directly to clergy: I emailed all diocesan clergy whose names appeared on a list provided by diocesan personnel, using an email script, to make them aware of my project. I did not directly solicit interviews, but rather concluded the email asking clergy who were interested in being interview respondents to reach out to me. At the conclusion of each of these initial interviews with clergy, I asked respondents whether they would be willing to alert other clergy, or active lay people, of my project. I supplied respondents with my contact information and asked that they pass it along to any persons they believed would be interested in participating. Some respondents heard of my project and reached out to me directly. Respondents were recruited in roughly three rounds of recruitment: first, the initial clergy contacts who responded to my email to the list of clergy provided by the diocese, second, a few more clergy recommended by the first round clergy respondents and many lay leaders recommended and

alerted by the first round clergy respondents, and third, another round of lay respondents recommended by the second round of lay respondents. With the additional consent of each respondent, I audio recorded each interview for use in data analysis. Respondents were made aware during consent that they have the right to stop or erase the recording at any time during the interview. Audio recordings were then transcribed; these transcriptions are the data source for this project's subsequent analyses. To protect the confidentiality of respondents, pseudonyms are used throughout for the diocese, parishes, and individuals mentioned and quoted.

Two different interview schedules were used: one for clergy, another for laity. The interview schedule for clergy covered topic areas including: their own experience of their vocation; their observations of other priests excelling in parish ministry; their observations of other priests faltering in parish ministry; the personal qualities they think are necessary for priests in parish ministry; how parish ministry is like or unlike other forms of leadership; and finally, a set of questions about how they see a priest's gender mattering to his or her parish ministry, including some questions added on the advice of respondents about clergy titles and dress. The interview schedule for laity covered similar topic areas, including: their personal history in the church; their observations of priests in parish ministry; the personal qualities they think are necessary for priests in parish ministry; how parish ministry is like or unlike leadership in other fields; and again, a set of questions about how they think a priest's gender matters to his or her parish ministry, including the added questions about clergy titles and dress. Both interview schedules are given below. I hoped to be able to generalize from this data set some particularly salient views of clergy women in parish leadership positions and some common articulations as to why clergy men and women may experience different career trajectories.

In analyzing interview transcripts, I have followed Glaser and Strauss, and Gerson and Damaske, though these theorists represent different methodological traditions, building on the strengths of each. First, I draw on grounded theory, employing a constant comparative method to identify and probe the rationalizations respondents employ to make sense of how they observe gender mattering in church life. Glaser and Strauss explain how their constant comparative method allows for "generating and plausibly suggesting (but not provisionally testing) many categories, properties, and hypotheses about the general problem." (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This method is defined by following the rule: "while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category." (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Put differently, any coding should categorize an incident based on how that incident compares with other incidents that are similar – either because they appear in similar cases (similar respondents), or because they are similar to other incidents that appear with the same case (respondent). Categorizing, or coding, with a sufficient level of analytical acuity requires that the analyst think about how the data compares across cases, and code according to the what presents as theoretically relevant in these comparisons. In other words, the coding should be primarily inductive, reflecting from the data forward to categorizations and themes. The first full coding of interview transcripts was done inductively, and I developed nine large-scale codes to capture patterns of interest. Excerpts could be coded to more than one relevant code, and often were.

Initial codes

- Episcopal Church: ECUSA identity-markers and shibboleths, church history, church polity, ECUSA in the world, emergent models for church, seminary
- Presentation of self: the collar, titles for clergy
- God as actor: intercessory God, personal relationship with God, call, God's vision
- Family as metaphor: "Father knows best", family life of the priest, patriarchy, motherhood including pregnancy
- Sacred authority: scriptural interpretation, priest as vessel for God
- Leadership and pastoring: career experience/training, leadership within congregation (delegation, management), empathy/love, authoritarian leadership, business experience & non-profits, role of priest as expansive
- Power & abuses of power: power in the parish/church, financial malfeasance, sexual misconduct, trauma (individual and collective)
- Defining gender: naturalizing gender difference, gender balance (as ideal), gender and race comparison
- Doing gender: naturalizing seeing difference, gendered norms of behavior, gender-specific pastoring, gender representation

After this first round of coding, I did a second round of inductive coding, reading the excerpt files produced by the first round, and noting emergent patterns in each file. I noted when excerpts converged around a set of common concerns, particularly when gender was overlaid with another set of concerns. I then ran queries to identify excerpts which were coded to multiple initial codes, following the patterns I had identified. For example, I found that "Leadership and

Pastoring" included many considerations of which dimensions of leadership respondents considered easier or more challenging for men and women. I then queried those excerpts that were coded to both "Leadership and Pastoring" and "Doing Gender." A third round of inductive coding of the excerpt file that resulted from this query led me to develop the concept of Gender Pragmatism and the discussion of gender and leadership that appears in Chapter 4.

The second methodological approach I have found useful is that of Gerson and Damaske, who write at length about how to code interview data, given the complexity of the interview interaction and the social situation of respondents. Their approach stresses how to sort through interview data and identify the most generative moments. Gerson and Damaske write, "…participants are socially situated actors who are rarely positioned to know the full array of institutional arrangements, cultural forces, and deeper motivations that influence their actions and worldviews. The only way to discover how such unseen forces shape perception and action is to distinguish among the different *kinds* of information that participants provide and to search for patterns across the entire sample." (Gerson & Damaske, 2021). Following this directive to look for patterns across the entire sample, I continually employed the coding and analysis procedure outlined in the previous paragraph.

Gerson and Damaske are clear that the analyst of interview data must attend to both what respondents say they do and what they actually do, and should carefully tease apart any inconsistencies. Respondents may give explanations of their actions that do not, in fact, explain their actions as social actors. The authors give the example of women who made different choices in their lives in how they chose to organization their career lives and family lives, but who all justified their choices as being what was best for their families (Gerson & Damaske, 2021). The notion of doing what's best for the family was shown to be an account, in that it was

a story these women could tell, but it was not an explanation for what they did as social actors, because they did not all do the same thing. The monolithic character of the responses in terms of why the women interviewed said they did what they did was not reflect of monolithic courses of action, so the analyst should not see that consistent message around doing what is best for the family as reflective of a consistent pattern of social action.

Attending to both how respondents explain their action, and the actions they have taken, gives the analyst the opportunity to understand how the respondent's story fits into the broader social picture. Gerson and Damaske write, "…distinguishing between contextual factors and personal accounts can be a powerful analytic tool for finding more fundamental (if not necessarily visible) forces that help explain both worldviews and 'real world' practices, even if interviewees are unaware of them." (Gerson and Damaske, 2021, 166). Any gap between the account a respondent gives of why he or she believes or acts a certain way, and how that belief or behavior matches or differs from the beliefs and behaviors of other respondents espousing the same account can make visible the previously invisible determinants of respondents' beliefs and actions. By isolating where the same rationalization yields different results, the analyst can locate social forces acting undetected in respondents' lives.

Somewhat similarly, ambiguity and contradiction in an interview transcript should be understood as potentially generative data. When respondents are inconsistent, or contradict themselves, they are showing the limits of the account they have available to draw upon in explaining the social world. "More often than not, inconsistency and ambivalence are neither misstatements not attempts to deceive but instead are understandable reactions to incompatible options or ideals and ambiguous social circumstances." (Gerson and Damaske, 2021, 167). This signals an opening for the sociologist to apply an analytic frame. Sometimes, Gerson and

Damaske explain, these inconsistencies show norms around what accounts are deemed desirable. Respondents are likely to show themselves to hold the viewpoints they deem appropriate to hold, showing social desirability bias in their responses. Inconsistency in an interview can yield evidence that points out what norms are operative in a particular social situation, and also where those norms hit limits and lose their normative control over social action. In my study, I was interested to find the gaps and inconsistencies in the meaning system respondent's use to understand gender and the authority of the priest. These gaps and inconsistences show where the meaning system has been inadequate for interpreting the new reality of a gender-integrated clergy, and therefore will show where gender is most durable and persistent in shaping these deeply-held beliefs about sacred life.

Chapter Overview

Chapter One: The Hydra

In this chapter, I have introduced the case of women's ordination in ECUSA and outlined my research design and methodological approach. I have also introduced the Hydra Model and explains its usefulness for investigating change in gender as social structure. Subsequent chapters will present findings from this research as an empirical illustration of the Hydra Model.

Chapter Two: Schemas for Sacred Authority

Every instance of gender as social structure is comprised of schemas and resources. In this chapter, I begin with an investigation of sacramental ministry as a social structure, and how it operates as an instance of gender as social structure. I chart the schemas legitimating and justifying the sacred authority of priests in ECUSA. Before women's ordination, a form of

gender essentialism that I call Aristotelian Essentialism was among these schemas, and justified women's exclusion from ordained ministry. The inclusion of a form of gender essentialism as an operative schema marked sacramental ministry as an instance of gender as social structure in the years before 1976. This chapter traces both the Aristotelian Essentialism of the past, and the schemas used by respondents today to justify the sacred authority of ECUSA clergy.

Chapter Three: Decapitation

Decapitation, in The Hydra Model, refers to change events that decouple schema from resources in gender as a social structure. In the case of women's ordination, decapitation unmoored practices that maintained an all-men clergy by dismantling the schema for sacred authority that excluded women and was based in medieval theology (Aristotelian Essentialism). Sacred authority in my respondents' view is no longer gendered and can apply to men and women, representing a discarding of Aristotelian Essentialism as an operative schema for the structure of sacramental ministry and a dismantling of sacramental ministry as an instance of gender as social structure. Without a form of gender essentialism as an operative schema, sacramental ministry ceased to be an instance of gender as social structure. Decapitation is strengthened by a moral boundary that respondents have erected to exclude what they see as the sexism of the past from their new schemas for sacred authority, which do not include Aristotelian Essentialism.

Chapter Four: Latency

Latency, the time after decapitation, is characterized by tension and contested meanings. Individuals have a lot of agency during this time to direct the development of new arrangements

of schemas and resources because nothing is yet taken for granted. During these unsettled times, respondents showcase the multiple, sometimes conflicting meanings that could pertain to gender in church life, as they seek to configure meanings into new schemas that will give clarity and consistency to new practices. Though sacramental ministry is not an instance of gender as social structure during Latency, respondents still feel a need for gender to be made meaningful in the context of sacramental life, and so they import meanings from elsewhere in society to somehow preserve gender as part of sacramental life. In ECUSA, a focus on common mission alleviates some of the tension of latency and is aided by features of Anglican and Episcopal identity that position tension and disagreement as a normal feature of church life. In order to maintain their focus on common mission and avoid direct action on matters of gender, respondents employ two cognitive strategies: Intentional Gender-Blindness, and Gender Pragmatism. Both of these cognitive strategies allow respondents to import meanings from the surrounding culture to make sense of the tensions they experience around gender and sacramental life during latency.

Chapter Five: Regeneration: Revolutionary Essentialism

After an old instance of gender as social structure is undone and an old schema dismantled in decapitation, new schemas, and their associated arrangements of resources, emerge. In regeneration, sacramental ministry again becomes an instance of gender as social structure. Gender persists in new structures because the schemas that actors build up to make sense of their experiences of gender in sacred life are built from a combination of meanings available in the surrounding culture at the time of decapitation, and the ingredients bound together in the closure of the previous version of the schema. These emergent schemas are in dialectic relationship to each other, implying and opposing one another. I show respondents'

efforts to build two such emergent structures for gender in church life in chapters 5 and 6. In Chapter Five, I show what I call Revolutionary Essentialism, an emergent schema that posits that each individual's gender and sexual identity is part of God's incarnation, and therefore women and LGBTQ+ adherents should be fully included in every aspect of ECUSA church life.

Chapter Six: Regeneration: Nostalgic Essentialism

As ECUSA has moved to include women and LGBTQ+ adherents more and more in church life, including in ordained ministry, some adherents have defected in protest. Among those who have left ECUSA, or considered leaving, over issues of gender and sexuality, a new form of gender essentialism has emerged to act as a schema justifying their proposed continued exclusion of women and LGBTQ+ adherents from some aspects of church life and sacramental ministry. This form of gender essentialism is not a copy of Aristotelian Essentialism, but rather a reconfiguring of arguments that I call Nostalgic Essentialism.

Chapter Seven: Durability

The Hydra Model posits that change in gender in any of its instances as social structure will be constrained by how much change has occurred in the social organization of reproduction. Though a direct connection between how gender matters to sacred authority in ECUSA and the social organization of reproduction might seem unlikely, in this chapter I present how disagreement and tension over the proper form of address for clergy women shows this case's deep connection to the meanings and practices of reproduction. In ECUSA, “Father” is the usual title for men who are priests, whether or not “Mother” should be the usual title for women who are priests is a source of tremendous disagreement and discomfort for respondents. “Mother” as a

title, what it is taken to mean, and what the implications of its wide usage might be for gender in the church, are all evidence of how any case of gender as a social structure will connect back to the arrangement of sex and reproduction. I further this argument by showing how the gendered meanings in work-family conflict for clergy women are exacerbated by the expectations placed on clergy for care and fulfilling the role of an idealized parent for their congregation members.

Chapter Eight: What the Hydra Model offers

Finally, I reiterate the Hydra Model's contribution to the study of gender, and especially of change in gender as social structure. I also consider how changes in schemas for gender and sacred authority within ECUSA have had significant effects on the Anglican Communion more broadly. ECUSA's current censure within the global Anglican Communion, and the global reaction to women's ordination and the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ adherents that has been called the Anglican Realignment prompt me to consider how this example might showcase the challenges of tolerating intolerance, using current tensions in Anglicanism to illustrate Popper's paradox of tolerance. I further consider the generative potential of unsettled times, how to weigh the various potential harms of change, and the enduring question of how to understand social change when the direction of change in underdetermined.

This dissertation contributes both a theoretical innovation for the study of gender and social change, and an empirical story rich with illustrations of both how gender's influence on dimensions of social life can evolve, and how that evolution is constrained. The Hydra Model offers a navigational chart for scholars of gender investigating instances of change in gender as social structure. The Hydra Model outlines how structures that contain schemas that are forms of

gender essentialism can be changed, pointing out the necessary components of decapitation events, how important individual agency is in times of latency, and how a newly open ideological field will be filled with new gender essentialisms vying to act as operative schemas for new structural forms. Empirically, the case of women's ordination in ECUSA and how this change to sacred authority has been made meaningful for adherents is a rich story showing how change occurs, and offers an excellent illustration of The Hydra Model.

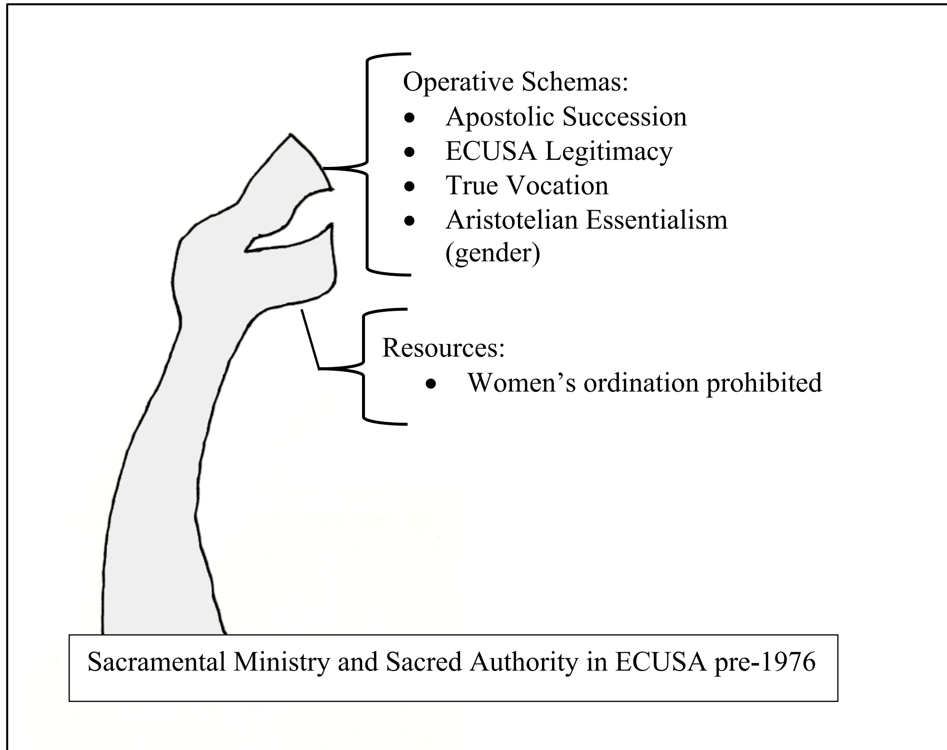

Figure 3: Schemas operative for sacred authority and sacramental ministry, pre-1976

According to the Hydra Model, the first predicted event in the transformation of an instance of gender as social structure is decapitation, when an old instance of gender as social structure comes undone. This chapter considers the pre-decapitation moment, tracing the schemas operative in defining and upholding sacred authority for sacramental ministry in ECUSA during the years before 1976. In order for a social structure to be an instance of gender as social structure, a form of gender essentialism must appear as an operative schema in that structure. Without that gender schema, the structure may still be a social structure, but it will not be an instance of gender as social structure because it will not be effectively defining gender in social life. A social structure is an instance of gender as social structure if and only if a form of gender essentialism appears among the schemas operative in setting and stabilizing practices for

the allocation of resources. In this chapter, I show the multiple schemas operative in defining and upholding sacred authority for sacramental ministry in ECUSA. I show that pre-1976, a form of gender essentialism which I call Aristotelian Essentialism was an operative schema in this structure, making sacramental ministry an instance of gender as social structure. I also show that in interview responses taken in 2018-2019, Aristotelian Essentialism no longer appears as an operative structure for sacred authority among ECUSA adherents, suggesting that a decapitation event unfolded in the years between 1976 and 2018-2019.

Sacramental ministry – the consecration and administration of sacraments – is the social structure under consideration throughout this dissertation because as an instance of gender as social structure it has undergone significant change in ECUSA. This is a prime example of a social structure useful for seeing the interplay of schemas and resources, as shown by Sewell's treatment of sacraments as structure in his article laying out these concepts (Sewell, 1992). The resources involved in consecrating sacraments include both material and immaterial resources: spaces, instruments, rites, etc. For the purposes of this study, delineating the resources involved in sacraments in more exacting detail is not necessary. The schemas operative to make sacraments work must include what justifies the sacred authority of the sacramental minister, and who can stand in that position. Sewell notes two important schemas that serve to rest sacred authority in the person of the priest, writing,

> First, a priest's training has given him mastery of a wide range of explicit and implicit techniques of knowledge and self-control that enable him to perform satisfactorily as a priest. And second, he has been raised to the dignity of the priesthood by an ordination ceremony that, through the laying on of hands by a bishop, has mobilized the power of apostolic succession and thereby made him capable of an apparently miraculous feat – transforming bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. (Sewell, 1992, 11)

Sewell appropriately points out the role of institutional professionalization and Apostolic Succession in his consideration of the sacred authority of the Roman Catholic priest. I will consider the case of the priest in ECUSA, using ECUSA history to build from Sewell's work. I will also mark the unmarked schema – a form of gender essentialism – which pre-1976 contributed gendered meanings to determinations of who could hold sacred authority to consecrate. In Sewell's case of the Roman Catholic priest, only men can hold sacred authority, in my case of ECUSA, clergy roles are now gender-integrated with both men and women holding sacred authority to consecrate.

In this chapter, I will present the schemas for sacred authority that were operative in ECUSA before women's ordination was approved in 1976, briefly describe important moments in ECUSA history leading to the 1976 General Convention vote to approve women's ordination, and then show in my interview data what schemas are operative upholding sacred authority in ECUSA today. Among the schemas that upheld sacred authority in ECUSA before women's ordination I note Apostolic Succession, ECUSA institutional legitimacy (particularly important for professionalization of clergy), true vocation, and a form of gender essentialism that I term Aristotelian Essentialism. Aristotelian Essentialism says that women are unfit for ordained ministry because they are deficient in comparison to men, this deficiency being based on their reproductive role. This form of gender essentialism is largely grounded in the influential work of Thomas Aquinas who himself drew upon Aristotle in his thinking on gender. Efforts to reform ECUSA in the 1960s and 1970s included several changes to institutional practice and structures of authority, but the most impactful by far was the decision to open clergy positions with sacred authority to perform sacraments to women. In my interviews, I find that though the other schemas upholding sacred authority in ECUSA have remained fairly stable, Aristotelian

Essentialism is no longer voiced by any respondents in my study. In the Hydra Model, a change in practice and concurrent discarding of a previously powerful set of meanings are the necessary conditions for a decapitation event. Aristotelian Essentialism's absence from the schemas operative in the social structure of sacramental ministry suggest a decapitation has occurred, which will be considered with more detail in Chapter 3.

Apostolic succession in ECUSA church history

Apostolic succession is the church doctrine that states that an ordained person is commissioned for sacramental ministry by their ordination in a ceremony of the laying on of hands, in which they have been anointed and blessed across an unbroken chain of such ceremonies stretching back to when Jesus first commissioned St. Peter. It is believed that each person who is ordained is ordained by someone who can trace their ordination, through this laying on of hands, back to the historical person of Jesus himself, and therefore directly to God. Apostolic succession is a belief commonly held across most sacramental churches but certainly in Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and in the churches of the Anglican Communion, ECUSA among them.

The Episcopal Church U.S.A., like the U.S.A. itself, is a product of the outcomes of the American Revolutionary War. During the war, most of the Anglican clergy (with regional variation) serving at Church of England churches in the American colonies were loyalists, siding with the British crown and military. In many colonies, especially in New England, New York, and New Jersey, church activity was scaled back and many parishes ceased public services altogether (Prichard, 2014, 101-105). Further South, in Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas, the local Church of England parishes was directly overseen by colonial governments and ordered

to continue in their activities, while removing any mention of the sovereignty of the English crown. The Church of England in mid-Atlantic and southern colonies was largely populated with lay people who were supportive of the American Revolution, and its clergy were split on the issue (Prichard, 2014, 106-108). The overall picture of this period is one of uncertainty, and geographic variability.

After the chaos of the Revolutionary War period, Anglican churches rebuilt and formed local dioceses that over time grew into the Episcopal Church. First, in Maryland, in 1783 the Protestant Episcopal Church was established with the support of the state legislature, it was the first Anglican church established in the U.S. independent from the British crown. In Maryland, this early ancestor to ECUSA was established with two key features: full independence from the British monarchy (the king of England would not be the head of this church), and episcopal ordination (ordinations had to be performed by bishops who would themselves have been consecrated as bishops by other Anglican bishops, preserving apostolic succession). Obtaining bishops who could perform ordinations, and who had been consecrated within the tradition of apostolic succession, proved challenging. As more states followed Maryland's lead and established local churches, many elected candidates for bishop. Those candidates were stalled by the requirement in England that any candidate for ordination had to swear an oath of loyalty to the British crown (Prichard, 2014, 113-119). This stalemate persisted for several years, during which time an American version of the BCP was approved in 1789 (Prichard, 2014, 120). Eventually, in 1784, Samuel Seabury was consecrated as a bishop in Scotland by Anglican bishops who did not require a loyalty oath to the English crown (Prichard, 2014, 120). Throughout his ministry, Seabury emphasized the Holy Spirit's presence in sacramental

ministries, including ordination, and thus positioned apostolic succession as an important dimension of legitimate authority for clergy leadership in the emergent Episcopal Church.

ECUSA Legitimacy: the *via media* and the Three-Legged Stool

In contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, which claims legitimacy on the basis of Apostolic Succession alone, ECUSA is a product of the Protestant Reformation, and additional bases for institutional legitimacy as a Christian church have led to the development of a strong theological identity which serves as a basis for the legitimacy of the church itself. ECUSA's legitimacy matters for establishing the institutional basis for a priest's sacred authority. The professionalization priests undertake and the churches within which they exercise their sacred authority to perform sacraments are backed by the institutional force of the Episcopal Church. The theological schemas that ECUSA adherents identify as particular to their Anglican faith figure into establishing this legitimacy in the minds of adherents.

The Church of England, the ecclesiastical forbear of ECUSA, and today its sibling church in the global Anglican Communion, was famously established by Henry VIII of England as part of his efforts to obtain a divorce against the will of the pope. Over the first century of its existence, the Church of England was theologically reframed several times: from nearly identical to Roman Catholicism, to radically Protestant, back to nearly Catholic, and then during the long reign of Elizabeth I, a consistent Anglican theology and identity began to take shape. Of course, the English Civil War of the 17th Century was largely motivated by tension within Anglicanism, but respondents in my study speak of an Anglican identity common across ECUSA today and the Elizabethan Church of England. The imagined kinship of the contemporary ECUSA and the late

Tudor Anglican Church suggests that understanding the key theological features of that moment in church history merits attention.

The first major concept from early Anglican history that continues to be meaningful for ECUSA adherents is the *via media.* In his historical essay "From the Reformation to the Eighteenth Century", William P. Haugaard writes that Thomas Cranmer and Elizabeth I were the most influential personalities in establishing Anglican identity of the 16th Century. Cranmer headed the development of the first editions of the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP), iterations of which are still used as the standardized prayer book of every national church within in Anglican Communion. Cranmer's influence on ECUSA belief and practice persists in the prayers and services maintained in ECUSA's BCP over the intervening centuries. Cranmer was also instrumental in translating and distributing the Bible in English. Elizabeth I, for her part, sought to quell religious strife and conflict during her reign by emphasizing common practice over common belief. The Elizabethan Settlement, also called the *via media*, or middle path – the term drawn from Aristotle himself – was emphasized as a way to remain in communion despite some differences in belief (Armentrout & Slocum, 2000; Haugaard, 1988). Tensions nevertheless persisted within Anglicanism over the role and importance of Scripture, preaching, and performing the sacrament of Communion/Eucharist.

The second major concept from the early centuries of Anglicanism that still holds meaning for adherents today is the three-legged stool. Richard Hooker, the theologian from this 16th-Century period who is most widely-read in ECUSA today, presented a vision of a church that was a hybrid of Catholic and Protestant belief – in the case of Anglicanism, Puritanism was the most important Protestant point of comparison. Hooker positioned Anglican belief as sacramentally similar to that of Roman Catholicism, writing, "It seemeth requisite that we first

consider how God is in Christ, then how Christ is in us, and how the sacraments do serve to make us partakers of Christ. … They which by baptism have laid the foundation and attained the first beginning of a new life have [in the Eucharist] their nourishment and food prescribed for the continuance of [that] life in them." (Hooker, quoted in Haugaard, 1988, pg 14). Hooker, however, also advanced the image of proper Christian belief as a three-legged stool, resting on tradition, Scripture, and reason. Hooker's inclusion of reason as a leg of the metaphorical stool has had implications for how science developed alongside Anglican theology, especially during the English Enlightenment. Scholarly attention to 17th Century English understandings of reason and rationality has resulted in work arguing that English Enlightenment thought saw reason and masculinity as entwined – both reason and the masculine ideal of the time were primarily concerned with control over Nature, while women were associated with Nature itself (Harding, 1986; Lloyd, 1979; Longino, 1993). The three-legged stool presents three wells of meaning important to Anglican identity, each carrying gendered expectations for clergy. Each leg of the stool also carried the potential for contesting those meanings, and the debates over the proper meaning of tradition, Scripture, and reason are central to the historical question of women's ordination, and to ongoing debates about the meaning of gender and sexuality in the future of ECUSA and Anglicanism.[8]

ECUSA's institutional legitimacy is upheld by several theological concepts that act as schemas legitimizing ECUSA as a church. The *via media* emphasizes common practice over common belief, and the three-legged stool offers Anglicans a group-specific heuristic for a measured approach to establishing correct belief and practice. Together, these two concepts act

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[8] See Chapter 4, "Latency" for more discussion of how ECUSA's openness to differences of opinion in matters of gender matter to what happens to the meaning of gender for sacred authority in ECUSA post-1976.

to support the legitimacy of ECUSA for its adherents, in turn legitimizing the sacred authority of clergy people trained and ordained within ECUSA.

True Call: Vocation and idealized vocation

Clergy also carry moral authority on the basis of their sacred call and ordination to holy orders. Most priests can be presumed to be the only ordained person in their parish (some may have retired or inactive priests as parishioners, but it is not necessarily the case that every congregation will include such a person). The priest's authority in matters of sacred life stems from his or her ordination, and the sacred vows that have established a relationship between that person and the church, and that person and God. The sacred authority of the priest is rested upon the priest's connection to God, which is the basis of his or her vocation, then formalized in their ordination (Episcopal, 1979). The proper identification and living out of a calling is central to a priest's sacred authority in his or her parish. Though unique in its explicit sacred orientation, a priest's call has been considered the basis for social scientific understandings of vocation.

Notions of vocation, historically, coupled the sense of true call with an idealized view of who could receive such a call. Weber considered the priest's call a model for understanding professional vocation, his insights on this question have inspired subsequent sociological attention to vocation (Weber, 1964). Vocation, when evidenced by an individual's fit with an idealized worker for their given profession, unfolds in organizational settings wherein the organization, the job, and even the possibility of vocation to that job are gendered (Acker, 1990; Britton, 2000; Williams, 2001). In professional careers, ideal workers are seen to be those who can give themselves fully to their career, single-mindedly and passionately pursuing the leading

questions of their field.[9] Gender further complicates vocation because while professional men are expected to give themselves fully to their career, professional women often experience being pulled between two vocations, as both work and family are presented as vocations demanding total dedication (Blair-Loy, 2003). Despite wide-spread awareness of ideal worker norms, and their negative impacts on all workers, but especially women, these norms remain stubbornly persistent and pervasive (Brumley, 2014; Kelly et al., 2010; Zanhour & Sumpter). For clergy, dedication to work as evidence for a true vocation can mean orienting their entire lives around the church calendar, prayer, the deep theological questions at the heart of religious practice, and the care needs of congregation members.

It is reasonable to expect that the gender identity of a clergy person will matter to the success with which their claims to sacred authority, on the basis on them living out their vocation through ordained ministry, match their person in the eyes of themselves, other clergy, and lay people. Sacred authority can be claimed, but it must also be conferred, and sacred authority in other fields depends on the person of the professional, including their gender, so this should be expected to be the case for clergy as well. Historically, the incorporation of gender essentialism as a schema legitimating sacred authority has helped establish an idealized understanding of vocation wherein the person called has had to fit a masculine ideal.

[9] Idealizations of scientific vocation offer a helpful comparison. The notion of vocation is particularly salient in the study of science and scientists. Many scientists garner their own moral authority from their presumed fitness to their profession, as is evidenced by their single-minded pursuit of their vocation (Shapin, 2008), their intellectual ability, and their ability to fit the image of the scientist as the dominator of Nature (Harding, 1986; Lloyd, 1979; Longino, 1993; Oreskes, 1996).

Aristotelian Essentialism

Aristotelian Essentialism is a form of gender essentialism that serves as the operative schema for gender among the schemas for the sacred authority of priests. Aristotelian Essentialism is built from the work of Aristotle, as interpreted and amended by Thomas Aquinas, and holds that women are fundamentally inferior to men based on their role in human reproduction. Both men believed women's bodies were tied to their reproductive capacity as an anchor limiting their other human abilities in a way that men's bodies were not. According to this logic, no human embodied in a female body can be a suitable candidate for ordained ministry, and therefore the clergy should be comprised exclusively of men.

Widespread and concentrated intellectual attention to the question of women's ordination, though common in 12th-Century writings, had been largely abandoned after the dawn of the 13th Century. Two primary factors contributed to this centuries-long closure: the formalization of Canon Law in Western Christianity in 1234 with *The Decretals of Gregory IX* (or perhaps earlier in 1140 with the *Decretum Gratiani*, though less formally), and the establishment of standard theological curricula across medieval Europe's newly-formed universities (Barton, 2015). Universities educated monastics and parish clergy, who then staffed church bodies which adhered to the newly adopted Canon laws. These institutions worked together to build consensus across Christendom of how church was the be done and under whose authority. As this dispersed institutional form solidified at the turn of the 12th to 13th Centuries, the question of women's ordination, and the linked question of the gender of God, dropped from intellectual debate not to be considered with broad attention again until the late 1960s, when a roughly twenty-year consideration of women's ordination deepened rifts between churches,

brought schism in some, and ushered in a significant transformation in the meaning of gender to the doing of Christianity in many Mainline Protestant denominations, including ECUSA.

In the 12th Century, universities were established in many European cities, centralizing learning and scholarship in ways that were unprecedented in the European context. These universities primarily educated clergy in their early years. In order to ensure that clergy could communicate across what had come to be understood as Christendom, with common language and common vocabulary, universities established Latin as a lingue franca for intellectual work, and built standardized curricula, this was the dawn of "liberal arts education" though the liberal arts of the time do not bear much resemblance to those taught in undergraduate degree courses today. The seven liberal arts of the medieval period were divided into the trivium (rhetoric, logic, and grammar) and the quadrivium (geometry, astronomy, music, and arithmetic). The highest form of study was theology. One key driver of the medieval intellectual project was the desire to understand Nature as a way of seeing more fully God's purpose and plan in Creation. Thus, medieval scholars were interested to learn all that they could from scholarship that had preceded them, including importing books and works from Islamic centers of learning, and reinvigorating engagement with surviving Greek and Roman texts. Primary among the Greek thinkers for medieval university scholars was Aristotle. Aristotle's work was widely considered authoritative on matters of the natural world, standing as a dominating influence on European thinkers on questions as divergent as what makes a tragedy (*Poetics*), how the heavens are organized (*On the Heavens*) and biology and physiology both human and animal (multiple works). Aristotle understood women to be naturally inferior to men, and the female sex to be a lesser version of the male sex. Aristotle's influence was so profound that even papal objections to his work's

inclusion in curricula went unheeded, and his work came to be central in liberal arts scholarship (Kuhn, 1957; Falk, 2020).

At about the same time, scholars and papal authorities were working to establish standardized, and enforceable Canon Law. Previously, the enforcement of religious law had varied across places and governance structures, with no clear line of authority for the adjudication of religious law in Europe. Canon Law, as it came to be formalized in *Decretum Gratiani* c. 1140, and then in *The Decretals of Gregory IX* in 1234 (Barton, 2015; Cardman, 1978), formalized a line of authority over religious life that concentrated authority in the papacy, and that established a legal system universal across Christendom. These religious laws went unchanged until 1917, and had been revisited and revised only once before the moment of debate and rupture around gender in the Roman Catholic Church that began in the 1960s (the discussion of women's ordination that resulted in women's admittance to ordained ministry in ECUSA occurred during the same 1960s-1970s time period as the debate in Roman Catholicism). Once Canon Law was standardized and more easily enforced, scholarly theological debates that had flourished about how and why Christianity ought to be practiced were closed, and the answer of the day became legal precedent enforceable by papal authority (Cardman, 1978; Gibson, 1992).

Together, the establishment of Canon Law and standardized university curricula solidified what meanings gender would carry in Western Christian belief and practice, built from medieval interpretations of ancient Greek biology, and of Christian scripture. The medieval consensus on gender in church was that God was masculine, and priests should be men. There was significantly less agreement on whether deacons had to be man, and the considerable power of medieval abbesses suggests that what at first appears a simple exclusion of women from ministry was more complex on the ground (Macy, 2006). Three notable medieval scholars:

Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, took up the question of women in holy orders, and though Aquinas is by far the most often cited in my interviews as a source of these medieval views, the varied approaches of these three show how much openness there was in the pre-Canon Law period to the question of women's place in church. According to careful work by Francine Cardman (1978) tracing these scholar's views, Bonaventure wrote of considerable uncertainty for any scriptural basis to prevent women from being ordained, but he wrote their exclusion seemed to him the 'more prudent' course to take. Aquinas built his arguments from Aristotle's description of the female form as a deficient example of the male sex. Aquinas saw women as inherently inhabiting a subject position on account of this biological deficiency and therefore as unfit to stand as sacramental ministers. Duns Scotus wrote that there was no particular reason for women or men to inhabit different roles in the church but that Christ had ordained it so when he named the twelve apostles, who all happened to be men. Christ's decision should therefore be understood as meaningful, and should set the precedent for prohibitions on ordaining women. These three thinkers did not arrive at their shared conclusion by the same route, but when Canon Law established prohibitions against women's ordination, and women's touching of sacramental objects (Gibson, 1992), the appearance of intellectual agreement was provided by enforceable sacred law.

Aristotelian Essentialism became an important part of the social structure of sacraments as an operative schema necessitating that only men could hold sacred authority to consecrate. This form of gender essentialism was grounded in the social organization of reproduction, providing theologians and church leaders with reasoning that posited that women's reproductive bodies prevented them from ever being able to act as sacramental ministers. Across *Politics*, *History of Animals,* and *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle argues for women's deficiency in

comparison to men. Aristotle writes that while men are capable of producing, and sexually discharging, a fluid (semen) which results in new life (a baby), women are in his view only capable of producing, and sexually discharging, a fluid (female ejaculate) which lacks this capacity. Thus, in Aristotle's view, women's bodies performed similar functions deficiently in comparison to men's. He also wrote that semen held the necessary ingredients for new life, while viewing women's reproductive contribution as entirely passive. For Aristotle, women's bodies consign them to a particular set of reproductive functions and therefore to a lesser social position entirely under the control of men.

Building on Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas also argued for women's deficiency, though he did so according to a particular set of theological concerns. For Aquinas, in *Summa Theologica*, women's bodily deficiency presents a problem for the theologian, for why would God create a lesser being as part of humankind? Aquinas, certain that God does not make mistakes, had to find a way to explain what he saw as the truth of Aristotle's biological descriptions of women's bodily deficiency alongside the Biblical truth of God having created woman in Eve. His solution was to argue that women were deficient of body, as Aristotle had described, but to also add that this deficiency was in-keeping with God's plan and served a purpose. For Aquinas, reproduction was a necessary part of God's plan for humanity, and women's bodies, though deficient in most respects to men's, were useful for the purposes of human reproduction, and therefore not proof of God having made a mistake in their creation. Women, by virtue of their bodies, which were deficient and purposed only for reproduction, were therefore easily excluded from ordination and any other roles which might require bodily perfection. Aquinas built from Aristotle's declaration of women's bodily deficiency a theological form of gender essentialism which served as a schema to require and enforce an all-male clergy in Western Christianity for over 700 years.

Of the schemas working together to legitimate ordination, and to necessitate ordained clergy for consecrating sacraments, one of those schemas was, from about 1234 to 1976, a form of gender essentialism. This is how gender becomes structure – one, or more, of the schemas involved in a set of practices is a form of gender essentialism, which itself is based on a particular understanding of women's/female bodies and reproduction and the proper ordering thereof. Social structure is an interaction of schemas and resources, and keeping a structure stable often involved multiple schemas. A social structure will be an instance of gender as social structure, then, when at least one of the operative schemas in that structure is a form of gender essentialism. This instance of gender as social structure or will be, through that operative schema, meaningfully based in the social organization of reproduction.

The adoption of women's ordination in ECUSA

Any discussion of women's ordination in ECUSA must include a brief history of women's ordination in both ECUSA and its institutional forbears: The Church of England, and The Roman Catholic Church. In building a historical narrative of the developments that lead to women's ordination being approved at the 1976 ECUSA General Convention, I have identified a few keys moments of closure and opening of the question of how gender matters to priesthood. First, the early 13th Century is important to consider as it is a moment of closure around the question of women's ordination that impacted all of Western Christianity, including the Roman Catholic church in England (which became the Anglican Church, and in the U.S. eventually became ECUSA). The founding of the Church of England during the English Reformation is important to consider for understanding the basis of Anglican theology of sacraments. ECUSA's formation as the U.S. branch of Anglicanism stands as an example of how ruptures have been

handled in ECUSA history. And finally, the years leading up to the 1976 vote saw increasing pressure and acts of protest to advance the cause of women's ordination. The scope of this dissertation makes it prudent that I exclude any debates about women's potential for sacred authority that may have arisen in Christian traditions outside of the broad contexts of Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, as those discussions were not often cited or referenced in ECUSA's debates around women's ordination.

This history is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is it intended to advance clear causal claims, rather its intention is to show how gender has mattered to church institutional practices and meaning systems in the years before 1976. These vignettes from ECUSA's past offer snapshots of the symbols and meanings that became entangled in the meaning system in place in ECUSA in 1976. All meaning is contingent, and the cultural resources available to people as they make sense of their world should be considered as factors on which the development of social change is contingent; this abbreviated history is intended to highlight some of the moments that have been made meaningful and thus have served as resources for respondents in making sense of their present.

Whereas between the 13th Century and the 1960s, women's ordination had been raised only occasionally as a question in locally-specific contexts[10][11][12], the period of 1964-1976 is one of rapid change to ECUSA hierarchy with many moves to include women and laity in more positions of power within the church. ECUSA moved to include women more fully in the life of the church beginning in 1964 and culminating in 1976 with the approval of women's ordination to the priesthood. It took several more years for women to serve as clergy at all ranks of the church hierarchy: the first woman elected bishop was in 1989, and the first woman elected as presiding bishop was in 2006. However, after 1976 ECUSA showed broad acceptance of women's ordination, with those who opposed women's ordination making up an increasingly small minority of ECUSA adherents. Following Chapter 10 "A Reordered Church" in Prichard's

[10] As Macy (2006) has shown in his work, some women religious held significant power in church and community life. Women religious in the position of Abbess – most of whom came from noble families – could, and did, under some circumstances, perform consecration. These women were powerful local leaders. However, abbesses were not ordained as priests. Abbesses were also subject to a sharp curb on their power in the late medieval period, and in England, the dissolution of the monasteries stripped was power remained to abbesses in the years around the Church of England's founding.

[11] In ECUSA, there were women ordained to the Order of Deaconnesses, which was reestablished as a formal order in the 1920s, largely in response to agitation from women members of ECUSA who had recently won the right to vote and demanded concurrent rights to representation and access to leadership in the church. Deaconnesses primarily did service work, and held a supporting role in relation to other clergy. However, Deaconnesses were never considered clergy for the purposes of securing Church Pension Fund benefits, and this snub was cited in the calls made for women's priestly ordination in the 1960s and 1970s. (Prichard, 1991, rev. 2014; Schjonberg, 2014 at https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2014/07/28/ordination-timeline/)

[12] The approval of ordaining two women to serve as priests in the Anglican Communion: Li Tim-Oi was ordained in 1944 in Hong Kong as part of the Anglican response to World War II and Japanese military invasion. Her ordination was not officially recognized in the broader Anglican Communion until 1971, when the Synod of Hong Kong and Macau became the first national church in the Anglican Communion to formally adopt women's ordination to the priesthood. Her ordination in 1944 was an important and public move towards greater acceptability of women's ordination, but should be understood as an outlying event. The official recognition of her ordination in 1971, however, fits into a period of broad change in attitudes towards women's leadership in the church, and women's ordination.

A History of the Episcopal Church (1991, rev. 2014, 315-335) some key dates show the advance of women in church leadership. Elizabeth Bussig, a lay woman active in the national church, drafted a report titled “Report of the Bishop’s Committee to Study the Proper Place of Women in the Ministry of the Church” which was submitted in 1966 urging the House of Bishops to allow women to be ordained as priests. In 1971 a coalition that would eventually be called the Episcopal Women’s Caucus (still in existence) met in an effort to advance the cause of women’s ordination by aiming at the Presiding Bishop. This group introduced a resolution calling for women’s ordination at General Convention in 1973; the resolution failed to pass. In 1974, 11 women were ordained to the priesthood in an irregular ordination in Philadelphia. The so-called Philadelphia 11 were ordained by three retired bishops. Four women were irregularly ordained by a retired bishop in Washington, D.C. in 1975. In 1976, when a resolution was introduced at General Convention to approve women’s ordination to the priesthood it passed.

This period coincides with a broad push for reform in ECUSA, and an expansion of roles for women in the church. Advances include the approval of a new Book of Common Prayer in 1979 (BCP; the prayer book used by all ECUSA parishes containing the order for nearly all services), and a new Hymnal in 1982. Those dates reflect the end of lengthy revision processes. The services included in the 1979 BCP. Other changes during this period include giving lay people more roles during services – including reading Scripture, establishing a standardized seminary curriculum and the adoption of a standardized final seminary exam (The General Ordination Examination, 1972), and formalizing processes for including laity in the call and ordination process for clergy in Commissions on Ministry. In 1967, the General Convention voted to allow women to be lay readers (to read Scripture during services), and to be deputies to the General Convention. Deputies are empowered to vote at General Convention on resolutions

that form the basis of ECUSA's governing structures, women's advance into lay leadership as deputies represents a significant increase in their power as full adult members of the church. This period is characterized by a broad push for the empowering of lay people to take on more leadership in the church, and by an expansion of who could hold lay and clergy leadership positions including the opening of these roles to women.

Findings: Schemas legitimating sacred authority

I find, that with the notable exception of Aristotelian essentialism – the schemas outlined above are present in respondents' views of what legitimates the sacred authority of priests as sacramental ministers. Apostolic succession, ECUSA legitimacy, and true vocation are all operative schemas across responses in every respondent group: men and women, both clergy and laity find these schemas compelling.

Respondents in my study saw evidence for the sacred authority of the priest at two key levels: institutionally, grounding their faith in the individual in their faith in the larger church body, and individually, finding qualities in the individual that justified their faith in them. Institutionally, priests' sacred authority was understood to be legitimate on the basis of their completion of ECUSA's ordination process which includes discernment under the supervision of a call committee and the bishop, seminary education, standardized examinations and practical experience. Trusting institutional traditions, such as liturgies built up from institutionally-agreed upon interpretations of Scripture was also important for establishing legitimate sacred authority; the liturgies and sacraments are believed to follow from the ministry of Jesus himself so respondents were comfortable trusting sacramental ministers that they saw following ECUSA's theology. Individually, the truth and legitimacy of the call felt by a priest to his or her ordination matters to respondents, and the moral goodness of the priest is seen as supporting evidence for

their call. Respondents also say of legitimate sacred authority, “you know it when you see it” (Russell, lay, man). They describe seeing or sensing divinity as God works through the priest, as the priest being a channel or vessel for God. None of these ways of recognizing the sacred authority of a priest is gendered in interviews.

Respondents placed a great deal of trust in the institution of the Episcopal Church to grant legitimacy to the sacred authority held by a priest. Sacraments performed by priests were considered legitimate on the basis of the priest’s ordination, which was the culmination of a lengthy professionalization process overseen by the Episcopal Church. In interviews, this institutional basis for legitimacy was discussed in two main ways. First, in the professionalization process all priests are required to go through, and second, in the history of the church itself and ECUSA’s perceived connection to Jesus through its traditions.

However important institutional backing, respondents also spoke about personal qualities that showed them a particular person was well-suited to the role of priest. An individual’s showing out that they had been selected by God to fill this role was said to be important for establishing their legitimacy as a priest. Evidence for selection was seen in how others experienced the divine in that individual’s presence, both in and out of worship settings. The legitimacy of call was also important, and could be found in the individual’s sense experience of their own call as felt it and described it to others.

Apostolic succession in ECUSA now

Respondents in my study still position Apostolic succession as an important schema legitimating sacred authority. Consistent with expectations built from ECUSA church history, I find that respondents see apostolic succession as the primary way ECUSA maintains tradition through tying the sacred authority of current clergy to the sacred authority of those who came

before, all the way back to St. Peter and Jesus himself. Apostolic succession is seen as central to ECUSA identity across historical periods, connecting the current church to its institutional past. Apostolic succession is also important for organizing church hierarchy, bishops are elevated to positions of considerable power in ECUSA on the basis of their connection to a role that is grounded in apostolic succession. Though priests are also ordained according to this schema, ordination to the office of bishop requires the presence of multiple bishops to lay on hands, which strengthens the schema of apostolic succession even further. Bishops are individuals who have been marked as part of the line of apostolic succession by multiple members of that line, and their authority as organizational leaders at the diocesan level depends on apostolic succession. The bishop, due to the symbolic and organizational power of their role, can have significant impact on the pace of change, in accelerating, or decelerating, changes to institutional practices according to their personal beliefs and preferences. Apostolic succession is, therefore, a consequential, and enduring, schema legitimating sacred authority in ECUSA.

Respondents with a particularly strong personal connection to ECUSA and deep knowledge of church history: those with seminary training, and those with lifelong membership who have studied the church, position Apostolic succession as an enduring feature of ECUSA identity. Danielle, a woman who is currently in seminary training to become a priest, talks about apostolic succession as an important feature of establishing ECUSA's legitimacy as a church in the post-revolutionary way period. She also connects that history to the current structures of authority that empower bishops to exert local control, leading to variation across dioceses in how matters of ordination and sacred authority are handled. She says,

> Yes, they're so interesting. This book was talking about the Revolutionary War and the difficulty that the Anglican churches had during that time. Obviously, when many clergy left and went back to England or went to Canada, but those that stayed, developed into very strong congregations with a lot of authority and

> autonomy, because there weren't bishops here because they weren't being ordained.
> There was the whole thing where Samuel Seabury had to go over to England and then the English bishops rejected him, so he went to Scotland and was ordained there, and then came back. Then William White and someone else went over and did receive ordination from the Anglican Church. In that time before they got ordained, these Episcopal churches, especially in the south, were really strong, knew what they were doing, had lay leadership, weren't worried about the fact that they didn't have bishops, and just moving forward. That figures into our polity, into our constitutional canons, and the writing of that, because they weren't going to give up that authority.
> It's so funny because we are hierarchical in a lot of ways and we have these people that defer to the bishop and stuff. When it comes down to it, bishops can control, or suggest, or encourage, or model the behavior they want, but they cannot require a rector of a congregation who basically has tenure to do stuff. I think it's really related to our roots, or history, or polity in that period of time after the revolutionary era where we didn't have oversight by bishops. That's in our DNA. It's cool, I think. (Danielle, lay, woman)

For Danielle, apostolic succession is central to ECUSA identity: it is "… in our DNA" which means that the tension that grow out of apostolic succession are a concurrent embrace of both centralized hierarchy, in the ordaining of bishops, and local control, in the authority of bishops.

Bishops, according to Virginia, a clergy woman, hold a complex office by virtue of their connection to the schema of apostolic succession. Bishops symbolically represent church history in their person, as part of an unbroken line of sacramental ministers. Bishops are also empowered to hold authority of the priests of their dioceses, who are also sacramental ministers, but of a lower order of ministry. Priests must be ordained by one bishop; bishops must be ordained by three bishops. Bishops are therefore an embodied representative of more apostolic succession that priests are. Virginia explains,

> One source of information is the ordination of a bishop in the prayer book. You look at the vows and the examination part of that service and when you tell somebody they're going to be an apostle, there's a lot of baggage on that word and bishops have an apostolic ministry. They're placed on much higher pedestal than priests. A Bishop is a symbol of unity, is the symbol of a whole diocese. A bishop is a symbol of the broader church.
> A Bishop has been ordained a bishop by someone who was ordained a bishop by

> someone, it goes all the way back in an unbroken line to St. Peter. That's a huge thing to carry on your shoulders. That sense of unbroken tradition of 2000 years. A bishop's job in part is to discipline the clergy, make sure that we obey our vows. There's a piece there where a bishop can't just can't see the clergy as colleagues or peers because there is that differential. It's a very lonely job being a bishop. (Virginia, clergy, woman)

The bishop's legitimacy is a proxy for the church's legitimacy. The bishop is ordained by multiple representatives of the church, and then himself or herself ordains. The bishop carries the line of apostolic succession forward in their ordinations that he or she does, or does not, perform. The bishop, because of apostolic succession, holds symbolic power at an individual level and can act as a linchpin either upholding, or remaking, how ordination is done at the local level of the diocese, and therefore who is able to legitimately hold sacred authority as a sacramental minister.

In the Diocese of the West, broad acceptance has been very recent for both women's ordination, and the full inclusion LGBTQ+ adherents in church life, let alone in ordained ministry. The diocese was one of the most conservative in the U.S. on these matters, until a new bishop was elected in the 2000s, and during his tenure he oversaw a time of tremendous transformation around these issues in the diocese. Alice recalls,

> It was a real dramatic change in the Diocese of the West… [it] had been very conservative, very traditional, very much in the camp where although women weren't excluded from being priests, there was a lot of anxiety about their presence in the priesthood, and very anti any gay clergy, very socially and spiritually lethargic, weak, tied to the old ways but the Diocese of the West was transitioning and the election of Bishop Randolph was a real turning point. He was like opening-- You know The Wizard of Oz when Dorothy lands and it's been black and white, and the door is open and it's all technicolor? (Alice, lay, woman)

For Alice, a bishop holding power to steer the direction of the entire diocese in matters of gender and sexuality and sacred authority resulted in positive change. She sees the moves to reject opposition to women's ordination and the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ adherents as a move from black and white to technicolor. For others, Bishop Randolph's embrace of these moves was so

concerning that they left the diocese, and ECUSA altogether. His tenure was a time of national struggle over the direction of ECUSA, and that manifested locally as he staked out clear positions on matters of gender and sexuality in his role as bishop. Bishop Randolph's ability to take a position and steer the diocese in a direction so clearly rested on his sacred authority as bishop being legitimated by the schema of apostolic succession, which respondents saw as central to ECUSA identity.

ECUSA identity and Institutional form

Respondents also mobilize ECUSA institutional form as an arrangement of resources that also acts as a schema legitimating the sacred authority of clergy leaders, particularly bishops. Resonances between ECUSA and the U.S. government are pointed out, which suggests that for some respondents the institutional isomorphism between the two is a source of additional legitimacy for ECUSA (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991, 74-75). ECUSA is organized hierarchically, but with a level of local control for bishops in dioceses and for rectors in parishes that is much greater than that of similarly-ranked clergy people in other denominations: neither Roman Catholic nor Methodist clergy have this high level of local autonomy. For respondents, local control, hierarchy with dispersed power, and community oversight of leadership recruitment, are all symbolically valuable for establishing the legitimacy of the authority of clergy leaders.

Several respondents talk about what ECUSA and the U.S. government have in common when discussing what makes ECUSA institutional form legitimate. Phillip, a lay man, who had a long military career, talks about the similarities he sees between the "rules and regs" of the military and the laws and rubrics of the church. He talks about rubrics – italicized directions to congregation members for how to move through the liturgy of

worship services – as similar to rules of conduct in the military. Phillip talks about deferring to the authority of bishops and church leaders because their position in the hierarchy, given apostolic succession, is proof of their fitness to lead in matters of asserting correct belief and practice. Jerome, a clergy man, speaks of the institutional isomorphism across ECUSA and U.S. governmental structures, claiming that the observable similarities stem from shared history, and suggesting that this structure is foundational to ECUSA as a church.

> If your diocese is not functioning well, then neither are your parishes going to be functioning well. You can look out on the panoply of all the diocese and see where the leadership is strong, and you see that filtering down across all the congregations. You see the head leadership is not so clear, not so strong, so there's fudging that's happening in the congregations too. In many ways, the Episcopal Church is very hierarchical still. As much as we try to work at being communal about that, our structure is hierarchical. We have to recognize that for its goodness and also its downfalls. We can support what's good, and we can be cautious on what we know is potentially the negative sides of it.
> We're organized. The Episcopal Church is organized as the United States of America. We grew up together, we grew up with the same leaders, we have the same basic constitution, the same basic structures. What you see happening in the national politics you see happening in the church politics. That's just the way we're structured. (Jerome, clergy, man)

These institutional features of how the church is organized have important implications for the day-to-day doing of church. Jerome points to the hierarchical organization of the clergy as an important feature of ECUSA, which aligns with how important apostolic succession has been shown to be as a schema legitimating sacred authority in ECUSA.

Vincent, a lay man, echoes Jerome's interest in how ECUSA's hierarchy is organized, but rather than focusing on the presence of hierarchy as the most important factor governing how ECUSA works, Vincent emphasizes how many dioceses there are how decentralized bishop's authority really is. Within each diocese, the bishop is empowered to exert local control and the presiding bishop, though elected to lead the bishops, does not exert power and control over them the way that the Archbishops, or the Vatican does over Roman Catholic bishops.

> Vincent: See, there we go, because you got presiding bishop, but there's no organization that is comparable to call the Holy See to do all the administrative stuff. That's where it should come from, basically, is from the presiding bishop, but presiding bishop doesn't have the authority to do that, because we're so democratic that all the bishops basically have their own little fiefdoms. You can't have-- I don't know how many dioceses we have now.
> Cat: I don't know.
> Vincent: There's probably 30 or so dioceses. We can't have 30 different theological interpretations or explanations. As a result, we haven't done anything.
> Cat: There is this institutional--?
> Vincent: There's an institutional inertia. It prevents us from a unified approach to some things, because we want to be democratic, and the bishops don't want to give up their authority and their diocese. The presiding bishop is not able to act in a unified manner, and to get thirty bishops to agree on something, I imagine, would be very difficult, unlike the Pope who can just say, "Here it is, folks. This is what it is." The Catholic Church is a true hierarchical organization, and there's no question about that. The Episcopal Church is not. (Vincent, lay, man)

For Vincent, ECUSA's hybrid form, bridging both hierarchical and decentralized forms, is central to the church's identity and how it operates. ECUSA is not unified under one clear authority for Scriptural interpretation, and so many interpretations and views of the Bible are able to maintain a presence in the church. This openness to multiple viewpoints is central to ECUSA identity and has its historical foundation in the Elizabethan settlement (or *via media*) that encouraged 16th-Century English Christians to pray together despite significant differences of belief. That decentralized approach to dogma persists in formulating ECUSA identity.

The combination of decentralized power and hierarchy underpinned by apostolic succession in ECUSA makes for a church where authority is legitimated by institutional form, and specifically, by the form's democratic appearance. Danielle, a woman pursuing the priesthood, explains that authority to perform sacraments is democratically-based. She embraces hierarchy because the church hierarchy is made up of people called to those positions by church members. She embraces ECUSA's decentralized institutional form because allowing for multiple

interpretations allows all believers a space from which to worship consistent with their beliefs but still part of the church whole. She explains,

> Theologically, I believe the authority comes from the community, because it's the community that's saying, "Yes, this person should move forward in ordination. We see this or we don't," or, "Yes, we affirm that this is our Bishop," or "Yes, we affirm this is our Bishop slate." It's the community that's deciding on that. To me, that seems like the authority.
> That's why we have in our diocese, a place like St. Thaddeus, where for them, they've decided in their community – I don't know if they've done any studies on this or not, but if it's just tradition or whatever. Right now, anyway, their presenting identity is that they don't recognize women as leaders. That's what works for their community, and we are blessed that they're part of our diocese.
> I think there's a lot of support for that in the Bible and in the covenantal relationship that God had with the Israelites and that salvation is for this community of people, not for the individual. It's like Jesus says, "If you come to the altar with your offering, and you realize you have a weird thing with your brother, leave your altar offering and go and repair things with your brother and then come back."
> It's more important, this relationship with this person, than some religious right. It's like, "Go repair that." That to me points to authority is in the community. It's a good question, though. I'm still working on that one. That's my current understanding. (Danielle, lay, woman)

The authority of the clergy, for Danielle, comes from the people they are leading in worship. When people come together, according to the rules and form of ECUSA, they can choose their leadership authentically to the needs of the community. Sacred authority then is legitimated by the symbolic meaning that respondents derive from the arrangement of resources that make up those institutional forms.

ECUSA Legitimacy: liturgy traditions

In ECUSA, the sacraments are performed according to set rites: liturgies specified and standardized in the Book of Common Prayer (other national churches in the Anglican Communion have their own prayer books in vernacular, the BCP is ECUSA's). The liturgies in the BCP were agreed to at General Convention, and the current form of the BCP was released in

1979 (another is forthcoming). These liturgies were written by theologians and scholars drawing on centuries of tradition, and sometimes going back to scripture and early Christian history and writings for turns of phrase or concepts of divinity. The BCP itself is a revision of a prayer book that is part of a chain of prayer books going back to Elizabeth I and Thomas Cranmer and the *via media* compromise of the Elizabethan era English Reformation. The liturgies which give institutional validity to the sacraments performed according to their prescriptions are designed such that the priest is not important as an individual, but as an institutional actor empowered to play the part of sacramental minister. To this end, the liturgies that legitimate priests' sacred authority for adherents also function independently of those individual priests.

Linda (clergy, woman) explains that the ECUSA's liturgies' focus on the liturgy itself, and not on the priest or presider, was important to her conversion and pursuing ordination in ECUSA. She says,

> I was totally blown away by the power of the sacrament, I guess is what I would say. The liturgy itself really drew me. I feel like if I boil it down, there's two things that I really see as differences between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church. One is, in the Presbyterian Church, worship is very focused on the person leading the worship. It's a couple of prayers, a few hymns, and the sermon, and everything in worship rises and falls on that person.
> I felt really uncomfortable that way, but when you go to an Episcopal Church worship service, it's not about the person. You can interchange different priests. That liturgy carries you, the focus on Eucharist carries you, and even if the sermon totally sucks, it's okay because you have all these other things are going on. You know what I mean? I'm not saying that the sermon isn't important because I totally got formed to preach in the Presbyterian Church.
> I think it's super important, but that isn't the whole point of worship. To me, the focus is much more on God and on God's activity in us in the Episcopal Church, versus a person and what they're doing in the service. It felt like finally, that was the right kind of worship. It felt like I was starving for something in worship, but I didn't know what it was. (Linda, clergy, woman)

For Marie (lay, woman), who is a lifelong Episcopalian, the liturgies promote an almost trance-like experience of worship, and a priest must be a competent liturgist not because he or she must

accomplish anything extraordinary in doing the sacraments, but because he or she must not interrupt the flow of liturgy with mistakes that could inhibit congregants' worship. She says,

> I think they need to have an appreciation for the choreography of liturgy, if you will. Many people who were raised in an Episcopal church are on a very high liturgical level. There's that flow… I think if you're inculcated, especially from childhood, to that sort of that thing, we all know intellectually that God doesn't care about that, but we know that God cares about intention and worship. If that gets interrupted, you're in a different place. You're not actually going to that suspended state of worship that we tend to look for in our liturgy. (Marie, lay, woman)

The liturgy gives shape and validity to what happens at a service, which includes validating the sacred authority of the priest leading the sacraments.

Clergy also talk about wanting to share the liturgy and believing that the forms of worship outlined in the BCP and upheld by ECUSA are uniquely well suited to connect people to God. Sandra (clergy, woman) talks about the BCP as a key to connecting with young adults and enhancing the sense of mystery that she thinks will draw people to the church. She says,

> Well, for me, because it's so exquisitely beautiful when done well and by done well, I don't mean, robotically with intention and care because it's such, I call it the whole prayer book is just a treasure box and we have so many things to use, and nuance. We have four Eucharistic prayers. We move through the whole prayer book during the course of the year.
> … Do you use that to allow the liturgy, which really just comes from the original, which means work of the people, to allow the liturgy to be a vehicle for folks to connect with God, but the work and care that it takes before that one hour on Sunday? Actually, we have two services but it's huge, but it's worth it to me. Because when done, well, as best as we can do it, it does open the window for folks.
> … I keep pointing out that the framework is there and ancient and exquisite. Studies are prevalent that younger people, 20s, early 30s are being drawn back to the churches that have really healthy liturgy. So much that it's not everywhere but the trend to the big box churches, with the screens, with some of those folks who are now saying, "Oh, wait, I'm drawn to the mystery," and this ancient liturgy of ours when done well, I think invites that. I know it does. (Sandra, clergy, woman)

Sandra points to the ancient origins of many of the prayers and services as important to their effectiveness. She talks about the church itself, in its prayers and ceremonies as sacred and

connected to God. She talks about inviting people into churches and into mystery. Susan (clergy, woman) also talks about liturgy and sacrament in terms of connecting people to God through ritual, and for her, being ordained and performing sacraments was hooking into something deeper than she had felt before. She says,

> What I noticed for myself in doing [the sacraments] is the love and understanding of ritual and how important ritual is to bring people together, whether it's just lighting the same candle every time we get together or placing a rock on the altar and claiming what that is for me and how it relates to my life. The definition of sacrament, I think, is something outward visible signs of God's inward and spiritual grace. Somehow, I was given the understanding of that a long time ago and could see how powerful that was for people, to do something that meant something else. When I finally got to celebrate the Eucharist, it just felt like the next phase of that, of getting to do that in a more credible way, in a way that had deep roots, and had scripture and tradition to back it up. (Susan, clergy, woman)

Like Susan, Sarah sees sacraments as deeply rooted, and backed up by institution. What Susan calls tradition, Sarah calls the sacredness of the church. She says of performing sacraments, "I think it needs to be because leader is God. The leader is the sacredness of the church, and the gift that we've been given; to carry it, and to attempt to be true to it. That means that there needs to be a humble awareness. Our limitations." (Sarah, clergy, woman). All three of these clergy people talk about God as the leader of the sacramental ministry they perform. And all three see God working through the traditions of the church, and through the liturgies of the BCP.

Priests' sacred authority is made authoritative by the institutional backing of the church. For those who believe that the ECUSA is a valid church, that its authority to bless and sanctify is real, the gender of a clergy person does not matter because the practices of that institution say so.

ECUSA Legitimacy: Seminary and Professionalization

Priests are ordained in a ceremony by the laying on of hands of a bishop. A bishop must be present to perform ordination, and this requirement is believed to connect each priestly ordination – through the laying on of hands – back to Jesus himself. Ordination requires a bishop's hands, prompting jokes about "magic hands", and ensuring the that line of apostolic succession which can be traced from today's clergy back to St. Peter, and Jesus's hands, goes unbroken and serves to legitimate ordinations today. The long history of ECUSA rites and rituals is invoked in interviews to explain why the sacraments performed today hold sacred legitimacy, and why those who perform them hold their authority legitimately according to thousands of years of Christian history. This appeal to history in not unique to ECUSA, but the form it takes in ECUSA is worth noting here as everything from the structuring of liturgy to the changes made to church polity to allow for women and LGBTQ clergy to serve at all levels of church hierarchy are deemed legitimate on the basis of this appeal to the past, both institutional and Biblical. In seminary education, institutional oversight of each individual clergy person's career in ministry can be quite explicit. Deborah describes the response she got when applying to seminary before having assembled an official discernment committee and getting diocesan approval, "They told me pretty quickly that I should have talked to them before I applied to seminary. They said, 'We like to be in control of the process, and we want to tell you which seminary we recommend and all of that.'" (Deborah, clergy, woman). Deborah's diocese responded to her efforts to begin the ordination process without explicit institutional support in the form of steering from her diocese with a slap on the wrist and a brief slowing of her process. Seminary education is one of the formal ways in which ECUSA maintains control over the professionalization of its clergy. In general, respondents see ECUSA seminary education as necessary preparation for ministry and a

source of priests' sacred authority.

Respondents explain the necessity of seminary education as part of this longer tradition. Seminary training is a formal education and an integral part of the professionalization process for ECUSA clergy. Lay and clergy respondents alike talk about seminary, and especially the theological training received there, as necessary to prepare priests to perform sacraments. Respondents believe that a theological education is required to fully understand and be able to adequately perform the priestly role in the sacraments. When asked what gifts, talents, skills, and abilities someone would need in order to be a sacramental minister, lay respondents often spoke about the need for a sacramental minister to have a solid understanding of the theology behind the sacraments. Sean (lay, man) says, "I think that first of all, understand what they are. This is not just some traditional or meaning-- Some we do it because they've always done it that way. There's a lot. There's a very, very deep theology, there's a deep, inherently, divine aspect of what each one of those things are." (Sean, lay, man). For Sean, the priest must understand that deep theology in order to effectively perform the sacraments for the congregation. Austin (lay, man) gives a similar opinion, noting that understanding the reasoning and theology behind the sacraments can allow the priest to explain them to his or her congregation. Austin says,

> Yes. Well, I think one thing is that you need to feel particularly called and that it is a necessary part of your vocation to perform them in the first place. Right now, one of the things that is necessary is for someone to be able to clearly communicate why we do them. We do them because we've always done them is not a very compelling reason if I have never been to church before. Some personal clarity on [chuckles] the theological underpinnings or experiential underpinnings of the sacraments would be helpful. (Austin, lay, man)

Again, the sacrament is aided by the minister performing it having an educated understanding of the theology behind the practice.

Training is also seen to help clergy live into their call through their ministry. Seminary training is seen as helpful, but the integration of that training and effectual sacred leadership requires the individual clergyperson to bridge their training and the life of the church. Albert (lay, man) explains that training is very important, and individual clergy people should remember their training and lead in accordance with the Bible. He says, “If people that are leaders have some sort of training. You can be trained, but then as a person, you would have your own way of seeing things. If you don’t stick to what the Bible says, basically, you could add other things that are not necessary. I would say sticking to the Holy Book would be a quality that will give light to the congregation.” (Albert, lay, man). Though Albert is saying that personal qualities and convictions to follow the Bible are necessary in addition to seminary training, the fact that he starts his answers with training speaks to the general perception that this formal education is a crucial step in clergy professionalization in ECUSA. Even Albert’s answer that seeks to qualify that assumption and say that seminary is not enough starts from the presumption that seminary training is a universal first necessary step. Carol (clergy, woman) considers this question of the relationship between seminary training and personal preparation for ordination, and why she wanted to go to seminary. She remembers,

> I remember being asked a question when I was going through the gauntlet at the Commission on Ministry here as to whether I would be approved for Holy Orders. The question of, "Why do you want to go to seminary? You’ve got all the books you need," was the attitude. What I realized and told the committee was that I knew that I knew a lot of disparate pieces, but I had no idea how it all fit together. I really, really, really wanted to understand that and felt that seminary would be a place where I could hang things up on a structure and see how they all fit together.
>
> Honestly, that’s one of the most beautiful and wonderful things about being a priest is really being able to live that integration. Live into the integration of information and experience, and the particular, and the abstract, and all of these really just different and seemingly at odds things, and realizing how connected things are. That is a really amazing thing about being a priest, I have to say, for me. (Carol, clergy, woman)

For Carol, seminary education gave her the theological training and grounding in Episcopal tradition that she felt she needed in order to act as a sacramental minister in a way that made sense to her. This sense-making work is exactly what Sean and Austin were saying clergy need in order to perform the sacraments with clear meaning in the congregation. Seminary is seen as a formal education that serves as a bridge from call to ministry.

For clergy who convert into ECUSA as part of their discernment, inculturation into ECUSA norms and traditions is part of seminary. Several clergy respondents had begun their spiritual lives in other denominations and had converted, joining the Episcopal Church as a part of their discernment and ordination process. For these clergy, seminary education served an additional purpose: they were being introduced to ECUSA identity through their formal theological education. Some convert clergy already possessed an MDiv at the time of their ECUSA discernment process, and for them, ECUSA seminary was explicitly about inculturation. Linda, who switched from the ordination track in the Presbyterian Church to the ordination track in the Episcopal Church, already held an MDiv, which was a sufficient qualification educationally, but it did not communicate her fitness for ECUSA priesthood to her diocese. She says,

> The Episcopal Church just clicked for me. I thought, 'I think this is who I am. I think I'm Episcopalian,' which waylaid my process.
> It slowed everything down because now I was having to do all these other obligations. The checklists were totally different from the Episcopal Church than the Presbyterian Church have. I still think it was one of the best decisions I ever made. I switched, graduated with my MDiv, and then the Commission on Ministry said to me, 'Hey, that's wonderful, but we want you to be more Anglicized. You're not Anglicized enough. We're afraid you're too Presbyterian.' That's basically what they were saying. I was like, 'Trust me, I'm not. I'm not Presbyterian. I'm so Episcopalian.' [laughs] They were like, 'No, we don't know if that's true. Take a couple of years,' was basically the-- I was like, 'Oh my gosh, I just graduated with a Master of Divinity. I have a religion degree and a Master of Divinity. There is nothing else for me to do.' I was really sure I was supposed

to be doing this. (Linda, clergy, woman)

Linda ended up satisfying the requirement to be more Anglicized by spending time in a small seminary aligned with the Anglo-Catholic faction of ECUSA[13]. Her discussion of those experiences is mentioned elsewhere as that community serves as a good example of how opposition to women's ordination can still impact the lives and trajectories of women clergy in ECUSA. For Jerome, the requirement to be Anglicized caused less turbulence to his process, but nonetheless, his previous seminary training in the Roman Catholic Church was sufficient education, but not sufficient cultural formation. He says,

> I did not repeat seminary. the Episcopal Bishop here was fine with what I had done theology-wise, even though it was back in the '80s because of my work in the church and keeping up with my theology. I went to the local West Coast seminary for a year of indoctrination. They call it Anglican Studies. Somebody had said to me, it's reform school, and that makes the most sense to me because I'm being reformed. I spent two semesters in an ECUSA seminary, and just a wonderful supportive environment. Being in a one-year situation, there was a little group of five or six of us doing the same thing, so we had our own little support group as well. (Jerome, clergy, man)

Jerome and Linda both spent additional time in formal educational training beyond the normal MDiv because their theological training had been in a different denomination and professionalization for clergy careers in ECUSA requires not only theological training but also formal inculturation in the norms and traditions of ECUSA.

The formal education ends when clergy successfully complete the General Ordination Exam. This multi-day examination is described at great length by Robert (clergy, man) whose

[13] Many of the people connected with this particular seminary have now left ECUSA for the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), a new province not recognized by the Anglican Communion but recognized by some Anglican Communion provinces, and formed to be an alternate and, according to ACNA adherents, more orthodox Anglican province in the U.S. and Canada. Opposition to women's ordination, and to the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ adherents in church life, was a primary driving factor in establishing this new church body.

personal experiences of the GOE have led him to declare, “I made a vow in seminary that if I ever have the power to remove the General Ordination Exam, the GOE, if I ever had the power to remove it, I will.” His GOE was complicated by a family emergency the night before his exam was set to begin, and successfully completing his GOE took several tries, and included his bishop’s efforts to support him, even setting up a committee of theologians and clergy to counsel and coach Robert as he re-took several questions. None of the clergy I spoke with particularly enjoyed the GOE, but Robert was unusual in his level of considered disdain for it.

Robert remembers the structure of the exam as such, “The GOE consists of seven questions. Those seven questions, you answer one in the morning and one in the afternoon. You basically have two hours, three hours to answer it. Some are open book, some are closed book. There are seven points of the church that they ask you questions on.” Answers are then reviewed by a panel, and scores are assigned. I asked for further clarification,

> Cat: Just a clarification question for me, the reviewers, who are they in the structure and hierarchy of the church?
> Robert: They’re in a black box.
> Cat: Are they ordained persons, professors, lay people, you don’t know?
> Robert: Yes, yes, yes. I’ve met several reviewers because later, they come outside while I was reviewing. They’re mostly professors, but professors can be lay people, and some really snooty ordained people. I only say that because the ordained people I know that are reviewers have been awfully snooty about some matters. My words. I think they would take umbrage to that.

An expert panel is empowered in this exam to assign number scores to students’ answers, and students must pass this examination in order to move forward with their ordination. A failed GOE usually cannot result in an ordination. Although, it is important to note again the power of the bishop – a bishop could ordain anyone they pleased, successful GOE or not. That bishop could face consequences in the House of Bishops, and the legality of any such ordinations they

performed could be questioned. In general, those seeking ordination must successfully pass the GOE before they can be ordained.

The GOE is a highly-academic and rigorous examination. It is designed to be rigorous and academic, and this finale for seminary education upholds the norms that the ECUSA clergy are well-educated and an academically accomplished group. For Robert, that emphasis on academic excellence in matters of church may not be very relevant to the actual doing of church. He is concerned that the GOE rewards academically-inclined folks while penalizing some of the gifts necessary for ministry that are less easily fit into an academic framework. He says,

> My problem with the GOE is that it raises up people that will not do well in a parish ministry. It won't work. I was a better preacher before I learned to preach. I had to unlearn because you learned to speak from your heart before you get in the seminary. It's just 'Jesus means this to me. When I read the scripture, it moves me in this way. This is what I've seen in my life.' That's what we talk about as laypeople. In seminary, they're like, 'No, that's not it. You have to do this.' (Robert)

For Robert, a practice like the GOE that emphasizes the cerebral over the practical is not helping clergy to form their own capacities to build the ECUSA of the 21st century. Robert's objections to the GOE are particularly strong[14], but he is not alone in his skepticism of seminary training as sufficient to the challenges facing the clergy of the 21st-century ECUSA.

True vocation and community-based discernment

Professionalization for clergy in ECUSA is a highly-structured process, and follows a general pattern (though individual's stories can vary depending on specifics). First, individuals who desire to be ordained speak with their parish's rector. If those conversations end with both

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[14] GOE is part of 1960s reforms (Prichard, 1991 rev. 2014): it is one of the metrics put into place to standardize clergy training and to give lay people a seat at the table through the process. The GOE grew out of a concern that clergy training was not rigorous or transparent enough, so its unpopularity with clergy presents an interesting tension.

the individual and their rector agreeing the idea should be taken further, then the individual speaks with their diocesan bishop. If the bishop agrees that the individuals should pursue ordination, then a discernment committee is formed to vet the individual's call. These committees are made up mostly of lay people (who are invited by clergy and the individual him or herself) and also include the clergy overseeing the individual's process. When a discernment committee agrees that an individual is called, and the diocesan bishop also agrees, that individual then applies to seminary for a master's program. M. Div. degrees are awarded by many institutions, but the expectation in ECUSA is normally that one will attend one of the ECUSA seminaries, which include GTS, VTS, CDSP, and Sewanee. Most ECUSA clergy respondents in this study attended one of these institutions. After a three-year course of study, an M. Div. is awarded. Individuals must also complete a certain number of hours of field work under the supervision of ECUSA-approved mentors. Finally, there is an examination process (the GOE) that includes long written answers to complex questions. If an individual is successful to this point, they will be ordained as a deacon, and usually after six months as a deacon (this is called the transitional diaconate), they will be ordained a priest.

A call to ordination must be discerned within the context of church community; it is not possible to be ordained as a priest based on an individual sense of call alone. That call must be affirmed within a parish community, by a bishop, by a seminary faculty, and by a panel of examiners. At points in this process, an individual seeking ordination will be subjected to significant evaluation of their characters, their fitness for ministry, and their sense of call will be questioned. For some, this questioning is thought to ensure that only people who are truly meant to be priests make it through the process. Stories of dissuading people from seeking ordination

are offered as proof that the system works, and stories of clergy burnout are often accompanied by memories of signs that they should have been dissuaded from ordination.

The most straightforward stories of community discernment are those that feature an individual being told by community member(s) that they would be a good fit for ordained ministry, and that being heard as validation of what the individual already suspected about himself or herself. If the community member noticing someone's fitness for ordained ministry was the bishop, then the progression from call to ordination was even smoother. Sometimes, however, the role of community members is to dissuade individuals from seeking ordination. Discernment as a community activity creates openings to push those who are deemed unfit for ordained ministry off of the priestly track, despite their own personal convictions around their call. Kenneth (clergy, man) explains that the purpose of community discernment is to prevent the ordination of those not truly called[15],

> Your discernment isn't just between you and Jesus. It is discerned by the church. It needs to be validated by people who know you well or you're willing to let know you well who could help discern that. Some people, again, in the pews, let's say, might see a person who's really good around the church and sensitive and all that and say, well-meaningly, "You ought to be ordained." Maybe they ought not to be ordained. Maybe there are great people, and that's what God needs to fill the church with. To put them into ordination would ruin them. The way my mentor put it, he was a celibate priest, so not married. He said funny things sometimes. He said, "Ordination is like marriage. You should only do it if you have to." [laughter]
> What he meant by that is if there is not some other way you can fully express your love for the Lord or perhaps your partner, don't take the huge step of marriage because that's a giant commitment, and you're better not making it, and maybe discerning later that it would be okay to do that, but doing it prematurely, and then you're stuck in a life that you're not called to. (Kenneth, clergy, man)

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[15] Community discernment is a moment that bias can easily enter the ordination process. It is unclear to me whether these given examples are times that bias was operative – I have no access to the individuals who were counseled not to pursue ordination and I do not know anything about their sense of their own vocation – but it is interesting to note that relying on others to validate a call opens the possibility for any biases, for the purposes of this study particularly gender bias, to influence judgements about the validity of a call.

For Kenneth, not all wonderful people who feel called to ministry, or who show signs of a call that is visible to others, are truly called. Kenneth uses this framing of the call to ordained ministry as something to protect people from as part of his defense of his opposition to women's ordination. This will be discussed in greater length in the next chapter. Andrew (clergy, man) tells of successfully dissuading a colleague in seminary from continuing to pursue ordination. He says,

> I helped a really beautiful lady. She was an actress, Hollywood. Her husband was a producer. He had a lot of money, and she was in seminar with me. Just this gorgeous girl and stunning, beautiful. Maybe two years my junior.
> I was 32, I was starting when I was 32 and at the end of the first year, I could tell how miserable she was, how awful. I just had to sit down with her because I was the oldest guy in the class. I sat down with her and I said, "Now, well, I got to tell you the truth. A part of call is searching out others who believe that this is a call also. It's a community verification valve. I said "I'm part of your community. I love you dearly because you're a wonderful woman and I got to tell you; you were not called to the Christian ministry." She just cried and she said, "Thank you. No one has been willing to tell me that."
> I said "It's obvious that this is so painful for you and it's so hard for you. You're brilliant and you're struggling with everything. Absolutely everything is a struggle. It's pretty obvious God has called you to something but this is not what God has called you to. You need to figure out-- most everybody, especially women back in those days, if they had the slight urge to become more religious, obviously was priestly ministry. Like, "Now we can do it," jumped in. What a mistake for a whole lot of them. That wasn't what they were called to do. They were called to something else. That's not what the call was. In my seminary class, we started with-- this is an example, I think a good example, we were really good with each other. 25 started my seminary class 11 finished. That was the best thing we could have done. It was obvious, those other people were not called to do this. It was just obvious. It was obvious that the 11 of us were. We're all still priests. Every single one of us. (Andrew, clergy, man)

Andrew and Kenneth echo each other in their move to frame ordination as something that many could easily fall into and that they should be dissuaded from. For them, a true calling is undeniable and inescapable. Having multiple points along the way that a community member can state doubt or opposition to their pursuit is then a good thing that ensures nobody is ordained

who would be a poor fit for the role of priest.

Community-based evaluations of someone's fitness for sacramental ministry as a priest can be accomplished in one-on-on interactions, but the process often also includes more formalized evaluations. Respondents' experiences of evaluation proceedings vary and can, but do not always, include formal psychological evaluations and therapy overseen by the diocese. Joyce (clergy, woman) explains,

> Well, we go through extensive psychological testing before we're ordained, it's a long process. I mean, it's not just going to seminary and-- I was the chair of the commission of ministry for a while and when we would interview candidates for Holy Orders, one of the things we really paid attention to was whether or not people were there taking themselves too seriously, if they were taking their call too seriously, if they saw themselves as Jesus, if they saw themselves as God, if they were going to really, really enjoy that deference, those were red flags. Typically, people would not go further on the process than their psychological testing.
>
> That's supposed and I think it does help, most of us are completely healthy. When one clergy misbehave typically-- Well, they've decided that the rules don't apply on them, that they're above the rules for whatever reason and have established situations where people don't ask them questions. If you've got an affair going on, if you're molesting a child or if you're stealing money, you can't have people ask you a question. (Joyce, clergy, woman)

However, these systems of psychological evaluation and training are not universal. While Virginia (clergy, woman) talks about benefitting from receiving therapy as part of her discernment process, Austin talks about how he didn't receive any therapy as part of his and how he might have benefitted from it. Virginia says,

> One of the great things that it did for me was one of the first things I had to do was see a therapist, and I had never been to a psychologist.
>
> I never had therapy, and my parents had died when I was a teenager, and I'd never processed that, and so it was a great benefit to then having to being required to do that inner work, which I needed to do but I've been putting off for 20 years basically. I suppose, in a way, my call to ordination is connected with a sense of wellness and processing of grief and moving through that bad stuff. (Virginia, clergy, f)

But Austin, who was also grieving during his discernment process (though more recently, Virginia's parents had died many years ago, Austin's loss was more recent), was not put through psychological evaluation and treatment, he says,

> By the time, and then I started doing commission on ministry and discernment committees in my church, and convincing all these people that I was supposed to go to seminary. I think there was also this part of me that was like everything had been so just blowing up for so long and shifting. People were dying and relationships were ending, our family was falling apart. I was just searching for something to hold on to, just some certainty in something.
> I never really went to therapy for any of this stuff. The way that I coped with it was to really shut down and put a lot of walls up in myself to pretend-- Really, what I did was just, I conceptualized everything so that I could explain theologically why my father had died, where he was, and why I shouldn't be sad about it. That was a brilliant coping mechanism because I survived for a while. Shit was hitting the fan, but I was going to be okay. I think that's also how I approached my own spirituality and faith and theological pursuit because I want to be an expert at something. I want to grapple and know everything about these things. (Austin, lay, man)

Austin eventually decided that his call was to leadership as a lay person in the church, albeit one with a seminary education and considerable theological expertise. He talks elsewhere in his interview about finding his joy and call in thinking of new formulations for church to take in the 21st-Century, and of his realization that he did not see himself as a sacramental minister. Performing sacraments is what really separates the ministry of clergy and laity in ECUSA.

Institutionally, community-based discernment is self-protective. Barring from ordination those who can be known to be more likely to commit financial malfeasance, sexual misconduct, or any other violation of a spiritual community's trust, helps to ensure that ECUSA maintains high levels of community trust, and thus institutional legitimacy as a church. The moral and spiritual authority of the church is aided by the moral uprightness of its clergy, so those who may be more likely to commit wrongs are to be kept out of ordained leadership. In cases of misconduct and broken trust between clergy and parish, it is precisely these problems that arise.

The validity of the sacraments of Eucharist and baptism are questioned when priests are perceived to fail in their call. In fact, one gender-based reason that women clergy are sometimes seen as desirable is their presumed moral goodness, offering a throwback to Victorian gender ideology. This topic will be further discussed in a future chapter (Chapter 5 "Regeneration: Revolutionary Essentialism").

True vocation: Legitimate call, evidence of being touched by the divine

At the level of the individual clergy person, respondents talked about signs that a call to ordained ministry was legitimate that were visible to others. These are the sorts of individual qualities that community members might consider if they were on a parish discernment committee working to validate the call felt by someone early in the discernment and ordination process. According to my interviews, an individual will be an able and fit sacramental minister if they feel called to ordained ministry, are able to inhabit the priestly role in sacramental ministry by being a channel of God's grace so that others can experience the divine through them, which is accomplished by carrying out ECUSA liturgy. The institutionally-overseen professionalization process described in the previous section is necessary for sacramental ministry to work because that process forms priests who are able to do ECUSA liturgy sufficiently for God to work through them and the sacraments are therefore accomplished.

Respondents talk about mystery and the ineffability of God when they seek to describe how they can know that an individual clergy person is in the right call. Russell (lay, man) says "All I can think of, you know it when you see it. [chuckles] I don't know what you're [interviewer] looking for in that regard." (Russell, lay, man). For Russell, someone who is meant to be a priest is obviously so in ways that are difficult to pin down or define. Mystery is an important dimension of call for respondents, both clergy and lay, and it is not gendered in

responses. Almost none of the responses around call, inhabiting the role of priest acting as a channel for God, or carrying out liturgy are gendered in their perceptions of what makes an individual fit for priestly ministry. Those that do consider gender are respondents who adamantly oppose women's ordination. Everyone else in the sample talks about the mysterious dimensions of the sacred, and the priest's attunement to them in their call, in effectively gender-neutral terms. Gender resurfaces in discussions of liturgics around questions of dress and voice pitch, but those are not about the legitimacy of the priest's sacred authority to perform the sacrament, more his or her style for doing so.

When the institutional practices that govern priestly professionalization became formally open to men and women both any broad understanding of sacred authority as something only legitimately held by men lost its sway. Respondents talk about sacred authority as something men and women can hold because that is what they see in the institution around them. Gender still matters to the legitimacy of sacred authority in the moments that bishops and community members treat those seeking ordination according to gendered norms (see Chapter 4 "Latency" for more on this). But those practical experiences of gender mattering are at odds with the beliefs and meanings held within the larger church as an institution, which has embraced a gender-neutral view of sacred authority, resulting in respondents who experience professionalization for priests as a process that is still often gendered, but who then describe sacred authority and the priest's role in gender-neutral terms.

When respondents talk about knowing someone is a good fit for the role of priest, they often say that it must begin with a deep and true call. The call is presumed to come from God. Russell, a lay leader in his parish, says,

> I think there has to be that deep calling, it has to be the foundation, the bedrock of what you build this person as a leader of a church on, it's [snaps finger] most of it.

> Now, the day-to-day is about administration and running a church and doing pastoral service and all kinds of other things, but you don't have the basis. I'm sure in seminary they describe all that. All I can think of, you know it when you see it. [chuckles] I don't know what else you're looking for in that regard. (Russell, lay, m)

A priest's job encompasses many different jobs, but central to all of them is his or her role as the sacramental minister. And for that, there must be a sense of call. When clergy describe their own calls, they may talk about a sense that it is inescapable. Bridget (clergy, woman) was working as a teacher, very early in her career, and enjoyed her job. But she felt something was missing. She describes it this way,

> I was like, "You know, if there had been anything in the world besides priesthood that would have done it for me, this would be it."
> I love it, I get up everyday excited to go to work, I love everything I'm doing but that Sacramental piece is really missing. There's just no way in what I'm giving that I feel like I'm giving all that's being asked of me to give to God's people. I feel like I'd love to go about this in a different way that does involve Eucharist and Reconciliation and all that kind of stuff. After that I took a year off to do my discernment process and went to seminary. I was ordained pretty young. I was 26. (Bridget, clergy, f)

For Bridget, the call was stronger than her plans for her career in teaching. It was something she couldn't get away from, and sacraments were the key to her sense of calling. It was not just that she wanted to do service, it was service through the sacraments. This focus on sacramental ministry is common in clergy call stories.

Performing sacraments carries with it significant sacred authority and is backed by institutional power. Some clergy experience this call to a powerful position ambivalently, others embrace it with almost a sense of noblesse oblige. Thomas (clergy, man) has wrestled with seeking an authoritative position, he says,

> It's one of the things I struggled with when I was in the call process. I'm still working on it, but it's this notion that I felt called to be a priest because I felt called to have that authority. Not my own authority, not authority over people or telling people what to do or what to say, but that authority given by God to

> present God's word to God's people. There's different layers of authority. You can look at authority as someone just dictating who and what people do, where people go, what they do, when they do it. That's basic. Sometimes I have to in my job here, I have to have that kind of authority. We need to get this done, we have to get this done, we have to do these different things. It's okay. (Thomas, clergy, m)

For Thomas, holding authority may be uncomfortable, but he feels it is something he must do in order to live into his call to help people connect to God. Kevin too felt that his call was to hold a certain amount of power and authority. Similar to Thomas, Kevin (clergy, man) talks about holding that position in order to accomplish something for God. Kevin says,

> I guess what it comes down to for me is that if that's-- This isn't going to come out the right way, but I'll just go for it. If that's the God I want people to see, then I should be in a position to preach that God. One does not have to be a priest to be able to preach. One does not have to be ordained at all in order to preach. For me, I needed the authority of the church to preach that. That's how I felt and that's why I engaged in this process and where I'm at now. (Kevin, clergy, m)

Kevin, like Thomas, sees the sacred authority of the priest as something to pursue and hold as a way of helping connect people to God. Andrew is more established in his career than either Thomas or Kevin, having had a long career and now being retired from full-time parish ministry but still actively serving as a priest. Andrew is confident in his call and his authority, and sees embracing one's sacred authority as integral to doing the job of priest. He says,

> The call is the call, is the call, is the call. I have never for one second questioned my call, not ever. I left everything to follow this and I have never looked back once. I haven't looked back once because I knew the call was true. If we don't question the call, then we're not questioning God. It is when we start questioning our call, we're questioning God, but we're doing it for the wrong reasons because that isn't working, thus we're thinking it's God's responsibility. God screwed up; God failed me. So, I question my call because I didn't do that. The call is on me and I'm the one who's supposed to do that … If we're rock solid on the sense of call, then we can actually move forward in time to say whose responsibility it is and how to do it. Our authority disappears once we question our call I think. (Andrew, clergy m)

Andrew sees his authority as a basis for responsibility. His view of call puts responsibility on the

clergy person to live into the authority that has been placed on them. The authority that clergy hold can put them into intense situations on a regular basis, and being drawn to be present in those moments is part of the sense of call as well.

Two respondents offered surprisingly similar summaries of what being a priest entails, and why call is important to inhabiting the role. Andrea is a lay woman and Sandra is a priest. Both talk about the priest as someone called to serve, and to serve in life's most intense moments. Andrea says,

> You're a priest. You help bring people into the world. You help see them out of it. You help them while they're here to make sense of their lives, make sense of their love connections, make sense of their family, make sense of their place in this world. … It's hard and that's why I really believe people who are called to that are very special. I often will sit there during sermons going, "I wouldn't say it that way. I would totally say it another way." I know that being a preacher, that is not my calling, no way. … There was no way I could handle the thought of being a priest because of dealing with all the different people. I'm not a foot washer, your feet are gross. It takes a very special person to really feel that calling. (Andrea, lay, f)

Andrea frames the importance of call around the intensity and difficulty of the priest's job to be present in peoples' lives, and acting in a servant capacity. Sandra explains that there are many roles that are present at important moments in life, but that her call was to present in those moments, and to be in the role of priest. She says,

> "Vocation is basically the place of the world's deepest need and your greatest desire." To me that's more vocation. I could have made more money, I had more stability, all the things you look for in a career, had I not been called to the priesthood, on the one hand, but I wouldn't have had the gift of this vocation. I wouldn't have met these people I've met. Oh my gosh, I met the most incredible people, experienced.
> I've been at a birth and a death, and they're very similar events. They're both very holy, there's pain, there's tears, there's blood. There's sometimes blood on both, but that's what I mean. I guess if I was an EMT I could see some of that but not in the same way. I don't think one's better than the other, I think we need the EMTs, and the nurses, and the midwives, and we need the clergy too. I'm just saying my vocation has been that clergy role in those times. (Sandra, clergy, f)

Sandra talks about birth and death as holy events, and positions herself as called to be there, and not as an EMT, or midwife, or nurse, but as a priest. Being called to sacramental ministry as a priest also means being called to other holy moments in life, including the really intense events like birth and death. These are meaningful events, and a call to be present as clergy is understood to be necessary to inhabit the role.

Once a clergy person, and their community, is sure of their call to the role of priest, and the sacred authority that comes with ordination, then they must come to understand how to hold their sacred authority appropriately so that when they perform sacraments, they are able to help people connect to God. Seeking connection between the human and the divine in sacramental ministry leads clergy to talk about their authority in terms of mystery, and to emphasize their efforts to remove themselves as individuals from their ministry. Many clergy respondents speak about God as the active party in sacramental ministry, not themselves. Joyce (clergy, woman) says she needs, "The ability to remember that it's not magic hands, that this is God. Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, it's God doing the work, not you." Sarah (clergy, woman) echoes this sentiment, saying that in order to perform sacraments she needs "…well, God. God equips me. God calls me. God asked me to do these things." Deborah (clergy, woman) explains this sense of God working through oneself at greater length. She says that in order to perform sacraments she needs,

> I think an awareness of being God's tool, a channel, the St. Francis prayer, the song versions, make me a channel of your peace, to have that openness to God, and I think that's what a sacrament is, it's the spiritual coming made visible in the physical. … To me, I really believe that we're consecrating at the altar. It's that special way of connecting with Christ and with God and what a tremendous privilege to be able to be in that position that God is working through. People see my hand, but God's the one who's making this change that's going to be given where He gives Himself to the congregation and I guess wanting to help people to feel that and see that and be the conduit for that. (Deborah, clergy, f)

For these clergy, God is acting through them, and part of that action is to equip and enable them to perform sacraments by calling them to do it.

The notion of acting as a conduit, or channel, for God is common in clergy interviews. Clergy also talk about getting out of the way, or of letting God work. They see themselves as important to the sacrament in that they are performing the liturgy, but they see God as the primary active party in sacraments. For many clergy, being too present as their unique individual selves in their sacramental ministry would hamper the sacraments. Andrew explains,

> It's obvious to tell who is up there just thoroughly enjoying themselves, and enjoying the wonder of this moment. I'm convinced, to do that, if you get out of the way, then the people are served. If you stay in the way, somehow God is still effective, but nobody knows it. If you do a mass and people come up afterwards and say, "I have heard the voice of God. I saw a vision. The Holy Spirit came into my life." I've had those experiences a lot over the years. (Andrew, clergy, m)

For Andrew, priests who are able to 'get out of the way' are best able to help congregation members connect with God in the sacraments. It is important to note as well, that because God is the active party in this view, a priest can do a bad job of getting out of the way and though the sacrament may not be experienced with as much transcendence by the congregation, God will still have worked through the priest to accomplish the sacrament. Sandra (clergy, woman) explains it like this, "Then again, here's a cool thing. Even when it's done sloppily, God still got to be God. This is what I love about it, and the sacrament is just as valid if a crappy one day. I mean, that's my point." A good priest can do liturgy well, but that skill is not necessary for sacraments. Sacraments are accomplished by God, and the priest serves as a conduit in their performance of the sacramental rites in liturgy. If a priest is truly called by God to serve in that role, then the details of any particular performance do not matter to the validity of the sacrament. Kimberly (clergy, woman) answered the question of what she needs to be a sacramental minister with "To hold your own part lightly" and when I asked her what she meant by that she said, "It

means don't take yourself too seriously. [chuckles] It means that God is at work, even if we don't know exactly how, and to be faithful to that, to be confident in that, not assuming that I have to do it, 'I have to do this,' God will make happen what needs to happen." Kimberly brings some humor to her answer, but is again stating that clergy are called to serve, not to sanctify.

In order to be sacramental ministers who are able to get out of the way and let God work in the sacraments, priests must have felt a call from God, they must have that call validated by their community, and they must complete a formalized professionalization process including seminary education. ECUSA, as an institution, must be perceived as legitimate by adherents in order for this process to work. If adherents doubt the validity or legitimacy of the church as such, the clergy's fitness for ministry and the validity of sacraments performed in ECUSA churches by ECUSA clergy are in doubt.

The schemas for sacred authority in ECUSA remained mostly intact following women's entry into ordained ministry, with the notable removal of Aristotelian Essentialism. Apostolic Succession remains an important schema for establishing the legitimacy of ordinations. ECUSA's legitimacy as a church institution, and therefore the legitimacy of its ordained clergy to perform sacraments, is still grounded in schemas particular to Anglicanism and Episcopalianism, including the via media, the three-legged stool, the liturgical forms of rites, and professionalization within church seminaries. True vocation remains an important ideal for those seeking and conferring sacred authority. Aristotelian Essentialism, unlike the other operative schemas, has dropped from consideration and no longer appears to be operative as a schema for sacred authority in any interviews. This decoupling of a previously operative schema and the practices within the structure of sacramental ministry is a compelling piece of evidence suggesting that women's ordination in ECUSA should be considered a decapitation event in the

Hydra Model.

Chapter Three: Decapitation

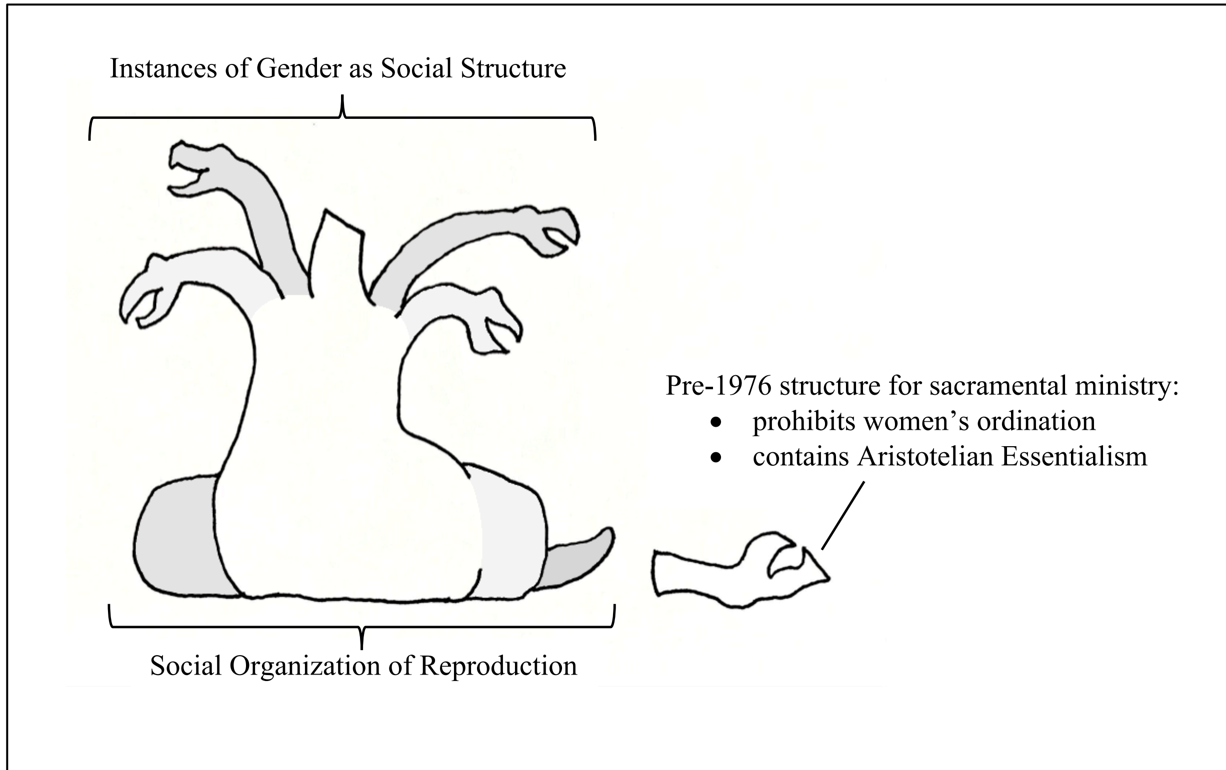

Figure 4: Decapitation

In the Hydra Model, decapitation, or a decapitation event, takes place when a structure ceases to function as an instance of gender as social structure. In this case, sacramental ministry continues as a social structure despite the changes to the gender makeup of ECUSA's clergy, but it is no longer functioning as an instance of gender as social structure and is no longer enforcing gender order through its enactment. This change requires that a new moral boundary be established excluding the previously operative schema for gender, which was Aristotelian Essentialism. In this chapter, I will show in respondents' interviews, how ECUSA adherents have erected a moral boundary to exclude Aristotelian Essentialism from consideration as a schema for sacred authority. Though the excision of Aristotelian Essentialism from ECUSA has been accomplished, standardizing practices around discernment and ordination has lagged

behind. The importance of Apostolic Succession and a dispersed institutional form to ECUSA means that individuals, especially bishops, still exert considerable control over who has access to the sacred authority necessary to perform sacraments. I will show that despite the uniform decapitation of Aristotelian Essentialism, uniform practice has not been established. Decapitation in the Hydra Model is the process by which an old way of enacting gender comes undone as an old instance of gender as social structure ceases to act as a gender structure because of the excision of the form of gender essentialism – here, Aristotelian Essentialism – that had served as an operative schema making the social structure an instance of gender as social structure.

Decapitation: Exclusionary moral boundaries

Aristotelian Essentialism has been excised from the schemas used to consider a potential clergy person's fitness for the job, and is not a schema operative in legitimating the sacred authority of ECUSA priests as sacramental ministers. So completely removing a schema that had long been operative from an institution requires not only the disentangling of that schema from the resources the mobilization of which it previously dictated and necessitated, it also requires the erection of a moral boundary excluded that schema, previously so powerful, from legitimate consideration by group members.

In order to fit the ideal worker norms for clergy, an individual must have received a legitimate vocation, or call – they must have been chosen by God. The ideal worker norm pre-1976 for clergy in ECUSA included a presumption, and automatic requirement of male embodiment and masculine social identity. It was a job that only men could be legitimately called to. Though God was understood to occasionally call women to serve in the church, the history of the Order of Deaconesses shows just how powerfully gender separated the call women might receive from God and that which men received. Pre-1976, men could be called to different

forms of ministry: some to monastic life, some to parish ministry, some to the diaconate (though very few pre-1970s). All of these calls were institutionally-sanctioned as clergy careers, as evidenced by their inclusion in the Church Pension Fund's listing of positions for which pensions would be provided by the church institution. Recall that deaconesses were excluded from such benefits because their ministerial work was not considered clergy to the same degree. Men could be clergy, with all the power and institutional recognition associated, and women could not.

In my data, both men and women can be considered the ideal worker. In fact, Katharine Jefferts Schori was named by several respondents as the ideal priest. This will get more attention in Chapter 4, "Latency" when I examine how gender continues to be mobilized in setting ideal worker norms in ECUSA. For now, suffice to state that masculine gender is not a requirement for legitimately holding sacred authority for a vast majority of ECUSA members. Those for whom masculine gender remains a requirement have invented a new gender essentialism to exclude women's ministry: what I term Nostalgic Essentialism will be discussed at greater length in Chapters 6 "Regeneration: Nostalgic Essentialism". Even these opponents of women's ordination build their position from a new schema, themselves also rejecting the Aristotelian essentialism of the past.

Moral boundary excludes Aristotelian essentialism

In her book *Money, Morals, & Manners*, Michele Lamont argues that upper-middle-class men establish and maintain their identities as members of their class group through asserting and maintaining boundaries that define their group (Lamont, 1992). These boundaries establish who is to be included, and who is to be excluded. Lamont shows her respondents using three types of boundaries: moral boundaries, socioeconomic boundaries, and cultural boundaries. In this study, I find that respondents erect a moral boundary to exclude espousing Aristotelian essentialism

from their group identity. Using Lamont's formulation of moral boundaries, and building from her account of how moral boundaries are built from cultural resources, I show that ECUSA adherents exclude Aristotelian Essentialism from their schemas for legitimating sacred authority by casting it as a backwards way of understanding sex and gender that is out of step, of the past, and not consistent with an Episcopalian spirituality.

Lamont argues that boundary drawing – signaling identity and group belonging according to agreed-upon symbols and meanings – is an essential activity of self and group definition (Lamont, 1992, 7). She writes that these activities matter to establishing a discernable self, and that asserting boundaries for group inclusion and exclusion can stabilize social environments in times of change. She writes,

> By generating distinctions, we also signal our identity and develop a sense of security, dignity, and honor; a significant portion of our daily activities are oriented toward avoiding shame and maintaining a positive self-identity by patrolling the borders of our groups. At a more macrosociological level, boundary work is used to reinstate order within communities by reinforcing collective norms, as boundaries provide a way to develop a general sense of organization and order in the environment. (Lamont, 1992, 11)

Boundary work, following Lamont, is an important way of holding identities stable, even when processes of social change threaten or challenge the continuity of group identification. In the case of ECUSA, it is reasonable to expect boundary work in response to the broad acceptance of women's ordination as a significant shift in institutional practice. Lamont talks about boundaries establishing a sense of group membership with boundaries that both include and exclude – she likens it the concentric circles that make up a doughnut shape (Lamont, 1992, 10). In this chapter, I will show how respondents use Aristotelian Essentialism as a basis for building an excluding boundary: boundaries of this sort mark who is outside and excluded from group membership. In Chapter 4, "Latency" I will show how establishing boundaries for ECUSA group

inclusion – defining what schemas for gender will be considered moral and acceptable within ECUSA – is an ongoing process that unfolds after a decapitation event.

I argue here that Aristotelian essentialism had been effectively displaced as an operative schema legitimating sacred authority in ECUSA, and that it no longer is imbued with meaning and power sufficient to mobilize and organize resources. In the Hydra Model, when a schema was previously operative in organizing resources, and is now lacking that power, a decapitation event has occurred. In the case of ECUSA moving to accept women's ordination, decapitation resulted from a social movement for women's ordination, and though this study does not have sufficient data to argue forcefully, I suspect many decapitation events may follow social movements that challenge previous structural forms, particularly those that attack schemas by seeking to change attitudes. Decapitation is signaled by two distinguishing features. First, decapitation is shown in the total removal of a previously powerful schema from a social structure, and cessation of that structure to function in society as an instance of gender as social structure. In Chapter 2 I showed that the schemas legitimating sacred authority in ECUSA no longer include Aristotelian Essentialism. The second feature of decapitation events is the building of a moral boundary that excludes espousing the deposed schema from acceptable group behavior, which is the subject of this chapter. Aristotelian Essentialism is no longer an acceptable view among ECUSA adherents, and respondents seek to distance themselves from such views.

In my interviews with ECUSA adherents, boundary work[16] is accomplished when they articulate the viewpoints and beliefs that are morally acceptable among group members, and when they articulate those views and beliefs which are not acceptable and warrant exclusion from the group. Of boundary work, Lamont writes, "Boundary work is also a way of developing a sense of group membership; it creates bonds based on shared emotions, similar conceptions of the sacred and the profane, and similar reactions toward symbolic violators. More generally, boundaries constitute the system of rules that guide interaction by affecting who comes together to engage in what social acts." (Lamont, 1992, 11) In her book, Lamont shows her respondents building and maintaining three different, but related, types of boundaries around their upper-middle-class identities: moral, socioeconomic, and cultural. I find that the boundaries which accomplish decapitation, displacing a previously powerful schema, are moral boundaries. According to Lamont, "*Moral boundaries* are drawn on the basis of moral character, they are centered around such qualities as honesty, work ethic, personal integrity, and consideration for others." (Lamont, 1992, 4). When displacing Aristotelian Essentialism through boundary work, respondents cast the previously powerful schema as itself exclusionary, as old-fashioned, as inconsiderate, and as backwards. This is a moral boundary because embracing Aristotelian Essentialism is seen as incompatible with moral behavior or with correct practice aligned with the values of ECUSA Christianity.

[16] Though boundary work is also an important concept in STS, and especially in work on boundary objects (following Star, 2010), I use the term here following Lamont's formulation. Lamont focuses on the building and maintenance of boundaries that distinguish social group membership. This is not a deep consideration of the epistemic nature of such boundaries, rather, I focus here on the moral weight of the forceful rejection of Aristotelian essentialism I find, and how that boundary work is important evidence for a decapitation per the Hydra model.

Respondents erect moral boundaries excluding Aristotelian essentialism from ECUSA identity by distancing themselves from the gender essentialism, broadly construed, they see both in the broader society around ECUSA, and in ECUSA's past. They talk about sexism or bias, and present such beliefs or practices as outside of the boundaries of acceptable moral behavior. Respondents distance themselves from gender essentialism by casting any gender essentialist logic as part of the broader society, and the church as an institution within that society that is influenced by its norms, but may itself be resistant to them.[17] Respondents who distance from societal gender essentialism point to how entwined ECUSA is with the society within which it is situated, while simultaneously noting the steps ECUSA has made toward further gender egalitarianism and LGBTQ+ inclusion. Sean, a lay man, says,

> A lot of what's going on in the church is mirrored in society. In a lot of ways, the Episcopal Church has been very upfront about things, and it's really not been all that long and there is yet resistance therein. Part of the brokenness of humanity is mirrored very well in that. There are a lot of misogynistic things when people say, "We are not misogynistic." All of you have mothers, or you wouldn't be here. You may or may not have sisters, or you may or may not have a wife, or it's a man. There are a lot of women that have internalized that kind of stuff, and eat their own kind of thing. I applaud the church for-- We're about ready to see our first woman bishop. (Sean, m, lay)

For Sean, ECUSA's struggles around gender are reflections of the gender-related conflicts that play out more broadly in society. However, Sean points to ECUSA's open grappling with gender as proof of its institutional positioning far from the worst of gender essentialism. He notes how complex dismantling misogyny can be, while saying he "applauds" the church for its institutional

[17] In this discussion, gender essentialism refers to any form of gender essentialist logic which respondents may construe as sexism, misogyny, or bias. The specific forms of gender essentialism which acted as an operative schema for gender and sacred authority pre-1976 will be referred to specifically, as Aristotelian Essentialism. Other emergent operative schemas for gender and sacred authority will be introduced in Chapters 5 and 6 and will also be referred to specifically, as Revolutionary Essentialism, and Nostalgic Essentialism.

efforts to do so.

This move to cast ECUSA as an institution that does not endorse gender essentialist logic is seen in Vincent's and Lisa's interviews when they talk about LGBTQ inclusion in the life of the church. Vincent, a lay man, talks about how in his views, ECUSA has distinguished itself among Christian churches, and particularly in contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, through its decisions to pursue gender egalitarianism and LGBTQ inclusion. For him, these institutional moves around questions of gender and sexuality are proof of ECUSA's distance from broader norms around gender, particularly those common in churches he sees as otherwise similar. He says,

> The last big break would be ordaining women. The Catholic Church didn't do that. Then, we ordained gays and lesbians. We had a bishop, even, who was elected who was gay. Catholics just don't do that. Our bishops speak out on social issues that the Catholic Church does not. We had an announcement in our bulletin last Sunday that Gay Pride parade's coming up in July, "Come and march." Well, you wouldn't see that in the Catholic Church. Well, you wouldn't see that in many Episcopal churches, actually, but it was in our bulletin here. In fact, you wouldn't have seen that here 10 years ago. It's changed, and we have adapted to cultural change that other churches have not, but yet we retain many traditions that would speak otherwise. In my mind, it's kind of a juxtaposition, almost. (Vincent, m, lay)

For Vincent, recent moves to make ECUSA more open and inclusive on matters of gender and sexuality are signs of institutional adaptation to "cultural changes" which at first appears to contradict any claims that his comments are evidence of distancing from gender essentialism in the broader culture. Instead, these comments should be understood as Vincent positioning ECUSA on one side of a cultural divide, with gender essentialism on the other side. He sees ECUSA's expansion of ordination to women and LGBTQ+ individuals as a sign of that distance, and the recent push for activism around issues of LGBTQ+ rights as further evidence. ECUSA, in Vincent's view, is not separate from surrounding society, but is it increasingly positioned on

the side of those who reject gender essentialism. Lisa, a clergy woman, points to very similar evidence when claiming that ECUSA is on its way to growing more inclusive and open in matters of gender and sexuality. She says, "We have several gay couples and one gay couple priest and non-priest who have had children and that brings a new family construct in. We just had some transgender students. I think we have a gender fluidness that we are working on incorporating into who we are as well. We're relatively new at that. We're relatively new at that. Knowing the Episcopal Church, I'm sensing that we're just open for the road, [chuckles] open for the church, and it was really exciting." (Lisa, clergy, f) Lisa points to the diversity of gender and sexual identities in her own parish as proof of ECUSA's increasing distance from strict gender essentialism in its logics and practices. She also states confidently that, despite the newness of this open diversity, "knowing the Episcopal Church" greater diversity and greater inclusion will be the future. ECUSA, for Vincent and for Lisa, is an institution within which the gender essentialist logics and practices of the surrounding culture are eschewed in favor of increasing efforts for full inclusion of all gender and sexualities.

Lamont argues that moral boundaries allow for the exclusion of those with whom group members do not want to be associated. Lamont writes about the behaviors her respondents undertake to signal moral boundaries, "The people excluded by our boundaries are those with whom we refuse to associate and those toward whom rejection and aggression are showed, and distance openly marked, by way of insuring that 'you understand that I am better than you are.'… Exclusive behaviors are experiences as repugnance, discomfort, embarrassment for the excluder, and as snobbery, distance, and coldness by the excluded." (Lamont, 1992, 10) In Lamont, study, respondents showed reticence to engage with those they sought to exclude, and has no qualms about being belonging to clearly distinct groups. In ECUSA, the church's

dispersed institutional form, which allows significant local variation in belief and practice, makes full exclusion difficult. Local parishes, and even whole dioceses, can have strong disagreements while still remaining in full communion with one another. This means that moral boundaries in ECUSA are usually not strongly exclusionary with respect to other church members with whom respondents disagree. However, I do find that the majority of respondents are intolerant of any gender essentialism that would exclude women from ordained ministry. Though opponents of women's ordination embrace a form of gender essentialism that is distinct from Aristotelian Essentialism in order to justify their views on women's ordination, to a majority of ECUSA adherents in my study that distinction is unimportant. The majority view those who would exclude women from ordained ministry as out of step, and cast them as other. This boundary is an exclusionary boundary, but it is a soft exclusion because of the desire of all ECUSA respondents to remain in communion, despite these differences in belief and practice. As much as excluding Aristotelian essentialism important for ECUSA identity, embracing the church's decentralized form and tolerance for diversity of belief is equally important.

Respondents in this study draw a moral boundary to exclude what they usually call "sexism" from ECUSA group identity. By claiming that sexism is a relic of the past, respondents seek to position themselves, and their group as firmly rooted in the present, and as opposed to such outdated ways of thinking and behaving. Respondents adopt this view to cast all forms of gender essentialism as important cultural forces outside of ECUSA in the present moment, and therefore claims that gender relations inside of ECUSA are becoming more egalitarian progressively over time. This narrative is so widespread among respondents that it is impossible to identify a small number of respondents as particularly representative, indeed every respondent

engaged in linguistic moves to distance themselves and the present ECUSA from gender essentialism (even those respondents who embrace Nostalgic Essentialism – discussed in Chapter 6 – also engaged in distancing and portrayed themselves as champions of egalitarianism). The distance from essentialism is purported to occur in time and in space. Respondents talk of gender essentialism as a feature of life in previous generations, as part of a patriarchal Episcopal tradition that is being transformed, and as part of life in broader society which the church is both influenced by and somewhat insulated from by ECUSA's tendency to gender egalitarianism.

A common move among respondents is to claim that attitudes about gender are changing generationally, and so older church members can be anticipated to hold more gender essentialist views while younger generations will hold fewer. Similarly, according to this view older women can be expected to have encountered more gender essentialism in their life than younger women (interviews with clergy women somewhat contradict this expectation, but the expectation is nonetheless widespread that younger clergy women have faced less gender essentialism than their predecessors). Interviews with women who self-identify as members of the Baby Boomer generation showcase this belief that older women dealt with more extreme gender essentialism than is in place today. Amanda, a clergy woman, describes what she sees as the necessary changes for ECUSA in the 21st-Century. For her, dismantling gender essentialism is central to transforming the church for the future. She talks about the deleterious effects of gender essentialism in her own life as what kept her from finding her own voice, and she says,

> We need to have our young women find their voices earlier than I did. We need them to find them in their 20s. We need them to be confident in themselves, not looking outside of themselves for their value and their worth. I think they need to be heard and they need to be valued and they need to know they are, I guess. I think really, we need to help them find their voice as early as possible because it makes a difference in who they are in the decisions they'll make. Whether they'll

> be the next person that comes up with that great research because they have the confidence to go into medicine, or they're going to be the next Presiding Bishop because they have the confidence to go in and have the gifts to really minister to a hurting world. I think that's what we older women can offer to our younger women, is to help them not be like me and go from being my father's daughter to my husband's wife, to find my own voice. If you think of other things, you have my contact information. (Amanda, clergy, f)

For Amanda, young women's ability to trust in themselves and their individual sense of purpose can help make the world better, especially if it is cultivated young. And for Amanda, following one's own path at a young age can be easily blocked by internalizing the lessons of gender essentialism that Amanda felt defined her as "my father's daughter" and "my husband's wife." Amanda believes that her experiences with gender essentialism are tied to her generational position in society, and this is characteristic of the narrative that holds that gender essentialism is a remnant of a past era that is being challenged and undone in the present.

Another respondent, Beverly, also spoke about women's experiences of gender essentialism as generationally-specific, positioning the largest impacts of gender essentialism on women's experiences and abilities in the past. Beverly is a lay woman who has worked in ECUSA helping parishes in financial matters, she also self-identifies as a member of the Baby Boomer generation. She told a story about a clergy woman organizing a capital campaign in her capacity as the new rector in a parish. This clergy woman worked hard to gain the support of a particular lay leader as she began the campaign. The so-called matriarch of the congregation was an important stakeholder in the community, so this rector asked her to join a discernment group to discern if the parish should go forward with a capital campaign, and if so, who should lead it. The lay matriarch discerned that they should indeed launch a capital campaign, and that she herself should run it. With her backing, the capital campaign was successful. Beverly held up this story as an example women's style of leadership and why women are better at capital

campaigns often – and the end of the story was a strong assertion that women have this set of gifts for rallying support because they don't assume they will be in charge. Beverly was careful to qualify that this is most true of women leaders from older generations, because of their lived experiences of gender essentialism. Of rectors leading capital campaigns, she says, "I think women can be better at that. … Women are socialized to do that. We don't assume that we're going to have power and authority necessarily, at least women in my generation don't. I think it's a little bit different now." (Beverly, lay, f). In telling her story of why this woman was so successful as a rector, Beverly points to her experiences with gender essentialism as a key prompt for her developing such effective community management and leadership strategies. Beverly says that this is characteristic of women, and more specifically of women "in my generation" – again, those born 1945-1964 – showing again how respondents often believe that gender essentialism as a force in women's lives has lessened in recent decades, and was experienced as a limiting cultural force more by older women than by younger women. Gender essentialism is presented as a remnant of a past era.

Along with expectations that women face less gender essentialism in their pursuit of individual goals today than they did in the past, respondents also expect that church members who are older are more likely to act according to gender essentialist logic in their encounters with clergy women than younger church members. These respondents characterize older people as more likely to harbor gender essentialist views because gender essentialism was a more influential cultural logic in their formative years. Three respondents answered the question, "Do you think lay people have different responses to men and women clergy?" by describing how they thought age might influence someone's openness to the leadership of women clergy. Doug, who is a clergy man, said, "I think it's generational, to a large extent. … What roles have you

seen women in that it was that's just the way it is, rather than that they shouldn't be doing that, that's not a woman's work, that's not what women are called to do? I think that has something, some piece to play in that." (Doug, clergy, m) According to Doug, older people are less likely to have broad experience with women in leadership roles, and so they may be more suspicious of women in clergy leadership positions. Charlotte, a lay woman, also believes that older church members are likely to be less open and supportive of women clergy's leadership. She says, "I think, maybe, being taken seriously by, especially older congregants, is probably harder for a woman and probably easier for a man. Other than that, I don't think gender makes a difference" (Charlotte, lay, f). Charlotte not only expects age to impact one's openness to women clergy's authority, she expects that otherwise gender does not matter to how lay people respond to clergy. In other words, Charlotte sees gender essentialism as a relic of the past to such a degree that only older people are likely to be influenced by gender essentialist logics in their treatment of clergy men and women.

Many respondents who seek to distance the present ECUSA from what they characterize as the gender essentialism of the past not only claim that older individuals are more likely to hold gender essentialist views, but also claim that individuals and congregations who are more traditional in their religious practices are more likely to hold gender essentialism views. These discussions are not exclusively referring to conservative groups that have broken from ECUSA over matters of gender and sexuality, but rather to a continuum of traditionalism on which individuals and congregations who remain within ECUSA fall. Those who are more traditional, according to these responses, are more likely to retain gender essentialist beliefs and practices. The past of the Episcopal Church and, global Anglican Communion, out of which the current

ECUSA has grown, is characterized as traditional, and respondents claim that part of being traditional is embracing gender essentialism.

For some respondents, age and traditionalism are connected. Andrea, a lay woman, echoes both Doug and Charlotte that age matters, and she posits that gender essentialist logic is tied to traditionalism. When asked if lay people have different expectations of men and women clergy, she says, "I think it depends on the congregation. I feel like maybe older, more conservative, more traditional congregations would have a harder time accepting the authority of a woman. As women, we're still trying to fight that battle on all fronts. The fact that we can have authority without needing to be territorial about it, and that we deserve it based on our own merits. I don't know, I think it would depend on the congregation and just how traditional they are." (Andrea, lay, f). Andrea connects strong adherence to tradition with likely gender essentialism. She is engaging in distancing from gender essentialism in that she implies that more progressive or forward-looking congregations will engage in less gender essentialist thinking, but she is also connecting gender essentialism to the past of the Episcopal Church specifically. Distancing from gender essentialism by tying it to church tradition accomplishes both establishing one's own distance from essentialism and building an explanation for why gender essentialism might persist in one's church community, despite that established distance. If the tradition is consistent with gender essentialism, then gender essentialism can be reasonably expected to be part of church life no matter how far individuals' own views might have moved from those views.

Danielle, a lay woman who is in the ordination process, offers an explanation of why some within ECUSA oppose women's ordination that establishes distance between herself and these minority views which are consistent with gender essentialist logic. She makes it clear that

not only are the views of those who oppose women's ordination nonsensical to her, but that are minoritized within ECUSA. She says,

> Matthew shared his views with my colleague about why [he opposes women's ordination]. I didn't ask what those were, but I imagine it has to do with, if Jesus is God's representation on Earth, and Jesus was a male. Then, there's something about how these Anglo-Catholic churches really believe that the clergy person is representing the congregation to God and God to the congregation. Which I don't necessarily agree with, I'm not sure about that. That's stronger in their tradition, I think, therefore, they feel it needs to be someone with a penis, I guess. Which is so bizarre to me because if you learn about gender and people who are intersex, like there's just such a spectrum. The binary thing just isn't reality. (Danielle, f, lay)

Danielle characterized Matthew's views, and those of all who self-identify as Anglo-Catholic within ECUSA, as distance from her own and from those of the congregations within which she worships. These more conservative views are, according to Danielle, part of ECUSA's tradition, but not part of its current mainstream, and not in line with what she anticipates for the future. She signals this by talking about "these Anglo-Catholic churches" and "their tradition" putting distance between herself and ECUSA and those whose beliefs are more aligned with gender essentialist logic.

ECUSA respondents also embrace a progressive view of change in gender norms at a macro-social level. They speak of change as inevitable, and see more equality between men and women as the inevitable direction of that change. Respondents saw this inevitable progressive change as part of broader patterns of social change, and saw ECUSA's rejection of Aristotelian Essentialism as part of a broader move to discard belief in women's deficiency. The boundaries that exclude Aristotelian Essentialism from ECUSA membership are aligned with boundaries these respondents draw to exclude those who believe in women's deficiency from the future they envision for society as a whole. In this vision, respondents see themselves, and cast themselves,

as part of a broader pattern of social change, and so the cultural materials from which this boundary is built are shared. Lamont expects that boundaries will be made of, and consistent with, cultural resources available throughout the society in which actors are situated. She writes, "As pointed out by neo-institutional theorists and other, individuals so not exclusively draw boundaries out of their own experience: they borrow from the general cultural repertoires supplied to them by the society in which they live, relying on general definitions of valued traits that take on a rule-like status." (Lamont, 1992, 7) In other words, actors build boundaries out of what is already available to them, and they traits they value for group membership are likely to be valuable traits in society more broadly. Boundaries, then, are neither pre-existing Platonic forms that groups import whole-cloth to demarcate group membership, nor are they completely original inventions of the group. Lamont writes, "Yet boundaries are rarely created from scratch. They generally exist prior to situational interactions and are determined by available cultural resources and by spatial, geographic, and social-structural constraints, i.e., by the particular set of people with whom we are likely to come in contact." (Lamont, 1992, 11). In this example, I find that ECUSA group members use a culturally-available narrative of the inevitability of progressive change to position themselves, and their exclusion of Aristotelian essentialism, as part of a positive movement for change in society at large.

The inevitability of progressive change?

Distancing by appealing to the inevitability of change in the direction of gender egalitarianism sometimes presents in the data as an assurance that this change will continue, and that younger generations do not hold gender essentialist views. Marie, a lay woman, describes her view that things are changing as older generations give way to younger generations who are more open to gender egalitarianism and the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ church members in church

life. Marie, however, maintains that it matters who is in positions of power for how quickly progressive change around gender and sexuality can be accomplished. She says,

> Did you ever hear Phyllis Tickle? An Episcopal theologian from the South. I think she was well up into her 70s the first time I heard her lecture. It was right on the cusp of this turn of events for LGBT folk and equality in marriage on a civil level, much less a religious, secular versus non-secular. Here is this rather proper looking 70-plus-year-old Southern woman speaking to one of our conventions here. She says, “All the uproar is because things have begun to change, not because we’re still trying to make them change. The momentum is tipping and there’s really not a lot anything left to do. Don’t you all worry, all it’s going to take is a few funerals." [laughs] To some degree, she’s right, but when there is a person in a position of privilege, whether they’re aware of it or not, that’s still there. All that’s fine and good unless it steps on [their] toes personally… and could very easily lead [them] into opinions and actions that are not worthy of human care of one another or care of each other as God’s children. (Marie, lay, f)

Marie is wary of too rosy an outlook for those who would like to see continued progressive change because of the potential for powerful people to limit what change can happen. However, she agrees with what she remembers Phyllis Tickle saying about continued change, “All it’s going to take is a few funerals.” This view presumes that change in the progressive direction around gender and sexuality will continue naturally. Believing in the inevitability of such change pushes gender essentialism further from the imagined present of the church in Marie’s view. Lisa, a clergy woman, also holds that change will continue as it has, and the gender categories will grow increasingly more fluid over time inevitably. She explains,

> Lisa: I think gender is increasingly becoming more fluid. Lisa Ling is doing something on the furry people on CNN.
> Cat: What?
> Lisa: Furry people. They all dress up as furry animals so you don’t know whether you’re talking to a male or a female.
> Cat: Interesting. Okay.
> Lisa: Yes, the furry people. There is a group of people that are known as the furry people.
> Cat: There’s so many things I have to go look up after our conversation.
> Lisa: Lisa Ling is doing a special on CNN about them. I think that’s why you see younger people don’t really care where the boys are with boys or girls with girls. That’s just not a concern. It’s a far more gender-fluid environment in younger

> people than certainly in my day and age. We were boys and we were girls and yet the truth of the matter is, is we all have both hormones or it just the hormones. Some have a little bit more of one or the other. [laughs] (Lisa, clergy, f)

Lisa puts so much distance between the gender essentialism of the past and what she sees as the fluidity of the future that she has expanded her gender categories for the future to include "furry people". For Lisa, younger generations' openness to a more spectrum-based understanding of gender, or a fluid understanding of gender identity and sexual identity is evidence that gender as a social construct has changed meaningfully enough that the "we were boys and we were girls" world of her own youth has disappeared. Distancing from gender essentialist logic by positioning it as a relic of the past enables respondents to carry the gendered expectations and experiences of their own lives alongside a certainty that things are changing, and will inevitably without too much intervention on their part.

This chapter has shown how change in an instance of gender as social structure moves from initial tensions between the allocation of resources and the schemas that justify and necessitate those allocations to the complete exclusion of previously powerful schemas from consideration for actors engaged in that structure. When schemas and resources come uncoupled to such a degree that a social structure ceases to function as an instance of gender as social structure, a decapitation event has begun. In the Hydra Model, what marks a decapitation event is the establishment of moral boundaries to exclude from consideration by group members those schemas for gender that were previously operative. Aristotelian Essentialism is no longer endorsed by any respondents in this study, providing evidence that decapitation has occurred in ECUSA as the clergy has grown gender-integrated. The combination of a shift in practice with the forming and enforcing of a moral boundary to exclude a previously powerful operative

schema comprise a decapitation in the Hydra Model.

Chapter Four: Latency

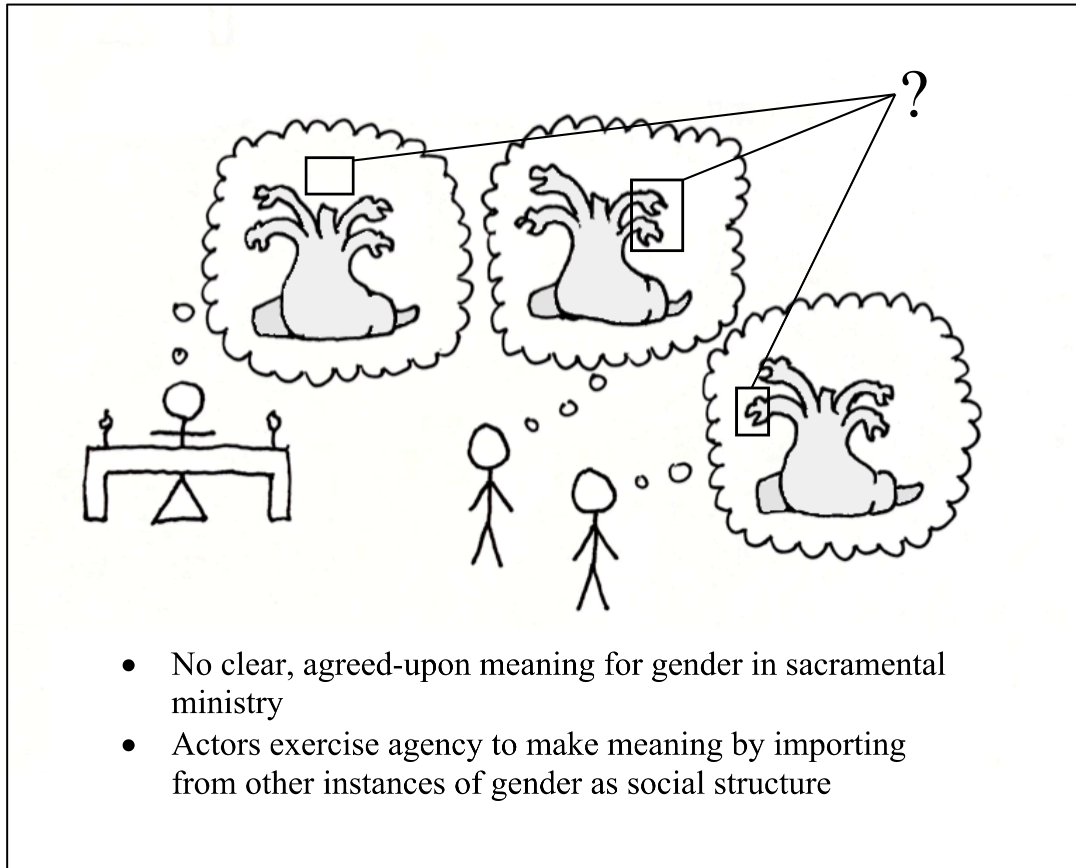

Figure 5: Latency, individuals exercise agency in making meaning after decapitation

After decapitation, the Hydra Model predicts a period of latency. Latency in the Hydra Model is not specified to time, instead it should be understood as the period during a change process in an instance of gender as social structure in which previously-stable arrangements of schemas and resources have ceased to meaningfully enact gender for participants. In the interim before new instances of gender as social structure emerge (as will be described in Chapters 5 and 6), individual actors are unusually empowered to exercise personal agency in determining the meaning of their actions. Latency in the Hydra Model references the moment in the mythic story when Hercules has severed a head of the hydra monster, but before two new heads have regenerated to take its place. This chapter is concerned with latency, tracing how individual

actors employ cognitive strategies to make sense and meaning of new practices, engaging in the early stages of regeneration as they do so. After the decapitation shown in Chapters 2 and 3, ECUSA adherents no longer use Aristotelian Essentialism to make sense of what gender means for sacred authority and sacramental ministry, and are instead actively seeking new meanings for gender in church life that can be formed into schemas that will uphold the new practices of sacramental ministry with a now gender-integrated clergy.

Latency is a period of tension and disagreement, when group members have not yet settled on the meanings that will guide practice. Differing views of how gender matters to church life persist and respondents in my study are not unified in their understanding of how, or even if, ECUSA adherents should think or talk about gender after the decapitation of practices restricting ordination to men and the accompanying schema of Aristotelian Essentialism. Instead, I find respondents employing two cognitive strategies to wrestle with how to talk about think about gender in church life. These cognitive strategies allow respondents to engage with what gender means, and should mean, as they develop new schemas for gender and sacred authority. ECUSA is an ideal place to study latency, because the church's group identity is built around the via media, and the three-legged stool, two idealizations of Anglican identity that emphasize the potential for common practice despite differences of belief. This church is populated by adherents who view toleration and tension as central to their group identity.

Theoretically, careful attention to how actors navigate the inconsistencies and tensions of latency can help to explain how individuals understand their own agentic ability to shape change in the institution in which structural change is unfolding. Both Risman and Sewell write of individual actors as holding significant agency over larger social processes by discussing the moments when actors choose their own actions in interactional contexts. In latency, actors face

many moments of such choice because the meanings of important categories, like gender, are not set and taken-for-granted. Instead, actors have choices when imbuing what they observe with meaning taken from other social arenas. Though actors do import meanings that pre-exist in the surrounding society, as Wuthnow and Swidler have shown and predicted, which meanings they choose to import and employ is underdetermined. Actors exercise their agency when they choose from available cultural ingredients to build new schemas which make the new practices they are engaged in meaningful. In this case, women are ordained to the priesthood and so both men and women hold positions of authority as clergy people. However, meanings of clergy authority, as was shown in Chapter 2, "Schemas for sacred authority", have been built upon the assumption of an all-male clergy, and so in making sense of these new clergy women, adherents must exercise agency in ascribing meaning to their authority and their ministry.

I find respondents use two primary cognitive strategies to sort through the difficulties of making the authority and ministry of a gender-inclusive clergy meaningful within a society that still embraces and perpetuates a gender binary and patriarchal norms. The first cognitive strategy widely-used by respondents is what I call Intentional Gender-Blindness. This strategy extends the moral boundary established in decapitation to push away any thought that might build meaning upon a gendered pattern respondents observe in church life. Rather than stating that these gender patterns exist, respondents employing the strategy of Intentional Gender-Blindness dismiss the possibility that gender impacts church life and instead discount any gendered patterns as individual idiosyncrasies that happen to align with gendered patterns, but are not themselves evidence of gender's persistence in shaping church life. The second cognitive strategy that I find is what I call Gender Pragmatism. Respondents use Gender Pragmatism to note their observations of how church life continues to fit gendered patterns consistent with broader

society, and to consider how gender might impact individuals and communities in the church, seeking to understand without any accompanying push for action. Neither of these cognitive strategies reaches the level of schema, and neither compels action on the part of respondents to effectuate any particular set of gender relations in church life. Rather, the function of these cognitive strategies is to allow respondents to navigate the tension and inconsistency that arises in the relationship between practice and meaning when a long-standing structure (i.e. sacramental ministry as an instance of gender as social structure) is interrupted by social change, particularly ongoing change.

Both of these cognitive strategies allow respondents to get away from any moral imperative to shift the non-gender structures of church that were for so long entwined with Aristotelian Essentialism. Intentional Gender-Blindness absolves respondents of any guilt or any responsibility to be conscious of gender at all – they are not explicitly valuing people based on gender so it is no longer a problem, any gendered patterns that occur are happenstance. Gender Pragmatism allows respondents to take gender into account when considering the best way to organize church. It also allows gendered patterns to be reified and continued, but it allows respondents to see gender and consider its genesis and its impacts. This cognitive strategy is ultimately a generative one. Even though it allows the reification of gendered patterns that work against women, it allows concurrent consideration of the issues and respondents can start to think about where gender comes from, how it manifests, and whether that aligns with their ideal vision for church in ways that enable them to engage their own agency in developing new schemas for gender in church.

This chapter traces how respondents use cognitive strategies to make sense of gender means for sacred authority in the absence of a fully-developed schema for gender now that

Aristotelian Essentialism has been discarded. First, I will use the literature on women in professional leadership positions to form expectations for what respondents are likely to think about clergy women based on patterns for how women in leadership are received. Second, I consider how ECUSA adherents are a good population for studying latency because of their stated tolerance for tension and dissention among group members. In this discussion of ECUSA institutional form, I consider the role of bishops and their role in setting the pace of institutional change, and show that they are both empowered and constrained by ECUSA's dispersal of power. Third, I will show how respondents use the cognitive strategy of Intentional Gender-Blindness to avoid engaging with questions of how gender matters for church life, seeking to exclude considerations of gender from new schemas for sacred authority. Fourth, I will show respondents employing the cognitive strategy of Gender Pragmatism to simultaneously notice how gender patterns church life while also excusing themselves from taking further steps to alleviate gendered inequalities in ECUSA. In the Hydra Model, latency is the period during which individual actors hold the most agentic control over the forms that displaced instances of gender as social structure will take on in their next form, and so attending to latency is important for understanding change.

Women and Clergy Leadership: Expectations

One contribution of this work to the study of gender and professions is in interrogating how an increasingly gender-integrated clergy shapes what gender means for leadership in church organizations. Women's entry into ECUSA's ordained clergy coincided with women's broader gains in the world of work, but despite women's gains in educational attainment and entry into professional careers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017), gender segregation at work remains high,

women and men rarely perform the same job at the same level (England, 2010). Women in leadership, including increasing numbers of clergy women (Schjonberg, 2019), are particularly subject to bias, and according to role congruity theory, this bias forms on the basis of a perceived mismatch between feminine gender presentation and leadership ability (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Foschi, 2000). Attitudinal studies have suggested that the gendering of clergy jobs is more flexible than many other professional leadership positions, and therefore women clergy may not violate role congruity as much as other professional women in leadership (Ferguson, 2018; Lehman, 1985). Nonetheless, women clergy on average under-attain similar clergy men in their careers (Nesbitt, 1997; Price et al., 2011), suggesting that lay people's openness to women clergy might not be enough to ensure their advancement. By considering how the meaning system that once excluded women from clergy leadership outright has changed as women entered the clergy, this study contributes to social scientists' understandings of what dimensions of gender essentialist logic are easily challenged by women's educational and career attainment, and which dimensions are resilient in the face of these developments.

How strongly bias built upon existing gender essentialist logic impacts women in professions that have recently become gender-integrated needs more attention. In such cases, the gendering of a profession, or of its ideal worker may be unclear or in flux. Examining how men and women in leadership position in such professions are evaluated, can contribute an extension of role congruity theory that tests its applicability in cases of recent gender-integration. Role Congruity Theory expects that women in leadership will face prejudice due to a perceived mismatch between their gender and their professional role (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Foschi, 2000; Heilman, 2001). Research has consistently shown that women are expected to show warmth, but not competence due to these gendered expectations, and that women in leadership are negatively

impacted by perceived role incongruity in two distinct ways: first, women seeking leadership roles will be seen as a less desirable choice than men, and second, women in leadership roles will be evaluated less favorably than men when they perform masculine-associated leadership (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Foschi, 2000). Clergy, men and women, are explicitly expected to perform both warmth and competence in their role leading parish congregations, presenting an interesting case for studying the durability of these phenomena across contexts.

Across professions, women in leadership are consistently penalized in evaluations on the basis of role congruity bias (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Clergy women are increasingly subject to less of this bias in attitudinal data (Ferguson, 2018). Yet, women clergy continue to make up a minority of solo or lead pastors in ECUSA (Schjonberg, 2019). Despite recent gains in representation at the upper levels of ECUSA church hierarchy, horizontal and vertical gender segregation persist in ECUSA clergy careers (Hurst et al., 2021; Schjonberg, 2019). This mismatch between perceived openness to women clergy, and women clergy's actual career attainment suggests that some deeply held beliefs about the fitness of women for leadership roles in the church have persisted as those beliefs justifying women's exclusion from ordained ministry have been discarded. Clarifying when and how gender essentialist logics persist in Episcopalians' understandings of gender in clergy leadership could have implications for the study of persistent gender bias in other professions.

ECUSA Identity: Tension and Toleration

After decapitation, a moral boundary has been established to exclude the previously powerful form of gender essentialism, and its prescriptions for social practice, this was shown in Chapter 3 when respondents were quick to exclude Aristotelian Essentialism from consideration

when thinking about what gender should mean for church life. What is less clear, is what views of gender will be considered acceptable and compatible with group membership for adherents of ECUSA moving forward. The boundaries of what is acceptable are what Lamont considers inclusive or inclusionary boundaries, she writes, “Distancing behavior is contrasted with what could be labeled “friendly behavior,” or inclusive behavior. Behaving in a friendly way (être sympa) makes others feel “comfortable,” (Lamont, 1992, 11). She talks about a doughnut of acceptable moral behavior for group membership: those whose actions are excluded find themselves outside of the doughnut, and a second group can be excluded for failing to meet all the requirements of acceptable behavior from within, those inside the doughnut’s hole. Inclusive behavior is a way to signal acceptance of one’s group membership on the basis of correct belief and behavior among insiders (those who have already navigated exclusionary boundaries).

In Lamont’s study, inclusive behavior is used to show acceptability within the upper-middle-class, and so is a way of signaling class on the basis of moral action. In that context,

> …inclusion is enacted though a range of everyday activities such as “flirting, complimenting, flattering, honoring, introducing, initiating, debuting, exchanging gifts and secrets, promoting or electing to high office, raking into one’s confidence, dancing together, hosting, eating together, playing together, corresponding, caressing, making love [i.e. gestures/activities designed] to make people feel as though they have free and privileged access to highly valued social activities. (Lamont, 1992, 11).

In my study, establishing correct belief and practice around matters of gender within ECUSA requires respondents to come up with ways of talking about and considering how gender matters to church life that will be easily understood by group members, and will not be seen to invoke Aristotelian Essentialism (which has been discarded and excluded). Questions arise: What sorts of behaviors around gender do respondents see as acceptable? What is okay to do or say? How do respondents understand these boundaries, and what do they see as their individual role in

maintaining or challenging inclusive boundaries? What schemas and structures for gender in church life do respondents want to see emerge?

Decapitation, but uneven change across ECUSA institution

Change in ECUSA is uneven. In the story of women's ordination, change since 1976 has been slow-moving with dioceses moving to accept women's ordination at their own pace and sometimes out of step with each other by decades, and in some cases with division within dioceses as some parishes moved to accept women's ordination while others persisted in resisting the change. Part of why change is so uneven across this institution is because the schemas legitimating sacred authority in ECUSA include both Apostolic Succession and institutional legitimacy in part grounded in the wide acceptance of the correctness of a dispersed institutional form as a key feature of ECUSA identity. This institutional form means that bishops are empowered to mobilize resources in their home dioceses per their individual interpretations of scripture and church teachings, which leads to significant variations across dioceses. This dispersed institutional form with strong local control is further legitimated by its institutional isomorphism, not with other Christian churches, but with the forms of USA federal governance. ECUSA identity and USA identity strengthen each other in respondents' views – the belief in a common/shared history, and visible similarities across institutional forms enable mutual reinforcement of the legitimacy of these two institutional forms.

Uneven change: bishops' role

One institutional control over the ordination process reigns above all in the person of the diocesan bishop, whose approval is required to move forward in the discernment and ordination process, and who ultimately performs the rites at ordination ceremonies. Further, bishops control

much of the minutiae of hiring in their home dioceses, including the first position(s) clergy will hold after their ordination. Susan was very sure of her own call to ordained ministry, but her surety bristled many community members as she navigated the discernment process, and her diocesan bishop made decisions that added years to her ordination process. She says,

> Then, when I started having conversations with the bishop who was in charge of me at that time, I started getting knocked down to my knees. I was like, "Really?" "I can see your gifts, but here's some things that you're going to need to do." In fact, as part of my process, I had to go to … another level of discernment with a larger group and everybody who was hoping to become a postulant would go at the same time on this retreat. I had to go twice, because the first year, he said, "We're not saying no, but we're saying not yet."
> The not yet was, "How about you take a year off of your life and go do something where you're only of service?" He said, "You could go live with unwed mothers in LA and help them get jobs, or you could go live on a sustainable farm someplace, or you could do some international ministry," and, very ignorantly, I said, "International ministry sounds really interesting." Again, without doing much research, I signed up to go volunteer in Australia for a year. I chose it because it's an orphanage for girls run by an Episcopal woman who is married to the man who used to be a bishop in Australia.
> I thought, "I could probably learn about somewhere new and I would keep this Episcopal connection." It was the worst year of my life. (Susan, clergy, woman)

The time she spent in Australia was frustrating as Susan saw solutions to problems the organization faced but those who ran the orphanage weren't interested in her ideas of how to change things there. She describes confusion and frustration at being in a professional setting where she couldn't affect the change she desired to see. Back in the U.S., Susan continued to navigate the ordination process according to her diocesan bishop's plans for her,

> Anyway, I made it through that, and then the other bishop took over then. Then, from there, I did two more years. After my three years of seminary at Jesuit school, we were supposed to do one year in an Episcopal School, but my bishop said, "I would really like you to do two." I said, "I love school, great. I'll end at a place where there's good scholarship and go for two years." I finished up out at VTS and did some field ed out there. It was great. It was wonderful. (Susan, clergy, woman)

Again, Susan's path was lengthened by her bishop's decision to prolong her seminary training.

Bishops hold extraordinary power in their diocese in deciding who is ordained, and when. According to Susan, navigating one's relationship with the bishop is a common hurdle in seeking ordination.

> Susan: … that process was lengthy, and everybody that's become a priest can tell you their ordination horror story of the crap they went through. [laughs]
> Cat: Do you have a horror story?
> Susan: Just going to Australia is mine. People were like, "Really, you had to quit your job and raise money to go live in another country for a year?" I was like, "Yes, I did." Others are worse than that. At my second seminary where we ate together, that would be frequent dinner conversation of like, "What's your bishop story?" At that same time, I never felt like I wasn't going to do this. That process, which took about, I don't know, maybe 8 or 9 years total, it never felt like I was waiting or on hold, it felt like I was preparing, and it turned out it was.

What Susan calls her "bishop story" is not uncommon. Ordination is remembered by clergy in my study as easier or harder mostly dependent on the support or perceived difficulties presented by their bishop.

For some clergy, a bishop's full support throughout the discernment and ordination process means that their process moves very quickly. The following three examples are all women clergy who were particularly young when they began the ordination process. These three women sought ordination right after college, and were ordained in their twenties. In Jennifer's case, her process was held up by difficulties getting an available bishop to oversee her process. There had been a moratorium on ordination in her home diocese after the previous bishop's suicide. Jennifer was eventually able to connect with a bishop in another diocese as she pursued education away from home, and that unorthodox connection ended up being a smooth ordination process for her as the bishop she was under supported her call and helped her navigate a challenging situation. She explains,

> I'd already gone up to meet with the bishop at the time and that had gotten beautifully. He sat me down and he heard my story, a little longer version that you just heard but not much longer. He said, "I hear you are called to ordained

> ministry, and I will do everything in my power to ensure you get ordained," which was pretty incredible.
> Given it was the mid-'90s, we didn't really care about young ordinations at the time. We were happy with a bunch of second career folks who were older. Not to be told, "Go out and get some life experience and come back when you're 40," was really unusual. (Jennifer, clergy, woman)

Jennifer credits her bishop's support with her easy transition from college student to seminarian, and eventually to her ordination. She had other early career struggles, some of which stemmed from difficulties relating to other bishops as she worked in several dioceses.

Michelle's process was very fast. She speaks of feeling a call and conducting interviews the women in ministry and pastoring who she knew, and friends who were active in various denominations to determine for herself whether ordination was her call, and if so, in what church. She settled on the Episcopal Church and pursued ordination, meeting with a discernment committee and her bishop in quick succession. Of the speed of her process, she says:

> It was really, really fast. Part of that is I think because that my bishop that I went through the process with-- It's interesting because being a woman, a young woman, and clergy person, is challenging. There's challenges to it, and at the same time, he wanted to be able to brag that he had a young seminarian. There's a sense in which they pushed me through the process really fast to just be able-- Because again, it wasn't really a big part of the culture of raising people up in ministry. We had a local school for ministry, but I went to a residential seminary which was different.
> There was a sense in which that-- One of the women priests at my home church said, "Just don't let them push you too fast. Take as much time as you need." At that point, I was really excited, and I wanted to go to seminary. I kept thinking, "Okay, if this ever feels like the wrong thing, I'm going to stop." (Michelle, clergy, woman)

Michelle's process was later complicated by her first marriage ending in divorce while she was in seminary and the question of whether that divorce, and her subsequent relationship with someone also connected to the church, disqualified her from ordination. Her bishop was initially more supportive of her ex-husband than her during the early stages of their separation and divorce, and her faculty held a vote to determine whether she would be allowed to continue her

seminary studies. She was allowed to continue and her bishop severed ties with her ex-husband after she filed a restraining order. This episode is unique in the data for its particular contents, but the focus on a potential clergy person's personal life is not unique. Interestingly, Michelle talks elsewhere in the interview about preaching drawing on her experiences from her first marriage and the patterns of emotional abuse she suffered from. According to her, that sermon elicited many positive responses, primarily from women in her congregation, who told her that her bringing that personal experience to her preaching helped them to heal. Without the support of her bishop to support her throughout the ordination process, that sermon would not have been preached.

Heather is another woman who was ordained young, and she went through the process at a time when some diocese readily ordained women to the priesthood and others did not. Heather benefitted from going through the process in a diocesan context where her gender was not considered a disqualification, and where she was already known to the bishop. Her process moved very quickly. Summarizing her experiences of discernment, she says,

> Heather: I sailed through the ordination process, nobody ever questioned anything. I had no obstacles in the ordination process. Just nobody ever questioned anything. When I had my interviews with the commission on ministry, the biggest issue was, "What does your grandmother think about this?" [laughs] That was one of the questions.
> Interviewer: Really?
> Heather: Yes, because it was the Diocese of the Northern Plains. Northern Plains is a small diocese. I grew up there. People knew me, they knew my family. The guy who was the chair of the commission on ministry really didn't believe in women's ordination, but he was a priest I'd known all my life. Nobody ever questioned anything. (Heather, clergy, woman)

Of her bishop's leadership at the time, she says,

> It all seems so very long ago, because it was so very long ago. I really started thinking about it when I was 12. That was in the '70s, and women's ordination was an issue. I don't know how much that really played a part in things. I was young and so I just thought that women's ordination was-- They just hadn't

> thought of it, like women being doctors. It's not like it's illegal or something, they just hadn't thought about it. I didn't realize at that time how revolutionary it was. I was in a diocese. I come from Northern Plains, and the diocese in Northern Plains at the time was doing a lot of renewing and thinking about what ordained ministry meant, what leadership meant.
> They were in a big transition, headed by the bishop at the time, of, everybody has gifts for ministry, everybody should be serving. I was really inspired by that vision, that everybody had something to offer, and I know that that's really what got me into this. I just took that very seriously, that everybody had something to offer and gotten in my mind that that was where I had something to offer and that that's what I should be doing, is leading the church. In high school, I really committed to that would be my future path. In Northern Plains there just wasn't really any obstacle to it, there really wasn't.
> I never had any difficulties, I didn't see any issues with women's ordination until after I became ordained, actually, and I came here. In Northern Plains, it just wasn't an issue. It's a more liberal place than here, or was at the time. The Diocese of the West is different now, but when I came here, it was very controversial. (Heather, clergy, woman)

Heather went on the have a baby while serving as a rector and has been rector at her parish for many years. She was among the first women clergy to serve as rectors in this diocese and she experienced differences in the diocesan climate around ordination for women having come up in a diocese where the bishop was actively supportive of young women seeking ordination and moving to a diocese where the bishop at the time was not supportive of women's ordination. Her position as rector happened as a result of hyper-local events where she had been an assistant, the rector left, and she stepped up and when the parish couldn't find someone they liked better, they hired her. The bishop had to sign off on her call to serve as rector, but at that point, she'd already been in place.

Bishops have an interest in advancing potential clergy that they want to work with. Bishops have final say over who serves at parishes in their diocese and hold a claim to the first years of an ordained clergy person's career. Bishops are also expected to act as pastors to their diocese's clergy, so their position involves a lot of time spent managing parishes and their priests. Bridget is one member of a two-clergy marriage, and she and her husband were

sponsored for ordination by two different dioceses. When they were ordained and had to find jobs, she explains that,

> [My husband] was from here and I was from [a diocese thousands of miles away]. So theoretically, each of your bishops has a claim to two years of your time after you're ordained. … But the job market, it was right after the market tanked and there were just no curate jobs anywhere. Everything was so competitive. They made a deal, both bishops, that if there was any way either one of them could find two jobs within driving distance of each other that they would work it out. (Bridget, clergy, f)

Bishops manage their clergy, staffing their diocese as they think best. In this case, bishops worked together to keep a married couple from living and working states away from each other.

Bishops can make the discernment and ordination process easier for those they are more personally invested in seeing ordained. Danielle says of her diocesan bishop,

> There would be times where he would say, "Danielle, don't worry about the GOEs, because I've got the magic hands and I can just ordain you, whatever GOE score you get." Or, "I'm the bishop--" Things that don't normally happen, like having a diaconal ordination outside of the cathedral. That is not the norm in our diocese. I would say stuff like, "Can we do that?" He'd be like, "I'm the bishop. I can do that." (Danielle, lay, woman)

Danielle talks about her bishop supporting her call and discernment, and she also talks about how his embrace of his own authority to shape the diocese through his shepherding of ordination processes had what she saw as positive results. This bishop could allow for unusual circumstances, like a diaconal ordination outside of the cathedral, to ensure that the people he hoped to see ordained got ordained. The example given is of a woman being ordained deacon who did not speak any English and served a Spanish-speaking parish. For her, attending seminary instruction in English was proving impossible. The bishop was able to work something out with local clergy and interpreters so that her process could be smoothed, and her ordination was moved to her home parish as part of this individualizing of the process. For Danielle, this kind of show of authority shapes the clergy of the diocese as a whole for the better, and is a good

use of the bishop's authority and position.

Bishops can also ensure that clergy are not called to positions they deem inappropriate for them. At the time of our interview Jerome, a clergy man, was not working full-time as a priest in the diocese but held a number of part-time positions. He spoke of having embraced that his ministry would not look like a full-time parish priest position (nor would it carry with it the Church Pension Fund pension that those positions have). But for Jerome, his hope had been to attain such a position. His relationship with his bishop, though supportive during the discernment and ordination process, soured. Jerome credits his difficult relationship with his diocesan bishop for his exclusion from consideration for several parish positions. He says,

> Jerome: I would say blackballed but certainly not on his list of people to-- What's the word I want to say? He had me pegged as bi-vocational and dammit, he wasn't going to let me into any other type of service. He's the Chief Personnel Officer, so he can do that in a service. It was never comfortable for me.
> Cat: Did you get a sense of why?
> Jerome: Yes, I crossed him. I crossed him once. I called his card and then he just "How dare you? I'm your bishop." … There were openings I was not only not invited, it was just that, "No." I have that second and third hand, so I don't know how real that is, but, "No. We need to look for somebody else." It's the way it is. In perspective, it's one of those things … It was also that it's a hierarchy part that he had some power, and he was going to hold on to that. He was going to hold on. That may just have been him, it may just have been him, I don't know, but that was my experience of that hierarchical power. (Jerome, clergy, man)

While Jerome's relationship with his bishop was tense, other clergy reported receiving support from that same bishop during their own ordination experiences. When Doug, a clergy man, was ordained, he was the first openly gay person ordained in the diocese, and the bishop was prepared for eventualities in which people might object. He spoke to Doug of his own power as the bishop in such a situation. Doug remembers,

> Bishop Randolph was relatively new, he had come out of a diocese in which it wasn't an issue. It wasn't an issue for him personally, and when we had our first conversation, he said to me, "There are people who aren't going to like this, and that becomes an opportunity for education, and that's what we'll do," and that's

> what he did. He was always supportive as me as a person, not me as a gay person. He was always supportive as me as a person. I being gay was something he had to deal with in certain bits and areas, but we had the conversation on the day of ordination.
> There's always that point in the ordination service in which if anybody has some reason to stop this, now to stand up and say so. We had this conversation that morning, saying, "There may be someone standing to refute this ordination, I just want you to be aware of that, and here's what I will do when that conversation comes up. These are the steps we will take and then we'll go ahead and ordain you because everything else is in place, and there is no one person or small group of people that will stop this but know that it may happen." It didn't, but there's a possibility. (Doug, clergy, man)

In Jerome's and Doug's stories, the complex role of the bishop in forming the clergy of the diocese is outlined. The bishop can lift up those he or she deems fit for ordination, and can make their process easier. The bishop can also direct clergy toward jobs they want them to fill, and can block clergy from attaining positions that they deem a poor fit.

The bishop's power in ordaining and calling clergy means that bishops' personal politics and beliefs around women and LGBTQ+ individuals serving in ordained ministry have been important to the story of what seeking ordination is like for those populations. The ECUSA's diffuse church polity resembles the U.S. government in many ways, and dioceses are like states, bishops like their governors. If a bishop in one diocese holds a minority view on the ordination of women, or on the ordination of LGBTQ+ individuals, that bishop can ensure that his or her view is reflected in the clergy of that diocese for decades. Similarly, if a bishop changes his or her mind on a question of gender or sexuality and Holy Orders, signaling that change can have tremendous impact on the thinking in an entire diocese.

When women's ordination was first approved in ECUSA, it was with caveats. It was determined that no bishop ought to be forced to ordain women, or to have women clergy serving in his diocese (all bishops were men at the time). According to Kimberly (clergy, woman), "They met in Florida, the House of Bishops basically made a gentlemen's agreement, I'm serious –

saying just that, 'If we're going to make a place for you in this church, if you don't want to ordain women and won't ordain women, don't worry about it.'" (Kimberly, clergy, f). The approach was accommodationist to bishops who were holding hierarchical power over ordination in their diocese and not willing to ordain women to the priesthood. Bishops, in the years between 1976 and 2006 (This date is according to Kimberly's interview and coincides with Katharine Jefferts Schori's election as presiding bishop becoming the first woman to serve at such a high position in the line of apostolic succession, as of 2006 remaining in ECUSA required bishops to assent to her legitimate leadership and the propriety of a woman holding authority of them as their bishop), could do as they pleased with respect to women's ordination in their own diocese.

In practice, accommodating bishops who dissented from the national church's embrace of women's ordination barred some women from completing their discernment and ordination processes for years, in Deborah's case, the transitional diaconate was not a six-month period between her diaconal and priestly ordinations, but a twelve-year stint in a diocese where the bishop refused to consider ordaining her as a priest. She explains,

> Well, I got married when I was in seminary. My husband got a job. [We moved for his job]. Well, [we moved to a large diocese, where the bishop] agreed to ordain me to the diaconate on behalf of [the bishop who had sent me to seminary]. I was ordained to the diaconate there that fall. A few years later, [the large diocese split, and we ended up living in the new diocese which would not ordain women]. There were a couple of us women deacons who were then transferred into the [new diocese]. I was transferred. [This new diocese] not only continued to not agree to ordain women to the priesthood, it became a place where clergy who were opposed to women in priesthood collected and came and were welcomed. I had to reserve myself to being deacon for twelve years there. (Deborah, clergy, f)

Deborah talks about having the education of a priest and a call to ministry that required performing sacraments. She speaks of feeling an ambivalence about the orders of ministry, but consistently a clear conviction that the communities she felt called to serve, and the places she felt called to serve – colleges, military, prisons – were people and places who wanted a priest

who could perform Eucharist. Her call to perform sacraments was thwarted by the diocesan politics in which she found herself.

Bishops, however powerful, are also individual people. And as all people do, bishops can change their opinions. One example was mentioned by multiple respondents and shows the power of a bishop's actions in setting the tone for a diocese. Bishop Bruce served as bishop locally for years. At the time of his tenure as bishop, he was known to be skeptical of women's ordination, and was not known to have ordained any women himself during his tenure as bishop. The diocese was known to be conservative. One way of showing displeasure or disapproval of women's ordination that was popular for years in ECUSA was to change communion lines if one was standing in a line where a woman would be handing out communion. Philip (lay, man) remembers seeing this in his home parish,

> Philip: Marion Homer, she was a woman in the parish, wanted to be ordained a priest so Father Doyle -- I could say this openly. We called him Mr. Doyle. Doyle went down to see Bishop McIntyre and he decided that Marion would be ordained in the class of '77. We supported her of course, from the parish. Although there were some people when she'd assist with Holy Communion, some people would not receive communion on the side where she was. Tacky?
> Cat: What do you think that was about?
> Philip: Some people can't accept change. That's the answer right there. (Philip, lay, man)

Heather also spoke of times, especially early in her ordained ministry, when parishioners would change lines to avoid getting communion from her. This practice was common enough that it was understood that standing in line to receive communion from a woman was tacit approval of women's ordination, and that changes to church form understood to come with it. With this backdrop for his actions, Bishop Bruce made a gesture that reverberated through local culture. Doug recounts,

> The interesting thing about that bishop, Bishop Bruce, after he retired as bishop and the first woman was ordained in our cathedral, he very publicly changed lines

> for communion to go to her.
> When you talk to folks who've been in this diocese a long time, that's a real key point of the shift in this diocese that even Bishop Bruce could say, "No, this really is okay." He's a longtime rector at [a major local parish], so he was well-known in the diocese when he was elected bishop. He was Father Bruce but then he just became Bishop Bruce, but to see him change communion lines to go to the woman who was just ordained was significant, a big visual shift in the thought process. (Doug, clergy, man)

The bishop, by virtue of the power of the office and the role in the diocese, can set norms and attitudes through his or her behavior. What this means for individuals navigating discernment and ordination is that their gender and sexuality may matter very little to their process, or it could matter a great deal.

Jessica began the ordination process two separate times in two different dioceses because of the difficulties of working with one bishop who was uncomfortable with her sexuality. She remembers her first inklings that she felt called to ordained ministry, and how her first process failed to end in her ordination. She says,

> Once that seed was planted, you can't do anything really discernment-wise until you graduate from undergrad. I started a discernment process my senior year and that blew up very quickly because I identify as bisexual and that was not acceptable, it's still isn't acceptable in that diocese. It was also a very politically charged and heated moment in the ministry of the Episcopal Church.
> All of this was really just going to general convention that summer and the bishop was unwilling to make waves and so many things. I ended up having to pull the plug on that process myself. (Jessica, clergy, woman)

She abandoned pursuing ordination in her home diocese at the time because her sexuality was deemed an impediment to her ordination by the norms of the diocese, which were if not set certainly upheld by the bishop. Jessica said it felt like ordaining LGBTQ+ people in the abstract was fine, but when faced with a real person, the bishop didn't know what to do. She continues, "At one point the bishop said, 'Well, you could take a vow of celibacy and I'd ordain you tomorrow, no problem.' I was like, 'I'm 22, what does that even mean? Do we have vows of

celibacy in the Episcopal Church?'" (Jessica, clergy, woman). Eventually, Jessica moved and was active in ECUSA in another diocese and began her process again there. In a different diocese, with a different bishop, she describes her second process,

> I then went through the process again in [this diocese] and had a night and day experience. I guess that's how I'll approach it because I was very open from the beginning this time, the second time. All my paper work was basically like, "Hi, I'm Jessica and I'm bisexual."
> [laughter] I had this on the first page so then I can never be accused of withholding this. It was a non-issue. I got asked a couple of times in the group interview stages, "So what does that mean? Are you faithful to your partner? Do you have multiple partners?" All the typical questions. Once it was established that I was monogamous then everyone was totally fine with it. There's still some level of ignorance but it was so much better that I didn't even care. (Jessica, clergy, woman)

Jessica's story points to how much soft power the bishop holds over ordination processes. If the bishop approves, then the diocese falls in line. If the bishop disapproves, then the diocese holds the line. Moving from one bishop's purview to another can mean the difference between a priestly ordination and a twelve-year transitional diaconate on the basis of being female, or between leaving the discernment process altogether or being ordained with the full support of one's diocese on the basis of sexual orientation.

The *via media* and toleration

The Elizabeth Settlement, also called the *via media*, in Anglican Christianity refers to the norm of tolerating differences of belief so long as common practice is achieved by doing church according to the rules set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. During the reign of Elizabeth I, England was home to those who would return to Roman Catholicism and discard the Church of England and English Reformation altogether, and to those who would put the Church of England further into Protestantism, even into emergent Puritanism. The mythologized story of Elizabeth

I's response to this challenge – of not seeking to rule men's hearts – emphasizes her focus on establishing and maintaining norms for common worship according to a common prayer book. Anglicanism thus casts itself as a religion of common prayer – using a Book of Common Prayer in the native tongue in each province – and valuing common practice over common belief.

Among my respondents, many either use the term *via media* or refer to Elizabeth I to explain toleration's centrality of diverse belief and toleration to ECUSA identity. Even among those respondents who do not use such language, an interest in tolerance and the inclusion of diverse viewpoints in church community is pronounced. Abigail, an older lay woman who has been active in ECUSA her whole life, casts being Episcopalian as being in balance, and sees balance as necessary for accessing truths about God. She says,

> In religion, we need to be able to reach out a little bit, to look at God in different ways. Maybe some of that comes from my interest in religion in general and studying comparative religions. God doesn't change but our view of God changes. It's like if God were a mountain, you approach a mountain from this direction and it looks one way. You approach it from this direction and it looks different. You approach it from some other-- it looks different from each direction you come from. You change, your position changes, the mountain doesn't change. Religion needs to be able to help us find that balance and balance is one of my big, big things. It's one of the reasons I like being an Episcopalian or maybe that's why I am interested in balance, is because we are. We're Catholic and we're Protestant. We use old-fashioned language and we use newer language, especially nowadays. The same in music which is important to me. (Abigail, lay, woman)

For Abigail, knowledge of the divine requires flexibility to be willing to see from many viewpoints. This expectation that any particular vantage will give an incomplete picture means that Abigail embraces both the more Catholic and the more Protestant pieces of ECUSA tradition, and sees both as necessary. She does not use the language of *via media*, but her explanation is emblematic of how that ideal is present across many interviews, as respondents talk about the ideal without naming it.

Some respondents, particularly those with seminary training, talk more explicitly

about church history in their thoughts on toleration and the *via media*. Reflecting on the presence of disagreement within ECUSA, Danielle suggests that this lack of agreement on all matters is a central part of Anglican tradition. She considers diversity of opinion a feature of ECUSA, not a bug, even when those difference are on matters as important to faith and practice as gender in church life. She says,

> Yes, it's very Episcopalian. That's part of the messiness of the Episcopal church, which I love. If it were Roman Catholic it'd be like, "It's this way, there's no question top-down," right? In the Episcopal church we have general convention, that's very messy. 14 days of talking about stuff and voting on stuff. Then in the interim, the executive council, but it's not top down. The churches are the ones that drive-- They're way more autonomous, so it's just messier.
> I am grateful that there is a place like St. Thaddeus in our diocese. I want there to be a home for people who believe differently from the main Episcopal church. It's just hard when I come up against it every week and I hear about it all the time. I want there to be those places in our diocese. I think we're richer for them, I think it speaks volumes about our ability to converse civilly and to behave civilly across divides in conscience and belief.
> That is what the Episcopal church has always been. Like in the Book of Common Prayer, it was Queen Elizabeth at the time trying to hold together these warring factions where people were killing each other. That's our tradition, that's who we are and that's what came together in the Book of Common Prayer. She even said, she was like, "Believe whatever you want, but just pray together, God damn it." [laughs] That's what we still do, and I think that's beautiful. (Danielle, lay, woman)

For Danielle, "who we are" as a church body is people who worship together despite a history of tension, and sometimes even violence as in the 16th and 17th Centuries in England. Expecting disagreement, and that disagreement will not be a bar to common worship and common practice, is an established feature of ECUSA group identification. Danielle, whose views on gender and sexuality will reappear in Chapter 5, "Regeneration: Revolutionary Essentialism", believes very differently from Matthew, the priest she references here, but the two are collegial with each other (according to their interviews), and remain in full communion within ECUSA. Danielle expects

disagreement and differences of belief that go deep, and her willingness to remain in community with others with whom she disagrees is not impacted by their different beliefs.

Matthew, the priest with whom Danielle significantly disagrees on matters of gender and sexuality in church life, also sees diversity of opinion as a strength of ECUSA. Though he represents a minority viewpoint in ECUSA, he has not left for ACNA or Roman Catholicism, and remains part of ECUSA. He explains,

> I think there's been this slow shift now, where it's like the church has got really homogenous in a way. This nutty Anglo-Catholic up the road adds a little bit of diversity to the mix, so maybe we could them around for a minute. I don't want to make any waves. I feel like on the balance of it, what the Gospels preach, the sacraments are administered, try to be the light of Christ in this community, so there's all that. If they'll still have me, I'll still stick around. I believe that the Anglican Church can be a gift to the—to wider Christendom because of our unique inheritance of having the richness of the Catholic faith, some of those much-needed reforms. I wouldn't be here if I didn't believe that. I'm still here. (Matthew, clergy, man)

Matthew acknowledges his relative outside status within ECUSA, but he too endorses the measured approach to Christian practice that Danielle and Abigail talk about. For Matthew, sacramental worship within a context of institutional reform represents the ideal form for a Christian church, and he finds that in Anglicanism, and in the U.S. in ECUSA. His views, which will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 6 "Regeneration: Nostalgic Essentialism", differ markedly from those of the ECUSA majority and are closer to the views of those who have broken away from ECUSA for ACNA or other more conservative groups. However, staying in communion despite tension and disagreement is important enough to him that he has not seriously considered leaving ECUSA. This represents a commitment to the ideal of *via media*, a commitment held in common with Danielle, despite the divergence of their opinions of matters of gender and sexuality.

Reason, the three-legged stool, and engaging in disagreement

Along with the *via media*, the three-legged stool is a metaphor many respondents use to explain how Anglicans go about deciding what church practices should be. Drawn from Richard Hooker's theological work in England in the 17th Century, the three-legged stool is a metaphor for Anglican belief and practice. According to the metaphor, the three legs of the stool, which are co-equal in their importance to determining proper practice, are faith (sometimes Scripture, sometimes faith), reason, and tradition. Many respondents reference the three-legged stool, but I will focus on Austin's formulation of it. Austin, a lay man with a seminary education, goes back to the three-legged stool throughout his interview to explain his positions. Though others reference it, Austin gives the most thorough explication. For Austin, the three-legged stool gives a metaphoric basis for how church ought to work in Anglicanism. He says, "My understanding of the Anglican tradition … is you have to have some boundaries. There's this three-legged stool of Scripture, tradition, and reason. Within reason, is human experience and understanding. It's all mixed together, but they're all supposed to be checks and balances for one another." (Austin, lay, man). For Austin, thinking in terms of the three-legged stool means thinking in terms of balance so that each of these three dimensions will be considered in making determinations about church practice.

Austin extends his thinking about the three-legged stool to consider how change can happen in a church that equally balances Scripture, tradition, and reason. By including reason as a leg of the stool, Hooker explicitly made space for the human intellect in matters of theology. Respondents in my study spoke of reason as the basis from which many changes in belief can come to be seen as an appropriate part of faith and practice. If, according to the exercise of reason, a previous way of believing no longer makes sense or seems to accord with the Gospel,

then it is best to discard that old belief and replace it with once that can align with all three legs of the stool. Austin explains this as a three-legged spiral, seeing changes to scriptural interpretation over time as necessary and healthy for the church. He says,

> That's the beauty of the third leg [reason]. Nothing changes without everyone bringing their individual truth and experience to the tradition and the Scripture. That's why the Scripture is alive. If we kept interpreting it the same way, it wouldn't be living anymore. It's alive because the world keeps changing. We keep changing. We keep reading it differently. Then we keep interpreting it differently, then we interpret theology, then we have experience, then we have Scripture again. All this is like the spiral. It's like a three-legged spiral. (Austin, lay, man)

When old ways of interpreting Scripture, or of doing church, are seen to violate reason, that is taken as a signal to reform the belief system and the church practices. Austin sees Anglicanism as resting on an understanding of church that is necessarily open to reform.

A shared expectation of tension as part of religious life gives ECUSA adherents an openness to the contradictions that arise when a faith tradition that for hundreds of years followed a theology of women's deficiency is now led by a gender-integrated clergy. Austin explains that he sees tension as the basis from which the church should move forward. His understanding of Hooker's three-legged stool (see Chapter 2) is that Anglicans should expect and welcome instances of tension in their belief and practice, and should see those times as moments for deepening faith. He explicitly ties this belief to his experiences around women's ordination, saying,

> I think that's the three-legged stool again, you could not tell me that women are not supposed to be ordained priests because it says it in the Bible because I have not just one reason amongst a lot, I have experienced women as incredible leaders and priests and ordained priests and deacons, personally, I've experienced them incredible, both as leaders in congregations I've been a part of as colleagues that I've worked with so that it still says that stuff in the Bible.
> It is also true that women are as equipped and equally gifted priests and deacons and bishops as men are. I think it's a great way of challenging how we try to translate the cultural assumptions of a very specific culture to our own specific

> culture and that, I don't know. I think that is the tension that can be formation a little bit. We have a Bible that says one thing and a reality and experience that says another thing, and they're both pushing us somewhere. (Austin, lay, man)

Austin sees Hooker's inclusion of reason as one of the three legs of the thee-legged stool as an invitation to each church member to use their senses and their intellect to actively make choices about how to engage in faith and church practice. This is a shared belief among many respondents. Timothy, a clergy man, says, "Some Episcopalians can be very heady. We pride ourselves on reason." (Timothy, clergy, man). Reason, then, stands out as a particularly important feature of group identity that enables ECUSA to navigate tension and disagreement within the norms of church identity.

ECUSA identity, grounded in the *via media* and three-legged stool, prepares adherents to expect tension and change in church life. Respondents broadly endorse the notion that a healthy church is not one where everyone agrees, but one where everyone is committed to working

together[18][19][20][21]. Beverly, a lay woman, says,

> I think I had a realistic understanding from a pretty early age that the church is not the kingdom of God on earth. It's a community of people. It's a little bit more like the travelers in The Canterbury Tales. There's some godly people, there are some real screw ups and everybody's just trying to get to the Holy Land, the best they can. There are people who in a good congregation are unafraid to admit that they are seeking something bigger than themselves and better than their paycheck and I thought, "Why wouldn't I want to be with people like that?"
> (Beverly, lay, woman)

A vision of church where everybody's "just trying to get to the Holy Land the best they can" makes space for adherents to take seriously their own individual reckonings with the inconsistencies presented by institutional changes to allow women's ordination. The cognitive strategies outlined below are serious undertakings for ECUSA adherents, as they are exercises of

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[18] "Basically, the church is saying that, 'Hey, we're all the same people. We are all equal. We are all the children of God.' That's the only place where you could see that we are a part of it, that we are children of one person. I think it's coming from that. If we are children of God, then we don't want to hurt each other." (Albert, lay, man)

[19] "I think people are looking for inspiration as well, someone who's going to help take them out of the place they're in and give them something new to think about. A lot of that I think is why people come to the Episcopal Church because we allow you to think. We offer you things, we'll preach, but we're not going to tell you that you have to do this. …We allow you, we give you things to think about, and we have confidence that you will do so. That's more of how we are. We come out of a long history of theology." (Amanda, clergy, woman)

[20] "I think what is sacred-- I don't think there's anything as absolute sacredness. I think something becomes sacred depending on the interest of the community and your customs and your culture, because what's sacred to you might not be sacred to me, and that changes over time. The Episcopal priest needs to be vested in propagating the religious culture of the Anglican Church. To the extent that it's based on the symbolism, the bread and so forth, that, I think, is important. Whether or not you believe the blood is the blood of Christ or the bread is the body of Christ, to me, personally, that's not the most important thing. It's the tradition and your aspirations. … The Episcopal Church, I think somewhere in the doctrine, they stress the intersection of faith and reason. There's somewhere in there, right?" (Wayne, lay, man)

[21] "I know across the Episcopal Church, there are bishops who run the gamut from those who run a very Roman diocese… then you have people like the bishop [up North] … [who] is collegial, he's consultative, and he has the last word but only after he's had all of this input and is everybody happy? No. Did everybody feel heard? Yes. What more can you ask? What more can you ask?" (Jerome, clergy, man)

individual reason, which is an important component of faith for these respondents.

Intentional Gender-Blindness

Respondents employ the cognitive strategy I am calling Intentional Gender-Blindness to cultivate distance between themselves and any forms of gender essentialism, choosing to excise considerations of gender from their thinking and casting any gendered patterns they observe as idiosyncrasies of individual actors and individual situations. Intentional Gender-Blindness also involves individualizing by making claims that the gifts someone brings to ministry have to do with their personal qualities, not including their gender. Respondents use Intentional Gender-Blindness when noting their own encounters with clergy who bucked gendered expectations by possessing gifts often considered against-gender for them. Respondents also simultaneously claim that gender is irrelevant to priesthood and ministry, while conceding that it may matter to how a person is formed. Additionally, respondents allow that gendered expectations can correspond with the particular gifts that an individual priest brings to ministry, but reject the notion that the correspondence could be because gender is operating as an important social condition in that individual's life and ministry, and instead claim that the correspondence between gendered associations and individual preferences and talents is happenstance and pure coincidence. Individualizing gifts and talents in this way allows for the perpetuation of gendered norms within the clergy profession while obscuring gender's role as a collection of social structures that perpetuate those gendered patterns. Intentional Gender-Blindness allows respondents to assert that gender does not matter to ministry, while also allowing for individuals to be sorted occupationally according to gendered norms so long as those norms correspond to an individual's talents within ministry.

Respondents employ Intentional Gender-Blindness by noting their own encounters with

clergy leaders who violate gendered expectations through their ministry as proof that the qualities necessary for effective parish ministry are individual and should not be expected to adhere to broader societal gender norms. Sandra, a clergy woman, says, "In my experience again I've seen both male and female clergy share a character or display characteristics that you might put in a gender category but they would bust it out of the water." (Sandra, f, clergy). The inadequacy of gender categories to contain the qualities Sandra has observed in men and women in ministry suggests to her that gender does not matter, rather the individual qualities of a clergy person matter. Other respondents make similar points, and interestingly they especially note the qualities of successful clergy women that they see as not adhering to gendered norms for women. Wayne, a lay man, notes that individual talent is what matters, and he specifically says that he does not believe a man would have an advantage over a woman in holding those talents. He says, "As they're leading a spiritual community, it just comes down to the talent, as I mentioned--talent, perception, your view of what's around you, and so forth. In terms of certain things, a bigger man, in my mind, doesn't have any advantage over a woman or vice versa. It's just a matter of how aware the individual is. … For what you need, for the talents you need to lead a community, there's no difference that I can see." (Wayne, m, lay) Wayne's language draws an equivalency between "a bigger man" and "a woman" pointing to his felt need to contradict any expectations that hegemonic masculine presentation is necessary for successful parish leadership. Vincent, a lay man, discusses his own experiences with women clergy as rector and associate rector in his parish, and notes their ability to be authoritative in his explanation of why their gender does not matter to their gifts for ministry. Vincent says, "Right here in our parish, our rector and associate are both female. We have a deacon who is a male. No, I don't think it makes a difference. I think women can be every bit as authoritative as a man. They may go about it a

little differently, but they can be very firm and they can be good leaders. I don't really see a gender distinction in the quality of a priest. I'm not seeing that." (Vincent, lay, m). Being firm and authoritative, for Vincent, is an important part of being a good leader, and clergy women's talents for firm, authoritative leadership are proof that their gender does not matter to their fitness for parish leadership.

Respondents also employ Intentional Gender-Blindness by allowing that gender is real and may be consequential, but claiming that is irrelevant to priestly ministry. Sean, a lay man, talks about how gender matters broadly, but not for ministry (he also talks about some features of biologic sex as a stand-in for gender in this excerpt), he says, "Well, gender matters because I think, as with all, even a dog will react differently to a man or to a woman. Sometimes they're very negative, whatever, so, I think that as soon] as we think it we really are, 'Oh, we're all the same. This is all incidental.' No, that isn't true. There are differences but I think as far as their ability to be in the position, no. Gender doesn't, no." (Sean, m, lay). For Sean, gender is not incidental, but it is also not relevant to someone's aptitude for ordained ministry as a priest. Andrew, a clergy man, first says that gender does not matter, then says that it does, and concludes his thoughts by stating that fitness for leadership roles, not just those in ministry, is individual and not gender-linked. He begins:

> Cat: What about gender? Does gender matter-
> Andrew: Not to me.
> Cat: -to being a priest?
> Andrew: No. I don't think so. Yes, it does.
> Cat: Okay.
> Andrew: This is sloppy marmalade.

Andrew's interview was conducted over breakfast at a local spot of his choice. He spoke for thirty seconds about the marmalade before returning to the subject of gender. At that point, he spoke of a woman working in management in the business where he worked before pursuing

ordained ministry. Since being ordained, Andrew has been a rector consistently, often hiring other clergy to work under him at his parishes, both men and women, though elsewhere in this interview he explains that most of his pastoral associate rectors have been women because "they had the gifts." Here, he emphasizes that the woman manager in question was not fit for her role, but only because of her personal qualities, and gender did not factor into her unfitness. He continues,

> I've never worked for a woman in the church. I've worked in business for a woman but it was the worst experience I've ever had, not because she was a woman, because she was a crappy leader. She doesn't consult and was hired to be the president of the company. I was the head of marketing department. She was summarily fired after a short period of time. I've had a lot of women who worked for me but that's always been a partnership because everybody who works for me it's partnership, doesn't matter their gender or not. (Andrew, m, clergy)

By individualizing the qualities that made this woman in management unfit for her position, Andrew avoids making any claims about how gender might be related to one's fitness for leadership, either in industry or in the church. Both Andrew and Sean want to leave space for gender to matter in general, but reject the notion that gender might be a causal component of a man's or women's perceived fitness for leadership in the church.

Three clergy respondents, Deborah, Jerome, and James, offer different versions of a view that gender is irrelevant to discerning what one's particular gifts for ministry are. Deborah says, "It starts with a sense of one's own gifts and how those are going to be used and whether those will be better used as a deacon or better used in a large parish, better used is a chaplain in the military or the hospital. It starts with, 'What has God given me that I have to bring to the ministry?'" (Deborah, clergy, f). For her, the fit between a clergy person and a leadership position should be determined by the God-given gifts that individual would bring to the role, and those gifts are distinct from that individual's gender. Jerome concurs that individual gifts are not

related to one's gender. He says, "It's a different job for who's ever in that position. I think each of us bring our own gifts and talents. There I don't see it so much, if at all, being gender-related. Well, personally, I don't see that because I've seen a number of different people in that role of rector … and their ministry really gets formed around their gifts and their talents." (Jerome, clergy, m). His experiences seeing different individuals inhabit the roles of parish leadership act for him as evidence that gender is not related to one's gifts for ministry. James speaks of the importance of building relationships throughout his interview, and when discussing gender he echoes this point by stating that getting to know a clergy person makes gender "almost a non-issue". He says, "You have to pay attention to the person. There are inept priests on either side of the gender barrier, there's equanimity there, but there's very sharp people on both sides too. Those who have a lot to offer give us some fine guidelines through their ministry and that, as regards women's ordination, that the church is richer for it. It's who the person is and who responds to them and that everybody's different. If you get to know the person, gender becomes almost a non-issue." (James, m, clergy). When James speaks of those who have a lot to offer he is referring back to an earlier discussion of how much he admires Katharine Jefferts Schori and her ministry. Jefferts Schori was name-checked by many respondents, particularly often by clergy men, as a case of someone who brought admirable gifts for ministry to her roles as a clergy leader irrespective of her gender. She is held up as an example of a remarkable individual, and her gifts are presented as individual and unrelated to her identity as a woman.

Individualizing personal qualities, and outright stating the irrelevance of gender are two common ways that respondents cultivate Intentional Gender-Blindness. By explicitly stating that gender does not matter, respondents open a space to name the qualities and gifts that do matter for ministry, and having rejected gender as a qualifier, any gendered associations of any of the

qualities or gifts they find desirable is understood as coincidence. Andrea, a lay woman, served on the call committee when her parish was searching for a new rector. She spoke of her process on the call committee, and presented herself as gender-blind, race-blind, and generally blind to any personal identities mattering to the selection of a new rector. She says,

> It doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman, if you're gay or you're straight, if you're married or you're single, if you're Black or Puerto Rican or Black Puerto Rican. You're a person and that's all that matters. You're a person who connects with others, that's all that matters. Also, with the calling committee, that's what we were looking at as well. We were interviewing people from all those different backgrounds and all those different genders. We were just looking for someone who was going to connect (Andrea, lay, f)

Andrea rejects the possibility that a clergy person's various identities could influence their gifts for ministry, or her call committee's ability to discern their gifts, citing only a desire for someone who can "connect." This majority-white majority-cishet parish ended up calling their first woman rector as a result of the search Andrea discusses. However, that woman clergy person is a cishet white woman, so it is difficult to know how much trouble the calling committee had connecting with various candidates and how candidate's identities might have mattered to their ability to connect. Elsewhere in the interview, Andrea explicitly states that the call committee decided against the possibility of calling a gay priest because "the congregation wasn't ready" which suggests that connection may be more contingent on an individuals' identities than Andrea's initial statement would suggest.

Respondents' insistence that gender is irrelevant to gifts for ministry allows for space in people's imaginations where women can be performing feminized roles within the clergy occupation and that gendered pattern will be written off as happenstance or coincidence. Andrew, a clergy man, exemplifies this outcome of individualizing when he explains that many

of his pastoral associates over the years have been women because those women had particularly developed gifts for care and pastoring. He says,

> Maybe [people respond differently to men and women] because of gender. I think it's more because of gifts. I've had people – I engender certain reactions. Every other priest that I've had and I've worked with engenders different reactions than me. I can't speak expertly about it because they're just not me. Again, I don't do what I'm not good at. I don't make hospital calls. I don't make home visits. I don't do any of that kind of stuff. Why? I'm not really good at it. I'm not the pastor, so I've always hired a pastor. Most of the time it has been a female only because they had pastoral gifts and they thought they had pastoral gifts and they did have pastoral gifts. One time it was a male, all those times it was female. Far superior than my gifts. (Andrew, clergy, m)

According to Andrew, his parishes have been led by him as rector, as a woman priest as the associate or assistant rector in charge of pastoral care for many years. This gendered dynamic fits easily within the gendered norms of broader U.S. society and professional life, but Andrew claims that gender has nothing to do with it by appealing to these women's possession of particular gifts for care. Individualizing their gifts makes the gendering of work in his parishes a coincidental outcome, and not part of a larger gendered patterning of clergy work.

Another case that shows how gendered patterns get normalized by understanding gifts as individual and separable from gender is that of two priests who work together and are of different genders: Christopher and Margaret. Christopher and Margaret work as co-rectors as their parish. They are acutely aware of how the split in duties that they have established as working best for them aligns with gendered norms. Both speak of their co-rectorship as successful because it allows them each to work towards their individual gifts while being supported by the other's different gifts. Margaret says,

> This is [my] first time trying the actual co-pastoring together. But one of the reasons that [I] have some degree of faith in the model is that … it seems we have been giving complementary gifts and I hate using that term because of the way complementarianism has become like a term. Like conservative interpretations of women's authority, but I'm just going to use it in its like stricter sense. We have

> been given some different gifts and that together, they actually fill out a bit more fullness of like, what is expected. (Margaret, clergy, f)

Margaret sees strength in the ways that her particular abilities fit with Christopher's, such that together they are a stronger ministerial team for the parish than one of them would be alone. She talks about complementing each other, but is wary of the language of complementarity because of how central it has become to gender essentialist logics in conservative Christianity (including in the Anglican Communion). Margaret struggles to find language to describe a man and a woman working together such that their individual gifts harmonize without falling into language that is mobilized elsewhere to argue against women's fitness for ordained ministry at all (see Chapter 6 for a longer discussion of complementarianism). Christopher speaks of the same tension, noting that Margaret's talents for pastoring and his own for finances present a challenge for him, and that he actively seeks ways to avoid reifying these gendered patterns in the life of the church by giving an example of how to manage vestry meetings. He says,

> It just so happens that the way that we think we complement each other well and there's obviously overlap, but just in how we've divided our portfolios in terms of who does what, that Margaret's in charge of pastoral care, children, youth and family, a little more preaching and worship, and I'm more administration, financial community partnerships stuff. So, there's already some stereotypical gender, like separation thing. That then means that in our vestry meetings, I'm often the one that will answer more of the financial questions, there's a treasurer too. So, Margaret and I have talked before about trying to give her space to talk about some of that stuff to present financial things. Often and even in those same vestry meetings, it just seems like people will turn to me a little bit more as the decision maker. (Christopher, clergy, m)

Christopher is working to build his awareness of how gender influences his and Margaret's work as co-workers and co-rectors. He talks about making a point to create space for her to show leadership in non-pastoral matters. The presumption that men in clergy leadership will hold more gifts for finance, and women will hold more gifts for care and pastoring, is not isolated to Margaret and Christopher's parish.

There is a strong association across interviews of men with financial abilities and organizational leadership, and of women with pastoring and care. For many clergy respondents, those associations fit with their own sense of their personal gifts for ministry. This fit between gendered expectations and personal experiences of one's gifts presents a challenge for some clergy respondents who want to live into their own sense of their personal call, but who are uncomfortable fitting into gendered patterns. Michelle, a clergy woman, says, "There is still such an expectation that men are going to be better at business and leadership. The really frustrating thing is I'm not good with numbers and budgets. It's not my gifts. My gifts are in nurturing and building relationships and all this stuff that really lends itself to like, pastoral care, and children and youth, which pisses me off because it's so in line with my expected gender, and it's what gives me the most life. It's what makes me happy. Doing budgets doesn't make me happy." (Michelle, clergy, f). Michelle feels herself to be in a bind: by following her sense of her own passions and gifts, she will be working within the gendered expectations she perceives others placing upon her and her career. For Michelle, this conflict is somewhat lessened by strongly claiming that caring is in line with her personal gifts, and that those gifts are hers regardless of their gendered associations. Cultivating Intentional Gender-Blindness to individualize gifts to the person, and not the gendered person, can allow respondents to engage in professional arrangements that perpetuate gendering in ministry while distancing themselves from gender essentialist logics that would require such patterns.

Gender Pragmatism

Gender pragmatism is a cognitive strategy that allows respondents to talk about how gender still shapes church life and clergy careers without requiring action on the part of respondents to actuate any particular set of gender relations. Gender pragmatism allows respondents to focus on getting the work of church done (whatever that may be an individual) while accounting for gender might impact that work. Gender pragmatism does not align itself with any particular vision of what gender relations should look like in the church, rather, it is a narrative that takes for granted that gender will matter to church life and emphasizes the importance of navigating gender without detracting from the gender-neutral common mission of the church.

Whereas denying gender essentialism outright and cultivating Intentional Gender-Blindness is accomplished by individualizing gifts, Gender Pragmatists allow that some gifts are more common in women, and some are more common in men. Gender Pragmatism does not see gendered distribution of gifts and talents as a problem or as a sign of dysfunction in the allocation of clergy duties according to gender norms. Rather, Gender Pragmatism sees women's particular gifts and men's particular gifts as wells of talent to be mined for the betterment of the overall church body. Emotionality is seen as a women's gift, and the increased capacity women are presumed to have for emotional engagement leads to expectations that women are better able to do pastoral care work and to lead in a collaborative style. Gender Pragmatism sees women's emotionality, their caring, and their collaborative style as potential strengths to be valued in ECUSA. Gender Pragmatism as a cognitive strategy allows that women's strengths and abilities may be the result of socialization processes, but there is no need to correct for these processes,

simply to attend to their reality and value women for the experiences they bring as a result of those socialization processes.

According to Gender Pragmatism, women are more emotional than men, but that difference is not a weakness. It is simply a truth in this narrative that women are more emotional. Vincent, a lay man, explains,

> I hope this doesn't sound too patronizing, but women tend to be more emotional than men. Sometimes, I've seen female priests who tend to be ashamed of that, but that's just part of your makeup. It's part of who you are and they shouldn't be. For some people, that can be a sign of weakness. I don't consider that. I'm married. My wife who cries when she's happy or when she's sad, crying is just a way of her expressing herself. For me, it doesn't bother me, but there are probably some people who would observe a female priest who is weeping or crying, that they would say that it's a sign of weakness. That doesn't bother me. Jesus wept. Come on, folks. That's the shortest verse in the Bible. No, I don't see a real distinction, except that the emotions can play a factor for a female priest, and I think they're aware of that. They're aware of that, and so they try to keep it under control because they don't want to be seen in the eyes of some as a weakness, but for me, it's not a factor. (Vincent, m, lay)

Vincent does not challenge the gendered norms that encourage and allow emotionality in women than is disallowed in men, nor does he condemn those who might see emotionality as a weakness. He simply allows that in his view these dynamics exist and women's emotionality is not a weakness in his opinion, which allows him to endorse the reality of gendered differences in affect and behavior without endorsing a normative claim about what women's increased emotionality ought to mean for their potential as church leaders.

Virginia, a clergy woman, makes a similar set of claims, though hers are part of a longer discussion of the difficulties she sees women clergy facing in leadership roles.

> More challenging pieces, managing staff, especially if it's a larger church and more of a CEO kind of a role. More challenging for me as a woman to managing staff I think because I don't necessarily compartmentalize. Again, it means a horrible generalization about gender but I think men are better at saying, "This is just business," whereas we tend to bring everything in and stay awake over the people that are going to be hurt. It's hard. I had a bishop once say to me, "It's

> better to be clear than to be kind," and that can be very hard to do but it's true sometimes as a boss, but it's hard. It can be hard to do if you know it's going to hurt someone. Again, there are men who will stay awake too. (Virginia, clergy, f)

Virginia is careful to note that she is generalizing in this statement, but she still offers those generalizations as part of her understanding of how gender matters to the work of leading a large parish. The generalization may not be entirely accurate – "Again, there are men who will stay awake too." – but it is useful to her for helping her to explain the patterns she has seen and experienced as a clergy woman leading a parish. She continues, "It's a little easier. I think it's easier for me because I synthesize to get a sense of big picture. I think women, maybe we're better tuning into our intuition and sensing stuff that's going on under the surface if we've been taught to trust that intuition, which isn't always the case." (Virginia, f, clergy) Again, Virginia generalizes in order to communicate a pattern she has witnessed and experienced and that she interprets as a gendered pattern. Roger, a lay man, offers another perspective on the same phenomenon of gendered patterns in decision-making among men and women in leadership. His thoughts echo Virginia's, he says,

> A male can make a hard decision because males are pretty insensitive. [laughs] We look at an issue and we go, "Well here's the solution, and we're done with it. We're moving on. Put that in the drawers. Close the door. We're moving on," and with women it's more of a, "Well, I'm going to have to live with this," and I think it's not as arbitrary, as decisive, see once you say decisive on the other side you say it's not as arbitrary. I think the women have it right, that these decisions aren't meant to be dispensed with, they need to be well thought out, and then you need to think about, "Okay I made this decision, I'm moving forward, let's pay attention to how that decision is playing out and was it a good one or not." A man would go, "Pfft, my decision was a good decision, we got other decisions to make," whereas I think more of a female would be more, "Well it's not just laymen behind us. Let's make sure we don't forget that as we move forward." (Roger, m, lay)

What Virginia had described as compartmentalizing Roger speaks of as being insensitive. Noting the differences he's observed in how men and women in leadership approach decision making

enable Roger to claim that "the women have it right" and note the importance of thinking through complex decisions with multiple stakeholders in church life. For those who adopt a pragmatic perspective, generalizing about gender can be useful because it allows communication around real gender-based patterns of behavior and experience that matter to church life. For Vincent, Virginia, and Roger, accepting the reality of these gendered patterns enables them to consider how gender differences that present in church life might be made useful to the overall mission of the church and the accomplishment of that mission. For Vincent, women are more emotional than men, but that can be a good thing as it models Jesus's own emotionality. For Virginia and Roger, women's decision-making is less compartmentalized than men's, which comes brings benefits to the community being led. None of these respondents speak about the basis from which these gender-based patterns emerge, but both focus on how gendered patterns matter to the accomplishment of the church's mission – this is the heart of a Gender Pragmatist's perspective.

Women's gifts: care and collaboration

In the thinking of respondents who employ the cognitive strategy of Gender Pragmatism, gendered patterns emerge in social life, including in the life of the church. Those gendered patterns may arise from social origins, but their origin is less important than their impact on the life of the church as an institutional with a common mission. To advance the church's mission (which respondents often do not explicitly explain), gendered patterns in the allotment of talents and gifts should be accurately observed so that men and women can be placed in positions where they are able to be the most efficacious in service of the church's mission. Respondents therefore talk about women's gifts in terms of what women can uniquely contribute to the church.

Respondents perceive a greater capacity for care, and a tendency to lead through collaboration as two important qualities of women in clergy leadership. Caring and collaborating are seen as good fits for clergy women and as good pursuits for clergy women in seeking the serve the broader church.

Many respondents talk about the fit they perceive between women clergy and pastoral care. This is not surprising given the feminine gendering of much care work in the broader society around ECUSA. A Gender Pragmatist take on women clergy performing care work emphasizes the need for women in these caring positions, and the importance of women clergy's care work to the accomplishment of church community. For Gender Pragmatists, women clergy perform care work because caring women leaders are needed by their communities, and the natural fit between women and care fills a need. Sarah talks about her gender being an asset in establishing group for women in her parish who had significant pastoral care needs. Sarah was serving as an associate, and her rector, who was a man, asked her to take on the pastoral care needs of this group of women, who were not previously connected to each other through strong personal bonds beyond being members of the same parish. Sarah explains,

> One of the issues that came up was that the rector was really very, very concerned because he had five women that were going through very serious transitions, like loss of a child, like the husband went off with another woman, like [chuckles] they discovered their husband was going to be a felon, this kind of thing. It was like, "Whoa." So, I started a women's group and that was a great joy. We grew to a group of 10 women, all of them in major transitions, divorce, lost their job, special needs child, and they really bonded together. Yes. What is it now? It's almost 15 years now. That group is still going. (Sarah, f, clergy)

For Sarah, being a woman in the clergy meant she could provide care from a same-gender social position to members of her parish whose needs were not being met by their rector in part because he was a man and an all-women's group was the appropriate pastoral tool. Sarah sees her gendered care work as a tool to serve the parish's needs and by extension the church's mission.

The idea that women clergy are especially adept at ministering to the care needs of women congregation members is widespread in interviews. Lay people and clergy alike talk about how they expect women clergy to have a greater propensity for care giving, and both groups emphasize the importance of caring for people as a key component of parish leadership. Linda and Bridget both talk about their own experiences of being clergy women and being expected to perform a lot of care work. Both talk about how many times women clergy are expected to be the primary pastoral care givers for women in their parishes, but they offer differing opinions on women ministering to the care needs of men in their congregations. In Linda's experience, both men and women in the parishes where she has served have preferred to seek out pastoral care from her as a woman member of the clergy because of their expectations of her capacity for care. Linda says, "I think in some ways, it makes pastoral care easier in some ways, especially with women, but I think both men and women often are more ready to open themselves up to females, I think. At least I feel that way. I have noticed … there a lot of times people will be like, 'No, I want to talk to the woman.' I've heard that a lot. "'I want to talk to the female priest.'" (Linda, clergy, f). Linda's experience has been that her gender is perceived by lay people as an indication of her capacity for care, and enables many lay people to feel more comfortable approaching her for pastoral care needs. In contrast, Bridget has found that for her, pastoral care giving is easier with women than with men. She says that there are some differences between women and men, she calls them "layers" that make providing care for other women more straightforward for her. Bridget explains,

> Responding emotionally with somebody, that when somebody comes and cries in my office, I can hug a mom and it's not weird or creepy. I can provide a different kind of pastoral care – which isn't to say it's better but that more relational, compassionate, empathetic. Men can be empathetic and compassionate and everything too. It's just there are some layers that are different. I find pastoral care for women is easier for me as a woman. I don't find that men are as eager to

> speak to me about things that they're concerned about, and I don't find that it's easy for me to respond and relate to them that way. It doesn't mean that I don't care. It's just hard for me to know how do I engage this for you as a man? (Bridget, f, clergy)

For Bridget, norms of behavior that vary with gender make providing care for other women easier for her than providing care for men. Bridget also says that men are not as eager to speak to her, noting that in her experience pastoral care requests are coming more easily from women, a pattern that she attributes to her position as a woman clergy person in her parish. Both Linda and Bridget serve as associates in parishes with men as rector, and their experiences as associate rectors who are women who are also managing a large share of the parish's pastoral care work fit with expected gendered patterns in the ECUSA clergy (CPG, 2012). They experience the gendered dynamics of providing care differently, but both of these respondents see a presumed natural fit between their gender, their capacity for care, and the expectation that they provide care. Both Linda and Bridget are happy to provide the care expected of them because both see pastoral care as an important dimension of church, showing pragmatism in their approach these gendered expectations around care-giving.

Beyond care-giving, women are also perceived to have a propensity for collaborative leadership. Lay and clergy respondents, men and women, talk about their expectation that men will be more authoritative in their leadership than women will. Clergy women are most likely to talk about the flip of that gendered norm, perceiving themselves and their clergy women colleagues as particularly skilled in collaboration and collaborative leadership. Amanda and Deborah, both clergy women, speak about collaborative leadership as a style particular to clergy women. Amanda says, "I don't think gender itself matters. I think we minister in different ways. It has been my experience that women will be much more receptive and open to me as a woman. … I could get stuff done with some of my female contacts that the guys never could get.

Sisterhood matters." (Amanda, clergy, f). Amanda sees women's collaborative approach to leadership as built from common experience shared by many, if not most, women. She talks about sisterhood as a common bond between women in leadership. Amanda explains that her experiences of gender differences in leadership styles come from both her experience as a clergy member, but also from her experience working in the corporate world. She generalizes the two to describe her overall perception for how gender matters to leadership. She says,

> For a lot of men, it's very adversarial and combative and certainly, there are some women that are that way, clawing our way to the top and that kind of thing, where a lot of the women will work collaboratively. You talk casually, you ask about their families, you remember to ask about their kids, and this kind of thing and, "Oh by the way, blah, blah, blah, blah." "Oh yes, I could do that for you." It's more relational. It's much more relational. That was something I always worked hard at, was keeping up those relationships. "Oh, I haven't talked to you for a while. I know I don't do X, Y, and Z too much anymore, but how are you doing? What's going on with the family?" Those kinds of things. I think a lot of women minister – I don't want to say it's a softer side, but in some ways it is. Again, we look for a way to build relationship instead of maybe going to a hard and fast answer, or a hard and fast decision. (Amanda, clergy, f)

For Amanda, the most important feature of the collaborative leadership she observes among clergy women is its efficacy. What matters for Amanda is not gender itself, but gender's effect on leadership style, and how effective that leadership style is. Amanda talks about clergy women as an asset for the church because they use the performance of gendered relationships, e.g. asking about family, to build collaborative relationships that "get stuff done … that the guys never could." Amanda is using a gender pragmatist narrative to say that gender matters to leadership because leading within gendered norms and expectations – here, collaborating especially by bonding over women's experiences – can be efficacious and therefore helpful for accomplishing the mission of the church.

Deborah, also a clergy woman, makes a very similar point when she talks about how gender matters to leadership and says that women's leadership styles are different from men's,

and are changing how leadership works in the church. She says, “Well, I think one of the things that women did, and some of the things we try work on with the Episcopal Women’s Caucus, was the women’s models in leading or, in the more circular leadership, a leadership of peers as opposed to the old, traditional, hierarchical, and everybody’s trying to get to the top.” (Deborah, clergy, f). Deborah sees this change, moving away from hierarchical leadership models and toward circular or collaborative leadership models, as a positive change for the church. She also admits that gendered approaches to leadership may be illegible to the church institution, resulting in lesser rewards for women in clergy leadership. She says, “I think this is one of the things that’s evidenced in women’s salaries … you got to get the big churches to get the big bucks.” (Deborah, clergy, f). In other words, women clergy, according to Deborah, are more likely to lead collaboratively: this is good for the church and people being led, but may not be easily recognized and rewarded. For both Amanda and Deborah, women are more collaborative than men when they are in leadership positions. This tendency to collaborate can make their leadership less visible, but both of these respondents see collaborative leadership as particularly effective and therefore as a good addition to church life.

The role of socialization

Gender Pragmatism, as a cognitive strategy that seeks to make gender meaningful for adherents, does have an account for the origin of these gender differences. In particular, Gender Pragmatist accounts emphasize the role of socialization processes on the development of women’s talents and abilities. Though socialization processes unfold over the life course of all people, respondents spoke almost exclusively about the impacts of being socialized as a woman. Growing up, and being socialized, as a girl and then woman, is perceived by respondents as a common experience shared by women that gives them abilities in care and collaboration, and

prepares them for effective leadership in the church. Gender Pragmatism is more common among women respondents than it is among men, making it possible that Gender Pragmatism is particularly useful as a cognitive strategy for women seeking to make sense of how their own gendered socialization experiences matter to their approach to leadership. Nearly all respondents, clergy and lay, had experience holding leadership positions in ECUSA. Gender Pragmatism was employed to explain gendered patterns in church leadership among the laity and the clergy. Gender Pragmatists do not seek to change the gender norms that shape these socialization processes, rather they seek to harness the strengths that arise from those experiences for the betterment of the church.

Gender Pragmatism's appeal to socialization can be mobilized to explain why women development abilities for care and collaboration. In this excerpt, Dorothy, a clergy woman, explains that thinks socialization processes encourage women to develop a capacity for care that makes performing pastoral care as a clergy person easier. She says, "I certainly think pastoral care comes naturally to women. I am a scientist by nature, so I do like to really believe in science, and I really support the idea of a continuum. This does not apply in all cases, but women, I think, are enculturated to care and being caring, so yes, I think that part of it is easier for women." (Dorothy, clergy, f). Two features of this quote that make it representative of the Gender Pragmatist approach are Dorothy's insistence that she supports the idea of a continuum of gender, and her simultaneous endorsement to the idea that pastoral care will be easier for women than for men. Dorothy can both claim that gender is a spectrum and that women will develop caring skills because her approach is pragmatic, and her primary concern is to notice what presents in the world as she observes it and to consider how what presents can be mobilized and used to further the mission of the church.

Two respondents, Donna, a clergy woman, and Beverly, a lay woman, take Gender Pragmatism's interest in socialization a step further. Rather than stopping their analysis at the observation that some talents and abilities seem to be further developed in women than in men because of gendered socialization, these respondents consider the unequal power dynamics that they observe between men and women in society, and consider how inhabiting a lower-power social position shapes women and women clergy's ministry. Donna, a clergy woman, in particular talks about the combination of a social experience of less power and the professional experience of being a member of the gender group which is underrepresented in upper levels of church hierarchy. She says,

> Women are raised typically in contexts where they don't have as much power as their male counterparts. We accept that that's probably true and that therefore, they are always having to think about where they are in the power dynamics of, say, a corporate team, where they're the only female or there's maybe two females on a team of six, let's say; or in a house of Bishops where you have an average house of Bishops meeting with 130 to 150 bishops and 12 of those are women. Constantly, whether we're aware of it or not, our mind is figuring out how we're going to show up in this room and how we can show up safely and effectively. I would suggest that most men do not have to think about that in the way that women have to all the time. (Donna, clergy, f)

Donna observes that women's experiences of leadership are constantly accompanied by a consciousness of one's position of lesser authority and lesser power, because of one's social position as a woman. This is an analysis that begins from a close attention to gender and power, but it becomes part of the gender pragmatist narrative when Donna compares women and men in clergy leadership. That comparison becomes a place from which to understand experiences of less power as a resource women bring to clergy leadership, and therefore a resource to draw on for shaping ministry that will serve the church's mission and goals.

Beverly, a lay woman, extends a similar analysis when she connects gender socialization and leadership styles, with an eye for what these observed differences mean for the overall

financial health of ECUSA. Beverly has worked in finance for ECUSA, helping churches to run capital campaigns, often to resolve debt, and in her experiences, she has noticed gendered patterns in clergy's approach to leadership which have implications for the finances of parishes, and by extension ECUSA. She says,

> Personally, I think women are socialized in ways that make them a little bit better able to acknowledge their dependence on God and to knit communities together. That's not to say that there aren't men who do that well. It's the old joke, if logic were to rule the world, it would be men who rode side-saddle. If logic ruled the world, women would lead religious communities because they're supposed to be the ones who nurture the family, but we have trouble with that. … Again, it's that are we talking about building a spiritual community, or are we talking about running the congregation on the corner? Women tend to be a little more likely to ask for help, which means if they get into a situation and they need to go out and get more tools like financial competencies—My experience was the female priests were more likely to do that, and the female priests were more likely to run the organization with an eye to its future after them. A fair number of male clergy would run up debt knowing that they were planning to leave. It would put the congregation in a good place for a while, but then they'd have to pay off the debt well after their leader was gone. Yes, but they got to build a nice big building in the entrance. (Beverly, f, lay)

For Beverly, gendered patterns in leadership style matter a great deal because of the financial implications clergy leaders' actions could have on the future of their parishes. Beverly's response has many hallmarks of the gender pragmatist narrative. She notes that women hold certain gifts and abilities, and that those abilities are born from experiences of gender socialization as a woman. In this case, women are able to admit dependence and ask for help. These gender-associated abilities enable women to lead church communities in ways that are good for the broader mission of the church. Here, women can ask for help and collaborate, which means they approach parish financial matters more collaboratively and with more continuity across rectors, leading to financially healthier parishes which were better equipped to carry on the work of the church. Beverly believes that gender socialization gives rise to these abilities in women clergy, and she does not state a strong position on the appropriateness of these gendered patterns, rather,

her focus is on what contributions women's abilities born from women's experiences can offer the church.

The ideal clergy person is still a man

Gender Pragmatism, as a cognitive strategy, incorporates observed gendered patterns in church life into a view that highlights when and where gender becomes salient in church life, and considers how gendered abilities and talents could be best mobilized to serve the mission of the church. In this narrative, women are expected to hold gifts for care and collaboration, often as a result of gendered socialization processes. Gender Pragmatists also expect that most people active in ECUSA, and most members of contemporary U.S. society, will associate authority with men and masculinity. They anticipate that leadership positions will be associated with a masculine ideal, and that women in leadership will not be perceived to be a natural fit for such positions.

Gender pragmatists expect that people will associate authority and leadership positions with an ideal worker who is a man. The phrase "Father knows best" came up in several interviews to describe the naturalized view of a clergy man as the appropriate holder of authority over a parish and congregation. "Father knows best" was never said in earnest by a respondent speaking about their own view of gender and clergy authority, rather, it was said dismissively, and sometimes almost derisively, to characterize a simplistic view of clergy authority and gender that the respondents themselves did not endorse. In the context of the gender pragmatist narrative, "Father knows best" is important as a summary of an attitude about gender and authority that respondents report observing regularly. Russell, a lay man, sums up this observation, saying, "I think some congregations just have bias toward male priests, … I

characterize it as ‘Father knows best.’ The old-pro male priest who everybody, just, everything he says is correct. They just get stuck on that and it’s not necessary.” (Russell, m lay).

According to respondents, the effects of this widespread expectation that men will be well fit to positions of authority because of their gender can be seen in patterns around the hiring of rectors. A rector is hired by a parish to serve as their lead, and sometimes only, clergy person. Rectors are hired with tenure, and removing a rector is difficult once they are installed in the position. According to the Church Pension Group, rectorships are still overwhelmingly held by men, although women clergy are gaining as they make up an increasing share of the ordained clergy (CPG, 2012). Rectorships can serve as stepping stone positions, either to a rectorship at a larger, more wealthy, and more powerful parish, or to a position higher in ECUSA hierarchy, often a bishop’s seat. Gender disparities in the hiring of rectors feed into gender disparities in church leadership up the church hierarchy. Gender Pragmatists notice the differences in attitudes that they perceive ECUSA members hold about men and women of the clergy, and note that they believe expectations are generally that men will hold and exercise authority as rectors naturally, and will therefore succeed in rectorship positions. Michelle, a clergy woman, offers her perspective as a fairly recently ordained priest, and someone who attended seminary shortly after college without much previous career experience. At the time of our interview, she was only a few years out of seminary and had not been called to a rector position yet herself, she was serving as an associate at a large parish. Michelle says,

> I think a big one that I have reflected on while I was still in seminary, it was a lot of my friends who were graduating who were my age, who were men who were getting jobs as priests in charge. Women were not. With ministry being our first career where people have often said to me, "You need to get experience." I don’t have experience in like a business world of managing people or financial stuff. Me going out to be a priest in charge is my first job. I’m not going to be hired to do that, but I had male colleagues in seminary who did just that. There is still such

> an expectation that men are going to be better at business and leadership. (Michelle, f, clergy)

Michelle says that she saw a gender disparity in the job search outcomes for herself and her seminary classmates. According to Michelle, she was told to get more experience before she could be considered for a clergy leadership role (she uses the phrase "priest in charge" which elsewhere in the interview appears interchangeably with rector); her male peers with similar work experience, however, were often hired into precisely the positions she was told she was not yet qualified for.

This difference in lay people's perceptions of the potential for men and women to hold authority that Michelle describes is also present in Bridget's experiences. Bridget, a clergy woman, did an in-depth study of one parish as part of her seminary education. She conducted interviews with congregation members about the life of that parish over the years that each member had been active. Bridget was struck by how her respondents spoke about their one experience of a rector who was a woman. This parish had been rocked by several failures of leadership before the only woman to serve as rector there arrived. Bridget explains,

> This place only had one female rector. She lasted two years, and it was after a big scandal in the church and everything so it was a bad time, but the number of people that said very favorable things about her, and then they said, "But you know what? She just had this way of making decisions without asking people and nobody liked that so it was a bad match." But then the rector that came after her, they would talk about him and say, "Yes, he was really decisive, but we needed that. It had been a rough time." And I'm like, "Do you not see that you've told me the exact same story?" (Bridget, f, clergy)

Bridget notices that lay people spoke about decisiveness as a key quality in their descriptions of both a woman and a man who held the rectorship position in their parish. Where the descriptions differed was in the charge of the language used to describe that decisiveness. The woman was described as "making decisions without asking people" which was perceived as a sign of a

leadership mis-match between her leadership style and parish's congregation. The man was described as "decisive", but rather than his decisiveness being a sign of a mis-match, congregation members said his leadership style was what "we needed". To Bridget, this example highlights how men in the clergy are expected to wield authority because they are men, and are therefore rewarded when they do, while women are viewed as poor leaders for the same behaviors. Bridget goes on to talk about how, to her, this example is not a sign of a regressive congregation or a parish that is unsupportive of women clergy. Rather, she says, "I don't think this is church culture. I just think it's American culture." (Bridget, clergy, f). Bridget approaches how her gender impacts her work as a member of the clergy informed by the patterns she observes, but with her own focus on how to navigate the challenges of leading as a woman and not on how to undo the social structures that perpetuate those challenges. Her concern is with accomplishing the work of the church as it is.

Respondents do not believe that the ideal type against which men and women in clergy leadership are measured is one clearly aligned with hegemonic masculinity. Instead, the priestly ideal appears to have more room in it for varieties of masculine identity and presentation. Roger, a lay man, explains that men who would seek careers in the clergy are not men who would seek careers in corporate leadership; he says that both are men, but different kind of men. Roger says,

> I think it's a self-selection process. I think for men that it's appealing to become a priest, they had a little different mindset than a man who it's appealing to become the CEO of Pfizer. Do you know what I mean? ... They're very different kinds of – same gender, but very different kinds of people. … the subset of men that go in, they aren't the classic male persona. When you think about pastoral care and feeding of the soul, and empathy towards people's problems and all, that's not high on a male hunter list. [laughs] (Roger, m, lay)

For Roger, clergy men are men who care about care, who engage in empathy readily, and for whom the pursuits of the stereotypical CEO hold little of interest. These men do not, in Roger's

view, hit the same ideal held up in broader society. But within the context of the church, these men are the ideal for clergy. Michelle, a clergy woman, talks about being held to that ideal, and her perceptions that as a young woman she challenges lay people's expectations for what a clergy leader should look like substantially. She says,

> A young woman is treated so differently than a young man. It's so much more natural for people to see me as-- how would I say it-- just not a priest; just not as a priest. I feel like I'm just the most surprising type of priest to so many people. Even a gay man, in some sense, still has the male authority. Even for a parish in which his sexuality challenges people, I think it's still easier for them to see him as a priest than it is to see me as a priest. Just because there's been such a stagnant over the centuries, a priest is a man. That's just really hard to, I think, break out of. (Michelle, clergy, f)

Michelle believes that the ideal type for a clergy person, in the minds of most Episcopalians, is an older man. Michelle supposes that even a potential lightning rod identity, like homosexuality, could be less disruptive to a man's ability to meet that ideal, than could a woman's identity as a woman. Doug's experiences as a clergy man who is gay would appear to corroborate Michelle's hunch that gay men are still viewed by lay people as men and therefore an easy fit for the role of priest. Doug talks about his bishop being protective of him throughout the ordination process because he feared Doug's sexuality might make him a target for harassment. Despite his bishop's misgivings, Doug does not speak of experiencing negative attention for his sexuality during his clergy career. Doug instead speaks of church acquaintances and friends who changed their form of address for him upon his ordination, switching to calling his "Father" interpersonally to "reverence your position." (Doug, clergy, m). Though Doug's career has not been without its challenges, his sexuality appears legible to lay people and consistent with his gender and his priesthood. He does not speak of experiences like Michelle's which include lay people refusing to use any clergy title to refer to her, and of unwanted touching and remarks which she experienced as microaggressions. These two individuals are not a sufficient sample from which

to draw any conclusions about whether women or gay men are perceived by lay people as further from the priestly ideal, but their experiences do suggest that being a man may be a central component of fitting a shared ideal image for clergy.

For the Gender Pragmatist, a masculine ideal for clergy, and an expectation that men holding authority and taking decisive action in leadership positions is natural are present in the life of the church and therefore must be considered and contended with when seeking to accomplish the work of the church. Gender Pragmatism is not a cognitive strategy that seeks to undo these norms or replace the existent ideal type with another. Rather, those who embrace Gender Pragmatism seek to use their insights about how gender matters to clergy work in order to tailor their own efforts to achieve the best possible results. Bridget, the clergy woman who conducted a study of a congregation and found lay people used differently charged language to describe similar actions undertaken by men and women in clergy leadership, explains her approach to parish leadership. She says,

> I was thinking about gender stuff that like in a workplace, men can give direction or say, "No, we're doing it this way," and it's typically accepted as like, "Okay, he's decisive," but I'm supposed to be collegial and everything. If I'm very firm and directive that is not going to be received well; by women, by men, that's just not going to fly. So getting people to think they thought of it is a skill that I think women in ministry need to have. You can learn it. I'm still learning it, but 90% of the time, you need to make sure that people think it was their own idea, whatever you wanted them to do. (Bridget, f, clergy)

Bridget's response to what she sees as a stark difference in how lay people respond to men and women in leadership is to build up a skill set to contend with the gendered challenges she faces. Rather than seek to challenge expectations by being firm and directive herself, she has chosen to cultivate abilities like getting her congregation members to "think it was their own idea" whenever she is seeking to affect another's actions. This is a response characteristic of gender pragmatism: informed by keen observation of how and when gender matters to church life, the

Gender Pragmatist considers ways to work around and within gendered norms to accomplish her or her goals in the doing of church.

Women in clergy leadership may experience role strain

Gender Pragmatism is a cognitive strategy that takes as fact the presence and persistence of gendered patterns in people's expectations of men and women clergy. For Gender Pragmatists, the question is how to navigate gender as a social construction in ways that will be efficacious in forwarding the mission of ECUSA as a church institution. In parish contexts, different gendered expectations for men and women clergy often rise to salience in times of leadership transitions. Calling a new priest, and adjusting to a new priest stand out in the interviews as times clergy and lay people alike are particularly attuned to questions of gender. Moments of strain in a particular parish or in the broader diocese or even the national church can be moments when attention is trained on clergy leadership as well, and so gender can matter in those moments of strain and conflict.

When searching for and hiring a new rector, parishes form a search committee that handles the hiring process on behalf of the whole congregation. Most search committee members are lay people who have broad experience within the parish, like Roger, who has been active in leadership in his parish for many years. Roger is a lay man and has particular experience with vestry service and financial matters. He recalls his most recent experience on a search committee, when his parish called their first woman rector a few years ago. As part of that search process, the committee outlined what kind of person they hoped to find to be their new rector, and how gender might matter to that description. He says,

> I was at the search committee. We had this group that when we were starting our search, they were a discernment committee. They were working through our

> characters in the congregation and discerning what we would want to have in the next priest. It had nothing to do with gender. It had to do with we would like somebody that would challenge us and would make us uncomfortable, somebody that would lead us in a path of doing things, not just talking about things. Flo, she was high up in the organization and into it, director of something or other. She was also in Silicon Valley, high up in a tech company. She was Catholic, very, very active in the Catholic Church and also was a faculty professor at one time. … Here's Flo, who had done all of this stuff, and she decided that she wanted to go into the ministry. Couldn't do it as a Catholic, so she got active in the Episcopal Church and ended up going to the seminary. Here we have an alpha dog, [laughs] female alpha dog, which is what we're thinking, "This could work," and it has. Flo, she's a very gifted preacher in that she really gets you to think about things and she challenges you. With the diverse nature of our church, she is definitely because she's progressive. We have elements of the church that are more conservative, but she's managed to balance all of that. … This is her first time as a rector so she's developed this whole rector thing. (Roger, lay, m)

According to Roger, Flo stood out to the search committee as an attractive candidate because of her broad experience, working in the corporate world, as an educator, and bringing church leadership experience from her time as a Roman Catholic lay woman. He says that in the search committee's criteria for a new clergy leader, "gender had nothing to do with it" but in discussing the rector they eventually called, her gender is a key part of his moniker for her as "a female alpha dog." Flo's broad career experience and what came across to the committee as her obvious capacities for leadership and authority rendered her not only a desirable candidate but also a woman who could be defined in terms fit for an ideal male worker as well. A parish looking for an alpha dog could be satisfied with "a female alpha dog". The implied contradiction between one's leadership abilities and being female-identified in Roger's description points to the enduring strength of associations between masculinity and authority. In this example of one search for a new rector, gender mattered because it was the capacity for a woman to be judged excellent by standards that carried with them a masculine ideal that led to Flo being called to the position. She was able to be a good fit because of the legibility of her resume against a masculine ideal.

As has been previously mentioned, Katharine Jefferts Schori is mentioned by several respondents as an example of an ideal clergy person. She was the first woman elected to serve as presiding bishop of ECUSA, and held that position 2006-2015. Jefferts Schori earned a PhD in Oceanography before pursuing ordained ministry, and among her hobbies is flying small planes. These details of her biography come up in discussions about her often, despite them not being directly related to her ministry or church work. Rather, respondents use these biographical details as markers that Jefferts Schori is a remarkable woman who defies expectations. When recalling a visit she made to the diocese, Sean, a lay man, discusses her evening taking questions from ECUSA members in a local parish. This visit was during a trying time for the diocese when several parishes had left ECUSA, and property disputes had resulted in lengthy court cases. Many respondents spoke of this time in the recent history of the diocese as a stressful and emotionally draining time. Sean says, "I remember she took unvetted questions from anyone that was present on the floor. A person would pose a question, she would pause for an instant and reflect and then answer. She was not evasive, answered. I was so impressed. Of course, she has a PhD in oceanography, all of that. I was just like, 'Wow.' … I sent her an email. I was just absolutely impressed on that." (Sean, lay, m). Jefferts Schori came across to Sean as a competent leader in a time of trial, and in his description of her capacity for leadership, Sean notes her PhD though the credential was not related to her handling of church politics. Her PhD acts not as a sign of her spiritual depth or of her legitimate call to ministry and leadership, but rather as a sign of her competence and capacity for handling difficult situations. Other bishops and church leaders who are mentioned in interviews as models for leadership do not hold PhDs in unrelated fields, but their previous careers or credentials are not mentioned as signs of their competence. Sean's comments about Jefferts Schori, alongside Roger's assessment of his own rector's fitness

for a clergy leadership position on the basis of her extensive corporate resume show how much women in the ECUSA clergy are judged by standards that assume a masculine ideal and women must often demonstrate additional expertise and achievement.

In addition to talking about recent searches and calls, respondents also spoke in general about their expectations of the hiring process for clergy. Denise, a lay woman, spoke about her perception that what a congregation says it wants, and what it actually wants, may not align with respect to the gender of the clergy person. Denise explains that she sees parishes looking to expand their visions of what leadership could look like, and calling women to serve as their rectors is part of that diversifying of the ideal for leadership. What Denise observes, however, is that often women leaders confound their congregations' expectations once in leadership positions. She says,

> It depends on the congregation. What does the congregation want? I think gender matters in that I feel that women are more able to multitask and be collaborative. … I'm not saying all men are authoritarian, but there's a different leadership style with men, right? … [People are] like, "I expect the man priest to come out and have this vision for us." Maybe he's leading the vision process or something. Out in front kind of guy. I think that's projected onto women too, but then there's a little bit of a culture clash. I think when a woman arrives, it's like, "Well, we wanted that, but we didn't. Which is why we got a lady." There's this navigating of, "Well, I don't know what I want now, because she's not really a guy. That's what I wanted, was somebody to tell us where to go." I think there's a working out process. (Denise, f, lay)

Denise notes that as congregations might want to veer away from the authoritarian leadership model other respondents have referred to dismissively as "Father knows best" they call women to leadership position. Then when women's leadership styles do not match with previous experiences of clergy leadership (who have been men), or with expectations of clergy leaders (which was built from a presumed masculine ideal), congregations and clergy must navigate new models for leadership which can be quite challenging for parish dynamics. Denise is hopeful that

ECUSA is developing new models for leadership, because of the entrances of more clergy women in positions of leadership in parishes. Denise continues, “It’s changing. It’s changing, because there are lots of women, I think, in the Episcopal Church in leadership positions. Which is fabulous. I think that’s changing that culture of leadership.” (Denise, lay, f). For Denise, contested visions for leadership will result in new models which she believes will be better than those that came before. In the meantime, accounting for how women clergy leaders are held to standards built from a masculine ideal is simply part of parish life and therefore something to be navigated in order to accomplish the work of the church.

Sometimes, the difficulties congregations and new clergy leadership can face in establishing trust and a functional model for leadership within the parish may arise from a sense of uncertainty around what the new clergy leadership will enact. Many respondents spoke of clashes between long-serving lay leaders within the parish and incoming clergy leaders who sought to shake things up, make things run more smoothly, or simply enact any changes to how the parish works at all. In these moments, lay people sometimes leave their longtime parishes because they felt usurped by new clergy leadership. Sometimes such ruptures are small and personal, sometimes significant portions of congregations feel alienated by new leadership. Those stories are more common when incoming rectors are women, but they are not exclusive to women rectors. Respondents say that trust between clergy and their congregations is key to preventing such ruptures. Preston, a clergy man, says he believes that lay people are most able to trust women clergy in leadership when they are confident those women will not set aside religious tradition to advance feminist politics. He says,

> I think people are more willing to trust a solid orthodox priest that they know is not going to do any funny stuff with them. When it comes time to change, this church knows that I’m not going to pull anything on them. We’re not going to have “The Three Wise Persons” on Epiphany … that sends the message to the

> church that there may be some really goofy stuff coming down the road from this rector. It sends the wrong message. I think the reason these women are rectors around here, you're the one interviewing them but I'm sure that one of the reasons, they would never pull something like that. If people know that I'm not going to pull something on them, and they know we're going to have a big discussion before we're going to change so we can all process what we're going to do, but at the end of the time period, we're going to be doing something different, they're willing to do it. (Preston, m, clergy)

For Preston, linguistic changes that would focus attention on the gender dynamics embedded within ECUSA tradition, e.g., talking about "Three Wise Persons" rather than the more traditional phrasing of "Three Kings" on Epiphany would signal to congregation members that what Preston calls "really goofy stuff" would be coming soon. Solid and dependable leadership for Preston must be accomplished by eschewing any such changes to tradition. Preston says that what makes some women clergy well fit for rectorship is their adherence to church tradition and their avoidance of any "goofy stuff" that might foreground the integration of progressive gender politics into church life. Trust, for Preston, depends on adherence to things about which all church members can agree, and that should include the gendered language of church tradition. Practically speaking, Preston says, clergy women know not to foreground or draw attention to gender in church life in their leadership practices.

Susan's experiences in her parish, where she serves as rector, suggest that Preston is correct in his assertion that for some church members direct attention to gender in church tradition is unwelcome and signals poor leadership. Susan tells the story of an email exchange with a congregation member that began as a discussion of diocesan matters and became a critique of her views on gender in the church as they were interpreted by this man. Susan explains,

> Then it's a weird leadership role because somehow people think they can say things to us priests that we don't have feelings. … I'm also thinking about an email I got from somebody … Our conversation was about a decision that was

> made at the diocese and he was unhappy about that. In his email, instead of just addressing that, he decided to, "Ugh, here are all the other things that I'm mad about." One of the things was he said, "Frankly, I find Susan's insistence that we think of God as gender-neutral to be deplorable." Copied a number of people on it. One, I thought we had a relationship where we could talk about these things. Two, if you think it's deplorable, why would you copy other people? I think part of it, it's like he feels like he can talk about me to others like a thing instead of a person he needs to have a conversation with. That's not the kind of culture, in fact, I invited him to coffee and said, "We need to talk about this face to face because this is not okay that you've sent this in this way." Those were some of the ways I see it different. (Susan, clergy, woman)

To Susan, the congregation member's choice to mention a concern he had about her views on gender and theology over email, and to cc others, was a breach of trust in their relationship. She feels that he should have approached her for a face-to-face discussion of the question. What is particularly interesting for how gender can matter to the daily functioning of a parish is that this man's disgruntlement was broadly in response to diocesan-level organizational management, but it became trained and focused on a comment Susan had made in the past about God being gender-neutral in her view. Later in the interview Susan muses that perhaps advancing such progressive ideas about gender in theology is easier for clergy men because their gender as men protects them from being seen as overly invested in the gender politics in question. Susan says she believes discussions of gender and theology are potentially hazardous for clergy women precisely because they could challenge others' beliefs about gender in the church and could be taken to be an overreach of clerical authority. Susan experience showcases the dynamics Preston predicted: women clergy who are perceived to be overly invested in how gender matters to Christian theology or church life are seen to be overstepping their authority and their leadership is challenged on these grounds. Susan's comments that such conversations may be easier for clergy men is accompanied by her admission that she has learned to avoid such topics whenever possible for the sake of a peaceful congregation and parish life.

For women clergy to hold the authority of a rector in a parish, or be a diocesan bishop and rise in church hierarchy, they must navigate a complex of gendered expectations. Gender Pragmatism, as a cognitive strategy, allows respondents to talk about how gender matters to church life without endorsing a particular vision for change to resolve the contradictions of a gender-mixed clergy and strongly gendered understandings of leadership. Gender Pragmatism allows respondents to talk about these issues in the context of thinking about how to advance the mission of the church, which requires the mobilization of all of the human capital available to the church, which includes both men and women in the clergy. Virginia shows this approach when she talks about how gender matters to leadership more broadly in U.S. society, and how the skills necessary to lead a large parish come with complex gendered expectations. She says,

> Gender matters because we have different expectations of women and men. We've seen it so clearly in the presidential election. If a woman is strong, it's a negative very quickly. In a large church, where it's more of a CEO job than a parent job, that's particularly hard to crack because you need to be someone with those managerial, administrative skills as well as being a pastor. People want you to be a pastor but they also want you to be able to run a medium-sized nonprofit. Those are overlapping but not identical skills. (Virginia, f, clergy)

Those clergy who are able to navigate these sometimes-competing expectations are rewarded institutionally with careers that see them progress up the institutional church hierarchy. According to findings from the Church Pension Group from 2012, and as observed and reported by many respondents, women have less upward mobility through ECUSA church hierarchy in their careers. Virginia believes that this gendered pattern in clergy career attainment is the result of an institutional structure that places control over promotion in the hands of the lay people, who are also the population whose financial giving sustains parishes. Virginia says,

> One of the big things for me is that narrowing of the pyramid, the size of church and the gender of leadership. … That's a very, very measurable phenomenon. Large church senior positions are so much harder for women. Then the culture of blurred boundaries is a very big part of this whole story in the church that makes

> us so different from other industries, other parts of the nonprofit world. That mixing of client base and board and donor, it's so interesting to me that you're trying to navigate that stuff. (Virginia, clergy, f).

Virginia's attitude towards these gendered phenomena is one of interest, as she tries to figure out how to "navigate that stuff". She uses the gender pragmatist narrative to identify and explore how gender matters in ECUSA, allowing herself to engage with questions of gender without advocating for a particular course of action that the institution as a whole should take. Her interest, rather, is in how to navigate those challenges which are revealed.

This approach is practical in its aims: the goal is to build successful parishes and clergy careers within ECUSA, given the challenges presented by gender as it rises to salience at some points in church life. Tolerating inconsistency in practice, tolerating difference of opinion, etc. allows for a cognitive strategy like gender pragmatism to be widely adopted among respondents. In ECUSA, the elements of group identity that emphasize common practice over common belief encourage this sort of thinking. The common mission here is about common worship and shared dignity – that means that people can think pragmatically about gender, with an eye for equity because that's in line with the church's mission (as understood), and over a generation, significant shifts can take place. Eventually, tolerating inconsistency and incoherence, and thinking about it, leads to an ECUSA that is among the most progressive churches on matters of gender and sexuality.

In this chapter, I have shown how latency is a generative period following decapitation when individual actors are empowered to use cognitive strategies to draw on existing meanings in the surrounding culture to begin building new schemas to take the place of discarded ones. This examination of latency in ECUSA contains both empirical and theoretical contributions.

Empirically, I have shown how ECUSA is particularly open to disagreement among group members, and have posited the importance of institutional toleration for tension and dissent for allowing actors the agency necessary to explore what gender means in their experiences, and begin to build new schemas during latency. I have also shown the emergence of two distinct cognitive strategies for making meaning of gendered patterns in church life: Intentional Gender-Blindness, and Gender Pragmatism. Theoretically, I have argued that between the decapitation of an old instance of gender as social structure and the reemergence of new ones, a period of latency empowers individual actors to use the culture and meanings that surround them to sort through and build the beginnings of new schemas for gender. This period is highly generative and should be attended to by scholars looking to understand how actors navigate change, and especially the space between stable structural forms.

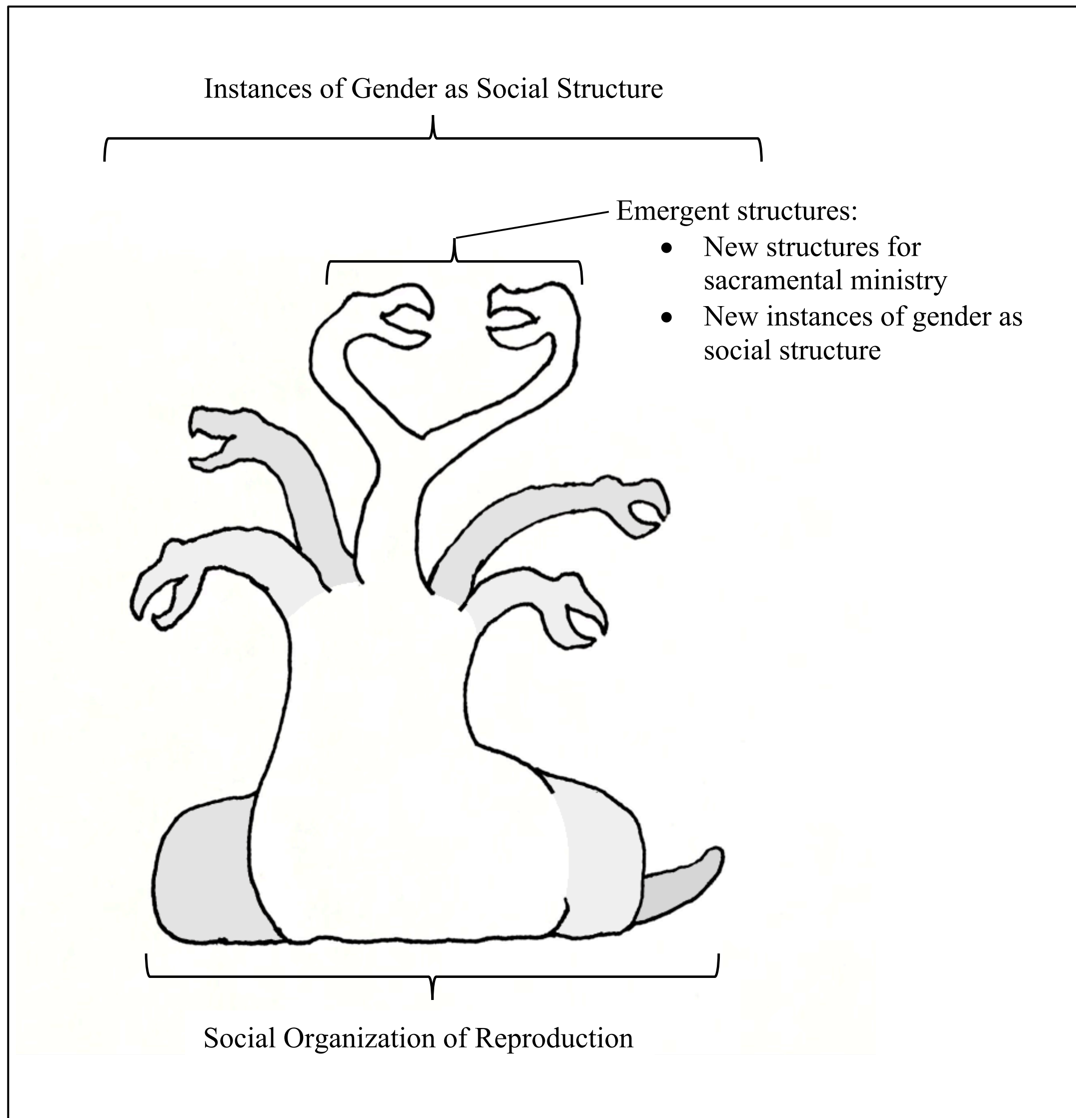

Figure 6: Regeneration, the emergence of new instances of gender as social structure

I find that after decapitation, and concurrently with latency, a period of regeneration begins. As in the mythic story, the headless hydra grows two new heads where there had once been one, and these heads are distinct, yet each as monstrous as the very first. This chapter and the next function as a pair that together show how instances of gender as social structure re-emerge as social structures for sacramental ministry and sacred authority that include forms of

gender essentialism among their operative schemas. In the Hydra Model, Regeneration is the process through which emergent ideologies form an ideological field within which two opposing, dialectically-related visions for the future of the structure that has experienced a decapitation event are proposed. In the case of women's ordination in ECUSA after the decapitation of the instance of gender as social structure that was the structure of sacramental ministry including Aristotelian essentialism, new structural forms for sacramental ministry as instances of gender as social structure are envisioned in two ways, each with its own emergent schema outlining the meaning of gender in church life; I call those schemas Revolutionary Essentialism, and Nostalgic Essentialism.

Aristotelian Essentialism is the schema that justified and necessitated the durable patterns of resource distribution that resulted in an all-male clergy. Those resources include access to seminary education, eligibility for clergy careers with their corresponding pensions and material benefits, and being seen as a legitimate holder of the sacred authority to consecrate. When ECUSA church practices changed to allow for women's ordination to the priesthood, the gendered components of all practices associated with ordination shifted from being open only to men to being open to both men and women, representing a major shift in practice – in resource distribution. This change in practice was accompanied by a discarding of the old schema of Aristotelian Essentialism, and its exclusion from consideration enforced by a new moral boundary.

Following a decapitation event such as this, a period of latency unfolds, wherein actors are able to exercise considerable agency over the formation of a new schema to make sense of how gender is meaningful to institutional life. Latency is not neatly defined, as it is not a set time period but rather a social experience connected inexactly to periods in the life of an institution.

Latency is the social condition actors experience when they have to decide what to do with the tension and inconsistency that they feel when institutional practices are not accompanied by clear and agreed-upon schemas. Some respondents experienced this uncertainty upon joining ECUSA, having converted from other denominations which either still maintained agreed-upon schemas for gender in church life, or which had transitioned to new agreed-upon schemas for gender. Some respondents experienced this uncertainty years prior to the interview, but had come to embrace a new schema for gender in church life – either revolutionary essentialism or nostalgic essentialism both of which is shown in detail in chapters 5 and 6. In ECUSA, latency was experienced by different group members at different points in time depending on an individual's level of engagement with the dual structure of gender and sacred authority, and on when they first encountered Aristotelian Essentialism, both when in the course of their life, and when in the course of the recent history of the decapitation event which displaced Aristotelian Essentialism in ECUSA.

During regeneration, dialectically-opposed potential forms for the new structure of sacramental ministry as an instance of gender as social structure begin to form. These nascent forms of social structure are the emergent heads of the hydra. As individuals grapple with their discomfort, they exercise their agency by drawing on immaterial resources – the pieces of culture available to them for easy sense-making[22] – piecing existing meanings together into new schemas for gender in church life. Schemas direct the apportionment of resources, and these

[22] Called cultural resources in Swidler's work, a term which is descriptively very useful but perhaps unduly similar to Sewell's use of resources to mean both material and immaterial resources. I will refer to cultural resources as cultural ingredients, as they serve as the raw materials from which emergent schemas are built by my respondents.

nascent schemas carry within them prescriptions for how gender ought to impact the durable patterns of practice that shape institutional life in ECUSA.

The questions that had preoccupied medieval theologians concerned with the gender of God and what women's role in church should be were seemingly answered by the Vatican's canonical endorsement of Aristotelian Essentialism, and by the durable patterning of practice in excluding women from ordination in the Roman Catholic Church until the present, and in ECUSA until 1976. That form of sacramental ministry as an instance of gender as social structure that was visible in an all-male clergy has gone from ECUSA, but the questions the medieval theologians asked about gender and God and sacred authority remain unanswered for many. Because what was contained within the medieval closure has been reopened by decapitation, and the concerns that prompted Aristotelian Essentialism's rise are still present (men and women still appear to different bodies, a binary is still supposed, and people still reproduce sexually; the Bible still refers to a masculine God, etc.) the questions must be answered again. Regeneration, then, is a process of meaning-making wherein questions that were settled must be answered again, with new argumentation.

In order to build up new schemas that answer old questions, social actors draw on the schemas available to them to make sense of their world and ease the inconsistencies they must make sense of – this is how schemas become resources. Swidler writes of cultural resources, which, for clarity, I call cultural ingredients – those ideas and meanings that actors can draw upon when faced with a need to assign meaning to a new situation, or to integrate an unknown situation into a meaning structure already understood. When my respondents seek to make meaning of a gender-integrated clergy, they draw on the meanings available to them in the society that surrounds them. Seminary-educated respondents often draw on theology and church

history they learned in their seminary studies. Respondents with significant business experience often reference schemas for gender in the world of work when thinking about gender in church. Parents and non-parents alike talk about parenthood and family structure: everyone has experience with family in one form or another. Respondents draw on meanings they already use to make sense of their world, and bring those meanings in to a new context when applying them to the question of how gender ought to matter to church life.

The emergent schemas I now trace, Revolutionary Essentialism (this chapter), and Nostalgic Essentialism (Chapter 6), carry with them divergent visions for the future of gender in the church. This oppositional relationship between emergent schemas should be considered evidence for what Wuthnow predicted when he wrote of the emergence of ideological fields in times of social change (Wuthnow, 1987, 149-150). In what Swidler calls unsettled times (Swidler, 1986), those times when social meanings are not mutually agreed upon by all actors in a situation, an absence of agreement on meaning is often associated with an absence of agreement as to correct action. Ideological fields are proposed by Wuthnow as arenas into which emergent ideologies each propose various strategies for correct action, accompanied by their own unique nascent meaning systems. These emergent ideologies are arranged dialectically, similar to what Luker charted in her studies of the ideologies surrounding debates about abortion rights in the 1980s (Luker, 1985). What Wuthnow would consider ideologies, I will treat as emergent structures, as both emergent schemas are accompanied in respondents' interviews by prescriptions for how resources should be organized and how practices should be normalized to fit best with their preferred schema for gender in church life.

Revolutionary Essentialism

Revolutionary Essentialism is a form of gender essentialism that is an emerging schema for making gender meaningful in church life. Among my ECUSA respondents, Revolutionary Essentialism entails taking an active stance toward achieving gender equity and parity in ECUSA. Revolutionary Essentialism is part of the burgeoning of a new theology of sex and gender that would be part of a broader push to move the church and its politics in an increasingly progressive direction. Whereas the cognitive strategies employed in latency to put distance between the individual seeking to understand the persistence of gender inequality in the church and any personal responsibility to act to effectuate any particular set of gender relations in church, Revolutionary Essentialism is a schema that motivates adherents to work for change to church practices in the interest in gender equity. Though respondents have already been shown to draw moral boundaries and distinctions excluding Aristotelian Essentialism from their thinking, and to embrace the cognitive strategy of gender pragmatism in order to solve problems at the level of individuals and local parish organizations, what I am calling Revolutionary Essentialism is a schema for building a new church for a new century on the basis of a new theology of sex and gender.

Revolutionary Essentialism draws on ways of thinking and writing about gender that have been increasingly available in the broader society to adherents who seek to make meaning of their own experiences of the gender-integration of sacred authority in ECUSA. In 1976 the General Convention of ECUSA voted to allow women's ordination, and in the years before and after this date, critical writings introduced feminist theological thinking to a broader audience. Beginning in the late 1960s, feminist theologians, including Catholic theologians Rosemary

Radford Ruether and Mary Daly[23], and activist, scholar, and priest Pauli Murray in ECUSA, began to gain notoriety for their work which challenged the how essential the reasoning I have called Aristotelian Essentialism really was to Christian life and practice (Daly, 1968; Radford Ruether 1983, 1994; Murray, 1978). Throughout the subsequent decades, their work has become more broadly known, such that key insights from feminist theology are available to my respondents as cultural ingredients for building new schemas. Historical work by authors including Joan Gibson, Francine Cardman, and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza showed the complexity of gender relations in Christianity in the past, offering a fuller understanding of Christian history from the time of Christ onward, including chronicling the ways that women had served in church leadership roles (Gibson, 1992; Cardman, 1978; Schussler Fiorenza, 1983). Their work offered evidence of women's historical participation in church leadership and this reclaimed history also became a cultural resource for my respondents. In addition, in the U.S. since the late 1960s feminist thinking and writing has become part of academic curricula, and the impact of feminism on broader U.S. society is felt across institutions, albeit unevenly (England, 2010). The wide availability of cultural ingredients from a feminist perspective concerned with gender and sexuality in church life equips ECUSA adherents who want to build a new schema for gender in church but who do not wish to fall back on pre-1976 understandings of gender in church to do so.

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[23] Daly became known for her work as a theologian in the Roman Catholic church. She has since disavowed Catholicism. Since her earliest work Daly's thought and writing has veered away from a concern with reforming Catholicism toward an intellectual project seeking to consider possible forms for religion with femininity at the center. Daly has also at point embraced lesbian separatism, radical feminism, and recently has expressed her view that transwomen should be excluded from the social category of women. For the purposes of this work, the impact of her earliest works is most important.

Revolutionary Essentialism is based on an incarnational theological understanding that one's sex and gender – and sexuality – are incarnate features of God's plan for humanity. The beliefs that make up revolutionary essentialism are: gender (and sexuality) are an important part of each individual's unique incarnation of God and are part of God's plan for humanity, gender shapes experience and experience shapes the gifts one brings to ministry, and those who have experienced more privilege are blinded by their privilege to truths that those who have been oppressed can see (this has some resonance with Harding's standpoint theory), the experiences of oppressed peoples must be leveraged to improve church leadership, and so, ordaining and promoting more women will make the church more equitable, finally, Christianity requires activism on the part of women and sexual minorities because all gender identities and sexualities are incarnational and from God. What makes this schema a form of gender essentialism is its tacit endorsement of the immutability of gender and sexual identities. In making a strong claim that gender, gender identity, and sexuality, are all reflections of God's plan for an individual, revolutionary essentialism positions gender and sexuality as therefore fixed as part of God's creation. It would go against God's plan to ask someone to hide or act against their gender identity or sexual orientation. That belief carries with it an endorsement that these identities are fixed, which is a belief held in common with other forms of gender essentialism.

Gender is part of God's unique incarnation

The first tenet of what I call Revolutionary Essentialism is that gender, and by extension sexuality, is part of God's plan in creation and uniquely incarnated in each individual. Gender is therefore part of who God made each individual to be and should be part of their manifested individuality. Kimberly, a clergy woman, states this vision and emphasizes the importance of a

deep self-acceptance and self-love that sees one's gender as an integral and God-given part of oneself. Kimberly says,

> Of course [gender] matters. It's one of your gifts. The place you sit on the spectrum of gender and sexuality matters because it's part of who you are. It's part of how you incarnate good news. If you don't have good news in yourself, you haven't got a lot to share. It's finding some comfort level, but not a hundred percent. That's not healthy for anybody, but some ability to love yourself as the way God's made you is necessary before you can love your neighbors as you love yourself. You're not going to love them very well if you don't like who you are. (Kimberly, clergy, f)

For Kimberly, living into Christ's vision and ministering to God's people requires first self-acceptance and self-love. Training one's eye on their own self necessitates seeing one's gender as a part of that self that must be accepted and loved. This acceptance and love is required by God because one's individual incarnation is "good news" – a common synonym for the central message of the Gospels – gender is elevated in this thinking to an incarnated part of Jesus's offer of salvation to humanity. Bridget, another clergy woman, speaks of her own ministry and call in similar terms. To Bridget, her gender is a part of who she is as God created her, and therefore her gender identity is as much a part of her call as another part of her person, and all of what makes her has been selected and called by God to ordained ministry. Bridget says,

> I think [gender] matters because God went to the trouble of creating us as men and women, and I know that gets really complicated with people that are non-binary and all that kind of stuff. It's – I don't want to lock us into a model that excludes everybody else but I feel like God did make me specifically as a woman, and I feel I'm called specifically as a woman. I don't think that means that then I only have these things that I'm allowed to do, but I feel like all of me, including the parts of me that grow out of who I am as a woman, which doesn't have to be who you are as a woman or anything but that's all part of my ministry because I'm called as a whole person, so it matters in that way. (Bridget, f, clergy)

In Bridget's understanding, her identity as a woman is unique to her, and is part of who she is and what she brings to ministry. And, importantly, Bridget's gender is part of how God intended for her to be in Creation, and so her ministry as it is formed by her gender is part of God's plan.

In practice, the belief that one's gender is part of one's incarnation of God's purpose in Creation means that respondents who embrace this schema often argue in favor of gender differences in self presentation of men and women in the clergy as correct and proper to God's intentions for ordained minsters. Andrew, a clergy man, talks about his own insistence that the clergy women who work for him, in the past and present, dress and act according to their identity as women. He does not want these clergy women to "be like something [they're] not" which, in practice, means that he endorses feminine dress and self-presentation for them. Andrew says,

> All women that worked for me, I made it very, very clear that I want it to be exactly who they are and who they were called to be which was a priest independent of their gender. They didn't need to look like me and they didn't need to look like anybody else because God wants them looking exactly as they were. That's why God called them within the context of their gender and their sexuality and all those things. Don't try to be something like you're not. Don't try to be like a male, for instance, don't do that. Don't try to lower your voice at the Eucharist. Why would you do that? Sing soprano. Come on. That's what God gave you so be that. (Andrew, clergy, m)

Andrew goes on to give the example of the biretta – a square-shaped hat with a tassel on top – that is sometimes worn by clergy who are particularly high church as part of their vestments. He says that he would never expect a clergy woman to wear one. It is an interesting example because the biretta is part of traditional High Church dress in ECUSA, and High Church liturgical style is often associated with conservative theological beliefs, including opposition to women's ordination and the resultant schema for gender in church life that I call Nostalgic Essentialism (see Chapter 6). For Andrew, it is inconceivable that a clergy woman would want to wear a biretta while leading services. Andrew does not go on to clarify how he, or anyone else, would know if a clergy woman was being who God intended for her to be, or adhering to someone's else prescribed vision which would violate her unique incarnation, depending on her choices of dress, voice pitch, or any other gendered self-presentation. Within Revolutionary

Essentialism, the visibility of gendered bodies is important. Andrew argues that women should not seek to look like men, but should look like women as God created them. Sandra, a clergy woman, argues that both men and women should be visible and active in the clergy because the presence of both men and women provides balance and reflects the Genesis creation story. Sandra says,

> Sandra: We need both male and female because Genesis says, male and female, he created them. I think it matters. They have both in clerical roles is healthy. I don't think one's better than the other. I'm biased about female clergy. [laughter]
> Cat: How so?
> Sandra: Because we get stuff done. We don't mind cleaning the toilet although I've had male clergy who'll clean the toilet too. I'm very rarely in here. I'm usually out doing something as nutty as cleaning the toilet or I was counting sweet potatoes and mashed potatoes for the food drive we're doing for thanksgiving. No, I don't think it matters. I think we need both. It matters that we need both and we're diminished when we don't have both.
> Cat: Why?
> Sandra: Because it's not the fullest expression of humankind as God created it. (Sandra, clergy, F)

Sandra echoes Gender Pragmatism in her statement that women clergy get stuff done, adding another voice to those claiming that socialization as a woman endows women clergy with a particular set of skills for action and leadership. But Sandra goes further and says that the church needs both men and women in its clergy because God created humans as men and women and so both are necessary to reflect humanity back to God in the work of church. Both Andrew and Sandra are saying that difference is an important part of humanity, and that gender difference between men and women should be obvious and present in the clergy. This is a significant departure from the model of an all-male clergy, but it is not a challenge to gender essentialism.

In some articulations of Revolutionary Essentialism, the differences between men's and women's life experiences, and their associated experiences of God, are crucially important to understanding what women bring to ordained ministry that had been missing during the centuries

of a clergy that was all men. Carol, a clergy woman, describes her discovery of her own spiritual life and calling and how deeply entwined discerning her call was with her own awakening to the role gender had played in her spiritual life. Carol had a successful professional career before pursuing ordained ministry in mid-life. She speaks of having known she had a deep spiritual life but not knowing what it was she was called to do. In her telling, her reading and learning on the subject of women's spirituality was a turning point in her process of discerning her call to ordained ministry[24]. In coming to understand how gender might have mediated her experience of God, Carol began to see herself as someone who was called to be a priest, and who was called to be a priest as a woman. She says,

> This was one of the pivotal texts for me. *The Feminine Face of God*. … What this book does is it's written by two women who were friends. What they really did was, they interviewed women of all different backgrounds, faiths, traditions, whatever, about their personal experiences of God. What I found in this book was, women telling their own stories, living their lives, doing what they do, what we do with our children, teaching first grade, whatever the situation of each woman, … was and how they discovered and experienced God in their own lives. In our ordinary lives, so to speak. (Carol, clergy, f)

The focus on everyday interactions is a common refrain among respondents who believe women's spiritual experience is distinct from men's. Interactions with children, experiences around care-giving, and a relational approach to spiritual life all emerge in interviews. As the interview continues, Carol quotes the book, reading long passages from it that discuss the centrality of relationships to women's lives, and therefore to women's spirituality. Connecting those passages to her own experience, Carol continues,

> What I found in this book, what I got from it was encouragement to trust the story of my own life. For me to trust my own experience. As women, our experiences

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[24] Carol's experiences are a clear example of how respondents can choose from available cultural ingredients in building a schema that helps them make sense of what gender ought to mean for church life. *The Feminine Face of God* was published in 1991, and is part of a boom in publishing on women's spirituality that drew on 2nd-wave feminist discourse.

> tend to be measured against experiences of men in the same situation. If you think about it, the loud voices in the room are typically men, those of men. Their description of their experiences can make women wonder if our experiences are invalid in some way because they're not similar to those that are being described by the primary voice.
> This book really started to articulate that for the first time for me, where the experiences I've had of those things, if it's a cherry blossom or whatever they were describing, that those were valid experiences. They weren't something that I was imaging against a vacuum of experience or vacuum of truth in some way. In and of themselves, they're valid. (Carol, clergy, f)

For Carol, this book showcased patterns in women's spiritual experiences that echoed her own lived experiences of spiritual life. Seeing her own experiences as part of a broader set of human experiences that were shared gave her confidence to trust her spiritual experiences, and trusting her call to ordained ministry was a huge part of that development. Carol sees herself as a gendered person, as a woman, and sees her spiritual life as a woman's spiritual life. Her self-perception as a woman does not challenge essentialist views of gender as innate and immutable. However, her vision of what attending to women's spirituality ought to mean for the church is in line with progressive calls for change.

Revolutionary Essentialism is often open about the complexities of talking about gender. By focusing on the individual as the site of God's gendered incarnation in each human, this schema allows for gender to be innate and immutable while still being open to the continual development of increasingly deeper understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality. Marilyn, a lay woman, plainly states her belief that people of different genders are created differently, and that those differences may impact gifts and abilities. However, Marilyn thinks people of all genders should be included in church leadership at all levels, and so she argues for an embrace of gender difference and a defenestration of sexism. Marilyn says,

> As it turns out, we aren't created equal. Men and women should be created equal, but we are certainly not created the same. Our brains are not the same. Our hard wiring is not the same. Lots of things can happen there. Any good church

> probably has their spiritual gifts workshop. What I mean by that is, we all have different strength and other responsibilities. Let's figure out what you're best at and do that, but let's get the archaic sexism out of it. (Marilyn, lay, f)

Marilyn sees men and women as different but both important, showing a view similar to Sandra's. Sarah, a clergy woman, takes the idea that how sexed and gendered bodies are created by God matters and varies across individuals further. She tells the story of a discussion of science and religion that was hosted at a parish in the diocese. Sarah says,

> We had three physicists that talked with us about quantum physics, wave theory, particle theory, this kind of thing. It was just inspiring because you could just see the spiritual component in all of this, God's wonders and creations. Some went to say, "Wow. We're discovering. It's wonderful for us to be open to discovery." You think about, for example, the gender issues and the sexuality issues and someone to be able to say, "Look, I mean, we're on a spectrum. We just are. That's who we are. We're not binary people. [laughs] We may look like it but we're not." To recognize that. (Sarah, clergy, f)

Sarah sees openness to the reality of a gender spectrum, and not a gender binary, as part of learning about the nature of God. To Sarah, science is about understanding Creation, and through Creation, coming to better understand God. This view is longstanding within Anglican tradition, and the natural philosophers of the English Enlightenment who populated the era's Royal Society's membership were often members of the clergy as well as keen observers and theorizers of the natural world. Applying this long-held view of science as a way to God to questions of gender and sexuality leads Sarah to posit that one must recognize evidence for a gender and sexuality spectrum as part of any understanding of God's plan for humanity.

In her discussion of gender as a spectrum, Sarah also points to the notion that understandings of gender are changing and evolving, a view that is shared by other respondents. For example, Robert, a clergy man, speaks several times throughout his interview about how his view of gender and sexuality was broadened during his seminary study. Robert attended a seminary that is attached to a prestigious university and so seminary students often take classes

alongside graduate students from the wider university population. Robert took several classes in gender and sexuality, and has put a lot of thought into how what he learned in those classes impacts his understanding of God and the church. Robert sees complexities of gender and sexuality as nothing new, and as part of God's message to humanity in Scripture. To Robert, contemporary developments in the understanding of gender and sexuality as more spectrum than binary are a corrective to misunderstandings that have persisted. Robert sees complex gender and sexuality as more accurate to God's inspired word in the Bible. Comparing the past, when Robert thinks the Bible was misinterpreted because interpreters had gender wrong, to the present when these wrongs have begun to be corrected, Robert says,

> Then, there was one gender, it's male. Then there's 1.1, and that's female. We've come a long way in figuring that out. Try to guess David's gender, if you remove his name and read through what he did, it's fascinating. His relationship with Nathan-- Song of Solomon. Try to figure out the genders from that. There is gender-bending going all over the place. There's some very serious gender-bending stuff that Jesus did himself. Then the disciple who loved Jesus has an unknown gender. That stuff's at play. (Robert, clergy, m)

For Robert, Aristotelian views of gender (male, and female as a divergent and deficient form of male) have been left behind. And, in expanding and developing ideas of gender, people have more access to the true meaning of the Scriptural texts. Robert goes on to discuss an article he read about Moses's staff and the complications of translating from Ancient Hebrew in which phallus and heel are often the same word. For Robert, these linguistic signals in Scripture that point to sexed and gendered bodies and experiences in ways that are not easily fit into contemporary gender norms are signs that God's vision for sex and gender in humanity is broader than humans have yet discerned. According to the schema of Revolutionary Essentialism, gender and sexuality are from God, are part of God's plan for humanity, and matter to how God's vision for the world is to be accomplished.

Privilege shapes experiences and knowledge of God

This section shows how respondents think about the role of experience in shaping one's ministry. Some respondents believe that having experienced more privilege in one's life can blind one to the fuller and deeper knowledge of God that is available to people who have experienced oppression. According to this belief, experiences of socially disadvantaged positions are likely to enable one to access a fuller experience of God and humanity in Creation. This position is articulated by respondents who are concerned about considering their own social position and how it may matter to their work in the church.

The idea that experiences of oppression and lack can be seen in respondents' answer to the question, "Imagine the ideal priest, what is that person like?" This question prompted many different answers, among which the most common individuals named were Katharine Jefferts Schori, one's own rector, and Jesus himself. A second thread in these answers was respondents seeking to consider the sort of life that a person would have to live in order to be the ideal priest. Austin and Meghan, both lay people with seminary training, provided answers that highlight a key feature of revolutionary essentialist thinking. For both Austin and Meghan, a person who has experienced disadvantage is most likely to have developed the emotional and intellectual skills that would enable them to be an ideal priest. Meghan is explicitly envisioning someone who lacks privilege when she says,

> It's probably an undocumented transgender, homeless, quadriplegic, non-English speaking person. That's probably the ideal priest right now. Part of my own journey has been coming to understand white privilege. I think as a bisexual woman in a gay relationship, I understand a little bit about being underdog and not being the norm. Jesus saying in Matthew 25, "Whenever you've done at the least of these, you done it to me." Who's the person at the bottom of our cultural milieu? Is somebody that's disabled that has an accent that probably isn't documented, that's not white, that's not straight. They lived through some shit. [laughs] They know what it takes and they're probably smarter and stronger than we give them credit for because of what they've endured. (Meghan, lay, f)

Meghan points to her own experience as a woman, as a bisexual woman who is married to another woman, as important wells of understanding she draws upon. She also points to her race as a white person as something that she has had to interrogate. For Meghan, someone with different identities from her own, and identities that come with social privilege, would understand more than she can. Austin emphasizes the importance of difference in his definition of the ideal priest. Interestingly, though he does not offer as explicit a claim that the ideal priest would need to lack privilege in their life, he begins by envisioning a woman of color. To Austin, someone who does not experience white privilege or male privilege would have access to understanding he does not. He says,

> I don't know if there's an end all be all priest, but I would say, a woman of color who-- I always want someone who has a totally different experience of me. … Just like a person is totally different than me. It was a very different experience of the world, thus a different experience of God and a different interpretation of Scripture and theology that is born out of their experience of the world because, I also think it's someone that is deeply connected to themselves, knows who they are, doesn't need a congregation to tell them who they are. (Austin, lay, m)

What Austin points out that this way of thinking connects experiences of the world to experiences and understanding of God. This connection means that people who have experienced the social world from a position of disadvantage has access to a fuller understanding of God than those who have more privilege, making them more fit for clergy leadership roles.

Awareness of social position and privilege leads respondents to think that the church should incorporate discussions and awareness of inequalities in society. Marie, in talking about how gender matters to lay people's expectations of clergy, says that she thinks it is important for people continually reexamine their own social position, and their own prejudices. She says,

> I think that we all have to admit that we have some level of prejudice, not necessarily racism but we have prejudices based on our own experiences sometimes. Sometimes just with one incident. I think – when people used to say,

> "I don't see color, I don't see male or female, I don't see handicapped." I had a patient who was in a wheelchair and she said, somebody told her once, "I don't even see your wheelchair," and she said, "Well, gosh, I hope you do and you'd open the door for me." That is an epiphany right there. Don't stop seeing who I am and what my needs are. That's compelling. I think we want to think that because we've layered some intelligence or scholarship on something, we stop having our prejudices, no, we don't. I think we need to lay them on the table and be honest with ourselves or we're just kidding ourselves. I don't know how you can do that and not trip yourself up. Do you know what I mean? (Marie, lay, f)

For Marie, experience shapes one's view of one's own place in society and the world, and one's view of others. Those who have experienced sufficient privilege to be blind to the needs of others must critically interrogate their own viewpoint. For Marie, the future church should not be blind to social identities, but rather should consider carefully how one's identities have shaped their experiences and their needs. Marie gives the example of a patient who pointed out that she does not want others to be blind to her wheelchair, but to see it and to recognize her needs to seek to meet her needs. Seeing someone's needs requires being open to differences of experience on the basis of differences of identity and social position, and Marie is arguing that the church should be a place that is open about these differences and accounts for them.

One important implication of the idea that social position shapes experience, and experience shapes knowledge of God, and therefore an individual's ministry, is that those with the most privilege and power in society ought to be critical of their own capacity for leadership as a clergy person. Simon and Austin both speak to this point. Both of these respondents are white men who identify as heterosexual. Both have seminary training, though only Simon pursued ordination to the priesthood. These men speak of the importance of people from dominant social positions being surrounded by others with different experience, and of the necessity for such leaders to cultivate personal grounding so that they might not abuse the power and authority that is vested in them. Simon talks about his preference for leadership models that

distribute power and authority as he sees these new leadership models as a way to protect against his potential to abuse his power unknowingly. He says,

> My first challenge is I'm a fool in Christ. I'm a living contradiction. My energy gets in my way and my mouth will go before my listening, before my eye contact and being a white, straight male, highly educated in the United States middle class, that means that's power. My innate way of being in sense of my energy and my language, my voice and my brain comes from a place of privilege and can be exercised in general. … For me, I need shared leadership models. … Shared leadership by definition is one where leadership is shared and it's not held by one. As an Episcopal priest, as a rector of a parish, I'm given a tremendous amount of authority and given a lot of power. That's before declaring that I'm straight and white, and a male, and educated in this country. I have a lot of given power authority, and my challenge over my pastorate, which is my time in a congregation, is to earn it. Otherwise, there's no way you're turning around the community, as the power dynamics is too much. (Simon, clergy, m)

Simon sees his social position as someone who is "straight and white, and a male" as a source of challenge in his work as a priest. He has experienced being easily trusted with power and authority, especially in his current role as a rector. Simon worries that he can exercise power over other too easily for healthy leadership, and so he seeks to buffer his authority by embracing shared leadership models. He talks about these models later in the interview, and though the details are interesting, what is most relevant to the schema of revolutionary essentialism is that new models for leadership are necessitated by Simon's attention to the role of his social positions and identities in his attaining power and authority. Attending to social positions, including gender, as important forces shaping experience and ministry, necessitates the development of new models for church leadership. In a lengthy quote, Austin explicates this notion more deeply. He talks about the importance of personal growth and the adoption of a reflexive stance for leadership in the church. Austin says that people who hold less power in society are more likely to have developed this stance and the skills for cultivating person growth and transformation, and therefore they are better equipped to lead churches. He says,

> Richard Rohr has this phrase and he says that "Hurting people hurt people and transformed people transform people." A person who is engaged with their own suffering that has been transformed and is intentional about their own spiritual life, their own doubts that are part of their faith, people who have been transformed in some way have the ability to create space for other people's transformation and to invite people into something deeper. I think that there's men who are priests, straight white male people that are priests that didn't really have to do any work to become priests. There's a cultural assumption that they fit the role, therefore, it's a toss-up whether they are going to be able to bring any transformation to a community because they have the supremacy of the culture behind them. I think it's hard to preach the gospel from a position of power because everything about the bible is from the position of oppressed people. I think that women have to culturally to get through the process to become a priest, have to do more work than men do, just in the same way that people of color have to do culturally more work than white people do. LGBTQ+ people have to do more work than straight people do, because all of the cultural supremacy resides with those genders, races and sexual orientations. You just have a better chance of getting a totally un-self-aware white dude that is not going to help anybody but is just really impressed with themselves and how they are a priest than a woman or a person of color. Not to say that it's not possible that that doesn't happen. A person that is raised up by the status quo is most likely going to perpetuate the status quo. Transformation is exactly the opposite of the status quo and that should push us to new places that we've never been before. When the things that have always been true raise up a leader, that person has probably a hard time going to new, different places without a lot of inner work and their own kind of being pushed. (Austin, lay, m)

Austin sees the "totally un-self-aware white dude" as the clergy person with the potential to do the most damage to a church community. He does not suggest that racial, gender, or sexual identities on their own are enough to ensure spiritual gifts for leadership. Rather, for Austin, experiences of oppression or degradation are likely to lead to the sort of personal and spiritual growth that will enable someone to lead a church well. According to Revolutionary Essentialism, a clergy person who holds a lot of social privilege should be regarded with an increased level of incredulity as to their personal fitness for ministry and leadership.

Respondents who subscribe to the emerging schema of Revolutionary Essentialism see experience as an important factor shaping an individual's experience of God, and their capacity for leadership in the church. Austin and Meghan spoke about the increased capacity for

leadership of those who have experienced relatively less privilege in their lives. Marie talks about how the church should be cognizant of and seeking to meet the needs of everyone based on their individual experiences, not a presumed neutral person. Simon and Austin talk about people who inhabit social positions with the most associated privilege should be critical of their own leadership potential because their experience of privilege may easily blind them to the ways they can wield power over others. Together, these excerpts show how according to revolutionary essentialism, experience is crucial to shaping one's ministry in the church. Experience is mediated along established social divisions, including gender.

Women in clergy leadership

According to the logic of Revolutionary Essentialism, there should be more women in clergy leadership positions in ECUSA. Generally, the call from respondents is for a gender-balanced clergy, and the desire expressed is for a diverse clergy that reflects similar demographics to those found in the overall population: a roughly equal distribution of men and women in clergy positions across levels of church hierarchy is seen as balanced and therefore a desirable outcome.

Respondents generally agree that there should be more women in church leadership, and particularly that women should be more represented at the higher levels of church hierarchy (bishop's seats). Most respondents talk about this aim in terms of balance and endorse the idea that the church's leadership should look like humanity. Gender representation is part of that goal. For some respondents, racial diversity is an explicit goal as well, but in general respondents talk about racial diversity and equity within ECUSA as a goal to be pursued later, "that's next" was a phrase repeated by several respondents. Deborah, a clergy woman, speaks to the idea that men and women should be present and serve together in clergy leadership roles. She invokes the

model of a family headed by opposite-sex parents, then broadens her view to new models for family and new models for church. For these new models, Sarah believes, both men and women will need to be in clergy leadership positions. She says,

> I think looking at the church too and having respect for who's in our congregations, I think there's something very healthy about having both male and female represented at the altar. Maybe we could say that's a family. We see mother and father in the church supposed to be a family, but we have a lot of different models, changing models for families now too. I think it has been very healthy for the church to have both male and female at the altar and to hold up that we are all children of the Lord and not supposed to be one lower or less than the other. (Deborah, clergy, f)

For Sarah, representation of both men and women in clergy leadership, especially in roles that lead worship, allows ECUSA to be a church that models equity between men and women, and to her that is in-keeping with God's plan. Robert, a clergy man, agrees that men and women are called by God to serve as priests, and that men and women should be visible in leadership positions. He begins, "God calls all genders and there are two. There are more than two, in my opinion. God calls all genders to himself. God calls all of them in various ways to sacramental ministry that is different." (Robert, clergy, m). Robert then describes a recent experience of performing the Eucharist as part of a five-member clergy team. Present at the alter were Robert, who is a white heterosexual man raised in ECUSA tradition, Amanda who is a white woman and a second-career clergy person, and three more colleagues who are all white men but who vary in their sexuality and faith backgrounds: one is gay, one was Roman Catholic, one was Lutheran. For Robert, the diversity of religious experience and the diversity of gender and sexual identities present at that Eucharist were significant. He says,

> We're all at the table at the same time and we had enough elements, enough chalices, and patens so that all five of us could raise up at the same time. … All five of us raise the stuff up and I can barely contain my tears of joy because that's the kingdom of God. We, all five of us, the only thing is that there was nobody outside of European descent, but that's next. Here, that's next. Gender to [my gay

> colleague] is a different thing gender to me, it is different to Amanda. (Robert, clergy, m)

For Robert, gender and sexuality are important in shaping one's experiences, and showcasing a diversity of identities and experiences at the alter more accurately reflects God to the people than a less diverse clergy would. Robert wishes for even greater diversity, including more racial and ethnic diversity in the ECUSA clergy. For now, however, he sees gender diversity – which includes diversity of sexuality in his definition – as a source of strength for the church.

Respondents who espouse Revolutionary Essentialism argue that it is not sufficient to have a few women in clergy leadership positions, rather, they argue, women should be present in equal numbers to men. The common refrain is some version of a statement that drawing leadership from only one gender group is not sufficient to ensure appropriate leadership for the church of the future. Sarah, a clergy woman, talks about innate gender differences as forces that shape people, and of men and women as different but both possessing skills and abilities ECUSA needs. She says,

> I think it does matter. As far as equality, I don't think it does matter but it does in actual fact matter, [chuckles] in terms of power and position and so on. I think that because we still have been raised at this point to ascribe and to be taught to ascribe to ourselves certain strengths as particularly masculine or feminine, that we still are exercising some of that. I think we are. There is, of course, bias. There is cultural bias. They act as though the woman might be seen as aggressive [chuckles] whereas the male might be seen as forceful. Those are those differences. Yes, but there are differences, of course, in the ways that we think. There are emphases for women and the way their brains are wired and there's emphases for men in the way their brains are wired. Those are real. Those are real. So, to be able to recognize that, I think, is to say, "That's why you need both." [laughs] That's why you need both. (Sarah, clergy, woman)

Sarah's essentialist claims about differences in brain wiring between men and women are made as the justification for her call for the equal representation of men and women in clergy leadership. Gender difference, in her view, is real and biologically based, and it underlies

differences in ability. All abilities, those more likely to be held by men, and those more likely to be held by women, are necessary for the church's betterment and so both men and women should be present and empowered in clergy leadership roles. Russell, a lay man, makes the point that women should be fully included in clergy leadership in order to leverage their skills to the church's benefit. He says, "Let me say it another way, some are strong suits and then some are weaker and trying to put a point in about gender. I think when you cast your net and it's only men, you're only fishing in half the pond. When you're looking for new contributors, you're being too selective." (Russell, lay, m). Russell argues for gender egalitarianism on the basis of gender difference, and the need to build on the experiences and skills both men and women could bring to clergy leadership. Doris, a lay woman, makes a similar point, stating that women in leadership will help to build new models for church, which will be necessary in the coming years. Doris says, "Women, in my experience, are better at building that works and working together to do things. It's really important that we have women in leadership positions right now, because we need to work together and think of new ways to connect and do church. It's a good thing that we have everybody on the team for the future." (Doris, lay, f) Doris embraces an essentialist view that women have predictable skills on the basis of their gender, but then leverages that essentialism to argue for the pursuit of a radical project of reimagining how church is done.

Some respondents think that greater numbers of women clergy in positions of greater authority would make ECUSA a more fair and just institution. Many respondents told me about a Facebook group called "Breaking the Episcopal Glass Ceiling." It is a private Facebook group with heavily guarded membership, and though I sought access to the group, I was denied. Respondents explained to me that the group does not allow researchers access precisely because

it is meant to be a group only and exclusively for clergy women seeking to advance their numbers in the episcopate (the rank of bishop) in ECUSA. The existence of this group as a loose professional association and a space to share news and tactics is interesting, but when coupled with other respondents' stated beliefs that more women in the episcopate would make ECUSA a better institution, it becomes evidence of the emergence of Revolutionary Essentialism as an influential schema in ECUSA. As was shown in the previous discussion of Gender Pragmatism, some respondents believe that women are less prone to sexual misconduct and financial malfeasance than men are when they are in similar positions of power, particularly that of parish rector. Respondents believe that women's experiences shape their leadership skills away from these abusive practices. Respondents who are sympathetic to Revolutionary Essentialism also believe that more women in the episcopate would mean that such abuses of power would be diminished at the diocesan level and church-wide. Speaking of stories of abuse in the Roman Catholic church, Brittany, a lay woman, talks about how women's ordination and women's presence in ECUSA hierarchy could lead to better outcomes in ECUSA. Brittany says,

> I heard about one of the stories of Pennsylvania, the children of Pennsylvania that was recently exposed. One of them had been sexually abused, not physically abused by the person who baptized him. I don't even know where you begin to go with that. They wield that. I've been told, I think Margaret told me this, that she thinks that clergy don't understand, or don't accept the power that they have, which I think is stupid. Again, that's the non-professionalism, that's wanting to have it both ways. You can't. The whole power issue, and having them pretend that they don't understand what that means, or even accept that it exists … Would having women bishops help? Maybe some youth, maybe some women? It's not going to be the end-all, but I think it's a culture change that's needed. I don't know. The authority in the church is a big question for me, which is why I really want to be just there. (Brittany, lay, f)

Brittany sees more women in the episcopate as part of a cultural change that could make for a more just church institution. Brittany herself reported an experience of sexual misconduct from a member of the clergy and has since lost faith in ECUSA and left the church. Brittany does not

argue that women as bishops would immediately solve the problem of abuses of power, but she does support the notion that women in positions of power would signal a significant change in how the church as an institution approached issues of power and authority. One interesting historical resonance here is the argument that women will bring moral uprightness to church leadership by their presence as women, which echoes arguments for women's suffrage on the basis of women's virtue. It is also important to note that while Revolutionary Essentialism is present as an emerging schema for gender in church in ECUSA, and one that is attracting adherents, it is not yet a dominant schema. Several respondents spoke with disdain of others who would vote for a candidate for bishop "Because she is a woman" with two respondents stating verbatim, "I'm against that." Nonetheless, despite opposition, Revolutionary Essentialism is a schema of gender that is present in ECUSA and to which many of my respondents are sympathetic. According to the schema of Revolutionary Essentialism, women, by virtue of being women, bring sufficiently different experiences and approaches to leadership that will make the institution more just over time. Both latency and regeneration unfold concurrently, with some respondents ready to embrace a new schema like Revolutionary Essentialism, and some still sorting through what meanings to associate with the tensions they observe around gender in church life.

Imagining the 21st-Century ECUSA

Revolutionary Essentialism's usefulness as a schema for building a new instance of gender as social structure in the sacramental ministry of ECUSA is visible in respondents' move to tie their understanding of gender as a part of each individual's unique incarnation of God's plan for humanity to changes that are therefore necessary to ensure that ECUSA, as a church

institution, is serving the needs of all God's people, of all gender and sexual identities. Those identities are seen in this schema as God-ordained, therefore there must be adequate institutional support for the full empowerment of all believers of all genders and sexualities. In the formulation of Revolutionary Essentialism, respondents often expand their vision at this point to talk about how full inclusion in the life of the church should not just be for all gender and sexualities, but that full inclusion should also be extended to people of every race, class, ability status, and any other important dimensions of social identity. This is presented as an obvious outcome of faithfulness to the Gospel and teachings of Jesus, but the implications for ECUSA as an organization are potentially far-reaching. Across interviews, among respondents who espouse Revolutionary Essentialism and among those who do not, musing on the appropriate path for ECUSA in the 21st-Century is common. Respondents imagine challenges and potentially transformational opportunities for ECUSA in the coming decades – some of these will be discussed in Ch 8 "Implications". For those respondents most invested in Revolutionary Essentialism as a schema for gender in church, a mission focused on broadening inclusion practices fits with their understanding of what the Bible means for the appropriate role of gender in church life.

Following the logic of the schema of Revolutionary Essentialism, focusing on the full inclusion of people of all gender and sexual identities in the life of the church is not a move undertaken because of social pressure arising outside of the church, rather, it is a move to live more fully into the Gospel. Revolutionary Essentialism sees expanding access to church rites and sacraments as Scriptural. This is in stark contrast to those who argue that scripture requires exclusion from some church rites for women and LGBTQ+ persons (discussed in more length in Ch 6 "Nostalgic Essentialism"). Robert, a clergy man, sees Christianity as necessarily a religion

of inclusion and says that Scripture requires Christians to challenge social categories deemed important by surrounding society as irrelevant to God. Robert says, “As Paul would say in Galatians, ‘In Christ, there is no male and female.’ He was very serious about that. ‘No Jew or Greek.’ Both of those were highly controversial for the time.” (Robert, clergy, m). In other words, Paul wrote in the Epistles that social categories of identity which mattered greatly to the workings of the social world of his time did not matter to Christ, which means that social categories that matters a great deal to the society of one’s time are likely to be irrelevant to Christ. The church should not, in Robert’s view, limit full inclusion on the basis of any social identity category for which it cannot be shown those categories matter to Christ.

Carol, a clergy woman, grounds her assertions in Scripture, arguing that women should be included in the clergy, as women, and that including clergy women fully in the leadership of the church could prompt important change. She cites the many examples of women in the Bible who were integral to stories of salvation and proclaiming God’s intentions for humanity. She says,

> Now, if you actually go back and examine Biblical texts, those who traveled around with St. Paul included women. … For example, even if you look at the Easter text, Easter morning, the first ones to discover the risen Christ were women, et cetera. At some point, you just say, "You know what? I’m just not going to buy into all that patriarchal stuff. It was clearly originally about maintaining power." There were women in ancient Biblical times who were prophets such as Miriam, and Queen Esther, and Deborah, and Hannah, and Sarah. There are so many women in the Bible who were part of God’s history with humanity. That’s really what it’s about, is how you include the 50% of humanity that excluded by all of those arguments. How do you bring us to the table too? (Carol, clergy, f)

Carol sees in Scripture a clear message that God intended for women to be members of clergy leadership. To her, excluding women from clergy roles and from leadership in the church was a historical reflection of patriarchal social organization external to the church, God’s plan for men

and women had nothing to do with the establishment of an all-male clergy. Carol continues claiming that bringing women "to the table too" will mean expanding language used to discuss God and spiritual life. Carol wants to see ECUSA move to speak of spiritual life in terms that encompass ways that women experience God, that men generally do not. This is where her interview circles back to women's spirituality and what it might mean for the church's language and expectations of spiritual practice to fully integrate women into church leadership. Starting from an assertion that being a woman is a God-intended identity, and that spiritual experience as a woman, and a call to ordained ministry as a woman, are all part of God's plan for her, Carol asserts that the church should change to more fully reflect experiences and calls like hers. This is consistent with Revolutionary Essentialism.

Closely connected to claims that women should be more fully integrated and included in church leadership, and especially in clergy leadership positions, are claims that full inclusion will push beyond questions of gender. Respondents call too for a reckoning with how social categories of identity beyond gender and sexuality have mattered to ECUSA as an institution. They argue that living into the Gospel, and into God's plan for the church, will require challenging social inequalities that persist on the basis of gender, and sexuality, but also on the basis of race, age, class, ability, etc. Simon, a clergy man, says that clergy people who are preaching the Gospel in line with God's intentions can expect to make congregation members uncomfortable. To Simon, preaching should challenge social conventions, he says

> When a preacher preaches to the gospel with integrity … [it] often lead[s] to a message that can be uplifting and causes friction. That friction shows up whenever there's transformation or change or an invitation to. The gospel of Jesus Christ and our baptismal covenant says we will strive for the peace and justice for all people, and respect the dignity of every human being. The world, all, is in there. There [are] no exceptions to that list. When a clergy person preaches to that directly, that rubs when you deal with racism, you deal with sexism, you deal with any of the -isms. (Simon, clergy, m)

If the clergy leadership of the church is truly seeking to ensure equity and full dignity for all, according to Simon, those efforts will challenge social mores, and should. Michelle makes a similar point, saying that discussions of gender in the church are inextricably linked with discussions about sexuality, race, and privilege. She says,

> To me, the conversation about gender, like I'm saying, it's like the intersectionality stuff. It can't be separated from, like how I keep saying, I can't separate my gender from my age as a priest. That last conversation, the male-female thing, to me, can't be separated from homophobia. The gender thing can't be separated from transphobia. The gender thing can't be separated from race. My culture has a lot to do with my race and privilege. I think those are the sort of things I think you have to be thinking about. (Michelle, clergy, f)

Michelle uses the language of intersectionality to explain that her social identities are inseparable in her person, and are therefore difficult to discuss in isolation from each other. This inseparability of various identities in the experiences of individuals means that the church must push for the dismantling of social inequalities across all dimensions of identity for those who endorse the schema of revolutionary essentialism. The church, according to these respondents, should be pursuing a broad mission of equity and justice in order to live into the teachings central to the Gospel.

When respondents consider how to build a church for the 21st-Century that can achieve this broad vision of inclusion and equity, they speak of the importance of institutional self-reflection grounded in history. Kimberly and Jennifer, both clergy women, see looking to history as an important step for determining the future. Kimberly says that expanding understandings of who can and should be a leader requires a look back at how leadership has been defined and limited in the past. She sees ECUSA's history as tied to that of U.S. society. Kimberly speaks of the gradual expansion of human rights in U.S. history when she says,

> I think it's very much intertwined and I think it's related to what we see as a

> normative human being. Frankly, I think the history of this country is about that. When we became a nation who got to vote rich white men with land, it took a long time before African Americans could vote and was still only men, then it was women a hundred years ago. Finally, we decided that children had some rights and I'm serious. Even though we don't respect them all, ever, but who's worthy of being judged a real human being? I think that's what it's about, and it has to be a real human being if it's somebody we're going to look to as a leader. (Kimberly, clergy, f)

Building the ECUSA of the future, for Kimberly, will mean expanding definitions of who can be a leader, which requires a look back at how that category has been limited in the past. People who inhabit social positions that are disadvantaged must be considered full and equal humans to those who hold the most privilege, and then leadership will reflect the whole community. Jennifer is more pointed in her criticism of ECUSA and its complicity in the persistence of gross inequities and injustices. Jennifer argues that the church must have open, and likely painful, conversations about its past in order to move forward on any issue of equity and inclusion, including around gender and sexuality. She says,

> Creating that space that we can agree to disagree or get some honest education where we can be real about our history, real about what we know, what we think we know, what we don't know, I think is all critical for being able to have those kinds of conversations and be able to navigate waters, like, "Is the church leading society or society leading the church around issues of sexuality?" We were really way, way way, in some ways, behind issues around race when it came to slavery and the fact that we always bragged that we didn't split up during the Civil War. We always brag about that. "We didn't split up in Civil War." "Yes, you agreed to disagree with slaveholders." Did we make up for it by sending Jon Myrick Daniels to Selma to be martyred? I don't know, but we've got a Jonathan Daniels window at the National Cathedral. (Jennifer, clergy, f)

Accounting for history, according to Jennifer, will require ECUSA members to square with the church's history as an institution that tolerated the persistence of slavery in the U.S. in order to avoid fracture and schism. Similarly, ECUSA history includes agitation and activism on the part of some clergy people in the Civil Rights movement, while other clergy opposed such activism. Accounting for history can be messy in ECUSA because

the church is currently among the most progressive of U.S. Mainline Protestant denominations, but it is also, historically and still, among the most wealthy and elite of U.S. Mainline Protestant denominations.

Moving forward, these respondents argue, ECUSA should judge itself by its current success at living into the Gospel. Several respondents speak of the current Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, and the common refrain in his sermons to be "Jesus people." When seeking to explain what it means to be Jesus people, respondents talk about building a church that is inclusive and earnest in its attempts to progress forward. Jennifer continues, noting ECUSA's current reputation as a progressive church, and arguing that what matters is less being at the forefront of a social movement for equity, and more following Jesus's teaching and example in the Gospel.

> We like to think of ourselves in the forefront of things sometimes, sometimes we don't. Are we leading or following when it comes to gender issues? It's tough to say, but maybe we just need to make sure we're following Jesus. If society's coming along or if the society is beating us there, we just accept that. As long as we're trying to follow Jesus, we'll get where we need to be. That's really what it comes down to, is our best attempt to understand where Jesus would have us go. Isn't that really where our authority comes from? In the end our best attempt, human, broken, imperfect, sometimes lame attempts, but at least that's the intention, to follow Jesus, ideally together. (Jennifer, clergy, f)

For Jennifer, when coupled with self-reflection and clarity of vision, earnestly attempting to follow Jesus is enough. Several respondents made similar statements that what matters is seeking to follow Jesus, being Jesus people. In response to follow-up questions, respondents would sometimes give examples of times they saw their own parish, or the broader church, doing just that. When speaking with Doris, a lay woman, I asked, "How do you know when the church is following the scripture?" Doris responded,

> Again, it's that walking the talk thing. Back in the day, [chuckles] … some people didn't like it, didn't like when homeless people came on the campus and came to

> the services, and wanted to that taken care of. One of our past [rectors] said, "I knew we're doing something right when I looked at the congregation and I saw one of the pillars of the community, elderly woman, sitting next to a pro football player, sitting next to a trans person, sitting next to a homeless person." That everybody's welcome and we encourage that. To me, that's walking the talk. … That's the way it should be I think. That certainly wasn't the way it always was in the past churches. [silence] Certain people were shunned and not welcomed. (Doris, f, lay)

For Doris, a church community that has people of wildly different social positions and lived experiences sitting together when engaged in common worship is a church community that is following Jesus. Doris points to the diversity of wealth, age, social capital, and gender of the people in her community as a sign that the parish is doing church right. Gender is part of that diversity. According to the logic of revolutionary essentialism, a church community that is living into God's intentions for ECUSA will be radically open and accepting of people of all gender and sexual identities.

Revolutionary Essentialism begins from an assertion that gender is an important part of how each individual is uniquely incarnate from God. It continues with a claim that lived experience shapes an individual's gifts, including those for ministry. Men and women will have spiritual gifts that differ because they are shaped by their gendered experiences of God in the world. The church is strengthened and bettered, according to this logic, by the full inclusion of women and LGBTQ individuals in the life of the church, including in the clergy leadership of the church at all levels of ECUSA hierarchy. It follows from the all of these points that the ECUSA of the 21st-Century must be a church that ensures the full inclusion of people of all gender identities and sexualities in all rites and sacraments of the church. Grounded in an emergent incarnational theology that sees each individual's gender and sexuality as innate and immutable features of their unique incarnation of the Divine, Revolutionary Essentialism would see ECUSA broaden and expand its acceptance of women and LGBTQ people at all levels of church

hierarchy. Revolutionary Essentialism is a schema is built from existing cultural ingredients, that respondents put together in order to help them make sense of gender in ECUSA today, and that contains prescriptions for ECUSA as an institution that can be pursued by adherents as they seek to build a new structural form for gender in ECUSA – a new head of the hydra which will be both a structure for sacramental ministry and an instance of gender as social structure.

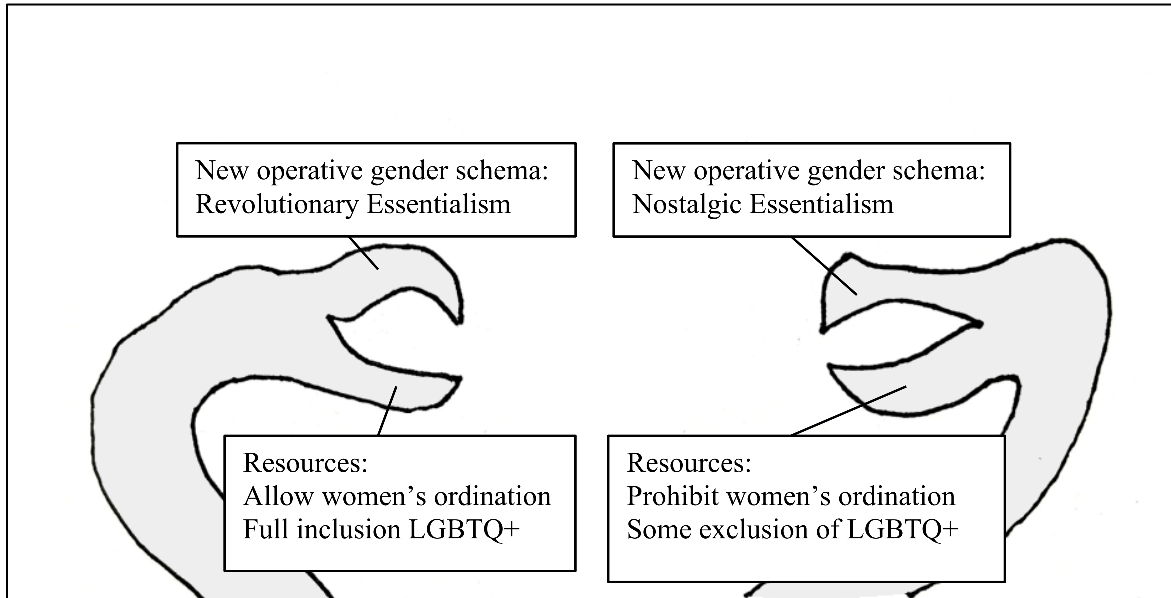

Figure 7: Emergent structures carry new operative schemas and practices around gender and sexuality in sacramental ministry

Defining Nostalgic Essentialism

In this chapter, I show that opponents of women's ordination are not using the gender essentialism of the medieval church, which I have called Aristotelian Essentialism and described in Chapter 2, but have invented a new gender essentialism that I call Nostalgic Essentialism which combines complementarian theology with claims of orthodoxy or traditionalism. Nostalgic Essentialism, like Revolutionary Essentialism, is a new form of gender essentialism that acts as a schema for the potential building of a new structural form for sacramental ministry which could also be an instance of gender as social structure. Unlike Revolutionary Essentialism, Nostalgic Essentialism argues that clear divisions between men and women in their social roles is required in order to maintain social order across time and established tradition. Nostalgic Essentialism is based in a presumption of irreducible difference between men and women based in their biology as intended by God, and shown in the Genesis story of creation. Those who

endorse this schema believe that organizing human social groups based on irreducible sex differences pre-exists society as such, and is eternal. They see value in tradition, and often engage in reconstructing an imagined past in order to justify its vision of appropriate gender relations. Nostalgic Essentialism appeals to an imagined past in developed gendered prescriptions for the organization of the Church in the present, and for the future.

Data for this chapter comes from two interviews, two published reports from breakaway groups from ECUSA, and press releases from the Episcopal News Service. Because opposition to women's ordination is a minority view within ECUSA, I built a theoretical sample (Gerson and Damaske, 2021, 47) of opponents who were active in The Diocese of the West and compared their interviews responses with published rationales for opposing women's ordination from breakaway groups from ECUSA. My two respondents who oppose women's ordination, Matthew and Kenneth, are both priests who were ordained to the priesthood within ECUSA. Since their ordination, Matthew has stayed active in ECUSA and Kenneth had left ECUSA for the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). Though these two men represent a small sample of opponents to women's ordination, their responses are important for illuminating how the Nostalgic Essentialism mobilized for opposing women's ordination rests of different assumptions about God and revelation than the emergent Revolutionary Essentialism more common in ECUSA.

Opposition to Women's ordination pre-1960s

In the 1960s and 1970s, when women's ordination to the priesthood was fiercely debated both in the Anglican Communion, and in Roman Catholicism[25], those who opposed approving women's ordination drew on what they presented as long-standing consensus against women's ordination to support their position. The 12th-Century's diversity of opinions on the matter were largely ignored, except in the works of scholars who sought to highlight precisely how little consensus on the question had preceded the establishment of legal prohibitions, like Cardman's 1978 article which appeared in *The Thomist*, a journal published by Catholic University. The feminist scholars and proponents of women's ordination of this era focused much attention on historicizing and contextualizing prohibitions against women's ordination. Their work has served as a well of cultural ingredients used by the proponents of revolutionary essentialism in building their new schema for gender in church life. The opponents of women's ordination from this era draw on 12th-century sources to show their arguments' universality. Just as feminist thinking developed a set of cultural ingredients that proponents of Revolutionary Essentialism could use, writing developed in the backlash to those feminist works makes up a deep well of cultural

[25] After the reforms of Vatican II, many Roman Catholics believed that ordination would open to women as a natural next step. In 1976, The Biblical Pontifical Division (within the Vatican, a group concerned with proper Biblical interpretation) found no strong scriptural basis for the exclusion of women from ordained ministry. However, rather that move to open ordination to women, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (the arm of the Vatican that defends church doctrine against heresy) instead issued a letter known as the "*Inter Insigniores*" in that same year, in which the argument was forwarded that tradition required women's exclusion from ordained ministry. A few years later, in 1994, John Paul II wrote *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, cementing the Vatican's opposition to women's ordination and endorsing teachings about sex and gender that align with complementarian theology and prohibit women from holding the sacred authority to consecrate or any position in the line of apostolic succession. The story is a bit different in ECUSA and this divergence is one of the main reasons that 1960s-era hopes of a reconciliation between Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism were ultimately dashed and abandoned.

ingredients used by opponents of women's ordination to build their new schema for gender in church, Nostalgic Essentialism.

In the 1970s, a new innovation in conservative theological circles sought to bridge the modern and the medieval by invoking mystery; this double invocation of an imagined history and a mysterious eternal set the basis for what has since become complementarian theology. In line with Duns Scotus's assertion that the gender of Jesus's disciples must mean something, these writers argued that though it may appear irrational to exclude women from ordination, it had been done for centuries and therefore must mean something important to the nature of Christian practice and belief. C.S. Lewis wrote about mystery in this way back in 1948[26], influencing the 1970s debate, claiming that mystery and opacity is necessary for church as such, "… we should expect to find in the Church an element which unbelievers will call irrational and which believers will call supra-rational. There ought to be something in it opaque to our reason and though not contrary to it – as the facts of sex and sense on the natural level are opaque. … The Church of England can remain a church only if she retains this opaque element." (Lewis, 1948). In other words, for Lewis, the organization of church as an institution ought not to reform

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[26] The date here may at first glance appear curious. Remember though that in the 1920s, after U.S. women won the right to vote they lobbied ECUSA for more opportunities in ministry and the order or deaconesses was formally established. Though deaconesses could not consecrate, and were not considered clergy for the purposes of pensions of entitlements, their order's establishment was considered an advance for women seeking ordination. In 1941, Li-Tim Oi was ordained to serve as a priest due to wartime necessity in Hong Kong, and in the post-war years there were some discussions of whether ordination ought to be opened to women more broadly. These discussions were nowhere near the scale of those that would follow beginning in the late 1960s and culminating in ECUSA adopting women's ordination in 1976. Lewis's essay is part of that earlier 20th-Century debate, and both by virtue of Lewis's status as an incredibly influential Anglican writer of the 20th-Century, and by the fact of his essay's predating the 1960s debates, it appears fairly often as a foundational citation among opponents of women's ordination in Anglicanism today.

according to new interpretations, but ought rather to embrace its own irrationality as a sign of its holiness.

Lewis may be talking about the Church of England specifically, but he concerns himself with what he sees as the disastrous implications of women's ordination on Christianity more broadly, beginning his essay with a concern that ordaining women would, "cut ourselves off from our Christian past." (Lewis, 1948). In the same essay, Lewis writes that he sees biological sex, and corresponding gender-based social institutions (marriage) as evidence of God's hand in creation. The irrationality of patriarchal marriage norms, for Lewis, should be seen as evidence for God's hand in the structure of human relationships. According to Lewis, if gender norms feel irrational it is only because humans are incapable of understanding God. He writes, "One of the ends for which sex was created was to symbolize the hidden things of God. One of the functions of human marriage is to express the nature of the union between Christ and the Church. We have no authority to take the living and semitive figures which God has painted on the canvas of our nature and shift them about as if they were mere geometrical figures." (Lewis, 1948). This line of reasoning pre-dates the 1970s, and became a useful cultural ingredient for opponents of women's ordination in the 1970s as they sought to build a theological refutation of the dismantling of medieval objections to women's ordination (King, 1975). By relying on claims of mystery, the reality of neat biological sex, and some connection to a universal standard of Christian practices, Lewis outlined three fundamental objections to women's ordination that would supplant Aristotelian essentialism among opponents of women's ordination.

Relying on mystery and rudimentary understandings of biological sex would prove especially important to the development of complementarian theology, still popular today, which claims that although men and women are both critical to the church, they should inhabit

different, complementary roles. Just as adopters of Revolutionary Essentialism build their view of gender in church from pre-existing ideas, opponents of women's ordination ground their nostalgic essentialism in ideas that pre-existed the debates of the 1960s, and which are clearly laid out in Lewis's 1948 essay. These ideas, alongside a theology called complementarianism that is rooted in the Catholic charismatic movement of the 1960s and 1970s, are important cultural ingredients from which Nostalgic Essentialism is built.

Opposition to women's ordination in ECUSA and the formation of ACNA

Since women were first ordained priest (in 1944 in Hong Kong, and then irregularly in 1974, and by approval of the General Convention of ECUSA in 1976) there has been opposition to women's ordination within ECUSA and the broader Anglican Communion. The question of women's ordination has played a major role in international tension and splintering within the Anglican Communion, often referred to as the Anglican Realignment, which has resulted in ECUSA being currently (as of 2022) censured within the Anglican Communion for its approach to issues of gender and sexuality in the church. There have been several groups that have split from ECUSA over the years since 1976, and in 2022 several of those groups are in communion with each other as a separate province of the Anglican Communion called the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). ACNA is not a member province in the Anglican Communion, having only been recognized by some provinces of the Anglican Communion.

Opponents to women's ordination broke off of the main ECUSA body at several points in the years since 1976. Though some left after women's ordination was approved by the General Convention in 1976, a second period of split began in 1997. In 1997, the General Convention passed two resolutions that ended accommodations that had been in place for those who opposed

women's ordination. Opponents were no longer allowed to bar women from ordination, but they were allowed to hold dissenting views. The same day those resolutions were reported, Episcopal News Service also reported that the Episcopal Synod of America (ESA), a group of opponents to women's ordination who had organized in the late 1980s, announced their intention to break from the Episcopal Church and form a separate province of the Anglican Communion – these efforts eventually resulted in the forming of a new Anglican province: the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) in 2009.

The first decade of the 21st Century brought new attention and urgency to questions of gender, sexuality, and ordination in ECUSA. In 2003, V. Gene Robinson was elected bishop of New Hampshire. Robinson was a man, but he was openly gay, and the timing of his election meant that it happened in the same year as a meeting of ECUSA's General Convention, which meant that delegates to the General Convention had to vote to assent to the elections of bishops that were elected in dioceses all over the country in that year, including Robinson whose election was approved. In 2006, at the very next General Convention, Katharine Jefferts Schori was elected presiding bishop of ECUSA. She was the first woman to be elected to the position, and the first woman to be a primate of any church in the Anglican Communion. For opponents of women's ordination, her election raised questions of apostolic succession and the legitimacy of ECUSA's sacraments both within ECUSA and in the broader Anglican Communion. After her election as presiding bishop, in 2009, ACNA was realized in its current form, bringing together several groups that had broken away from ECUSA. Jefferts Schori's tenure as presiding bishop was marked by very public splits within ECUSA and ensuing legal battles over church property. The Diocese of the West had several parishes split (the number is inexact but estimated around 8-9 parishes), losing members and clergy to ACNA. This local experience of national trends

included legal battles over church property, interruptions to ordination processes, and was experienced collectively by many respondents as a turbulent time.

ACNA includes both opponents and supporters of women's ordination: in general, Anglo-Catholics oppose women's ordination and Evangelical Anglicans are more split on the issue with some approving women's ordination. The new province issued a major report on the topic in 2017 seeking to address tensions stemming from the diversity of belief and practice around women's ordination present within ACNA. The 2017 report is titled, "The Holy Orders Task Force Final Report" and is addressed to ACNA's College of Bishops. The 2017 report draws heavily on an earlier report, "A Report of the Study Concerning the Ordination of Women" which was put out in 2003 by the Anglican Mission in America, a precursor group to ACNA. The 2003 report is dedicated to arguing against what it characterizes as the arguments for women's ordination, primarily using scriptural exegesis. The 2017 report cites the 2003 reports' conclusions as authoritative and is dedicated to setting out arguments against women's ordination from both Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic perspectives.

In the 2017 report, ACNA is explicit in their rejection of the medieval argument against women's ordination on the basis of women's deficiency. They appeal instead to an argument against women's ordination developed and popularized in the 1970s called complementarianism which is based on claims of women's essential difference from men. The argument from deficiency is thus replaced by an argument from difference. The 2017 report's summary of the history of arguments against women's ordination closely mirrors what I have described in Chapter 2. Of Aquinas they write,

> The 'traditional' position on women's ordination in the West coalesced in the 13th century, with the decisions of the Fourth Lateran Council and the theological work on Thomas Aquinas. Building on Aristotle's biology, Aquinas viewed women as 'defective men' whose innate mental inferiority rendered them unfit for

> the priesthood (other considerations quite aside, such as their inability to represent Christ in Eucharist). … Their physical constitution, their mental capacities, their emotional variability, all excluded them *a priori* from 'headship.' This negative assessment was the 'traditional' view of women's leadership in western society up until the recent past. (page 263)

Of note in this excerpt are two important instances of word choice that set up the report authors' own arguments against women's ordination. The first is the parenthetical note about women's inability to represent Christ in Eucharist. As noted in Chapter 2, this was considered by some medieval theologians though it was not a major focus of Aquinas's work. For Anglo-Catholics, women's bodies are present symbolic problems in Eucharist rendering the sacrament invalid. The second term to note is the word 'headship' which is associate strongly with complementarianism. Even in recounting the wrongness of the eventual medieval consensus against women's ordination, the authors of the 2017 report condense history using language that will later be used to bolster their arguments against women's ordination in the present.

In describing the development of complementarianism, the 2017 report's authors primarily credit George W. Knight, who was interestingly not connected to Anglicanism or the Episcopal Church at any point in his career. Knight, and others, the authors write,

> … offered a new perspective on relations between women and men in the family and in the Church. The two sexes are equal in the sight of God, they argued, and both were endowed with equally valuable gifts and talents – but qualities that were different and complementary. And God has ordained that men and women play different 'roles' in the family and the Church (this was the first time the word 'role' had been used to describe men's and women's differences).[27] Man's 'role'

[27] It is interesting to note that the authors state that Knight's publications in 1977 were the first usage of the word 'role' to refer to the sexual division of labor in society when the word 'role' had been in common usage in the social sciences to refer to the same over the years since Durkheim's 1893 *The Division of Labor in Society*. Similarly, in the 2003 report, those authors defer to the biological, psychological, and sociological expertise of Stephen B. Clark, himself a leader in the Catholic Charismatic movement and not a subject expert in any of those three fields of inquiry. In the 2017 report, Elain Storkey is presented as an expert on feminism and theology, and though in her long career Storkey has written and taught on these subjects, she is not a PhD and is not in herself reflective of the full breadth of work accomplished in feminist theology

> was to rule, to lead, and to protect. Women's 'role' was to submit, to follow and to support. (263)

This conviction that essential difference between men and women should necessarily lead to the conclusion that women should submit to men is held up by a set of theological convictions about the nature of the Trinity that introduce hierarchal relationships into the three persons of the Christian God. The report authors state that opponents of women's ordination who espouse complementarianism, "base their belief in male headship on the command of God and on the analogy of the Trinity." (263)[28] As will be discussed at greater length, Jesus's submission to God the Father in crucifixion is understood as a model for women who should submit to men. This submission to male headship is understood to be the basis for proper relations between men and women in the Church and in the family, but not in the surrounding society. Complementarity, according to this logic, is limited to the spheres of social life most knitted to God's purpose for humanity, and so the family and the Church must reflect complementary roles for men and women in headship and submission.

These arguments can all be summarized as an endorsement of the essential and critical persistence of the sexual division of labor in society alongside scriptural evidence for the exclusion of women from ordained ministry as part of God's plan. According to these arguments, women should be barred from ordination because they are different from men, not inferior. This absence of an argument that women are not fit for ordination due to their bodily inferiority is

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which is itself a field of inquiry and study. The opponents of women's ordination, in both of these reports, seek to build an ideological basis for objecting to the practice of women's ordination. They make gestures at scholarship that supports their ideas, but do not engage with the relevant bodies of scholarly work on any of the topics they purport to interrogate.

[28] Kevin Giles, a theologian, also an Evangelical theologian, has argued against this view of the Trinity and its corresponding call for women's subordination since 1977, calling it heresy (Giles, 2017).

further evidence that Aristotelian Essentialism, which supported and necessitated the practice of barring women from ordination in the years before 1976, has been discarded, even by those who continue to oppose women's ordination. Instead, a new schema for gender in church, a new gender essentialism, has had to be invented and articulated – Nostalgic Essentialism.

Interview data supports the claim that nostalgic essentialism plays an important role in holding together the various factions joined in ACNA. Kenneth is a priest in ACNA, formerly he served in ECUSA. His objections to women's ordination, and to the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ adherents in church sacraments and rites, led him to split from ECUSA. In the excerpt below, Kenneth explains his view of how both Anglo-Catholics and Evangelical former Episcopalians have found common cause in ACNA. He says,

> Because a number of evangelicals, … for them, the issues centered around headship from scripture. Whereas Anglo-Catholics had had more to do with Sacramental authority. That was the first thing that brought some of them together and then within a few short years, it was the homosexual issue. That brought a few more, who were more, shall we say, cultural, conservative. What happened is the, if you will, the theologically and ecclesiologically conservative, I don't want to confuse it with politically conservative cause that's not it but those who were more alarmed at what was happening to the church as the church formed a sort of coalition much like on the progressive side.
> A coalition was formed between the pro-women and the pro-gay who initially didn't have much overlap. Anyway, coalitions were formed to try to deal with what was going on one way or another. Those who left the Episcopal Church, there was a wave of Anglo-Catholics who left in the 1970s, and then, there was the first wave of evangelicals to leave in the early 2000s with what became the Anglican mission in America. Then after the Gene Robinson thing, things moved more swiftly and a number of others left.
> My personal thought, I knew that my days were numbered in 1997. (Kenneth)

Later in the interview, Kenneth expresses discomfort about this alliance. He sees Evangelical members of ACNA as insufficiently sacramental and predicts that ACNA will further fragment as those tensions increase. He believes that an alliance forged from discomfort with changes around women's role in the church, and church teachings around sexuality, cannot withstand

different approaches to sacramental life. Nostalgic Essentialism and its corresponding practical requirements for ministry in matters of gender and sexuality is a critical ideological basis for unity in ACNA as an emergent Anglican province.

Complementarianism: Gender binary as God's plan for humanity in Creation

The first key concept in complementarianism is that a strict gender binary is part of God's plan for humanity in Creation. Complementarians believe that humans are created by God in two forms: male and female. These two human forms are intended to complement each other and so a gendered organization of social life that corresponds to these different and complementary biological presentations of humanity accords with God's will. Society should, according to complementarians, give men and women different roles to correspond with the differences between their bodies. Complementarians further argue that men should perform roles of 'headship' and women should perform 'submission'. However, complementarians argue, submission and headship are equal. In the 2003 report, the Anglican Mission in America (AMIA) wrote, "In biblical perspective, men and women are equal as to nature and dignity but different and complementary as to order and ministries. The ministry of headship is different from but not superior to the ministry of support and submission." (AMIA, 24) This insistence on difference, but equality, is central to complementarian thought.

Complementarianism depends on the apparent universality of clearly defined male and female bodies. This view of human bodies and appropriate social organization does not consider intersexuality to be an important feature of human biology, nor does it define the boundaries of the supposed binary in biological sex presentation. Rather, complementarian thought assumes a binary in human biological sex presentation, and discounts any bodies that do not fit as

‘anomalies’. ACNA’s Holy Orders Task Force writes, “To be human is, certain anomalies notwithstanding, to be either male or female.” (289) This sentence inadvertently showcases a key analytical weakness in complementarian descriptions of humanity. If to be human is to be classifiable according to a strict binary, but the binary has exceptions, then the binary is not an accurate description of reality after all. Complementarian descriptions of humanity are threatened by the acceptance of a spectrum of sex presentations in human biology. Any evidence for a more complex picture of human sex presentation, or human gender identities, is seen as evidence for the fallenness of the world in this view. That insistence on a strict biologically-based sex binary in humanity sets up complementarian thought to include not just prescriptions for women’s submission but also anti-LGBTQ+ positions.

My respondents echo this endorsement of a strict binary in human sex and gender. Matthew displays discomfort when talking about why gender should be understood as important to the life of the Church. Throughout his interview, Matthew spoke more than one idea at a time, sometimes producing quotes that appear to wander but are trained on a central thesis; the following excerpt is one such a moment. In this excerpt, Matthew is speaking about his deep discomfort with what he perceives as a broad societal push to reject the gender binary. He says,

> One – what I think is an insidious – idea, that is seeping into the church, is – I could articulate in a few different ways – that there is a difference between male and female at all and – culturally, it's getting weird out there – that there is, or isn't. Well, that there's even two, it's starting to really come apart … Or, that that difference is somehow bad, if there is a difference. (Matthew)

Matthew believes that there are two genders, and is concerned that “it’s starting to really come apart” as societal attitudes shift to a broader acceptance of more complex gender presentations and identities. He also believes that there is a difference between male and female, and that that difference is important. He thinks rejecting claims of essential difference between men and

women is insidious, and he is concerned that such ideas could somehow “seep in” perhaps to pollute the Church. For Matthew, Christianity requires an acceptance of a gender binary as part of God’s plan for humanity. He says,

> We're made in the image of God, it's a pretty uncontroversial tenant of the Christian faith. That God, we profess to be one God in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That's actually become quite controversial. If you look at we're made in the image of this God, who is both a perfect unity, but also a community of persons. We're made in the image of this God, male and female we’re made. In a way, our maleness and femaleness image, the triune God in that. A male as a human and a female as a human perfectly in our nature, just like the Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God perfectly in their nature. Is the Father greater than the Son? No. Is the Son greater than the Spirit? No. They're perfectly God in their nature. Yet they're distinct in their persons. Right? (Matthew)

Matthew sees binary sexual presentation in humans as akin to the three-person presentation of God in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. He does not clarify why humans have two forms but God has three. He maintains that maleness and femaleness are critical to what makes up human existence.

Kenneth also casts sexual difference, and gender difference, as central to human existence. He speaks about biologic sex as foundational to human life, saying that men and women are different: here he uses the words “not interchangeable” mirroring some of the language used in the AMIA and ACNA reports. He also says that difference means complementary functions for men and women. Kenneth begins,

> Actually, I think the bigger question is, first of all, does one's sex matter to our lives as human beings? First of all, absolutely. We are complementary, we're not interchangeable. With relationship to Christ, the first answer is no, not at all. It doesn't make a difference because each are equal in dignity and we are both honored and Jesus took upon himself, our full human nature. There is no superiority in the body of Christ. We are equal in dignity but we are not interchangeable. (Kenneth)

Given the difference he sees between men and women and the implications that difference necessarily holds for their respective social roles, Kenneth continues with his consideration of the question of women's ordination. He immediately ties the question to the complementarian interpretation of Genesis, wherein God having created Adam first, and Eve from Adam's rib, is taken to mean that God's intention is for men and women to hold different social positions. He says,

> The question then, getting back to your question, is the priesthood merely a function, or if it is more than a function, in what way does sexuality have to do with it? … I would say the basic structural revelation is, and it's peculiar, but the male is described as having been created first and the woman created out of the male. They are complementary and they are meant for that complementary relationship. (Kenneth)

Kenneth does not use the word "headship" in this excerpt. He is careful throughout his interview to attribute the concept of male headship to other thinkers, and not to state his own adherence to that belief. However, his view of men and women as having complementary roles and functions, his endorsement of this interpretation of Genesis, and his opposition to women's ordination on the basis of that complementarity, make his views well aligned with those who more explicitly endorse male headship. Instead, Kenneth insists on complementarity, and allows women's not-maleness to act as their disqualification from ordination. This move from quotidian observations of male and female biology, through a complementarian interpretation of Genesis, to an endorsement of strict gender roles in Church with only men in ordained leadership is common in complementarian thought.

In complementarian thought, a sexual binary, and a corresponding gender binary, is understood as evidence of God's intentions for humanity, and as such, as eternal. Drawing on C.S. Lewis's 1948 essay, "Priestesses in the Church?" the ACNA report contends that, "traditionalists point to human sexual difference as a fundamental reality of creation – which is

redeemed, not removed, in Christ's work of salvation." (ACNA, 2017, 281). In other words, sexual difference and the division of humanity in males and females predated the Fall and will continue after Christ has redeemed the world at the end of time. Complementarians see the sexual division of humanity into two categories as so essential to human nature that it should be understood to prefigure any other feature of human existence. The ACNA authors further argue that to oppose this view is to see humanity as "neuter" – they do not allow for an understanding of humanity that believes sex and gender exist but should not necessarily be taken to mean the splitting of humans into those who do headship and those who do submission. They write of their own arguments, "…this view of humanity as inherently sexual is fundamentally opposed to the essentially neuter vision of humanity (i.e. the interchangeability rather than the fundamental difference and complementarity-within-equality of the sexes) which undergirds the arguments for both women's ordination and same-sex marriage." (ACNA, 2017, 281) Put another way, the authors argue that rejecting complementarian interpretations of sexual differences would conclude in a view of all humans as interchangeable one with another, whereas they see women as interchangeable only with other women, and men only with other men. To see men and women as equally well-suited to the same social roles is anathema for complementarians, and this animates their opposition to women's ordination and to full inclusion for LGBTQ+ persons in the life of the Church.

Complementarianism: God as male and masculine, shown in creative energy and authority

Complementarian thought moves from biological difference between men and women to necessary social roles that cast men in headship and women in submission by asserting the authority and masculinity of God. First, the authority of God in relationship to Creation is

asserted, and second the accompanying masculinity of God is shown in an interpretation of the Christian creation story that sees God's acts of creation and procreative sex between humans as analogous.

In this view, authority is understood as masculine, and God's authoritativeness in scripture is interpreted as proof of God's masculinity. The AMIA report authors write, "… in Scripture, the Creation is not the same order of being as His. It is not of His substance. It is not 'divine.' He transcends the Creation that He calls into being. This transcendent 'otherness' reflects His masculine nature expressed in relation to the Creation. He created. He is the Lord of Creation." (AMIA, 2003, 22). Put differently, in the act of creating the world, God separated himself from the world into two categories of being: God, and not-God. God held authority over that which was not-God by speaking it into reality in the Genesis creation story. Because scripture says the not-God responded to God's commands and took the forms now seen in Creation, God holds authority over all Creation as Creation consists of not-God. The distinction between God and Creation, for complementarians, mirror the distinction they see between men and women. God's authoritativeness then entails men's authoritativeness, which means that women must submit to men as Creation has submitted to God in submitting to his authority when he created.

Kenneth explains why, in his view, God's creative powers are masculine and not feminine. Anxiety about the potential feminine dimensions of creative action is present in the AMIA report as well, which suggests that Kenneth is not alone in his focus on proving that creation is a masculine act. He explains,

> The reason that the sun is described as masculine is because its life is self-generated and the reason the moon is described as feminine is because it's reflected light. It's not self-generated. Much like in human reproduction, it's the male that takes the initiative that seeks out the feminine. The feminine then

> receives and brings to fruition. It's a complementary function. You can't have life without both. The male principle is the initiating principle. The feminine principle is the receptive and fulfilling principle. (Kenneth, clergy, man)

In this explanation, Kenneth is showing both the complementarian assertion that God is masculine, and the key notion of complementary functions of men and women in humanity. Of note as well is the analogy drawn between God's creation of the world and human reproduction as accomplished in procreative sex. Kenneth argues that the male's role in procreative sex is initiative, like God's role in the creation story.

Kenneth's notion of God's masculinity and maleness prompts him to immediately switch topics to entertain the question of whether Jesus, as a man, could stand in for all humans in his relationship to the Creator God, or whether women would require a female-embodied savior. He continues, explaining that God contains all of creation but acts in a masculine way, and that therefore male-ness can stand in for all, while female-ness cannot. Kenneth says,

> The bigger question of the feminist is, can Jesus represent women in being a savior or do we need a female savior for women? We would say, biologically, the male does include the female. Whereas the female does not include the male unless she's carrying a male child because we've got the X and Y chromosomes, we would say, and the woman only has the X. In that sense, to have Mary taken out, or to have Eve taken out of Adam, although it's bizarre, if we try to think about it physically. Nonetheless, in this sense, it makes sense that the masculine had the feminine in himself to convey so God could work through that. As a myth, if you will, it makes a kind of sense and that God would be incarnate as a male for the same reason he can represent the fullness of humanity because he contains both. (Kenneth)

Kenneth strongly asserts that God is masculine and yet contains all of humanity (male and female). Men can represent women, but women cannot represent men, according to Kenneth, because of chromosomal sex differences. AMIA's report authors are clear that God is unquestionably masculine despite his creative abilities, and his containing of both masculine and feminine aspects of humanity. They write a long passage that concludes with a series of

statements to undercut any possibility that God could be feminine, because the presence of a feminine God would require pantheistic belief, which is at odds with Christian faith: "When the feminine is given the same prominence as the masculine, pantheism is the usual result. This brings with it the manifold problems of pantheism. At almost every point, pantheism is a worldview and a religion in direct contradiction to God's Word in Scripture." (AMIA, 2003, 29) Though God contains the feminine, it must always be subordinated to the masculine to avoid the pitfalls of pantheism. Complementarianism thus moves from recognizing difference between men and women, and God's authority and therefore masculinity, to a necessary subordination of the feminine.

Kenneth extends this understanding of God as masculine to argue that men should hold all positions of ordained spiritual authority in the Church. According to Kenneth, understanding the sexual and gendered dimensions of Christian scripture properly results in an interpretation that understands God's relationship to humanity as a marriage, wherein God acts as the man and humanity as the woman. God's masculinity, and Jesus's masculinity are essential for Kenneth to understanding the nature of God, and of humanity. He says,

> The relationship between Christ and his Church is husband and wife, bridegroom and bride. All the teaching about marriage, which is so controversial these days for a lot of reasons, once we see, as Scripture says, it's rooted in the relationship between Christ and his Church. Which also means it's rooted in the relationship between God and his creatures made in his image. It's not that anybody thinks that God is male, but his action is masculine based on our limited experience of gender through sex. (Kenneth)

Kenneth sees heterosexual penetrative, presumably procreative, sex as the dominant method through which to understand the relationship of God and humanity. God should be understood as masculine, as lifeforce.

Matthew similarly espouses the belief that God is masculine in relation to a feminine humanity. In this excerpt, Matthew spells out why sexual metaphors, and marital framings for those metaphors, are so important to his understanding of Christian faith. For him, men and women are different, the Church is the new Eve, and acts of creation come from uniting the female-ness of humanity with the male-ness of God. Heterosexual procreation is then the best metaphor for understanding the proper relations between God and humanity, and requires clear distinctions between men and women. He explains at length,

> The biblical marital metaphor is so rich and deep, it's crazy. The Bible begins with a marriage, Adam and Eve. It ends with a marriage of the new Adam and the new Eve. … There's a lot of insight into this metaphor … even the creation story of Adam and Eve, Eve is made out of the side of Adam. It's like, how does that work? In the new Adam and the new Eve, which is Christ and the Church, the Church is looked at as the bride of Christ as, the new Eve, so the marital metaphor continues. When our Lord is on the cross and his side is pierced, and the blood, and water come out, St. John's Gospel, it's a clear metaphor or imagery of baptism and Holy Eucharist. These two initiatory rites of the Church by which we become literally grafted into the new Eve. There you have Eve comes out of the side of Adam. The new Eve comes out of the side of the new Adam. There's a radical otherness between the bridegroom and the bride. There's this radical otherness that when it's unitive and comes together, it literally bears life, the two become one. It's us, all of us. That sex itself, if you follow out the metaphor, sex itself on Earth is this metaphor for the union of Christ and the bride, which is also God and humanity. Salvation. There's a reason why sex is such a thing. It's the high point of a sacramental union that actually images salvation. It's crazy. (Matthew)

In taking seriously the idea that procreative sex is an experience of spiritual salvation, Matthew's expresses concerns that those who do not engage in heterosexual sex for procreation miss out on this experience of salvation. He continues,

> If you can lose that radical otherness between the male and the female, very quickly you just go male and male. Now, it's actually more like a mirror. … Just theologically speaking, it can become a kind of sacrament of self-love. Even Judaism is deeply rooted in this otherness. There's a radical diversity between male and female which images the radical diversity between God and humanity. It's the coming together of that otherness that is life-giving. (Matthew)

Creation, therefore, is actively accomplished through the merging of masculine and feminine. God, as masculine, accomplished this in the Genesis story of creation. Creation, and humanity, should be understood as feminine in relation to God. However, within humanity there should be understood to be a clear distinction between masculine and feminine in men and women. According to this interpretation of Scripture, men and women must be understood as different in order to access, through marriage and procreative sex, hints of salvation.

Complementarianism: Headship and Submission

From the apparent difference between men and women, and the masculinity of God, there stems the belief that men are suited for social roles of headship, and women are suited for roles of submission. Complementarians often adopt a somewhat defensive tone when asserting these ideas. In both written report and interviews, nostalgic essentialists defend the differentiation of roles for men and women as though it were under attack. They contend that appropriate complementarian forms of the sexual division of labor should be more widespread and more acceptable in broader society. Matthew's tone in the following excerpt shows his awareness that his views on men's and women's essential differences and their corresponding social positions may be unpopular. He says,

> As we are saying male and female, well, I think we are there's lots of half-truths in this. We're confusing our equality for the distinction in the roles. Instead of males and females are different, and that's okay. They're equal when they're human beings, human nature. We're saying that they must be interchangeable in their roles. The distinction is becoming bad. There's a kind of androgyny that's happening. None of it is coherent or makes sense. I can't make sense out of it in any way. What I know is that there's the idea that male is different than female and that there are distinct roles. That a male is not designed for particular roles and a female is not designed for particular roles. That idea alone has become somewhat offensive. Would you say? (Matthew)

Matthew's move to draw a distinction between what might be palatable to broader society, and what is appropriate to the life of adherents in the Church, is one shared by the writers of the AMIA's report.

In defining and defending submission, the AMIA report's authors contend that submission should not be understood as an unpleasant or cruel thing to ask of women. Rather, they write, "In Scripture, submission is a good thing, and it is by no means limited to women. Jesus as the Son is ever submissive to the Father. All people made in God's image are to be submissive to God." (AMIA, 2003, 23). Submission is not about giving up one's own will, but about seeking to do the will of God. Jesus's submission to God the Father in the crucifixion is often used to argue for the value and godliness of submission. However, the notion of Jesus submitting to God the Father and being in submission to the Father in the Trinity has been attacked as heretical, including by the Evangelical thinker Kevin Giles. Giles, and others, contend that introducing an element of hierarchy to the concept of the Trinity goes against the central claim of God in three equal persons. The AMIA writers, however, contend that not only is submission present in the Trinity, and in women's submission to men, but that submission to those with greater power should be extended throughout society. They write,

> The Church as the Bride of Christ is by grace to be submissive to Christ who is Lord over all, the head of His Body. Men and women are to be submissive to one another in a variety of structures. In the Church, the members are urged to submit to those whom the Lord has placed in authority over us. In the family, the wife is freely to submit or orient her ministry under the oversight of and in support of her husband. The children are to submit to the parents. In society, we all are to submit gladly to the magistrates in all things agreeable to the revealed will of God, because God has placed them over us. In addition, we are to pray for them. (AMIA, 2003, 23)

This notion of submission extends from a view of women as subordinate to men, and encompasses a vision of society wherein unequal relations of power are interpreted as God-

ordained. The presence of unequally distributed power in a relationship is seen here as a sign that the less powerful person should submit, because having been given less power is a sign from God that they should submit to the will of the other. Distinction, difference, is the key to this view of submission. Women must submit to their husbands and to men because they are not made of the same stuff as men, they are different, and that difference entails and requires submission. This view of submission is one that seeks to uphold the status quo in any instance of unequal power between parties.

Submission to male headship was not drawn upon by either Matthew or Kenneth explicitly as a frame for understanding what the difference between men and women would mean for appropriate relationship between men and women. Kenneth spoke of headship as something that Evangelicals believe, and then cast himself as an Anglo-Catholic traditionalist and therefore not overly invested in the idea of headship and submission. Matthew openly wrestled with what submission could mean for men and women in the church. This excerpt begins with a follow-up question. Matthew has just said that Mary, Jesus's mother, should be understood as a metaphor for the Church in her relationship with Jesus. The Church, in this extended metaphor which also included the bride and bridegroom image, is gendered female. However, women are excluded from ordination in Matthew's parish, and other conservative parishes like it. So I asked if the Church is gendered feminine, why men should hold positions of authority and power in the Church.

> Cat: You were saying something about the church is Mary and that's such an interesting-- That's in some ways such a profound metaphor for thinking about how all this works. But then, I'm like so if humanity is the woman and God is the man, then why are the human males the ones that have what has become a powerful position?
> Matthew: Because they're sinners and doing it all wrong. Go back to the earlier question about what does a priest look like, the servant of the servants, our Lord,

> what did he do? He died on a cross. That's what it's supposed to look like. Guys aren't off the hook. Here's something else for you to chew on.
> Cat: Okay, let's do it.
> Matthew: There's this text, St. Paul's text in Ephesians 5 about marriage that it's like an anathema these days. … it's like, “Husbands love your wives like Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her. Wives submit yourself to your husbands as it's fitting to the Lord.” If you unpack it, what's so profound-- He's living in total misogyny, St. Paul is, right? What he says to the woman, "Women, submit yourselves to your husband," it's not that profound in its meaning. They probably would've been like, "Right, right, yes, got it." What makes it profound is what he says to the husband because when he says, "Love your wives the way Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her," what he's saying is die. Die on the cross, that's what you do. (Matthew, clergy, m)

Matthew presents women’s submission as part of a relationship in which men are called to adopt the role of Christ, who according to this narrative was crucified to redeem the world. Men, according to Matthew, must do as Christ did, which he explains in more detail as the excerpt continues:

> You be the first to forgive, be the first to ask forgiveness, you mount the cross and die. What he says to the woman, "Be under the same mission as the husband. Submission." Also, mount the cross and die for your beloved. He says in the first verse it's totally neutralized because he tells everybody love one another as Christ, the Lord. It's for everybody. The ordering is husband, this is how you lead, mount the cross and die. That's what you do first. Then, that's how you show the way for your wife If you look at Christ and the Church, that's how it happened. He mounted the cross and died and the whole church is called to pick up our cross and follow him. Do you want to be at the front of the line [chuckles] or do you want to be at the back of the line? Does it even matter if this is where we're going? Now, that passage has been used to justify untold horrors, because the man is not on the cross and dying. It's all wrong, it's terrible, but that's not God's vision for it, it doesn't make it okay. I don't know, who dies on the cross first? Do you want to fight about it? [laughs] (Matthew)

Matthew sees men and women as equally called to follow Christ, even to the cross. He sees this common call to follow Christ as cancelling out gendered distinctions, “it’s totally neutralized … it’s for everybody.” However, he still espouses a belief that the passage which he has said cancels out gendered distinctions in who should follow Christ and how, also says that women should submit. He argues both for complementarian submission to male headship, and for a

radical rejection of gendered differentiation in the common call to follow Christ. Arguing for women's submission to men's headship becomes an argument for endorsing unequal power relations in society as part of God's plan. As Matthew's arguing both sides of this idea shows, it can be tricky to integrate complementarian ideas into a view of the Church as an institution. He both endorses the propriety of women's submission, and argues that unequal power relations between men and women are a sign of the Church "doing it all wrong."

Complementarianism: Women cannot therefore be ordained to Holy Orders

In complementarian thought, men and women are essentially different, and God is male. It follows that women should submit to men. In the life of the Church, it further follows that women cannot serve as ordained sacramental ministers because they are essentially different from the male god by virtue of their female body (remember, transwomen are not part of this worldview). To argue against the possibility of women's ordination, the AMIA report authors explain that ordination allows someone to be symbolic of God. They write, "The point we want to emphasize is that the ordained priest/presbyter and bishop through their ministry of the Word, Sacrament and governance necessary to represent God to His People. The ordained ministry is, therefore, inescapably symbolic of the God it represents." (AMIA, 2003, 29). In this view, a woman's body cannot represent God because of its femaleness in contrast to God's maleness. This section of the report concludes by stating that it is the woman's body, not her beliefs, not even her own personal submission, that causes the symbolic problem. "Even when the ordained woman is orthodox in faith and not a theological feminist, by being a woman serving as a priest/presbyter or bishop, she has imported a contrary symbolism into the representative ordained ministry. Such symbolism will inevitably push matters in the wrong direction in the Church. We can already see it being done." (AMIA, 29) Introducing femininity to a symbolic

understanding of God is seen here as not only invalidating an ordination, but as also dooming the Church.

The writers of the 2017 ACNA report offer a similar argument. They write that the priest must symbolically adhere to a particular model in order to represent Jesus to the people. If a woman were to represent Jesus by acting as a priest in sacramental ministry, they contend, that would be counter to Jesus's incarnation as a man, and therefore would not uphold the doctrines of the Church. Again, women's bodies threaten the symbolic power of Church rites:

> The priest, as the long tradition of the Church's teaching indicates, functions as a symbol of Christ. Generally speaking, symbols shape our understanding of that which they represent. The question, then, with regard to the question of women's ordination, is what the biological sex of the priest suggests about Jesus. Jesus was incarnate as a man, and the ordination of men is clearly consistent with this. Traditionalists argue, however, that to have a woman as a symbol of Christ suggests a female Christ; a mixed-sex priesthood taken as a whole suggests a Christ who is either neuter or hermaphroditic. Women's ordination therefore a symbol that is at odds with the doctrine of the incarnation. (ACNA, 2017, 283)

The writers harken back to Lewis's 1948 essay "Priestesses in the Church?" and worry that women's bodies acting as sacramental ministers will introduce a Goddess in Christian theology. They write certain of the maleness of God, as has been established previously in the report, and worry that, "Female priests are thus held to be suggestive of a mother goddess, rather than God the Father." (ACNA, 2017, 283) Headship and submission aside, these arguments concern themselves with the symbolism of priesthood and ordination, and hold that women must be excluded because their female bodies would upset the symbolic equilibrium necessary to achieve valid sacraments.

My respondents who oppose women's ordination, Matthew and Kenneth, are concerned about the maleness of God and the symbolism involved in sacraments. They oppose women's ordination on grounds that echo those in the AMIA and ACNA reports. However, both are

careful to say multiple times that being excluded from ordination does not mean women should be excluded from the life of the Church. For Kenneth, extending from his discussion of God's masculinity in relationship to Creation, he asserts that while women have what he calls "special roles" in Jesus's Church, the role of ordained ministry is reserved for men. He interprets Jesus's 12 apostles being men as proof that ordained ministry in the Church should be reserved for men. He says,

> God is-- His primary function is masculine and Jesus tells us to call him 'Father.' Then Jesus fulfilling the Father's will and giving himself fully to the Father as both priest and victim, all of that stuff. Then choosing only male apostles to fulfill that ministry while at the same time, scandalizing the Jewish world by honoring women with special roles which was unprecedented. The first witnesses to the resurrection where at a time when women were not permitted to speak in courts of law, they couldn't give testimony. (Kenneth)

Kenneth notes that Jesus gave special jobs to women, and therefore those women not being included as members of the 12 apostles is a clear sign that women should not seek ordained ministry and should instead focus on complementary ministries. In discerning what Kenneth might mean when he appeals to special roles for women, consider the following passage from ACNA. Following a lengthy discussion of the impossibility of the interchangeability of men and women and whether traditionalist arguments against women's ordination have implications for the organization of power and authority in the Church outside of Holy Orders, the ACNA report authors write,

> There are pastoral and administrative tasks to be done; women *can* do the job, and to exclude them from a large part of this hierarchy is, in fact, to *make* them inferior. It therefore needs to be asked, do traditionalists have sufficient grounds for counting marriage and the family as the same kind of thing where equality does *not* entail interchangeability? (ACNA, 288)

Like much of the ACNA report, this section argues against women's ordination but is careful to argue in such a way that the ACNA House of Bishops, to whom the report is addressed, will

have final say over how to handle the issue in the new province. The writers are posing questions. Does insisting on difference between men and women, and excluding women from some forms of ministry, make women inferior in the Church? After posing this question the report authors conclude that the preponderance of evidence is on the side of traditionalists arguing against women's ordination, and insist that the burden of proof lies with those who would ordain women, not those who would exclude them. This claim rests on an appeal to an imagined past in Church history, which is the second key component of nostalgic essentialism.

Nostalgia for an Imagined Past

The second distinguishing feature of what I term Nostalgic Essentialism is its appeal to imagined pasts: times of Christian orthodoxy and tradition, when gender and sexuality were organized appropriately, and according to God's will. The Nostalgic Essentialists in this story point to three past eras of gender relations as times that had it right. The first is the moment of creation in Genesis before the Fall, the second is Jesus's ministry during his lifetime, and the third is an imagined Christian heritage shared by all believers. This third imagined past, the shared Christian past, is particularly inexact in its historical placement, with some nostalgic essentialists looking to the early Church before the Great Schism of 1054 that split Eastern and Western Christianity, some looking to the 16th and 17th Centuries and the foundations of Anglicanism in the English Reformation, and some simply looking backwards to a time they imagine came before the current era (roughly post-1970s) of what they see as gender confusion.

Nostalgic Essentialist accounts of the Genesis creation story have already been discussed in earlier explications of how this schema interprets the story of Adam and Eve to mean gendered essential difference between men and women is part of God's plan for humanity. The

Fall plays an important part in this imagining of early humanity as well. According to nostalgic essentialism, God's intentions for human men and women were shown in the creation of Adam and Eve, any evidence of humanity's divergence from their view of proper gender relations in history (differentiation, male headship and female submission, especially in the Church and family) gets cast as evidence for just how fallen humanity has become. One important outcome of this insistence that the Fall has distorted gender and sexual relations between men and women is that evidence for a more complex reality of human gender and sexual expression than what the Nostalgic Essentialists claim is shown in the creation story becomes evidence for the fallenness of the world, not evidence for knowing God more fully by appreciating the diversity of human expression and experience actually present in the world. The world is not a source of information to know God more fully, it is seen as a source of information about how far Satan has taken the world away from God's purpose. Matthew explains,

> It's important to engage this stuff. Speaking of principles, one of the principles would be Christian principle, is that just the principle of Revelation. Accept it or not, like it or not, but are there things or it's being of authority? Are there things that God has revealed to us that are true or are we the ones? A critique of religion is that humans just make all this crap up. … That it's just a way of self-soothing, whatever. That's fine, to have that view, it's not my view. It's not what the Church has ever seen and it makes a difference. It's one thing to ask the questions and integrate. It's another thing to say, "Does data from the world," – and part of our belief in the system is that it's a fallen world. – "Does that overlay? Does it change the belief system or [are] there core principles of the belief system that become the lens to interpret the data in the world around us?" It's sort of a: which one are you wont to do? What's happening now, already happening is that we're doing this one where there's the male and female thing— (Matthew)

For Matthew, seeking information from the physical world about the reality of human sex and building an account that would allow for more diversity in human sexual presentation goes against the principle of Revelation. Matthew holds that God revealed his purpose for humanity in Genesis before the fall, and to seek information about humanity's purpose from the physical

world would incorrectly conflate God's intentions for humanity with Satan's. Nostalgic Essentialism's insistence on seeking truth about human sexual and gender expression and relations from one interpretation of three verses from Genesis makes it nearly impossible for contradictory evidence from creation itself, and it exists in the physical world, to be considered.

Extending this idea, Kenneth explains his view that looking outside of Scripture for evidence of God's revelation, and especially trusting one's one experiences as a human, is idolatrous and sinful. He says,

> When I used to do teaching before I left the Episcopal church when I would be usually the go-to traditionalist to talk about gay issues, my first question was always, can we know as Christians, can we have a reason to believe or can we have a reason to answer the question, is homosexual desire a part of creation or is it a consequence of the fall and can we know? Some conservatives would say, "I don't care, it's just plain wrong." Some progressives would say, "I don't care, it's just plain right. It's whatever the person feels." Can we know? Can we have any knowledge of whether it's based on creation, part of the created order, in which case leave it alone, or is it a consequence of the fall? The answer is, yes we can know biblically. If you don't take the biblical witness, that's okay. Then, you're wherever you want to be but if you want to be faithful to the biblical scriptures, St. Paul, at the end of Romans 1 is talking about how God has revealed Himself to everyone. Everyone has knowledge of the creator but some people have chosen to follow the creature rather than the creator. They've become idolatrous. The root sin is idolatry in which we become the arbiter of truth, that's exactly what Adam and Eve did in the story of the garden. We'll decide whether God's original word is correct or whether the serpent has given us a better interpretation. We'll decide. When we become the center of the universe, anything happens. This idolatry, the worship of the creature, usually ourselves rather than the creator, what's the first thing that happens? Sexual disorder, confusion. (Kenneth)

In Kenneth's view, the passage he references from Paul's first letter to the Romans should be understood to mean that God is revealed to all, but that humans choose whether to follow God's revelation or their own human nature (humans, after all, are creatures, not the Creator). Humans who choose to follow their own experiences or their own reasoning, in Kenneth's words those who decide that "we'll decide whether God's original word is correct", are choosing to engage in idolatry and therefore their attempts to follow God, though perhaps earnest, are sinful. Kenneth

claims that trusting one's own human experience as a way to know God will inevitably lead to what he calls "sexual disorder, confusion." The appeal to look back at Scripture to know God's intentions for humanity results in the sharp focus on Genesis 1-3 shown throughout the complementarian account of proper gender relations, as this is the only time in Scripture that God's plan for humanity has not been compromised by the Fall. Looking outward for signs of God's intentions is understood by nostalgic essentialists to invite corruption in the Church. In the ACNA report, the authors state outright that the notion of women's ordination must have come from the society which surrounds the Church, and that therefore this move should be treated with the utmost suspicion as it might be a corrupting influence bringing sin into the life of the Church (ACNA, 2017, 279). Where to look for revelatory insights into the correct direction for the future of the Church is a core concern, and nostalgic essentialists claim to seek such insight directly from Scripture. Of course, any insight to be gained from Scripture must be gained through interpretation, and here nostalgic essentialists build up a portrait of an inerrant and consistent body of Scriptural interpretation across Church history.

Nostalgic Essentialism claims legitimacy on the basis of proper Scriptural interpretation, and claims as its version of Church history an uninterrupted set of consistent practices that stem from Jesus's ministry that have been threatened by moves to reform the Church (some put this moment of threat at the Great Schism, some at the Reformation, some at the 1970s and women's ordination). Key to this approach is the building of a version of Church history in which women's roles in the Church have been maintained since Jesus's lifetime. For example, in the 2017 ACNA report, the authors write that because Jesus did not name any women in his 12 apostles, women should not be included in ordained ministry. To include women would be to go against Jesus's example, or else to suggest that Jesus had somehow gotten it wrong in his time,

or that Jesus himself was influenced by the social norms of his time and place – for traditionalists any of these interpretations of Jesus's life and work in unacceptable (ACNA, 2017, 279). Beyond Jesus's lifetime, Nostalgic Essentialists often point to a time in Church history before corrupting influences had made their way into Christian belief and practice (e.g. women's ordination in the 1970s).

Matthew offers an example of Nostalgic Essentialism that reaches back particularly far into Church history to find an example of a time before corrupting influences from the surrounding society. Matthew sees himself as a catholic Christian this identity is about aligning himself with a Christian identity that is broader than one Protestant denomination and in full communion with those teachings on which all Christians can agree. Sharing across denominations is important for Matthew's determination of what should be considered good Christian belief and practice. At one point in the interview he says,

> For me, my passion is everything before 1054, because it's this quest. There are differences and there's fights and God knows there's terrible things, but there's still just one church. You see the East and West, they'd speak in different languages and there's stuff happening, but on the whole, there's one church and there's one teaching. (Matthew)

Matthew does not claim that there were not fissures in Christianity before 1054, but he dismisses them because "on the whole" Christians were united in their faith as evidenced by the lack of an obvious schism like that of 1054. Idealizing the early church, Matthew continues, "Even the early church, fathers mostly, you can read if they have different views on some of these things, but what the early church always did was that they would read the breadth of them, and they could talk about how different fathers thought different things about these things, but there was still this core substance that doesn't change." (Matthew, clergy, m). Matthew abhors the idea of a disagreement between Christians that cannot be adjudicated through reading and discussion. He

has a particularly bleak view of the splitting of churches, and for this reason holds an idealized view of Eastern Orthodoxy. He says, “Still, in Orthodoxy today, somehow, even though they split and break and fight and politics and all that, somehow the substance doesn't change. Whereas in the West, we've been monkeying with this thing since the reformation. We're just throwing around babies in bathwater and all of it.” (Matthew, clergy, m). As a corrective for what he sees as the destructive tendency to throw away tradition that becomes inconvenient in Western Christianity, Matthew articulates what he sees as the core teachings that make up orthodox Christian belief, across all churches. Among the teachings he identifies as central to what he terms orthodoxy are: God’s creation of humanity, the Trinity, the male-ness of God, Mary’s perpetual virginity, Mary as the model for the Church in relation to God, and marital and sexual metaphors as key to understanding God’s relationship with humanity. Sex and gender are central to Matthew’s understanding of Christian belief.

Matthew argues that the belief structure of Christianity has been consistent since the faith’s beginnings, and that sexual metaphors and gendered understandings of humanity and proper social roles for men and women have always been key to the faith. To dismantle the gendering he sees as eternal within Christianity would be to dismantle Christian faith altogether. He says,

> One of the things that I've been passionate about is looking at – we're created, Christians believe. Everything I'm telling you, they're not my ideas at all. These are ideas that I've studied. They're part of this thing that's come down, that I look at as a gift and a treasure that I keep trying to understand, but it's not what I think. It's what I believe, but it's nothing that I've come up with. … There's no secret really about what it is in its core throughout the ages. It's certainly the first thousand years. It's like if we want something different, maybe just start something different rather than trying to take apart this thing that's really quite beautiful. (Matthew)

Having established that the stakes are high: uncoupling particular understandings of sex and gender from Christian belief would threaten the entire structure of Christian belief, Matthew continues by elucidating why God's male-ness is so important:

> Like in the incarnation, if you believe that Mary was a virgin, and many don't, it's fine. For me, that's like one of the five pillars of Islam. Go make a new religion. Christianity's always believed that but I'm naive, what can I say? The seed that comes from God by the Holy Spirit, she's the female. We don't argue about that a lot, do we? The seed is from God, which fulfils the male role. Then, the flesh of the male that comes out comes from the female. If we change God to a female, the story doesn't work the same way unless you don't believe in the virgin birth and then it doesn't have to work that way. There's a dismantling of the whole thing which I don't understand. I don't understand. (Matthew)

Matthew jumps from asserting Mary's eternal virginity to God's male-ness and uses human procreative sex as a lens through which to understand God's incarnation in Jesus. Sex is central to this understanding of God, and God is metaphorically inseparable from maleness and masculinity. For Matthew, because he sees this gendered understanding of God as central to Christian belief as it has existed for centuries, any move to reshape what gender ought to mean in the life of the Church is a threat to Christian belief entirely.

Nostalgic Essentialism, as a schema for gender in church, shapes conclusions about how women should be included in the life of the Church on the basis of constant appeals to the imagined inerrancy of the Church's past practices. It is important to note here that nostalgic essentialists reject and part ways with actual Church doctrine of the past when it becomes politically inexpedient to continue to argue particular claims. For example, the Aquinian argument against women's ordination is explicitly rejected in ACNA's 2017 report, in which complementarian theology, itself a product of the 1970s, is held up as representative of consistent practice across Christian history. The argument from deficiency is rejected, and the

argument from difference forwarded, with a sleight of hand move to claim that the argument from difference, which is a new invention of the 1970s, was the actual argument all along.

On the question of women's ordination, Nostalgic Essentialists defer to documented Church history when necessary, and maintain an aversion to changing Church practices whenever possible. In their 2017 report, ACNA admits that women have served as deacons throughout Church history, and therefore women should be admitted to the diaconate. The report's authors concede that women have served as deacons first as associates of St. Paul and the earliest Christian churches, and then again throughout 19th and 20th Century Anglican churches (ACNA, 2017, 277). The report's authors further contend that women's presence in the ordained diaconate does not act as evidence to support women's ordination to the priesthood because the sacramental duties of deacons differ from those of priests, and therefore women's embodied female-ness is not a symbolic problem for their ministry as deacons. Throughout, Nostalgic Essentialists approach the question of women's ordination as though the legitimacy of the entire Christian tradition hinged on the answer. ACNA's report authors put it thus, "The question, then is this: Is it the Church's task to keep the practices which we have delivered, to live within them, and to expand our understanding of them; or is it to participate in an ongoing process of growth which, though it must always be connected to the central reality of Christ, may lead beyond the old ways, or even to rejecting them?" (ACNA, 2017, 289) These authors posit that preserving tradition and reforming practices are mutually exclusive, setting up a potential crisis of institutional legitimacy anytime women's role in sacramental ministry is expanded, including in women's ordination to the priesthood.

Implication: from women's ordination to anti-LGBTQ+ stances

In the 1970s, complementarianism was formulated as a new theology of sex and gender that could preserve the Church practice of excluding women from ordained ministry without forcing adherents to continue to argue against women's ordination on the basis of women's inferiority, as they had been doing since the 13th Century. Over the decades since, complementarianism has been adopted by thinkers in many Christian churches, notably in American Evangelical and conservative Christian churches, and in conservative Anglican churches. When tied to an appeal to an ideal Christian past, whether in Eden, pre-reformation, or simply before women's ordination in the 1970s, complementarian thought morphs into what I have termed Nostalgic Essentialism – a form of gender essentialism that appeals to an imagined past in order to forward prescriptions for men's and women's appropriate social roles according to a strict logic of difference, with women to submit to men. These ideas were developed to counter emergent calls for women's ordination, but have since increasingly been used to argue for the exclusion of LGBTQ+ people from the full life of the Church, including some sacramental rites (e.g. ordination, marriage). Because complementarianism rests on a central assertion of men's and women's difference, what began as a form of gender essentialism formulated to dictate the place of women in society grew into a schema that justifies anti-LGBTQ+ belief and action.

Matthew articulates clearly how asserting the essential difference between men and women as a key component of God's plan for humanity leads to assertions that LGBTQ+ people are engaging in sin in their sexual lives. He says,

> When you take the other away, it becomes this mirror image. I've always felt it's creepy to me. I get why it's Pride, I get it because the idea is like we're proud of who we are and all this. I get it, but it's creepy to me, especially for Christians that your rallying cry is the chief sin, right? If you sacramentally look at it, it's really

> weird that sacramentally, it's a mirror image of self-love. Then, we go, "Well, why two?" That's where we're going, why not three-- It doesn't matter anymore why two. The reason from the catholic Christian perspective is that the two is the fullness of humanity. The male and the female is the fullness of humanity together in the image of God and it's life-giving. Without the male-female, it's like doesn't matter why two, which we get and we're going that way. (Matthew)

Echoing the Nostalgic Essentialist interpretation of the creation story, Matthew is certain there should be two clearly distinct human sexes, and everyone should have sexual relationships with only people of the other sex. For him, heterosexual sexual relationships are fulfilling God's plan for humanity. Any other sexual expression or behavior is sinful because it does not hinge on differentiation between two forms of human. Therefore, viewing men and women as essentially different and insisting on that difference being meaningful as a sign of God's intentions in creation leads to dismissal of homosexual sex as inherently sinful and against the will of God.

Kenneth adopts a similar position, seeing homosexuality as evidence of the Fall. He speaks of LGBTQ+ individuals as fallen and sinful,

> It is natural if you assume our fallen condition, but if you assume our creative position, it is unnatural. From a biological point of view, it's unnatural. Homosexual desire does not lead to procreation, and therefore, it doesn't fulfill the purpose for which the woman was made to complement the man, be fruitful, and multiply. It's one of the millions of consequences of our fallen condition, and therefore, it needs to be dealt with pastorally. (Kenneth)

Kenneth continues with a discussion of how all humans are fallen and all are in need of pastoral care. He rejects the possibility of LGBTQ+ experiences and identities as sources for understanding God's revelation. He instead sees any gender or sexual expression outside of a strictly cisgendered heterosexual binary with women's submission to men as against God's will and therefore evidence of the fallenness and sinfulness of the world. He believes this means that sacraments and church rites should be reserved for those relationships that he sees as mirroring

God’s purpose for humanity, as found in the complementarian interpretation of Genesis. He explains,

> To the homosexual couple who might come saying, "Can you bless our marriage?" To them, I have to say, "No." I can also at the same time say, "I have my own struggles and what I promise you is that I will pray for you and I ask you to pray for me because I'm in no way better off than you are." I think that's where I try to go with questions like that. We are, and I know there's even, physically, there's some blurring of distinction between the binary sexes, that too is a consequence of the fall. Much like spina bifida or Down syndrome, or anything else can happen. Again, there's no excuse to treat that as a judgment on the person who's been affected by that, but there's also no reason to affirm that that's the way it's meant to be. (Kenneth)

Nostalgic Essentialists oppose women’s ordination on the basis of men’s and women’s essential difference, which they see as eternal and ordained by God. Applying this form of gender essentialism to the questions of how LGBTQ persons ought to be treated in the life of the Church results in their exclusion from the full life of the Church.

Nostalgic Essentialism, emergent schemas, and the Hydra Model

Nostalgic Essentialism argues that essential biological sex differences between men and women are evidence of God’s plan for human life to be organized according to a strict gender binary, with women positioned under men’s authority in spiritual life. This form of essentialism justifies its claims by appealing to multiple imagined pasts of supposedly orthodox practice, including Eden before the Fall, early Christianity, and any pre-1970s rules that barred women from ordination. This form of gender essentialism, because it turns on assertions of difference as ordained by God, is ready-made to provide an ideological basis for anti-LGBTQ+ actions in conservative Christianity, including in the broader Anglican Communion, and the new North American province of ACNA.

Nostalgic essentialism warrants significant attention because it is a schema for gender in church that is globally influential. GAFCON (the Global Anglican Future Conference) is a group of clergy and lay leaders from across the global Anglican Communion who are so committed to preserving what they see as traditions essential to Anglican Christianity that they have established an alliance among themselves within the Anglican Communion that seeks to agitate for, and establish practices that are in line with provisions of Nostalgic Essentialism. Of their founding, GAFCON writes on their website, "The Gafcon journey began in 2008 when moral compromise, doctrinal error and the collapse of biblical witness in parts of the Anglican communion had reached such a level that the leaders of the majority of the world's Anglicans felt it was necessary to take a united stand for truth." (Gafcon, 2008). ACNA is allied with GAFCON, and though this group represents a small minority of Anglicans in the U.S., their influence globally is tremendous. The Anglican Communion, because of its geographic distribution everywhere the British Empire held a strong presence, is a hugely influential global church, with significant influence over the spiritual lives of millions. Should such a church adopt a schema for gender in church life that endorses complementarianism and eschews equal rights and fair treatment for LGBTQ+ adherents the consequences for many could be quite significant, potentially curbing the agency and freedom of adherents worldwide.

Nostalgic Essentialism and Revolutionary Essentialism offer starkly different visions for the future of Christianity in the 21st Century, as two oppositional schemas that have arisen after a previously-powerful schema was displaced as institutional practices changed. After 1976, ECUSA began ordaining women to the priesthood, and Aristotelian Essentialism no longer held institutional sway. In the Hydra Model, such a change in practice accompanied by the drawing of moral boundaries to exclude from group identity any endorsement of the previous schema for

gender is a decapitation event, the previous instance of gender as social structure had ceased to function as such. Following decapitation, a period of latency ensues during which adherents must contend with confusion, inconsistency, and tensions around the question of what gender should mean, given changes to practice and meaning. As actors draw on the cultural ingredients available to them to make sense of gender's meaning in church, they begin to build up new schemas for gender and sacred authority that contain prescriptions for how resources ought to be organized to best reflect the values contained in each schema. In the Hydra Model, regeneration refers to the emergence of new potential instances of gender as social structure that contain these new schemas and their accompanying models for practices that could make up new structures.

The schemas that form during regeneration are answers to the questions reopened by decapitation. In this example, Aristotelian Essentialism, which said women could not be ordained due their deficiency in comparison to men, was a sufficient answer for the majority of medieval theologians who wrote and enforced Canon law. By 1976, Aristotelian Essentialism was no longer a sufficient explanation for the majority of delegates to ECUSA's General Convention who voted in favor of women's ordination. Afterwards, women could no longer be cast as deficient, but there was no good answer for whether and how gender mattered to God, to Christian belief, or to how church should be done. Two answers began to emerge, and though both are espoused by many adherents today, neither has been so completely adopted that a strong institutional form is clearly identified with it. Revolutionary Essentialism and Nostalgic Essentialism are dialectically-opposed answers to the questions of how gender does and should matter to sacred authority. They are schemas that could form the immaterial basis for new forms of social structure. Regeneration results in polarization as the answers that emerge to make sense of the confusion prompted by decapitation are dialectically opposed to each other and their clash

sets the dimensions of the ideological field opened by the displacement of a previously agreed-upon set of meanings.

Chapter Seven: Durability

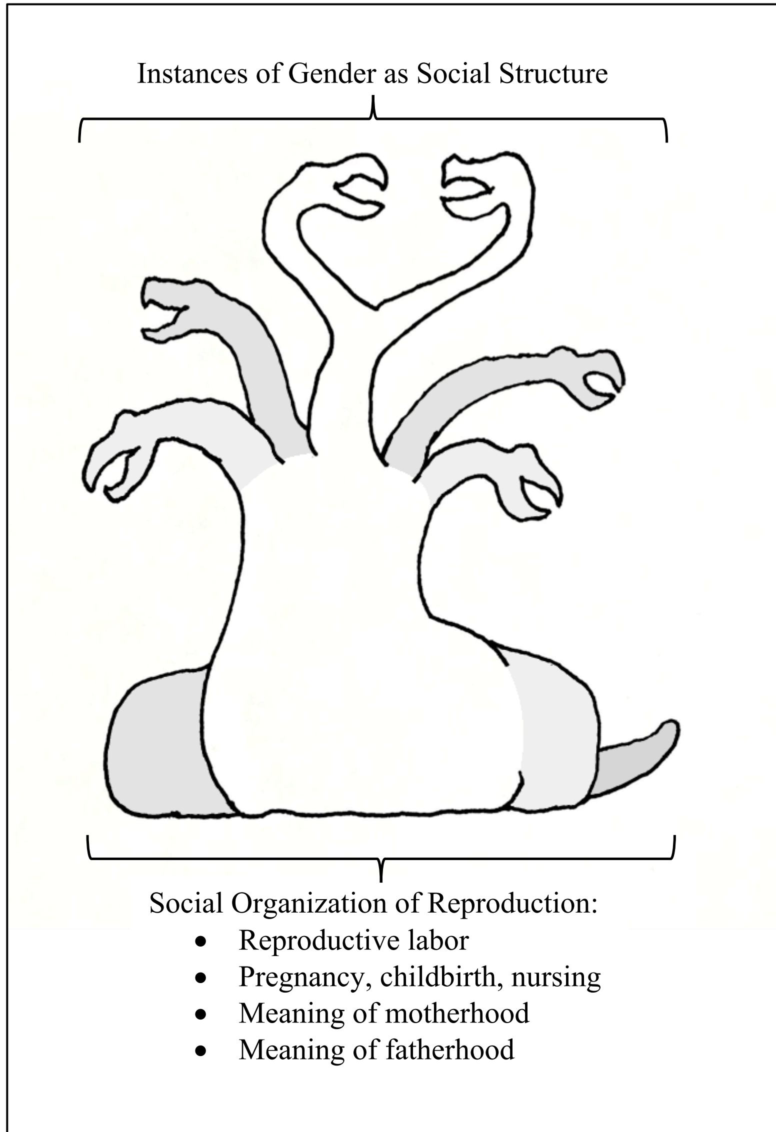

Figure 8: Social organization of reproduction is source of gender's durability

One of the hydra's most notable characteristics as a mythological monster is its durability and persistence in the face of Hercules's attack. Though the monster eventually succumbs, it puts up quite a fight. This chapter will consider how gender remains a persistent force in shaping social life and what explains this endurance in the face of change, much like the mythic monster the Hydra Model is named for. According to Griswold's description of her formulation of The Cultural Diamond, in contrast to a heuristic, a model is not only a tool for thinking, but one that

posits a causal direction (Griswold, 1986, 8). If, as previous chapters have shown, forms of gender essentialism can be displaced, and can regenerate as a constitutive element of social structure, then what causal explanation can the Hydra Model offer for gender's persistence in social life? In the Hydra Model, what explains gender's durability despite changes to practice and meaning? This chapter argues that the organization of social life around the practices and meaning of procreation and reproduction are the source of gender's durability as an organizing force in social life, using data from this case study of ECUSA.

Claiming that gender is located primarily in the social practices surrounding sex, both sexed bodies and procreative sex acts, is not original to this dissertation. Lorber's (1994) classic formulation of the analytic distinction between sex and gender positions sex as those physical characteristics of a body that mark an individual as "male" or "female" while gender is the social accomplishment of such an identity. Ridgeway (2011), in her account of gender's persistence in organizing social life, writes that the nuclear family, formed around a procreative male-female couple and their children, is the basis from which all gender inequalities grow. England (2010) has written of the importance of gender reference groups in setting norms for subsequent generations. Taken together, scholars of gender have consistently pointed to the family as an important site for the persistence of gender and gender-based inequalities. Beyond sociology, psychologist and psychoanalyst Chodorow (1979), in her account of how it can be that mothering is passed from one generation to the next, focuses on the importance of early life experiences of gender in the family in promoting the reproduction of gendered patterns of behavior. And Susan Moller Okin (1989), in her legal theory, suggests that justice, as such, is in crisis (as of writing in late 20th-Century U.S.) because of its rocky foundation on assumptions about the gendered division of labor in which women are supposed to naturally take on all

mothering and reproductive labor responsibilities as unpaid workers. Taking the nuclear family as an example of a structural form for human reproduction, I will argue in accord with these accounts, only disagreeing in that I will assume alternate organizations of social life around reproduction will also act as bases for gender, but that alternate arrangements might result in different practice and meanings of gender. It is not the nuclear family that causes gender, but any social structure organizing reproduction will result in gender as social structure: as the practices involved in reproduction vary, so too will the schemas that make sense of reproductive practices, and therefore, so too will the schemas justifying and upholding the multiple forms of gender as social structure in a society.

I claim that the schemas respondents use to make sense of reproduction inevitably shape the schemas they use to make sense of gender in other social arenas, including sacred authority and the organization of church life. Family and parental imagery and metaphors are common in ECUSA, and using interview data on both the lived experiences of balancing work and family, and on the family-based titles for clergy, I support my claim that schemas for reproduction inform schemas for sacred authority in two ways. First, I show how work/family conflict is pervasive, and exacerbated in the experiences of clergy women, due to the idealization of clergy people as ideal parents to their congregation members, and the women clergy's personal experiences of the perceived conflict between caring for their parishes and caring for their families. Second, I turn to the question of titles for clergy women, showing that respondents remain divided in their attitudes toward using "Mother" as an authoritative title equal to "Father" for priests. This evidence leads me to argue that schemas for gender and sacred authority have regenerated in ECUSA, following the decapitation of Aristotelian Essentialism, because schemas for gender are all bound to the schemas for gender that govern reproductive life, which have

remained stable, and so schemas for gender, in sacramental life and elsewhere, continue to regenerate in order to preserve this stability across society. The durability of all forms of gender essentialism, as a dimension of schemas for sacred authority, even in new formulations, is therefore an outcome of the persistence of the structures governing reproduction.

This chapter sets out the connection between schemas for gender and sacred authority and the social organization of reproductive life. According to the Hydra Model, gendered meanings in any instance of gender as social structure will be fundamentally based in the gendered meanings that uphold the social organization of reproductive life in a given society. This chapter begins, then, with an examination of how clergy are seen as idealized spiritual parents to their congregation members, and how idealized spiritual parenthood carries different expectations for clergy men and clergy women. These divergent expectations for idealized spiritual parenthood carry significant implications for the work/family conflict experienced by clergy women, which is similar to that documented among other professional women, but elevated and exacerbated by expectations that are specific to clergy women. From the realm of experience to that of meaning and metaphor, the chapter then moves to consider titles for clergy men and clergy women. Though "Father" is generally accepted as a title for clergy men, "Mother" for clergy women is considerably less widely endorsed. Many respondents report discomfort with "Mother" as a professional title, and whether "Mother" can ever be a truly equal title to "Father" is actively contested. These several ways in which family shapes what gender means, and ought to mean, for sacred authority in ECUSA point to the foundation of all schemas for gender and sacred authority in the broad patterns of the social organization of reproduction.

Clergy as idealized parents

For clergy women, work/family conflict is exacerbated by widespread expectations among both clergy and laity that clergy will act as idealized parents to their congregation members, taking on the parental role in a spiritual family. Generalized expectations that mothers will take on more care work in the family home seem to carry over into expectations of clergy women, whose allegiance to their own family is seen as conflictual with their duties to their congregation. The conflict is not widely perceived for clergy men.

Many respondents spoke of clergy as spiritual parents to the congregations, sometimes approvingly citing the metaphor, and sometimes critiquing its elision of spiritual and family life. According to this metaphor, clergy men act as spiritual fathers to their congregation members and clergy women act as spiritual mothers. Some see the presence of both men and women in these spiritual parental roles as a step forward for parity and equality between men and women. Deborah, a clergy woman, says, "I think there's something very healthy about having both male and female represented at the altar. Maybe we could say that's a family. … I think it has been very healthy for the church to have both male and female at the altar and to hold up that we are all children of the Lord and not supposed to be one lower than the other." (Deborah, clergy, f) For Deborah, and others who will appear later in this chapter arguing that "Mother" and "Father" are equivalent titles for clergy, both men and women act as idealized parents in their capacities as clergy leaders. Deborah may see the roles of spiritual father and spiritual mother as equivalent to one another, but many respondents talk about the care work expectations placed on clergy women as more intense than those placed on clergy men.

Idealized spiritual motherhood, for clergy women, is seen as conflictual with actual motherhood and caring for one's own family. As will be discussed in greater detail below, clergy

women respondents discuss these experiences of conflicting demands in terms that are familiar, if exacerbated, in the sociology of gender. Among lay respondents, some were quite explicit in their view that clergy women who were providing care to their own family were therefore providing less care and leadership to their congregations. Andrea, a lay woman, talks about her frustrations with her parish's rector, a clergy woman whose adult son lived with her for a time. To Andrea, her rector's willingness to have her son live with her, and presumably provide some care to him, was a sort of betrayal of the congregation's trust. She says,

> We were really optimistic about her when we brought her to our church. As there is with any new leader, you get most of what you pay for sometimes, and I think with her we didn't get everything we were expecting. … She had told us very clearly in our process with her, that … her son had always lived with her, [the two of them] and her son was a young adult at the time, and she was like, "I think it's time for us to live our own lives," but then as soon as she got this job, within a month or two, her son moved down and moved into the rectory with her. Her son has since moved out, that's fine, but it was a couple of years that her son lived with her again. We were like, "You said that you wanted to give him some space to grow up." (Andrea, lay, f)

Andrea uses this example, among others, in the interview to showcase her sense that her rector is not always forthcoming or truthful with her congregation members. Though the details vary, Andrea is not the only lay respondent to comment on her priest's family caregiving responsibilities in comparison to their pastoral care work for the congregation. All such cases, of respondents commenting on their priest's family life in terms of their ability to provide care to the parish, are about clergy women.

Idealized spiritual fatherhood for clergy men, in contrast, to idealized spiritual motherhood for clergy women, is not presented as conflicting with fatherhood in the context of a clergy man's personal family life. Clergy men are perceived as deserving of the title "Father" on the basis of their ordination, and their actual parental status is not considered. Many respondents spoke of an ethic of "Father knows best" in which clergy men held authority on the basis of their

proximity to a gendered ideal of authoritative patriarchal leadership (though usually it was seen as an old-fashioned view it was not contradicted with expectations clergy men would take on care duties in their homes). In contrast, some respondents express concern that referring to a clergy woman who is not a mother as “Mother”, on the basis of her ordination alone, is inappropriate. Title concerns will be addressed again, at more length, later in this chapter.

The care expectations placed on clergy men are also different from those for clergy women. Andrew, a clergy man, offers an excellent example of a common approach to pastoral care work among clergy men who hold rector or head priest positions. He talks about his gifts for growing community and building up congregations, noting that pastoral care is not his forte, but says, “I always hire someone to do that.” Most of Andrew’s associate priests, who have provided the bulk of the pastoral care while serving the parish in a support position, have been women. Marilyn, a lay woman, discusses the role of the unpaid work of lay women in caring for and building up congregations in past decades. She explains that she, and other women in their 60s, are the last of the “mega volunteers” who, according to her, organized church events, handled caring for congregation members in need, and ran the Sunday School and other church programs. Marilyn explains that these women, “came from traditions where their mothers stayed home and raised children … [and] you would do [all that.]” Now that this generation is getting older, and younger lay women are working too much to volunteer so much time to church, “Who's going to run that high tea?” (Marilyn, lay, f). By talking at such length about the role of lay women volunteers, Marilyn exposes one of the ways in which clergy men have not been expected to take on care work for their congregations: women who were excluded from ordained ministry took on a lot of community-building and care work in ECUSA parishes. Then, once women entered ordained ministry, clergy women were often hired as assistants or associates who handled

pastoral care, like the clergy women who worked in that capacity under Andrew. It follows from these interview responses, that many lay people expect to see women, ordained or not, handling care work in parish contexts, and have no such expectation for clergy men who are expected to hold a more traditional leadership role. For clergy men, despite changes in the gender schema upholding sacred authority, idealized parenthood still means “Father knows best”.

Work/family conflict for clergy women

Sociologists of gender have documented the particular challenges of balancing the demands on time and attention that are faced by women in the workforce. Though all workers must contend with the demands of both work and family on their time, women in particular are subject to moral demands on their attention grounded in cultural schemas that articulate the moral esteem appropriate to both work and family as mutually exclusive. The family devotion schema and work devotion schema are fully explicated in Blair-Loy’s *Competing Devotions* (2003), where she shows how these moral schemas are experienced by professional women as a choice between devoting themselves to their family, or to their work. I find that clergy women are acutely aware of both widespread expectations that they will experience conflict between their work and family lives, and their own shifting priorities between work and family throughout the seasons of their working lives. The omnipresence of expectations of work/family conflict across respondents’ discussion of clergy women, and of such experiences of conflict in interviews with clergy women, point to the family, the primary social structure that organizes reproductive life, as a generative source from which respondents import meaning when seeking to build meaning for gender as part of the sacred authority of priests.

Though work/family conflict was discussed in many interviews with respondents both men and women clergy and laity, I will focus on the responses of clergy women in this section, and will particularly focus on the responses of two particular clergy women: Carol, and Melanie. Carol and Melanie will be presented in age order, and are representative of two important generational age cohorts of clergy women: Carol is a Baby Boomer, and Melanie is a millennial. There are also clergy women who are members of both the Silent Generation and Generation X in the sample, but their responses are not included simply in the interest of succinctly pointing to dominant patterns across respondents. What Carol and Melanie clearly show in their responses is that pursuing one's vocation to ordained ministry is often experienced by clergy women as a choice of one's own vocation over one's family life. And further, marriage to a man is perceived as particularly fragile in the face of a woman pursuing her vocation. Parenthood and childcare are experienced as worthy and meaningful, but also act as a barrier to pursuing ordination, and to pursuing full-time clergy work for clergy women. Thus, marriage and mothering, both central elements of the social experience of reproductive life, for clergy women, present obstacles to the pursuit of spiritual vocation.

In general, clergy women's narratives of their own discernment and subsequent clergy career are full of instances of times that their gender complicated their path to ordained ministry. In many cases, marriage and motherhood stand out as life experiences that further complicated pursuing their vocation. Deborah, an older clergy woman, explains how the gendered expectations she experienced impacted her. She says, "When I was first looking at working in the church, women in the church worked basically as deaconesses or nuns. Were expected to not get married. It's been hard on women clergy to be married and having families. The men, that was never seemed to be that much of an issue for them. They knew they were going to have

careers, jobs." (Deborah, Clergy, F). Deborah began to pursue a life in ministry before women's ordination was approved by ECUSA's General Convention in 1976, so her path to ordained ministry included waiting until the prohibitions on women's ordination were removed, and navigating a diocese and bishop that were hostile to women's ordination and stalled her process for several years. Deborah's own experiences have attuned her to how gender shapes clergy's experiences of their vocation and careers, and she see the particular challenges faced by clergy women as shared with all professional women.

Deborah articulates work/family conflict as a challenge presented to all professional women, thus positioning clergy women's experiences as part of a broader societal story. She says,

> I think again with women we're still dealing with things like parenthood, motherhood. In the medical professions, it could be hard for women to take jobs that are 24/7 because they've got family to take care of, so they go into jobs like radiology where you have set hours and you can plan your schedule and stuff like that. I don't think you see that so much with the guys because the guys want to succeed, so they're going to rack up what's going to get them the points to move upward, upward mobility.
> The woman has got to balance the other things that she's trying to take care. There's a big concern with women clergy. … the first women ordained… It came up a lot in the processes and discernment for ordination because it changed when the woman has got this other job going on and feels a commitment to the parish and the husband saying, "Wait a minute, we got married. You're supposed to be home with the children"
> The change in roles was huge and there was a lot of divorce. It was hard on guys. I saw this with women going through seminary whose husbands just couldn't keep up the support if their wife happened to- the pressure and the commitment and things.
> (Deborah, Clergy, woman)

In this excerpt, Deborah points out several concerns for clergy women that appear in interviews with other respondents as well, primary among them the impending threat of divorce. A story shared by several clergy women in the sample, is being married to a man at the outset of their clergy career, and then divorced from that man as their career progressed. Deborah also points to

the strain of balancing the care work demanded in family life, and the care work demanded as part of pastoral care, and suggests that for clergy women in particular professional life is about attainment, but also about providing care constantly. Both Carol and Melanie will show these two common concerns: the threat potentially posed by following one's vocation to a heterosexual marriage, and the demands of caring for children and congregations.

Carol

Carol pursued her call to ordained ministry in mid-life, after having been establishing in another professional career for several years, and after having been in a long marriage to a man and bearing and raising multiple children. Her story includes both the end of her marriage in a painful divorce, and several delays to her own discernment process prompted by caregiving responsibilities. Carol story shows how for many women pursuing their own vocation and call to ordained ministry is undertaken at a cost to their personal lives according to gendered patterns wherein pursuing ordination is treated as a failure to correctly perform marriage and motherhood. Carol put off her own discernment in order to care for her children, and when she did pursue her vocation, she lost her marriage. This is one story but it is not unique in the data. Several clergy women I interviewed had experienced significant delays in their discernment process due to caregiving, usually for children, and several had experienced divorces that they believed were brought on or accelerated by their choice to pursue ordination.

Carol wanted to pursue a discernment process with an eye to ordination for years before she did so. At first, she delayed because the caregiving responsibilities of being a mother to young children were, for her, overwhelming such that it was impossible to fit a discernment process into her life.

I had written to the Bishop's Cannon to the Ordinary, because I'd done the Day of

> Discernment like I told you, and then I did another one seven or eight years later, I came to the same conclusion at the end of both of those, which was I just could not go through the discernment that Holy Orders really requires with young children.
> I just couldn't do it. I could not get enough silence in my day to do what I felt was essential for me to figure out if I really should pursue Holy Orders. She very patiently wrote back all in the fullness of time, Carol, all in the fullness of time. (Carol, Clergy, F)

Carol's diocesan Canon to the Ordinary – the clergy person employed by the diocese to handle all matters of clergy personnel – responded affirming Carol's decision to delay her process. My sample includes several other clergy women who chose to pursue ordination in mid-life after when their children had grown out of early childhood, so there is some evidence to suggest a pattern of pursuing a vocation to ordained ministry after one's childbearing years for clergy women. This is especially common, in my sample, among women who were not exposed to women clergy as children or young adults because their own early life years were before women's ordination was approved.

Carol's story of finally choosing to pursue ordination includes one more interruption for caregiving, and concludes in a painful divorce. She explains the rocky start to her seminary education, which included a long break to provide care to her husband,

> I went back to work when … my younger one was five. I started a Spiritual Director Certification Program .... By then, I was [professionally active] at the time, I'd gone back after my younger daughter was in kindergarten. I started back three days a week … I was still doing church stuff. I then had run the Sunday school, and I taught Sunday school.
> I'd done all the different things that I was interested in doing or that people would allow me to do. I talked to my husband and my girls about it, I said, "Listen, I won't be home on Wednesday nights," which would be a big adjustment for them because as much as we were in the 2000s, our family structure was still pretty traditional. It meant that they would have to figure out what they were going to do for dinner on Wednesday nights. They can have their nights, and figure it out or whatever.
> I made space for that and then six months into it, my husband [had an accident] which completely derailed everything for a number of months. I had to drop out, actually, I had to take a leave of absence from my job because he couldn't take

> care of himself or anything. It was like having an infant again. I had to drop out of that program… and it was a two-year program.
> I picked it back up … and started a second time and really started getting into theology in a very different way and just could not get enough of it, oh my gosh, it was amazing. (Carol, clergy, w)

When she went back, Carol focused on her discernment and training, eventually being ordained as a priest. In the following excerpt, Carol again the decision to finally pursue her own discernment process, after all of the caregiving delays.

> Then I applied to [divinity] school, and [the diocese and I] were in conversation about the whole thing. Actually, it was the final straw for me to apply to school was … One of the exercises you do … is, you imagine yourself lying on your death bed, looking back over your life, not in a morbid kind of way but in an assessing kind of way like, "Oh, I see where that went, that happened and just I made this decision, that decision, and so on." You see if there's anything during your life that you wish you had done that you have not. Is there stuff you've done you regret? Because you've done that, you can't fix that stuff that's long gone, but is there something you haven't done that you really wish you had? I thought, "Oh my gosh, how stupid would I have been?" I would have been so disappointed in myself that I didn't have the courage to try one theology class in a seminary, just a class, I didn't have to decide about ordination, I didn't have to decide the ultimate question of whether I'd wear a collar the rest of my life. I didn't have to go that far, all I had to do was take a class, just to satisfy my intellectual curiosity. I said, "Okay," and it happened, but then that summer, there was a course taught [here] by the dean of the seminary [nearby]. I took that class, and it was amazing, and then it was all over. It was just wonderful and it has been. That's what ended up happening, and I'm sure about the whole ordination process. You assess and reassess as you're going through school. (Carol, Clergy, w)

For Carol, trying out a theology class led to seminary and ordination, and she enjoyed the process, discovering a passion for theological thinking. However, as straightforward as her path to ordained ministry ended up being once she was formally in the process, her family life was not. Carol explains,

> Unfortunately, my marriage did not survive it, even though my husband said he was really supportive of my starting school, it turned out that apparently, he started having an affair that went on for a long time that I knew nothing about the whole time the first half of my seminary years. That was really, really rough, but I can't do anything to change that. That's the story of how I decided to become a priest. I've told the story a number of times, so it doesn't draw tears out of me like

> it used to when I would tell the story.
> (Carol, Clergy, F)

For Carol, pursuing her vocation cooccurred with in the loss of her marriage. Relationships are far too complicated for any straightforward causal claim that pursuing ordination caused the divorce, but it is noteworthy that Carol is not alone. Several clergy women respondents who began to pursue ordination while in a heterosexual marriage to a man experienced divorce concurrent with their discernment processes. For these respondents, heterosexual marriage and a vocation to ordained ministry were in conflict.

Melanie

Among younger clergy women respondents, two elements of Carol's story are less common. First, younger clergy women are less likely to be divorced, though this may be because of their relative youth. And second, younger clergy women are still likely to be mothers, but they are more likely to have continued working while pregnant and while their children are very young. Many take on part-time work, but most continue to work as clergy during their pregnancies and their children's early childhood years. The young clergy women in this study were also ordained fairly young on average – in their twenties, so they did not already have children before they were ordained. Melanie's experiences are representative of this new generation.

Several respondents in this group of young clergy women are in double-clergy marriages, where both partners work for the church, and where both partners have been seminary educated (in most, both are ordained, though not in all cases). In these couples, especially if both spouses are ordained clergy, women's careers still often take a back seat, at least during childbearing

years. Melanie explains some of the logistical complications that double-clergy couples deal with, saying,

> It's complicated because when you're in a clergy couple, there have to be two jobs in a good vicinity of one another. He's happy [in his job] and I'm happy here. I don't want our family to leave [parish] any sooner than is the right time for everybody. So it's not the same as for a single priest or often a male priest because usually his wife is willing to just move with him wherever, and the reverse is not generally the case.
> So, I can't just be like, "Okay. Well, I feel called to be a rector now, so let me look at who's searching for a rector." I need somebody [in town] to need a rector because we're not leaving [his job or this town]. Even though he tells me all the time that he would go if I had something I really felt called to do, but I'm not going to do that to my family; just uproot us for that and then have him dangling and looking for something.
> (Melanie, Clergy, F)

Melanie feels a responsibility to provide her family with stability, and that means limiting her job search geographically to those places that both she and her husband can find clergy positions. Consider that the Diocese of the West has 41 parishes: it can be quite a tall order for both members of a clergy couple to find rector positions within the same diocese. If one spouse has a good rectorship, the other often struggles to find a similarly stable and well-paying clergy position within close proximity. Given hiring patterns that continue to privilege men in rectorship hirings (CPG, 2016), it is likely to be women like Melanie who find their professional position less stable than their husband's. At the time of the interview, Melanie was working as a part-time associate rector, and continuing to spend much of her time providing childcare for the couple's young child. Her hours at the church are limited, so she is not subject to the demands of a full-time clergy position, and for now, she is satisfied with the situation. She explains,

> While I was in my baby bubble was when [my husband] got called to [his rector job]. I mostly focused on our son the first year. Then he got older and I started just feeling the drive to do more ministry, but not ready to completely leave home or leave them on Sunday mornings when I want to be in church worshiping with my son and teaching them to worship because he needs a parent on Sundays. This [part-time associate position] has been a great blend of: I get to exercise my

> priesthood in a public and intentional way now, and I still get to give my attention to what my son needs.
> I don't know how long this is going to fit the bill. For right now, I love it, it's perfect, but there's part of me that has the itch to go and do something on my own and full-time. [My son is a toddler] right now, so it'll probably be a couple more years before I start seriously thinking about that.
> (Melanie, Clergy, F)

For now, Melanie is happy to divide her time between ministry and parenting, and is not concerned to switch her focus to full-time work. However, she expects that she will want to make that transition as her son ages.

Throughout the interview, Melanie expresses concern that her own choice to pursue ordained ministry and motherhood during the same period of her life will result in professional consequences. She explains that she does not see a clear role model among her colleagues; no clergy women she knows have been successful as priests and mothers to a young child at the same time,

> I look at my mentor – [she's] extraordinarily successful, but she's been a priest since she was [in her twenties], and she just had her first child a year ago [in her forties].
> So, she had a whole career before she had a family, so she was able to give all her attention to it and to sidestep all those questions that people ask about; are you really invested because we see you spending all this time with your kids? They don't care if men do that, but if you're a woman, it's an automatic like, "Well, she's not all in." I just feel like I don't see any examples in my life of women with families who are also, in any way, climbing that ladder. I see women who've climbed the ladder corporately and then become priests and then done well, and women who chose not to have families and have done well in that way, but I just feel like it's outside of the scope of my options.
> I'm not bitter about it. I mean, I think it's disappointing to me in people, and in the church, and in just the state of the world; it's disappointing that it's like that but I just want what I'm doing to be rewarding.
> (Melanie, Clergy, F)

Melanie perceives a double standard where clergy women who are mothers are seen as less committed to their congregations than clergy women who are not mothers, and than clergy men, both fathers and non-fathers. Melanie understands this double-standard to be societal, but sees

that it particularly impacts the careers of clergy women because expectations of commitment and care to their congregation are so important for hiring and advancement. For Melanie, caring for her son and caring for her congregation are both forms of ministry, and both are vocations she feels called to. She explains,

> I'm called to be a mom and I had my son and I needed to be home with him because … it was just too much going on and I couldn't afford to pay anybody even if I wanted to. But when [we] came out of that, it's like; I don't want to just sit on my hands and not-- I think that you live out your priesthood at home, too. There's never a time-- I really do believe in ontological change. I suck at it sometimes, but I feel like I'm a priest all the time, whether I'm in an office or a church or my house.
> Public ministry is very different than your ministry and just going about your daily routine. I don't think I would want to put that off for 10 years because I'm in one stage of my life. I think they can coexist. It's messy and it's stressful, but I would rather have that kind of chaos than feel like I'm suppressing or ignoring these other parts of myself that have a drive to be expressed as well.
> (Melanie, Clergy, F)

Melanie would rather live a life that is "messy" and "stressful" than have to choose between motherhood and ordained ministry. For her, both are necessary for her to live into her vocation.

The challenge for Melanie is to figure out how to live into her vocation to ordained ministry and her vocation to motherhood at the same time. When asked "What do you see as the gifts, qualities, talents, etc. that a person needs for a career in ordained ministry?" Melanie responds by rejecting the notion that the career paths readily apparent to her in the church are actually open to her as an individual, because of her status as a young clergy woman who is a mother. She says,

> I say that- and this is going to be kind of a depressing response- but I say that as like I've kind of given up on that idea of career. Mostly because once I had my son, it just kind of changed how I looked at it. Which doesn't mean that I don't want to do really great and worthwhile ministry, but I just don't really care about climbing the ladder anymore in a way that I think I might have had ambition for when I was in seminary still.
> Some of that's just because I'm realistically looking at the path for women in the church and seeing that options are extraordinarily limited; and why invest my

> sense of the worth of my ministry in this path that has been carved out by men and that is still largely fulfilled by men? And if I think that the only way to find success and happiness is to follow that career path, then I'm just setting myself up to be anxious or disappointed. I'd love to see that change, but I just don't care enough to be really invested in changing it. I care about being fulfilled right now and about showing my children that whatever kind of ministry we're doing is really worthwhile and fulfilling.
> (Melanie, Clergy, F)

Melanie says she is not concerned with pursuing a career as such, but rather with ensuring that her work and her days are imbued with meaning. She has chosen to turn inward to solve the dilemma of how to pursue her career in a way that fits with her goals for her family life. Melanie perceived a structural problem and is attempting to find a way to make her co-existence with constraints internally peaceful. Other clergy mothers noted the same dilemma, though they varied in their response to it. What Melanie's response makes clear for the purposes of this study is that for clergy women, particularly young clergy women, they experience a pervasive mismatch between their own ambitions for their lives and the career pathways they see laid out before them as possibilities.

Both Carol and Melanie show in their stories how much clergy women perceive themselves to be subject to the same strains that other professional women experience, chief among them the often-conflicting demands of work and family. For clergy women care is a large component of their professional responsibilities, and so the care demands of work and family are perceived by them, and by others in their communities (lay respondents mentioned this concern) as in conflict and as a zero-sum. Clergy women are not unique among professional women, but rather are consistent in their experiences with the patterns observed among professional women by sociologists of gender for decades. Clergy women's careers are impacted by work-family conflict, providing one of the reasons that clergy women's careers often lag behind those of

similar men. In addition to offering an explanation for career stalls, clergy women's experiences of work-family conflict also point to the organization of clergy women's reproductive lives – their marriages and their parenthood – as foundational elements of their lives which impact their professional careers. For clergy women, family can have profound impacts on the course of professional lives, offering evidence that the gender structure most foundational to gender throughout society is in the structuring of reproduction and the gendering of reproductive labor.

"Mother" as a clergy title

When ECUSA priests are addressed in writing, it is as "the Rev. NAME", when they speak to each other collegially, most use first names to refer to one another, however, when lay people speak to or about clergy people, a title is usually employed to denote the clergy person's ordination status. In other Mainline Protestant churches, "Reverend" and "Pastor" are in common usage, but in ECUSA, neither is common. Instead, in most of ECUSA, the common practice for many years has been to call priest "Father"[29]. Women's entry into ordained ministry challenged that practice, and the question of how women clergy ought to be addressed persists. Respondents expressed a wide range of views on the subject of appropriate titles for clergy, and the wide range of opinions presented is evidence for two important findings. First, discomfort persists around women clergy's titles, particularly the title "Mother", signaling that there is a deep

[29] Respondents made clear that this practice has varied with time and place. Some older respondents recalled called their priest "Mr." as children. These respondents also remembered morning prayer as the most common religious service, with Eucharist (communion) being reserved for Holy days, and described a style of worship often referred to by Episcopalians as "low church". When the Book of Common Prayer was revised in 1979 it included more "high church" rubrics for services, including instruction that Eucharist (communion) ought to be the center of worship services every week, and more provisions for practices like the burning of incense, the chanting of prayers, and even processions. Through the late 20th-Century in ECUSA, "Father" came to be in more heavy use, even in those dioceses and parishes that had previously used "Mr."

connection between discomfort felt around authority for professional women and widespread expectations for women as mothers. Second, the lack of agreement about what it means to use "Mother" as a professional title signals how unsettled the meanings associated with family and reproductive life are in the contemporary U.S.

"Mother" prompts discomfort

The most common response to the question "How do you feel about clergy titles?" which was followed with either "What do you like to be called?" for clergy, or "What do you like to call your clergy?" for lay people, was that it all depends. Respondents then spoke about the importance of finding a form of address that was comfortable for both parties. Though there was little agreement as to how clergy ought to be addressed, there was broad agreement that many people find "Mother" an uncomfortable title for clergy women. Clergy women, clergy men, lay women and lay men all expressed discomfort with "Mother" either on their own part, or on the part of others that they had observed or spoken with in their parish community.

For this project's purposes, such broad discomfort with "Mother" as a title for clergy is extremely interesting because it signals a mismatch in respondents' interpretive matrices between the meaning they associate with the word "mother" and the meaning they associate with the person of a woman holding legitimate sacred authority as an ordained priest. "Mother" explicitly invites actors to bring up meanings associated with motherhood and how reproductive labor is organized in family structures. Therefore, widespread discomfort using the word "mother" as an authoritative title provides evidence that the persistence of gender essentialism, even in new forms as Revolutionary Essentialism and Nostalgic Essentialism, is grounded in the contested relationships between the schemas that uphold the social organization of reproduction in contemporary U.S. society and the schemas emerging to justify sacred authority in ECUSA.

In interviews, when respondents expressed discomfort with “Mother” as a title for priests, I followed up by asking them to explain that discomfort (either why they felt that way or why they thought others did, depending on the content on their previous answer). Many respondents spoke about the tradition of calling priests “Father” as foundational to their understanding of how clergy should be addressed. Most respondents felt comfortable with “Father”, even some who spoke about how uncomfortable they were with it in theory found that in practice they found “Father” an easy title to use for clergy men. Doug, a clergy man, explains that in his experience people are comfortable using “Father” to show deference because it is a practice they are used to. He says,

> It’s that comfort level, what have you grown up with? What are you comfortable with? One of the people at [my home parish] who is one of the first people to just make sure we felt welcome and we had this wonderful relationship as soon as I was ordained, it was “Father.” We had that conversation "You know you can call me Doug?" "Yes, I know I can, Father. I prefer to call you ‘Father’, I want to reverence your role." For me, it changed the dynamic of our relationship because now it was always “Doug.” (Doug, clergy, m)

For Doug, a friend’s decision to use a title to address him changed their relationship. For Doug’s friend, using “Father” was a comfortable way to show deference to Doug after he was ordained.

“Father” has not been universally by ECUSA members in all times and places, but according to respondents, in the Diocese of the West it has been common practice for many decades. Given the Diocese of the West’s conservatism before the 2000s and 2010s, there were not many women clergy in the diocese for many years. Recently, clergy women have made significant gains in the Diocese of the West, especially as rectors and leaders of large parishes. The widespread comfort with “Father” in the diocese has been challenged as more and more women clergy are visible and in leadership positions and they must be addressed.

In reminiscences of how clergy women and their congregations navigated the question of titles when clergy women were first ordained in ECUSA, several respondents recall clergy women who simply chose to go by “Father” as that was the tradition for priests at the time. Abigail, a lay woman, remembers her first encounter with a clergy woman, she says, “The first woman priest I ever met- this is back in the mid ’70s I think it was, if not earlier- wanted to be addressed as and referred to as ‘Father’ whatever her last name because I forgot, because that was the title for a priest in those days. I thought, ‘Wait a minute.’ I got why she wanted for that title to be used for her: because she was a priest, that’s what you called a priest kind of thing.” (Abigail, lay, f). In Abigail’s memory, this clergy woman chose to adopt the title used by all priests at the time, despite the mixed gendering of the title and her person. For her, according to Abigail, her position as a member of the clergy should be recognized using the title used for clergy. Charlotte, also a lay woman, had a similar experience with a clergy woman who was active in her faith community decades ago. Charlotte was not specific, I would estimate this encounter took place in the 1980s, the first full decade of women’s ordination. Charlotte explains that Robin was a clergy woman who preferred to be called “Father” because, as Charlotte explains,

> She was standing in for Christ. … So, because Christ was a human male, and that she felt as the sanctified, or whatever the liturgical-- the ordained representative of Christ in the Eucharist, that “Mother” was not-- I suppose it meant that she wanted to stand in for Christ in every way, including gender. We didn’t get into a lot of discussion about it, but I think she felt-- and I’m projecting, like she wanted to bury her own persona and identity in that moment, kind of a method acting thing. That, if she is standing in for Christ, she’s standing in for Christ, and to insist on being called “Mother” would be like saying, "I’m not really Christ, I’m also Robin." (Charlotte, lay, f)

Robin’s desire to remove herself and provide a channel for the divine is also reflected in several clergy interviews and discussed in Chapter 2 as part of how clergy experience their vocation. For

Robin, in Charlotte's memory, her gender was irrelevant to her ability to channel the Holy Spirit and perform sacraments. Drawing attention to gender would potentially interrupt her attempts to open a channel to the divine. Therefore, for Robin, "Father" was a preferable title because it was part of tradition and drew as little attention as possible to who was performing the sacraments, instead focusing attention on the tradition itself.

Some respondents spoke at length about what they think the widespread discomfort they observe with "Mother" as a clergy title means for gender in ECUSA. Beverly and Denise and are both lay women, and both offer explanations for what discomfort with "Mother" means. Beverly argues that it is further evidence of the challenges earning respect for professional women, tailored to the case of ECUSA with its traditions. She explains,

> In terms of building a traditional congregation, then women clergy face this really interesting double whammy where on the one hand, they face all the hurdles I guess that women face when they go into a traditionally male profession like doctoring and lawyering which was what they faced 25 years ago in doctoring and lawyering. Now half of all doctors are women. They also face the erosive quality that comes with the influx of women because women are seen as very nurturing, very intuitive. I think they were much more quickly accepted once the doors were open.
>
> They were accepted into seminaries and that sort of thing much more quickly than they got into medical school, say, or law school. Professions that have an equal or a predominant percentage of women are de facto become considered less prestigious. At the very time that they're going against the old guard that says women can't be priests and, "What am I supposed to call you, 'Mother', not 'Father'? I'm just going to call you 'Father,'" [laughs] similar to outright hostile comments. The profession itself is becoming less and less respected. It moved from a low-demand high-respect position to a high-demand low-respect position. All clergy have felt that shift from high demand to low respect but it hits women doubly hard because they're also working against just innate sexism.
>
> You'd think the Episcopal Church-- you can't expect any organization that still values Elizabethan poetry to be an organization that's also going to go for the next new-fangled thing. This is going to be by its nature a community that changes slowly. I think only the Catholic Church changes more slowly than the Episcopal Church. There is that too. All the people who just don't want change are somehow a little more empowered to be curmudgeonly about it. (Beverly, lay, f)

In Beverly's explanation, "Mother" is representative of clergy women's broader desire to be treated respectfully and with the deference they feel is due their status as ordained priests. Lay people's reticence to use the title, in Beverly's view, is reflective of a broader reticence to view clergy women with deference and respect. Beverly sees this reticence as grounded in broader societal difficulty deferring to women, even when women attain high professional status, be they clergy women, doctors, or lawyers.

Denise's explanation for the widespread discomfort she observes with "Mother" as a title starts from her observation that "Mother" is not as commonly used as "Father" in general. She points out that while "Father" is a form of address for priests in both ECUSA and Roman Catholicism, and is therefore something most people have come across, "Mother" for priests is unfamiliar to many. Wondering about the discomfort, she begins, "You know what I'm saying? Why is 'Mother' an issue? Is it because everybody has weird problems with their mom? Wow. Well, what about people have problems with their dad? That's not it. There's an acceptance of 'Father', maybe because okay, the Roman Catholic Church had all these 'Father, Father, Father', 'Father' forever. There's this 'Father, Father' hierarchy thing and there just hasn't been 'Mother, Mother, Mother,' right? (Denise, lay, f). Denise then continues her explanation by arguing that "Father" as a title holds a professional association, while "Mother" does not yet for most people. She compares "Father" to "Doctor" as words that are both titles used to address individuals, but also words that can refer to the professional position that individual holds. Denise notes that "Mother" does not have an established professional association for most people, so using the title may bring up associations with the word "mother" from non-church contexts more quickly and easily that "Father" does. She explains, "When people say 'Father so and so', maybe they don't think about 'father'. Maybe it's like 'doctor'. 'Doctor so and so'. Maybe that word doesn't mean-

- You know what I mean? ‘Mother’ still means mother. I still call it, my mother. Maybe, the meaning of that word is not ‘Mother’ and ‘Father’ in the clergy context, they don’t have that same meaning yet. I don’t know how to say it. That’s just the theory to set up now.” (Denise, lay, f). According to Denise, discomfort using “Mother” as a title for women clergy may be stemming from the word “mother” still being associated with motherhood and mothering, and with the professional status of a woman who is a priest. In contrast, the long tradition of calling men who are priests “Father” means that many people, according to Denise, associate “Father” with multiple meanings, some tied to fatherhood and fathering, and some tied to sacred authority and the position of priest.

Age is a major factor in the discomfort some respondents report witnessed around the use of “Mother” as a title for clergy women. The general pattern related in interviews is that lay people are less comfortable calling a young woman “Mother” than an older woman, and the older a lay person is the more discomfort they report using “Mother.” Thomas, a clergy man reflects on how lay people at this parish are comfortable calling him “Father” but uncomfortable calling his wife, also a clergy person, “Mother”: he says,

> I think one of the interesting things that is quite something when—[my wife] likes to be called “Mother” … When she mentioned that [in her parish] and said, ‘You can call me “Mother"’, some people were like, ‘You’re like my granddaughter’s age. I’m not going to call you “Mother."’ Yet they call her rector ‘Father’. I think there’s that inability to see the authority in the same way. I don’t know exactly what the root cause of that is. (Thomas, clergy, m)

Michelle, a clergy woman, relates a very similar experience. She works at a large parish, where she is an associate and the rector is a man. Michelle prefers to be called “Mother”, and has received pushback from congregation members, which she experiences as a rejection of her sacred authority. She says,

> Just to go off of my own experience in the church where I am now, it's harder for people to-- I think, for me also, I can't separate my gender from my age and also looking really young. Baby boomers in my church, from the beginning, call me "Honey" and have a hard time calling me "Mother Michelle" and always are like, "I can't call you 'Mother Michelle', you're younger than my kids." At the same time, they call our rector "Father Simon", and don't have a problem with that and he's not as young as me, but younger than they are and still constantly say, "It's hard for me to call you in this," which to me is them saying, "It's hard for me to see you as a priest," with that authority that a priest has. (Michelle, clergy, f)

Linda, a clergy woman, had similar experiences to Michelle, being told by congregation members that she was simply too young to be referred to as "Mother." Linda says lay people, especially women, would tell her she was too young for such a title. She explains that to her, that explanation "… which I didn't think was fair because if the male priest was young, they didn't have an issue, but I thought maybe that was how they were rationalizing it. A lot of times, it was just I just feel uncomfortable using that language and I'd be like, 'What do you call Father Ben?' They'd be like 'Yes, Father and that's so common we've been saying that forever.' It was as if it was just new, that was how they couched it, just a new and weird thing." (Linda, clergy, f). Thomas, Michelle, and Linda all note that lay people often express discomfort using "Mother" as a title for clergy women, and especially for young clergy women. This discomfort is felt by some clergy themselves, as Dorothy explains. She says, "I was 29 when I was ordained. I was in this community where there were a lot of older people. It just felt weird. It felt weird to have these older people calling me 'Mother.' I also never had children of my own. I need to probably think more about that. I wasn't like I hated it or anything, I just didn't feel comfortable with it for myself." (Dorothy, clergy, f). Dorothy's discomfort with being called "Mother" mirrors the discomfort many lay people feel calling a woman younger than themselves "Mother". In addition to age, Dorothy also raises the question of whether a clergy woman needs to be a mother in her personal life in order to be called "Mother" in her professional life.

One final source of discomfort with "Mother" related by many respondents is a sense that the word mother must refer to a woman with children, and generally is used to refer to one's own mother, and using "Mother" as a professional title feels discordant. Philip, a lay man, explains his own discomfort with "Mother" as a title, which is used by his rector, saying, "It took me a while to get used – I called Jennifer, and I said, 'My mom is my mom. Can I call you Jennifer?' Now, since she gave birth to a nine-pound baby last year, 'Mother Jennifer' is appropriate." [chuckles] (Philip, lay, m) For Philip, calling Jennifer "Mother" is easier now that she is herself a mother. Sarah, a clergy woman, expresses concern that "Mother" should not be used for women who are not mothers themselves. She says, "I think it's particularly inappropriate for a young woman who's not married or doesn't have children to be called Mother. I think that's not appropriate." (Sarah, clergy, f). Both Philip and Sarah offer opinions that are common according to the experiences relayed by other respondents: many people feel that "Mother" as a form of address for a clergy woman is especially uncomfortable if that woman is not herself a mother in her personal life. While "Father" is understood as a title having to do with one's position in a church community, "Mother" is still primarily associated with one's position in a nuclear family for most ECUSA adherents.

What should clergy titles be?

Respondents agree that the tradition they are most familiar with for clergy titles is using "Father" to refer to priests, and that that tradition is complicated by the influx of women into clergy positions. Clergy titles are contested because women could not easily be addressed with the title already in use for men as ECUSA adherents generally found it strange to call women "Father" (there are a few notable exceptions like those described in the previous section). With the tradition unmoored, respondents relay many experiences of individual negotiation around the

question of title. The most common responses from lay people echo Beverly, who says, “My feelings are that I will call them whatever they like to be called” (Beverly, lay, f), and the most common responses from clergy echo Michelle who says, “I’ve made different choices in all the different situations” (Michelle, clergy, f). But in seeking to sort out why “Mother” so often elicits feelings of discomfort among ECUSA adherents, respondents wrestled with what “Mother” means as a title for a person in a position of authority.

“Mother” provides equity?

For some respondents, “Mother” is the preferred title for clergy women because it both echoes the tradition of using “Father” for men while emphasizing the clergy woman’s social identity as a woman. These respondents see “Mother” and “Father” as equivalent titles, and see the widespread use of “Mother” an outward corrective to women’s past exclusion from ordained ministry. Abigail, a lay woman, says that “Mother” provides equity, and especially so in cases where clergy men are called “Father”, she says,

> Why it matters is recognition. I think especially with women to be addressed or referred to as "Mother", whatever, says, "Yes, you are a priest." If it is the custom for the men priests to be referred to or addressed as "Father", it’s a gender equity kind of thing. In that case, it does make a difference. On the other hand, in one sense it doesn’t because you recognize they’re a priest and what you call them is whatever you call them. I can see where if all the guys are being addressed as "Father" and all the women are just being addressed by their first names, that’s a different matter. (Abigail, lay, f)

Abigail’s concern that clergy men would be addressed with a title while clergy women were not is common among respondents who endorse the use of “Mother”. Several clergy women recount either observing instances where clergy women were not given a title when clergy men were, or have had that experience themselves. Jessica, a clergy woman, explains how she came to embrace the title “Mother” early in her clergy career, despite personal misgivings, because she

found that it ensured parity, she explains,

> Here everyone goes by their first name which is amazing and is my overwhelming preference but when I got to [my first job], I worked for a man who was “Father”. His daughter and his wife called him “Father So-and-So”. It was weird and I knew again because of the authority that he carried and because of just the history and cultural context of that community that it could not be Father So-and-So and Jessica. I was like, "Okay, I’m going to be ‘Mother,’" because there needs to be parity here.
> It’s a little weird when you’re … 28, and you’ve been ordained for five minutes and you have a 75-year-old … woman calling you “Mother”, that’s some awkward authority juggling going on there. It really took me a while to be able to use it to refer to myself, like to answer the phone and say, "Hi, this is Mother Jessica." Now that sounds reasonably normal but God, that was an adjustment. Really to me the titles are for women are about establishing equity and parity. I think that’s why a lot of women cling to them so adamantly because there are so many times when you’ll be introduced at some public event well, like, "Oh, we have Reverend So-and-So, Reverend So-and-So, Reverend So-and-So, and Suzy." You’re just like, "Hi, I am also in a collar." I think it’s important to call that out. (Jessica, clergy, f)

Michelle, another clergy woman, prefers to be called “Mother” for much the same reason. She explains, “When I started at my church, everyone calls the rector ‘Father Simon’. I came in. I decided I want to be ‘Mother Michelle’ because I want Father and Mother to be – Mother is the equal term for Father. That goes with how I identify as a woman. To me it’s, that’s the equal term, then that’s going to be what I’m going to be called.” (Michelle, clergy, f). Abigail, Jessica, and Michelle reflect one common view in ECUSA on the question of title for clergy, arguing that “Father” for clergy men is an ensconced tradition and so clergy women ought to be called “Mother” as the equivalent term available for women. Respondents who hold this view see “Mother” and “Father” as equivalent titles, both in terms of the social relationship they imply, and in terms of the authority they command.

There is a detracting view present across several interviews among respondents who hold that the legacy of patriarchy persists in shaping meaning in contemporary U.S. society such that “Father” and “Mother” can never be equal titles, “Father” will always outrank “Mother”.

Amber, a lay woman, have given the matter a great deal of thought and her responses offer a fair snapshot of this view. Amber says, “Especially with still our society being so patriarchal, ‘Mother’, to me, doesn’t have as much ‘oomph’ or power as saying ‘Father’.” (Amber, f, lay). Amber does not argue that “Mother” should never be used as a title for clergy women, but she worries that its use unintentionally reifies clergy women’s potentially subordinate status in relation to clergy men who are “Father”. For Amber, ECUSA should adopt titles for men and women clergy that signal gender equity in the church, but she is skeptical that “Mother” accomplishes this goal. She explains,

> In a way, I wonder if the “Mother”/”Father” thing is the Episcopal Church’s way of saying, "We ordain women," and this is a response to patriarchy by saying, "We have ‘Mother’, we have ‘Father’ and we’re standing up for the fact that we ordain women by even having a title for them." For me as someone who’s in the society, I still carry with me those societal assumptions, so when I go to church and I hear “Mother”, “Father”, I’m still under the impression that “Father” is more of an authority figure than “Mother”. I think the church is probably mostly responding, especially the Episcopal Church, responding and trying to do the best thing, but you could just never get rid of the outside influence on it. (Amber, lay, f)

According to Amber, so long as fatherhood is culturally associated with authoritativeness, and motherhood is not, “Mother” cannot act as a truly equal title to “Father”. What Amber’s concerns over “Mother” show is just how deeply the meaning of “Mother” and “Father” in church are based in the meanings people associate with motherhood and fatherhood, with childbearing and childrearing as it is governed by the social structures that organize reproduction in society.

In ECUSA, the tradition for clergy titles is in flux, practices are still changing and are not standardized. Respondents vary in what they think new practices should be, some arguing that “Mother” should be widely adopted as it ensures equality for clergy men and women. Others worry that “Mother” is not an equal title to “Father” because of societal attitudes that place

fathers above mothers in family authority[30]. What each of these position holds in common is a sense that there is no obvious and agreed-upon answer for what clergy ought to called; respondents are cognizant of a shift in practice, and a shift in meaning brought on by women's entry into clergy positions. The fact of ECUSA having a tradition of using "Father" as a clergy title and now addressing whether "Mother" ought to be used as a clergy title means that these interviews show how discomfort with women occupying positions of credentialed professional authority is associated with discomfort with mothers being seen as authoritative persons – the contested meanings at play in considering "Mother" as a title showcase how deeply all instances of gender in social structure are tied back to how reproduction is organized in a society. In terms of the Hydra Model, the social organization of reproduction is the causal root of gender's persistence as social structure. Instances of gender as social structure are likely to regenerate, just as sacramental ministry as an instance of gender as social structure has, so long as the social organization of reproduction currently grounding all gender in society endures.

This chapter does not argue, in a re-tread of Firestone (1970), that gender equity requires an uprising or revolution led by women and waged over the control of human reproduction. Though that argument is compelling, I find that the causal relationship between control over reproduction and how gender inequalities persist is not so straightforward. Instances of gender inequalities maintained within social structures can change dramatically despite the persistence of the normative nuclear family as the social site of reproduction. In this case, women have come to make up almost half of working ordained ECUSA clergy, and an increasing share of bishops

[30] Some respondents argue that titles that use family imagery should be discarded as they invite unhealthy expectations of clergy relationships with congregation members.

(Schjonberg, 2019). However, despite their professional rise, clergy women in ECUSA still face obstacles to their legitimate holding of sacred authority in the daily practices around clergy titles. Clergy titles in ECUSA draw on traditional usage of "Father" to refer to clergy men, and "Mother" as the analog for clergy women draws widespread opposition from clergy and Laity alike. "Mother" is unpalatable to many ECUSA adherents because of the associated meanings it invites that are drawn from the idealized nuclear family. Whether "Mother" is equally authoritative as "Father" remains an open question for respondents in this study, with some respondents vehement that it is not, and others equally sure that it is; this disagreement suggests that the direction of change between social structures directly engaged in control over reproduction – the family – and change in social structures not directly engaged in reproduction but also important social sites for gender – the church – is underdetermined.

I argue, therefore, that analysts of social change in matters of gender, should expect to find a relationship between their case and reproduction as it is currently organized in society. The Hydra Model is helpful to gender scholars in its call for a clear delineation of how reproduction matters to the instance of change in gender as social structure under investigation. If an instance of gender as structure is understood to be a head of the hydra, subject to decapitation, latency, and regeneration, then the social organization of human reproduction is the source of the hydra's endurance, and therefore inequalities that stem from reproductive inequities underlie the persistence of the gender essentialisms that regenerate after decapitation.

Chapter Eight: What the Hydra Model offers

This dissertation makes both theoretical and empirical contributions to the sociology of gender. Analytically, the Hydra Model solves two problems for analysts of gender and social change. First, it offers a structural approach to gender that is more specific than the Risman's original formulation of gender structure theory. Rather than positing universality across gender as one social structure, the Hydra Model offers a vision of gender as many social structures with one common foundation. It also avoids the pitfalls of approaches which emphasize the particularity of an empirical case to the detriment of generalizability by laying out the patterns in how gender changes that can be used to analyze other instances of gender as social structure. Though social change may be underdetermined, the Hydra Model offers analysts a map of how change in gender as social structure can be predicted to unfold. Empirically, this study provides an illustration of how it is that gender's influence on social life persists despite significant social change. Ridgeway predicted that gender's persistence was grounded in the nuclear family as a durable patterning of social life and this study has shown how the causal relationship between reproductive life and gender elsewhere in society in organized. By combining a rich empirical story with broadly applicable theoretical insights, this dissertation contributes to sociologists' tools for analyzing gender and social change.

In this concluding chapter, I revisit the study's argument, providing an overall summary. I also note the study's limitations. Then I consider Popper's paradox of tolerance and what it means for a global church to truly value the discomforts and hurts of all its members. I will present some respondents' experiences with their own spiritual callings being complicated or disrupted by moves to accommodate the discomfort of those who would question the validity of their call on the basis of gender and/or sexuality. I will suggest that more such cases can be

expected across the Anglican Communion in coming years as the polarization seen in the regeneration chapters is likely going to continue around issues of gender and sexuality and sacred authority. My hope is that the Hydra Model may offer a tool for understanding the turbulence around gender and sexuality likely to continue rippling through social life in the 21st-Century.

The story so far

This dissertation has used interview data to examine how ECUSA adherents understand what gender means to sacred authority and church life more than four decades after women's ordination was first approved by the General Convention of ECUSA in 1976. Before women's ordination was approved, the practice of excluding women from ordination to holy orders was necessitated and upheld by a form of gender essentialism that I have called Aristotelian Essentialism, which was rooted in medieval theologian's (particular Aquinas's) interpretations of Aristotle's work on human sexual difference. Aristotelian Essentialism held that women's fundamental deficiencies, due to their bodily role in reproduction, prevented them from holding sacred authority. When women began to be ordained as priests and hold the sacred authority to consecrate, ECUSA adherents erected a moral boundary to exclude Aristotelian Essentialism from consideration.

However, changes in practices and an exclusion of old forms of meaning-making do not automatically lead to widely-shared new understandings and new meanings. I have found that tension and inconsistency persist as to what gender means, or ought to mean, in church life. In sorting through inconsistency, respondents develop cognitive strategies to cope with unclear or unsettled meaning. I have shown that respondents employ Intentional Gender-Blindness and

Gender Pragmatism, both of which are cognitive strategies seeking to describe the meaning of gender in church life, but also to avoid activism on gender issues. Despite the exclusion of Aristotelian Essentialism from church life, ECUSA adherents still lack a widely-shared and agreed-upon set of meanings for gender in sacred authority and church life.

New meanings for gender emerge, carving out oppositional ideologies: meanings that come with associated prescriptions for practice. The meanings in both ideologies are forms of gender essentialism, neither is Aristotelian Essentialism. They are new forms, Revolutionary Essentialism and Nostalgic Essentialism. One of these ideologies appears to be increasingly accepted among ECUSA adherents – Revolutionary Essentialism. The other is aligned with those defecting from ECUSA, usually for the nascent ACNA – Nostalgic Essentialism. This process of ideological splitting around questions of gender and sexuality in church life appears to be happening somewhat similarly globally, though of course national and local contexts shape each emergence.

Each form of gender essentialism found in this interview data is somehow basing meanings for gender in sacred authority and church life on meanings for sex – biological bodies and human reproduction, both meanings of the word sex. The durability of gender essentialism despite its need to be reformulated comes from the persistence of the social organization of reproduction[31].

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[31] How changes in reproduction unfold is underdetermined. Over the course of the 20th Century, reproduction and family formation changed in unprecedented ways. First, the advent of effective vaccination for many infectious diseases that previously drove infant and child mortality meant that parents could be more confident the children who were borne to them would survive. An important component of the epidemiological transition, this drastic reduction in infant and child mortality reduced the number of children a couple had to produce in order to be sure of their offspring's survival. Second, technological advances in reliable contraception including the development of both hormonal birth control (i.e. "the pill) and long-term birth control methods like implants and IUDS, and the advent of reproductive technologies like IVF, when coupled

In this dissertation, I have argued that the story of women's ordination in ECUSA showcases a pattern of how social change to gender as social structure unfolds that can be expected to be replicated across other instances of change to gender as a social structure, and I have termed that pattern the Hydra model. The Hydra model predicts that the following pattern will be visible in instances of change to gender as social structure. Gender is not one social structure, but many instances of social structure each of which has a discernable set of gendered practices upheld by a form of gender essentialism. Any given form of essentialism can be displaced as a powerful schema if its argument and logic are found to be irrational or indefensible by people. Once a schema has been displaced and decoupled from the practices it once justified and necessitated, if a moral boundary is drawn to exclude that form of gender essentialism from debate or consideration, decapitation has occurred. After decapitation, a period of latency ensures. New gender practices, those now uncoupled from their previous schemas, are not so closely associated with agreed-upon meanings for their gendered element as they once

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with social control regimes that offered these technologies to individuals, meant that potentially procreative couples could control when to have children with more accuracy and agency than ever before. And third, beginning with the winning of women's suffrage early in the 20th Century, a series of legal moves to extend the rights of citizenship to women, including the right to own property, to credit, to attend universities, to play university sports, to use contraception, to no-fault divorce, and to abortion care (though that right has recently been curtailed by the U.S. Supreme Court), fundamentally changed women's agentic control over their own lives such that women could separate their economic well-being from their marital status for the first time in the post-industrial era (I will not speculate as to this being a first for ever in Western history, but it is a noteworthy shift in women's lives). Women began to pursue higher education in unprecedented numbers, pursuing careers in previously all-male professions (whether those professions were all-male officially or not), they delayed marriage, they had fewer children. All of these material changes required a rearrangement of the meaning associated with reproduction as it unfolds in family formation in the U.S. What does it all mean? As long as the practices of human reproduction, and the meaning thereof, remain in such flux as they have been for past fifty years in U.S., analysts and scholars should expect to see disagreement and inconsistencies in the meanings made of gender in sacred life and the church, and in social structures throughout society.

were, and so actors are faced with practices that lack a clear meaning everyone agrees upon and can easily defer to. This disjuncture creates feelings of tension, and so people seek to make meaning. They borrow from elsewhere in their surrounding society – from other instances of gender as social structure – looking to find something similar enough to import and use to make sense of their world. These cognitive strategy for sense-making, wherein gender schemas are borrowed from elsewhere in society to make sense of a set of gender practices that are not so firmly anchored in a schema for gender, help actors exercise their individual agency in discerning the meaning of their practices. When an old schema is decapitated, concurrent with latency, a period of regeneration begins. An ideological field opens; this field is then filled with opposing, dialectically-related emergent ideologies that suppose new forms of gender schemas to justify and necessitate new forms of gender practice for the structure that is undergoing change[32]. The root of gender's durability is in its tie to the organization of reproductive labor in society. As gender's meaning across social institutions continues to face challenges from social movements, analysts should expect to see decapitation, latency, and regeneration throughout society in many instances of gender as social structure. The Hydra Model offers analysts a map for what they can expect to see if gender as social structure is undergoing change somewhere in society.

[32] More research is needed to state with certainty that regeneration will always result in a pair of emergent opposed forms of gender essentialism. In this case, Nostalgic Essentialism and Revolutionary Essentialism are so related, but other instances of change in gender as social structure may show different patterns to how regeneration unfolds. I think it is likely that an open ideological field will invite dialectic opposition and that pairs of emergent forms for gender schemas will counter each other, but I do not have the data to argue this forcefully. I would point to Kristen Luker's book *The Politics of Abortion* and her tracing of emergent pro-life and pro-choice ideologies in the 1980s as a piece of supporting evidence for the likelihood of the emergence of dialectically-related gender schemas.

Study limitations

There are several important limitations to note in this study. First, the sample is local to one diocese – it cannot convincingly generalize across the entire U.S., or across the Anglican Communion, but is rather focusing in one place. That said, ECUSA is a church of approximately 1 million adherents who tend to be highly educated and therefore geographically mobile: it's incredibly common respondents in this study to have been involved in ECUSA across multiple dioceses. Second, the sample was collected mostly using snowball sampling, and was not constructed according to any rules for age or generational cohort. Nothing can therefore be said systematically about generation or age. This work also cannot say much about the effects of a respondent's active tenure within the church because the lower bound for inclusion was five years of active membership, so some folks have been involved for five years and some have been involved for fifty years. It may be that the insights of this study prompt new theoretical guidelines along which it would be useful to sample in future investigations.

Further, any implications from this study for gender and sexuality in the international context of the Global Anglican Communion are only useful at the level of implication. This work has prompted noting that the international situation around gender and sexuality in Anglicanism is intertwining with the national situations playing out throughout the Anglican Communion. There is an important dimension of the international story that is tied up with histories of colonialism and imperialism that have included the use of gender schemas as an element of oppressive cultural campaigns – any future investigations of gender and sexuality in the Anglican Communion must take seriously that gender schemas are a part of a set of cultural sets of meanings that were, and in places remain, part of colonial projects that also include the very religion under consideration in this work.

Women's ordination and Popper's paradox of tolerance

Within the Global Anglican Communion there are multiple, often opposing, viewpoints on the question of women's ordination to sacramental ministry and what women's role should be in the line of Apostolic Succession. Some national churches, called provinces (of which there are 38 total, including ECUSA) have removed all barriers to women's ordination to all orders of ordained ministry, including deacons, priests, bishops, and even primates (like arch-bishops, lead bishops of national church provinces within the Anglican Communion). A majority of provinces now ordain women to the diaconate and priesthood, and many have consecrated women as bishops. However, a minority of provinces still do not ordain women to any orders of ministry, including the Church in the Province of Central Africa, among others; several large provinces, notably including the Church of Nigeria ordain women as deacons, but not to any orders of ministry that can perform sacraments. This patchwork is increasingly a source of tension within the Anglican Communion, as is evidenced by the GAFCON conference and other moves by dioceses and provinces that oppose women's ordination to dissent from the practice being pursued by other dioceses and provinces. ECUSA has been censured since 2016 in the Anglican Communion for its stance of issues of gender and sexuality – though sexuality is the issue currently most fractious, changing views and practices around sexuality must be seen within the context of ECUSA as an outgrowth of changing views of the role of gender in sacred life.

One of the arguments presented for ECUSA's censure within the Anglican Communion was that ECUSA's moves to fully include LGBTQ+ adherents in the life of the church, including by blessing same-sex marriages, was a source of considerable discomfort for other member churches of the Anglican Communion. In several interviews respondents mentioned

Anglicanism's emphasis on the *via media* as a central tenet of Anglican identity. This toleration for discomfort and disagreement has benefits for group cohesion in times of change and unsettled meaning: for example, in ECUSA, an extended latency period has meant that inconsistencies and disagreements persist as to the meaning of gender in church life, but rather than ECUSA splitting into two equally-sized and warring factions, a minority of parishes and church members have defected from ECUSA for ACNA or other churches over gender and sexuality issues. There is, however, a potential danger in toleration of viewpoints that would question the humanity, or the worthiness for full inclusion in group practices, of women and LGBTQ+ adherents.

This example, of one Protestant denomination navigating change to its practices and schemas around issues of gender and sexuality, is not what Karl Popper had in mind when he formulated the "paradox of tolerance". Nonetheless, it bears consideration in the case of ECUSA and the Anglican Communion what tolerance ought to mean in religious community, and how adherents and church leaders ought to conceive of discomfort and harm. Popper writes,

> Less well known [than other paradoxes] is the *paradox of tolerance*: Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them. — In this formulation, I do not imply, for instance, that we should always suppress the utterance of intolerant philosophies; as long as we can counter them by rational argument and keep them in check by public opinion, suppression would certainly be most unwise. But we should claim the *right* to suppress them if necessary even by force; for it may easily turn out that they are not prepared to meet us on the level of rational argument, but begin by denouncing all argument; they may forbid their followers to listen to rational argument, because it is deceptive, and teach them to answer arguments by the use of their fists or pistols. We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant. We should claim that any movement preaching intolerance places itself outside the law and we should consider incitement to intolerance and persecution as criminal, in the same way as we should consider incitement to murder, or to kidnapping, or to the revival of the slave trade, as criminal. (Popper, 1945, ed. 2012, 581)

Put simply, tolerance for views that are themselves intolerant may invite such intolerance to hold power and therefore undo the tolerant society itself. Popper argues that open societies must reserve the right to quash intolerant views that threaten tolerance itself. It remains an open question whether Anglican church leaders are facing movements of such intolerance as those Popper points to as examples of what must not be tolerated. However, these church leaders are considering questions that have the potential to lead to significantly different status and standing within church life for individuals depending on their gender and sexuality. Whose discomforts are worthy of consideration and deference? What harms constitute sufficient cause for changes to group practice to remediate them?

Implications for Anglicanism and legitimacy

For those Anglicans who oppose women's ordination, members of ECUSA and those was have defected, a central concern motivating their dissent is worry over the legitimacy of sacraments and church institutions as a whole. If church practices are grounded in divine revelation, then a change to church practices would need to be grounded in a new revelation from God. Many opponents to women's ordination, including Matthew and Kenneth, are concerned that women's ordination being approved may have been prompted by widespread societal change and upheaval in gender relations, and perhaps not in divine revelation. Matthew considers in his interview whether widespread change in gender might be evidence of divine revelation, but says that he is withholding judgment on that question as erring on the side of caution. Sorting out when change to church practices is truly divinely-inspired and when it is societally-driven is central to opponents of women's ordination's concerns about institutional

legitimacy. These church members worry that change from an incorrect impetus could lead the church away from God and delegitimize the church entirely.

For some, schism is worse than disagreement. Matthew sees himself as part of the Episcopal Church, and does not see leaving for the Anglican Communion in North America as an appealing option. For him, breaking away is an instance of schism and schism throughout the history of Christianity is a huge problem that threatens Christians' abilities to connect to each other, and to God.

> At least in the Episcopal Church, there's not a lot of places for an Orthodox Christian, so there's that. I don't feel stuck at all, I feel called to be here. Then, I would say that Anglicanism-- Schism is just the most un-catholic thing you can do. As a catholic-Christian, it makes my stomach hurt. The idea of splitting and splitting, and splitting is gross. I appreciate that I have number of colleagues who felt called to leave and I'm not going to-- "I got you. I get it." They have and they're doing their thing, but that's just not me. At this point, as I say, the worst is kind of over. There's no more opposition really, because everybody left. I wish they hadn't. If we could have figured out how to have some more attention and work through these things, I think that would have been better, but it didn't go that way. As I watched theology just continue to change and unravel, I feel like me maybe part of the reason is just a reminder of the roots. I don't know how long it lasts, but this is where I'm called to be for now. I had one other thought to answer to that and I can't remember it now. I said in the beginning, I guess kick me out of the sandbox if you want, but I just want to be able to still play in the sandbox if we can do that. (Matthew)

Matthew does not want to leave ECUSA, instead he wants to stay in his church and continue to be in conversation with church members who think differently about theology than he does. There is an openness to this position, and Matthew's ability to stay in ECUSA is enabled by ECUSA's tolerance of those who differ with the national church body in matters of gender and sexuality.

Concerns that theology appears to be changing quickly, as shown above in the excerpt from Matthew, are shared concerns in ECUSA, even by those who accept women's ordination. Vincent, a lay man, has been involved in lay leadership in ECUSA for many years. In this

lengthy interview excerpt, Vincent explains how he thinks about changes to theology. Vincent is pointing out how important it is for the relationship between Christian belief, scripture, and changes in the social ordering of church to be articulated in a way that is easily accessible to all lay people. It is worth noting here that respondents who most readily espouse both Revolutionary Essentialism and Nostalgic Essentialism are the quickest to pull books off of their shelves during interviews, to point to scholarly theological work, and to engage in graduate-level intellectual discussions to justify their views on gender and sexuality in the church. As Vincent explains, this intellectualism may be a challenge moving forward for a church where theology around gender and sexuality is changing at a rapid pace,

> Cat: Sure. That adapting to cultural change-- as in I think the sexuality issue is definitely a really recent one, right, and to my understanding was very difficult for this diocese?
> Vincent: Yes. We had churches that split away from the diocese and became associated with other bishops, some of whom were in Africa and call themselves Anglican churches. Yes, it was a difficult time. One of the things that hasn't occurred yet, to go along with the cultural changes, there hasn't been in my mind an adequate interpretation, and theological interpretation, in particular, of the Scriptures, that can show laypeople, in particular, in a way that they can understand that this is in accordance with the Gospel, because there's so many places in the Scripture where you see a denouncement of the homosexuality. For the layperson, it's difficult to reconcile the church's action versus the scriptural references that they're familiar with. To our discredit, I'll call it, we, the church, has not articulated the theological basis for this. In my view, we've let the cultural change kind of lead the-- It was out there. Now, we have to follow up with something that people can understand.
> Cat: Right. That's very interesting, the cultural leading versus the scriptural interpretation leading, that those are different.
> Vincent: Yes, it is. I don't think there was the same issue with the ordination of women, in my view. There wasn't the scriptural references that-- There was some-- Paul, in particular. That didn't have the same effect on people, I don't think-- the many references that we see in Leviticus and other places that speak to the homosexuality issue. There needs to be a theological basis for this. The churches, in my view, has not done a good job at this.
> Cat: Do you feel that the church did the theological work around women's ordination?
> Vincent: I'm not sure. I can't answer that. We had very few churches leave because of ordination of women. There was one that I knew of up in the Monterey

> Bay area, but that's the only one I know of. We didn't have the big issue that seemed to be present when the bishop was ordained back in Vermont.
> Cat: I think that was '03, yes.
> Vincent: Anyhow, that's, I guess, what I would say about the church. The church, when it adopts a position that has a scriptural controversy associated with it, it needs to be able to articulate why it's adopting the position, and people need to be able to understand it. It can't be in a really difficult-to-understand academic PhD type of a thesis. [chuckles] It needs to be something the layperson can understand. (Vincent, lay, m)

The complexities of politics across the Anglican Communion, and of theological debates about gender and sexuality, are not immediately important to adherents in their daily lived experiences of church life. Vincent points out how off-putting it can be to adherents to be asked to engage in what he calls, "a really difficult-to-understand academic PhD type of a thesis" every time they must contend with a question of theology that has drawn attention as contested in society. Vincent wants to be able to feel confidence that his church has the right of scriptural interpretation, and to feel that he has command over those teachings and beliefs as a lay person.

For those who oppose women's ordination, however, correct scriptural interpretation is not the only source of concern for the church's legitimacy. There is also an argument made that if women lead in church, men will leave and the church will crumble and fall apart. The contention is that women in leadership will delegitimize the church institution in the eyes of adherents and accelerate secularization as adherent leave a church they view as increasingly having lost its legitimacy. The AMIA report puts it thus,

> The ordaining of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate will surely lead to the feminizing of the Church. In many congregations, the Church has already been largely feminized. For some time, women have carried the chief load of the work of the Church in the West. The ordaining of women to the priesthood and episcopate can only make a bad situation worse. Since man are by Creation fitted to lead spiritually, they cannot and will not be willing, in the long run, to serve under the spiritual leadership of women. They will simply leave the Church to the woman altogether. Europe is a case in point. The ordination of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate will only speed up this unfortunate process. (AMIA, 32)

Women's inclusion in leadership is seen here as a delegitimizing force in the church, because women holding authority is not legitimate. This view prompts the question of whether such a reason to exclude women from ordained ministry should be tolerated. Is it intolerant to claim that women cannot legitimately lead church institutions? Do those who holds such view suffer real harm when women are in leadership positions? Is their discomfort of a sufficient kind and at a sufficient level to require accommodation from those who would see women serve in leadership positions? Are women who feel called to serve in leadership positions required by the rules of tolerance to step aside?

The challenges of defining tolerance and considering harms

When women's ordination was first accepted in ECUSA, there was a compromise worked out between bishops such that acceptance of women's ordination was diocese-by-diocese. Some dioceses refused to ordain or recognize the authority of women as priests, and other dioceses had women as priests and even elected women as bishop (first in 1989). The national church body adopted an accommodationist position towards opponents. However, in 1997, the General Convention of ECUSA declared that accepting women's ordination was mandatory in a pair of resolutions that prompted opponents of women's ordination to begin plans to form a separate Anglican province. After 1997, bishops and others who opposed women's ordination did not all immediately leave ECUSA, but did make changes such that women seeking ordination could find a pathway by way of entering the process in another diocese. This stalemate held more or less until 2006, when a woman was elected as presiding bishop of ECUSA, and her election for every diocese to either ascent to the leadership of a woman as primate of the national church, or take drastic action. Kimberly describes how this sometimes-

accommodationist, sometimes-top-down approach to change at the level of the national church contributed to splits. She says,

> Yes. I think when there was something called the Port Lucie Statement, L-U-C-I-E, it was the place they met in Florida, the House of Bishops basically made a gentlemen's agreement, I'm serious - Saying just that, "If we're going to make a place for you in this church, if you don't want to ordain women and won't ordain women, don't worry about it." 15 Years later, the general convention is saying, "No, there has to be a provision for women who believe they're called to ordination to be ordained. If your diocese won't provide that, you have to provide a way for women to be connected to a place that will." That was the accommodation that was working [in 2006] ... There were still four dioceses where the bishops refused to ordain women, and a couple of them were working with neighboring dioceses to provide a route. There were a couple, they just flat out refused. The General Convention basically said, well, we're going to come and visit and inspect. It was too much of a power play, and that just ratcheted up the anxiety and stiffened their backs. (Kimberly, clergy, f)

The moment she describes in 2006 precipitated an acceleration of splitting within ECUSA. At several points since the ordination of women was approved in 1976 there have been moments of rupture when some parishes and clergy broke away from the main body of ECUSA. Generally, these splits are in protest of the national church body having adopted a position or a practice that the breakaway groups deem heretical. Women's ordination has been the main lightning-rod issue prompting these splits (and more recently, the full inclusion of LGBTQ people in church rites), but other reforms have also invited discord. Kimberly also talks about perceived top-down actions around the release of a new revision of the Book of Common Prayer in 1979. Kimberly says,

> Kimberly: They're ticked off about the new prayer book in 1979, which was not handled well either.
> Cat: I'm not as familiar with the prayer book.
> Kimberly: Many people were offended, and in a number of places, the Bishop simply said one Sunday, "While you're going to start using it this Sunday, throw away the old ones", without much introduction. Some parishes did it better than others, studied it, try different things and made it more gradual. In other places, it was literally imposed.
> We had that history, we had the ordination of women. Then we had Gene

Robinson, and some people who are change averse just said, "I'm out of here."

The form of ECUSA church polity is one described by respondents as highly dispersed. Each diocesan bishop wields tremendous power in the running of his or her diocese. The General Convention is made up of both the House of Bishops and the House of Delegates, which includes both priests and laity. In general, any changes must be voted on multiple times and ascent to changes requires that laity, priests and bishops be largely aligned (this is why it took years of voting to approve women's ordination before it actually happened in 1976). Accommodations first made in 1976 to appease those who oppose women's ordination began a pattern of emphasizing consensus around issues of gender and sexuality in ECUSA, intending to ensure that no one felt alienated by the church, but sometimes resulting in harm to those whose spiritual life was hampered by seeking to assuage others' discomfort.

How consensus is used by opponents to keep women from ordination, despite stated call

Recalling Kenneth and Andrew's framing of ordination as a legitimate calling only when it is inescapable (see Chapter 6), it is worth noting that these community-provided off-ramps for people seeking ordination who are believed to be making a terrible mistake were more often offered to clergy women in my study than to men. Clergy women told stories of being sure in their own call and having their process drawn out or receiving message that they were not an appropriate fit for ordained ministry. Perceived fit, and the importance of consensus in the church community, can be mobilized to slow progress through the ordination process. Usually, these blocks to their process were coming from stated opponents to women's ordination, or those who accept women's ordination but otherwise embrace nostalgic essentialism.

In Deborah's case, her diocesan bishop's opposition to women's ordination held up her

process for 12 years. She is quoted at length in Chapter 4. For Sarah, her sponsoring parish was splitting in two and half of the congregation was leaving ECUSA in response to Gene Robinson's election as bishop. Though the parish did not oppose women's ordination, it did not support full inclusion for LGBTQ+ individuals in ordained ministry, and the subsequent splitting of the parish slowed Sarah's progress. She explains,

> Sarah: The diocese paid me $1,000 a year and the sponsoring parish gave me nothing because they were going through a split.
> Cat: What's a split?
> Sarah: Defection. Yes. The pastor decided that he wanted to be the Anglican Church in America instead. He split the congregation, took most of the people with him. That was happening just as I was coming out of seminary. Yes.
> Cat: What was that like?
> Sarah: Well, it was-- I mean, I think, for him, that definitely was the right thing. I could see that he was getting increasingly unhappy with where he was. The regression having to do with the election of Bishop Gene Robinson was like a catalyst or the impending sense before he was elected, but the very prospect of his being a bishop was enough to contribute to this fracture.
> I felt for him it was the right thing and I certainly felt for the people who went with him was the right thing because they were not prepared to dialogue or to listen to the bishop or anything else like that. For me, I knew that I didn't have a lot of support at that parish. I had the congregants' support but the director wasn't that supportive. He just thought I was too old. Then, what happened is that [church – big suburban church with plant and team and I interviewed two clergy there] rector stepped in and said, "We'll sponsor you. We'll sponsor you."
> Cat: That sponsorship changed-- that was while you were still in the process in seminary?
> Sarah: Yes. Right. So, then, I came under their wing and they were the ones that sponsored me for the in-priest ordination. I was already up for a deacon. Yes.

Sarah was able to find a parish to sponsor her, but the turmoil that ensues when churches break away can be substantial. Both Sarah and Deborah experienced disruptions to their processes when ideological conflicts in the larger national church manifested in their home parishes and dioceses.

Sometimes the need for consensus to make ECUSA procedures around ordination work can complicate the ordination process when opponents of women's ordination are involved. For

example, Danielle talks about the confusion surrounding her impending ordination that stems from her co-ordinand's sponsoring parish not accepting women's ordination. She explains,

> Danielle: There are churches in our diocese that don't recognize Bishop Kimberly's authority. She's such a fucking badass, [laughs] and so accomplished as a scientist, and they won't let her celebrate Communion in their church. Going through the ordination process with Perry, who is a member of St. Thaddeus, which is one of the churches where they don't recognize her authority. He's been saying for a year now that if he's ordained by her, that half the congregation won't come up and receive Communion from him. Just last week, he said that he had a conversation with the rector, Matthew. That Matthew said, "If he's ordained by Bishop Kimberly, Matthew will not let Perry celebrate the Eucharist at St. Thaddeus." Perry, who's a man.
> Cat: Wow.
> Danielle: Yes. That really puts a wrench in his whole plans, because Perry is currently working 40 hours a week for St. Thaddeus and he's planning to continue that. Which is also a little weird, because when you're ordained as a deacon, you go where the bishop sends you. You often don't stay at the church where you're raised up. That's a little weird that he and Matthew have this all planned out, and this whole thing is throwing a wrench in their plans.
> I think there's compromises that can be reached, there's other bishops that can do ordinations that are male. I frankly told him last Saturday, I was like, "Perry, it's hard for me to hear every week about how your congregation, your rector just doesn't recognize the authority of women in leadership positions in the church. That's just hard to hear." You know what it felt like, Cat? It felt like, "You poor straight white man. You need a lot of empathy for your situation, and here I am giving it to you every week for a year. I'm done." [laughs] "Oh, how sad for you. Gosh." I'm a little emotional because this is all very live for me. I'm sorry. [laughs]

Danielle clarifies, that the need for a man to perform her co-ordinand's ordination does not apparently come from his personal professed views of women's ordination, but form those of his community members in his parish, including his rector. She says there is a difference of belief around sacraments and the role of the priest that connects opposition to women's ordination to Anglo-Catholic attitudes around sacraments in general. Fascinatingly, the first reason, about Jesus's male-ness did appear in the interview with Matthew, who is rector of this parish. The second set of reasons, about sacraments and the priestly role, did not.

Perry, my co-student, co-colleague, he says that he himself is fine with women's

> ordination, he doesn't have a problem with it personally. He said that he sat down and talked to Matthew at length recently. Matthew shared his views with Perry about why. I didn't ask what those were, but I imagine it has to do with, if Jesus is God's representation on Earth, and Jesus was a male.
> Then, there's something about how these Anglo-Catholic churches really believe that the clergy person is representing the congregation to God and God to the congregation. Which I don't necessarily agree with, I'm not sure about that. That's stronger in their tradition, I think, therefore, they feel it needs to be someone with a penis, I guess. Which is so bizarre to me because if you learn about gender and people who are intersex, like there's just such a spectrum. The binary thing just isn't reality. It would be interesting though, I would love to sit down and have a conversation with Matthew. The other thing that's complicated is I love Matthew, he's such a cool guy. I love him, [laughs] he's so fun. He's great at communications, he loves pickleball. He's such a beer aficionado. He plays the guitar, he's an awesome guy to hang out with and talk to. He taught a couple of our classes at the School for Ministry and about church history, and he was great. He's wonderful. He just believes very differently.

When I interviewed Danielle, plans for her ordination were in flux. The question of how the diocese would resolve the conflict around whether Bishop Kimberly could ordain both Danielle and Perry carried with it implications with long histories. Would a determination be made in a top-down fashion, and parishes could either get on board or figure out their own way? Would the Anglo-Catholic parish feel ostracized by the diocese's actions? Would the ordinations performed be considered valid by all members of the diocese? Would they be valid in the ordinands' home parishes? Danielle says,

> It sounds like what's going to happen is that my ordination date is set for a few months from now, and that Bishop Kimberly would do it. He can either get onboard or not. That's what it sounds like right at this point. Then there was also talk of maybe having his ordination at St. Thaddeus, not at the cathedral, which is unusual, most diaconal ordinations are at the cathedral. Then inviting a male bishop in to do his. That might be what happens on a different date. (Danielle)

This solution, to decide on a diocesan-approved course of action with the option to opt-out for Perry and St. Thaddeus, his sponsoring parish, echoes the accommodationist approach that ECUSA took towards opponents of women's ordination from 1976-1997. That this approach survived in 2018 shows just how deeply the fissure around women's ordination has taken root in

some parts of ECUSA. Accommodating those who disapprove is a way of lessening the risk of further fissure and split. Consensus is not achieved in these actions, but the appearance of everyone getting their way allows parishes that "believe very differently" as Danielle says, can stay in communion with each other.

For Linda, appealing to the importance of fit and consensus was a more intimately personal experience. She attended a small seminary as part of her process, having already studied in a non-ECUSA seminary she was sent to be educated in the Anglican Communion. Linda tells of her experiences at a small seminary that caters to conservative Anglican breakaways from ECUSA:

> I started in Revere House. It's this little, very conservative Anglo-Catholic seminary in New Hampshire.
> My crisis about women's ordination came again because most of the men there did not believe that women should be ordained. I got harassed to no end. They would call me names, some of them. They would call me "priestess," "wannabe priest." They had all these mean terms and derogatory ways to refer to women, the couple of a handful of women that were there. I went through another crisis about ordination. I called my bishop and said, "Put me on hold. I don't want to be--" In fact, I actually said, "Take me out of the ordination process."
> He said, "No, I'm just going to put your name to the side. I'm not going to take you out." I was furious. I really had a lot of trouble with the Church because of that experience. I thought maybe the Church isn't for me. I have to say that that little circle of the people that are very different in the Episcopal Church but having been new, I wasn't sure, but this is how people are.
> There was this one guy who didn't want to sit next to me in chapel because I was female. He asked to be moved. [laughs] It was just quite awful. I go to worship and feel hate radiating from the guy next to me like, "He thinks I'm different" because it was disturbing his worship for me to be there. Then I'm like, "It was disturbing my worship to be near him." [laughs]
> Another guy during-- Revere also is very monastic, which is a great idea, but we had to do dish crew, we had to do lots of--
> You had a certain day where you did work off the campus and stuff. During dish crew, he would whisper stuff under his breath to me all the time, mean stuff. I'd say, "What?" and he'd say, "Oh, nothing." Stuff like, [whispers] "Go home. We don't want you here." I'd say, "What?" and he'd say, "Oh, nothing." [chuckles] He was really awful. He was really awful. It really rocked my world. You're living in a close community with these people. I had never experienced that kind of cruelty, really, for being a female. The sexism there was really, really bad. A

> lot of people that go to Revere are not even Episcopalians, they're from these breakaway Anglican groups and a lot of these. I'm thinking that's why there was so much of that, which I didn't know going in.
> Yes. Even Episcopalians that chose to go there were pretty conservative. Funny enough, the one most supportive person was a former Roman Catholic priest. He was like, "Yes, women." You know what I mean? [laughs] I had one cheerleader there, everybody else was like, "This is so awkward." I get to go on and on about Revere. Oh gosh, it was such an awful experience. I met— (Linda)

The harassment she experienced prompted Linda to question her call – if her community did not support or validate what she believed was her call, then she must have misunderstood God, mustn't she? She asked her bishop to remove her from the ordination track and process. In Linda's story, the stakeholders in her spiritual community had different interpretations of the validity of her call, which led to significant distress and doubt on her part.

> I could tell you about some of the things, some of the things that happened there were so crazy. I put my whole thing on hold and then I also got sick. I don't know if it was related, but [laughs] I left Revere. I said, "I just can't live in community. I can work on my part, my degree from afar, but I can't live in this community anymore." I went to Tampa, Florida. My husband went to Tampa.
> I got really ill one night, I went to the ER, and they found a massive tumor in me. They thought it was cancer possibly. [chuckles] It was this prolonged illness, and it involved surgery, and this whole time I'm wrestling with the ordination question. It was interesting because once I thought-- The surgeon, after they did biopsies and looked at it, told me, "We're 80% sure it's cancer, and if it is, you may not have a lot of life left."
> I remember, the one thing, I didn't have kids then, but all of a sudden in my mind I thought, "I don't care about anything else, but if I die before getting ordained, that is not okay." That just came really strong to me, and I'd never been so sure of it because this whole time, I'd been struggling and struggling and struggling. All of a sudden, it was as clear as clear could be. The idea of death suddenly made that answer really clear to me.
> I was like, "I'm not going to die before being ordained. That's just how it is." [laughs] I don't know if it was the fight in me or the anger or whatever, but it was like, "Everything just feels to be pressing me down, and I'm just not going to do it. I'm going to get ordained." It turns out it wasn't cancer, it was all benign…. It hasn't reoccurred or anything, but it was a massive issue. I immediately went to my bishop and said, "Get me back in the ordination process right away. I want back in. What do I have to do?" From then on, I never wavered in my certainty about it. He got me back right on the track. I had to do a couple of other things in Clinical Pastoral Education and things, which was wonderful but a very hard experience for me. (Linda)

Linda's doubts were so significant that a terrifying medical experience, a moment in which she feared her life was ending abruptly, was necessary to align her convictions in her own call. Though Linda may have individual psychological reasons for being prone to doubt (I have no data to prove or disprove that her reaction to and interpretation of what happened to her at seminary was in line with what others would have though in the same circumstances), she was subject to harassment daily as part of a process that emphasizes the importance of community support in validating one's call. This emphasis on community validation has been used by opponents of women's ordination to hold up discernment processes, to stonewall ordinations, and to limit job opportunities for women clergy. Thinking back to Popper, which, if any, of these hurts or harms are sufficient cause to suggests that either supporting or opposing women's ordination and the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ adherents in church life is an intolerant position? How do the harms associated with concern for the legitimacy of one's church compare with the harms associated with being barred from living into one's call, or being denied the blessing of one's marriage?

What does the future hold for gender in U.S. Anglican churches?

Without a reliable tool for divination, it is impossible to accurately predict the future for questions of gender and sexuality in ECUSA, ACNA, or the Global Anglican Communion. However, some clues are visible. Within ECUSA, Revolutionary Essentialism appears to be gaining as a dominant schema for making sense of what gender means for sacred authority and church life. As Thomas, a clergy man, explains it, Revolutionary Essentialism holds that, "I think that male or female or transgender or whatever, if you have the gifts and the leadership and the love of God and you've been called to this ministry, I don't believe this is something people

come into saying, 'I want to be a priest.' I don't think— God calls you to be a priest and I don't think it matters who you are. I think anyone can do it because ultimately, we don't do it, we're just a conduit for God. God is doing it through us." (Thomas, m, clergy). This view is one in which God transcends to call individuals to ministry, and that call can come to anyone, irrespective of gender or sexuality. It is reasonable to expect, based on this work, that further inclusion of women and LGBTQ+ adherents in the full life of ECUSA will continue.

It also appears likely that the polarization apparent in regeneration will further deepen as broader societal attention to issues of gender and sexuality increases. In June 2022, when the U.S. Supreme Court overruled *Roe v. Wade*, both the presiding bishops of ECUSA and ACNA released statements. Bishop Michael Curry, presiding bishop of ECUSA, issued a statement that read in part,

> This is a pivotal day for our nation, and I acknowledge the pain, fear, and hurt that so many feel right now. As a church, we stand with those who will feel the effects of this decision—and in the weeks, months, and years to come.
> The Episcopal Church maintains that access to equitable health care, including reproductive health care and reproductive procedures, is "an integral part of a woman's struggle to assert her dignity and worth as a human being" (2018-D032). The church holds that "reproductive health procedures should be treated as all other medical procedures, and not singled out or omitted by or because of gender" (2018-D032). The Episcopal Church sustains its "unequivocal opposition to any legislation on the part of the national or state governments which would abridge or deny the right of individuals to reach informed decisions [about the termination of pregnancy] and to act upon them" (2018-D032). As stated in the 1994 Act of Convention, the church also opposes any "executive or judicial action to abridge the right of a woman to reach an informed decision…or that would limit the access of a woman to safe means of acting on her decision" (1994-A054). (https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/statement-on-supreme-court-dobbs-decision-by-presiding-bishop-michael-curry/, 6/24/22)

In contrast, Archbishop Foley Beach, the presiding bishop of ACNA, issued the following statement:

> While this decision doesn't end abortion in the U.S., it will lead to fewer children being killed through abortion. We thank God for this limited victory, and the

> Anglican Church in North America recommits itself to serving mothers so they can embrace motherhood and welcome their children. We also continue to point the way to God's healing and forgiveness for all who suffer physically and emotionally from their abortion experiences. (https://anglicanchurch.net/anglicans-react-to-dobbs-decision/, 6/24/22)

These contrasting statements show two important dynamics for the future of gender and sexuality in Anglicanism. First, they show how starkly oppositional the schemas for gender in these two churches, both of which claim to be the bastion of correct Anglican belief in the U.S., have become. Second, these statements show how deeply any schema for gender in church life is tied to the schemas being employed to make sense of human reproduction. Building on the insights of this work, and employing the Hydra Model to investigate change to gender as social structure throughout society, analysts should pay close attention to how contested meaning and practice in matters of reproduction will ripple out throughout society.

Why the hydra is useful

The Hydra Model can be a guide for analysis, pointing out expected patterns, which can help the researcher to properly attend to the specifics of their instance of change to gender as social structure, and to chart what is going on with practice and meaning around gender issues in specific institutional contexts. The Hydra Model offers a navigable analytic route between the Scylla of "Gender" as an analytic category for social structure being so capacious that its particular meaning in a specific case can be obscured, and the Charybdis of noting the contingency of every element of social change to the detriment of being able to point to patterns that might aid social scientists in ascertaining their work's relevance for navigating social change.

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