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The Influence of Parish Factors in Catholic Deacon Ministry Assignments: An Ecological Model Perspective

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The Influence of Parish Factors in Catholic Deacon Ministry Assignments:

An Ecological Model Perspective

A Thesis
Presented in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Degree of Masters of Art of
Psychology

By
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June 9th, 2015

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Biography

The author was born in Davenport, Iowa, March 8, 1991. She is a 2009 graduate of Parkway South High School in Saint Louis, Missouri. She graduated magna cum laude from Butler University in 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology.

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Abstract

Permanent deacons are a population within the Catholic Church whose numbers have been growing significantly in the last 50 years, with an estimated 18,000 men serving as deacons in the U.S. alone (Gautier, 2013). Deacons are ministers of charity and social justice, ordained to serve their local community for its religious, economic, and social needs through a commitment to their faith. In their growing importance and influence in the Catholic Church, little research examined permanent deacons as individuals or in relationship to the communities they serve.

For this thesis, data was taken from a larger nationwide study of 1,997 American deacons in 2013-2014 (Ferrari, 2015). The current study explored the influence of community level factors on the primary ministry assignments of 549 permanent deacons. The thesis tested the ability of *socio-economic status* (SES), *parish size* (number of families registered at the parish) and *individual deacon demographics* to predict ministry target population (ministry assignment at a parish vs. in the community) and ministry theme (spiritual vs. secular). Hypotheses were rooted in Ecological System theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Results suggested that parish SES and parish size were not significant predictors of ministry target populations. Parish SES also did not act as a significant predictor of ministry target population, but was a significant predictor of ministry theme (though not in relationship to parish SES as hypothesized). Secondary analyses suggested that the deacon demographic variables of education

and age were significant predictors of ministry target population, but not of ministry theme.

Based on the findings of the present study, three possible explanations are discussed. One explanation is that the modified ecological model does not accurately represent the reality of the deacon ministry. A second explanation is that the variables of influence do reside at a micro-level and/or meso-level of the model, but were not accurately represented in this study. A third explanation is that the variables that influence deacon ministry were found at a different level of the model, such as the exo-system or the individual level. More research is needed to determine which if any of these three rationales explain the data. The implications of specific results, limitations of the current study, and future directions are discussed.

Introduction

Since the Roman Catholic Church renewed the role of its third category of ordained clergy in 1968, 17,325 U.S. men have been ordained *Permanent Deacons* to serve their Church communities (Gautier, 2013). Gautier (2010) reported that of the total global number of 37,203 ordained deacons, 46% were found in the U.S. (Gautier, 2010). However, despite the great surge spanning those 50 years, very little research has assessed any aspect of these individuals. What little information published was clinical (Gamino, Sewell, Mason, & Crostley, 2007; Ashworth & Dilks, 2012) or demographic (Gautier, 2013; Gautier, & O'Hara, 2013) in nature. No research examined how parishes utilize their deacons or how community needs and resources influence the roles deacons fulfill in their individual parishes and communities.

The Role of the Catholic Church in Social Justice

From the conception of the Roman Catholic Church, Church doctrine pertaining to social justice has helped shape Western Society's moral compass (Matheny, 2009). The Church encouraged its followers and society as a whole to "love thy neighbor as thyself" and to treat all fellow human beings as brothers and sisters worthy of respect and dignity (Matheny, 2009). As the Church's influence spread across Europe, so did its responsibilities. Local communities relied on the infrastructure of the local Church communities. But the needs of the communities were growing faster than the Church was able to fulfill:

"Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution... Therefore,

brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.” (Act 6:1-4).

While these “seven men of good repute” are not labeled deacons in this passage, this biblical verse speaks to both the historical need with which the early Church was presented as well as their solution: the deacon.

Role and History of the Deacon

The title “deacon” comes from the Greek word “*diakonia*” which translates to “service” (Ditewig, 2004). This accurate definition seems logical since deacons are called to follow the example of Christ who said he came “not to be served, but to serve” (Mark 10:45). This service to God’s people and the Church takes three distinct, yet overlapping forms: ministry of *Charity*, the *Word*, and the *Sacraments* (Ditewig, 2004). More concretely, this threefold ministry began to take shape in the beginning of the second century in caring for the community through the distribution of goods and services, being an active participant in the governing of the church, and serving at the table in the Liturgy of the Eucharist (Bagley, 2013).

The deacon is “called” to a unique role in the Church: to serve as a constant reminder of the universal calling of all Christians to serve in Jesus’ name in both secular and religious areas of their life. The deacon’s vocation is to live among the people, in ways the priest cannot (Ditewig, 2004). For instance, most deacons maintain a job and family while fulfilling their clerical ministry (Gautier, 2013). The deacon’s ministry bleeds into the secular workplace and into the home with his own family. He understands the needs of the people in these

everyday areas of life in an intimate way that a priest often has not experienced. The deacon is an ever present and visible member of the Church in the daily workings of the parish communities they serve. Therefore, it is here he is called to serve (Cummings, 2004). Given this definition, it is no surprise that by the third century the role of the deacon “seemed to have overshadowed the presbyters [priests] in their importance and influence” (Bagley, 2013).

However, in the 11th century their influence started to decline into “relative insignificance” (Bagley, 2013; Cummings, 2004). There was no single reason for this decline. Instead a combination of more subtle societal changes took place that would force the Church to rethink how it served its flock. As the communities of Christians grew and changed, so did the role of the priests who served them. Priests assumed more and more duties originally reserved for bishops in the workings of diocesan churches (Cummings, 2004). As the role of parishes changed, priests assumed responsibility for more duties. Many of the deacons’ responsibilities put them in the role of assisting priests instead of ministering separately (Bagley, 2013). In addition, as the Church entered the 11th century, the secular governmental bodies and local communities began to fulfill many of the social services and outreach duties that once fell to the deacons (Bagley, 2013). Those services not fulfilled by the state were seen to by men’s and women’s religious orders as well as other lay ministry groups (Bagley, 2013). As the systems within which the deacons’ functioned changed, their *caritas* (charity) and administrative roles were all but eliminated, limiting deacons to only liturgical responsibilities.

Within the fuzziness of the role of the deacon in the Church and the erosion of their role by other organizations within the Church, the position of the permanent deacon became almost extinct (Cummings, 2004). Instead, the role of the deacon became “transitional” as a step toward the priesthood. Those studying to be priests are ordained transitional deacons in the 12 months before they are ordained to the priesthood (Trigilio & Brighenti, 2011). It was as such that the position of deacon would remain for the next thousand years until the ecumenical council of Vatican II in mid twentieth century (1962-1965) (Bagley, 2013; Cummings, 2004).

In the aftermath of World Wars I and II, discussions for a renewal of the diaconate were becoming more insistent, especially among Catholic dioceses in Germany. Church leaders and lay members alike desired a means of making the Church and the Word of God more present in the secular world so as to combat the great hatred and evil that seemed to pervade daily life (Ditewig, 2004). For many this meant a renewal of the diaconate that was more “permanent” than that of the “transitional” diaconate.

In the *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem: General Norms for Restoring the Permanent Diaconate in the Latin Church* (Pope Paul VI, 1967), a document summarizing the decision pertaining to deacons at Vatican II, the renewed role of the permanent deacon was declared as “supremely necessary for the life of the Church” (excerpt pertaining to deacon duties can be found in Appendix A). The document also included a detailed, yet not exhaustive, list of duties for deacons. While this detailed list might be misconstrued to be an expanding of the deacon’s

original role surpassing that of the Apostles' original intentions in Act 6:1-5, it is not. Instead, the list shows the Church learned from its original error in not defining what roles were those of the deacon compared to the priests. If carefully examined, the detailed list of duties still falls within the original three-fold mission of the deacon: ministry of charity, of the word, and of the sacraments.

Serving the Parish and the Community

A modern permanent deacon may be assigned by the local bishop to many different ministries or combinations of ministries depending upon the needs of the diocese (Gray & Gautier, 2004). Most deacons serve solely at one parish where duties are assigned by the parish priest. Other deacons may be asked by the bishop to divide his service among several parishes. Still other deacons may be assigned by their bishop to serve the Church in some other setting such as a prison or hospital rather than be connected to a particular parish community (Gray & Gautier, 2004). Others will be assigned to a parish but will be asked to fulfill roles outside the parish community by the parish priest.

One aspect of deacon ministry, that is the focus of this study, will be the *target populations* of the ministry, defined as “the population that benefits from the services the deacon provides.” Two terms will be used to discuss target population: *parish centered* (PC) and *community outreach* (CO). Deacon duties classified as PC serve only persons who are members of the parish community (i.e. those who attend the parish in which the deacon is assigned). PC roles may include: teaching parishioners, organizing the liturgy, leading the youth group, overseeing funerals, weddings, and baptisms as well as serving on various boards

and groups, etc. However, others deacons are sent out into a geographical community working with persons not belonging to the particular target parish, engaging in CO ministries. These CO roles may include: various chaplain assignments in prisons, hospitals, and even race tracks, ministering to the poor, and offering counseling in employment offices or in addiction recovery centers. All ministries, as long as they fall under the three-fold calling of the deacon (namely, ministry of charity, word, and sacraments) are considered worthwhile to the Church. In turn, by community psychology standards, both sets of roles are equally worthy for they serve the needs of a given population, as the population sees it (Kloos, Hill, Thomas, Wandersman, Elias & Dalton, 2012). For some parishes, serving their parishioners is their most pressing need. Others parishes or dioceses may see needs in their surrounding community as more pressing and therefore ask the deacon to serve them in addressing CO ministry.

The second aspect of deacon ministry that will be assessed in is the *ministry's theme*, examining whether a particular assigned duty fulfills a *spiritual* or *secular* need of either the parish community or geographical community in which a deacon serves. Both types of ministry may be paid or unpaid. *Spiritual ministries* fulfill religious centered services such as teaching doctrine, providing spiritual guidance and counseling, offering spiritual companionship to the sick, homebound, or imprisoned, or any work pertaining to Catholic sacraments (e.g. baptism, wedding preparation classes, and delivering the Eucharist to those who cannot attend Mass such as the sick and elderly). *Secular ministries* describe more physical or more basic needs such as helping at a homeless shelter or food

pantry, offering their skills teaching classes about interviewing or computer skills to help members of the community find jobs. Secular ministries also pertain to responsibilities at a parish such as being a scout leader, serving on the school board, or handling church finances.

In many regards, deacons function much like community psychologists entering a new community partnership (Ferrari, 2015). Deacons, like community psychologists, have their own personal gifts and skills based on their training and past life experiences. These are all valuable skills that they can offer to the community they are asked to serve after ordination. In addition, communities may inform deacons how they may best serve the target population. The deacons then address those issues the best they can with the skills and talents they possess.

Eras of Deacon Ministry

The men who have undergone deacon formation over the past 50 years have statistically stayed the same demographically: education, age, socioeconomic status, and ethnic background (Ferrari & Vaclavik, in press). What has changed is how they have been utilized by their communities (Gray & Gautier, 2004). According to Gray and Gautier (2004), there have been three generational cohorts to go through the diaconate formation process: the Pre-Vatican II “World War II Generation”, the Pre-Vatican II “Silent Generation” and the Vatican II/Post-Vatican II Generation. Compared to the two Pre-Vatican II Generations, the Post-Vatican II Generations is more likely to preach homilies (93% compared to the Silent Generation: 89% and WWII: 62%) and more likely be involved in

Catechesis centered ministries (89% compared to the Silent Generation: 80% and WWII: 57%) (Gray & Gautier, 2004).

Following this trend above, when ministry is accessed by decade of ordination, Gray and Gautier (2004) found as each decade passed, deacons were more likely to be utilized by their parishes to teach catechesis (1970's: 75%, 1980's: 77%, and 1990's: 88%). In addition deacons were more likely to preach homilies on social concerns, such as the needs of the poor (1970's: 41%, 1980's: 42%, and 1990's: 55%) (Gray & Gautier, 2004).

The Influence of the Community on the Individual: The Ecological Systems Model

Community psychology examines the influence of the community and systems in which an individual lives on the individual and inversely the influence of an individual person on their community (Kloos, Hill, Thomas, Wandersman, Elias, & Dalton, 2012). The rise, fall, and rise again of the permanent deacon over the last 2,000 years has followed the ebb and flow of outside and internal Church forces. This influence from multiple sources is described accurately by one of community psychology's most widely used models, the Bronfenbrenner's (1979) *ecological systems* model. Bronfenbrenner argued that the actions of the individual are influenced by the systems in which the individual is a part (Lincoln, 2012). In his model, Bronfenbrenner places the individual in the middle of the circle surrounded by ever expanding systems that exercise influence over the actions of the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009; Lincoln, 2012).

The original ecological model explored the influence of outside forces on the development of a child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 1998). On an individual level, each child has many aspects that make them unique such as their personality and biological history. However, as Bronfenbrenner points out, this child does not exist in a void. Instead, the child interacts with and is shaped by their surroundings and relationships. To represent these other factors in the child's life, Bronfenbrenner's model consists of several incrementally increasing circles surrounding the child throughout his/her lifetime.

Directly surrounding the child are their most important relationships, the people they interact with most directly and regularly called the *microsystem*. The microsystem consists of the child's parents, other family members, teachers, and peers at school. These people all bring their own unique histories and view points to the table which affect how they interact with the child as well as how the child interacts with them. If a parent is abusive and/or violent with the child, that is going to have very direct consequences on the development of the child, their personal growth, and their ability to form healthy relationships (Shonkoff, Garner, Siegel, Dobbins, Earls, McGuinn, & Wood, 2012). The reverse may also be true. If the child has very supportive parents or guardians, the child is a lot more likely to thrive in those relationships as well as in other parts of their life because of the positive scaffolding created within the home.

However, just as the child does not exist in a vacuum, neither does the family unit. The parents have jobs, they live in neighborhoods, and have relationships that do not pertain directly to the child but nevertheless have

influence over the child's life and wellbeing. This system is called the *mesosystem*. In the mesosystem, Bronfenbrenner explored the influence of community level factors on the individual child (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). For instance, though the child may have no interactions with their parent's boss at work, if the parent receives a raise, is required to work long hours, travel often or is laid off, that affects the microsystem relationships the child experiences at home because it affects the parent. The same may be said for the neighborhood or community in which the parents and the child live. If it is a safe environment where the child is free to roam and interact with other neighborhood children, this can be a very positive influence in the child's life. However, if the family lives in an unsafe neighborhood where they are under constant threat when they leave the house, this is going to affect how the parents interact with their child and how the child interacts with their peers (microsystem).

In addition to the micro- and mesosystems, there are more abstract and larger systems in play such as politics, the robustness of the main industries in the area, as well as mass media. These systems affect the ever changing experience of the community, the family, and the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). If the factory where the majority of a city is employed goes bankrupt, even if the child's parents do not work in the factory, it is going to affect their neighbors, friends, as well as other businesses that relied on the factory's business or the consumers previously employed by the factory. Politics and the media can also have strong pulls on the atmosphere of a city which trickle down to influence the individual in

very real, though not always acknowledged ways through their effect on the meso- and microsystems in which the child is involved (Bronfenbrenner, 1998).

Finally, the largest system in which all the other systems exist is the *macrosystem*. This system pertains to the attitudes and ideologies of a given culture on a national and even international level (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). If a child lives in a country where the United Nations has laid sanctions or lives in a warzone, while the child may not have direct influence over those ideological and political differences, these macro-level issues are going to contribute both positive and negative pressures on the environment of the child. For example, these cultural attitudes influence media and politics (exosystem) which in turn interact with each other and the more local communities (mesosystem) which in turn interact with each other and the microsystem which in turn affects the individual child (Bronfenbrenner, 1998).

Using Ecological Models in Community Research for Religious Organizations

While the original ecological model was used to discuss and map child development, in the decades since Bronfenbrenner first published, his ecological model explored many other systems (Duncan, 2011; Lincoln, 2012; Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005). These later interpretations have taken many forms and have been widely used as a framework for interventions and prevention research models in both clinical and community settings (Duncan, 2011; Lincoln, 2012; Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005). For example, the ecological model has also been used in research pertaining to building positive working relationships and student

outcomes in Catholic higher education academic settings (Duncan, 2011). Many school-based interventions focus on fostering positive communication and relationships between teachers, support staff, principals, and school board members (Knudson, Shambaugh, & O'Day, 2011). However, this particular study went a step further and included ideological components of Catholic social teaching (macro-level influences) and how, when included in the discussion can provide a common ground and framework that can be very beneficial to a coherent work and academic setting (Duncan, 2011).

Another study used the ecological model to explore the ministry experiences of first-career Catholic seminarians (Lincoln, 2012). With the individual seminarian in the middle of the model, the study explored the individuals "call to ministry," their personal family and academic history along with their individual faith journeys that led them to the seminary (individual factors). Also influencing the seminarian's ministry are the faculty and staff along with his peers at the seminary and the ministry locations (microsystem). These relationships were also influenced by school bureaucracy, church regulations and policies as well as the community in which the seminarian was serving (mesosystem and exosystem) (Lincoln, 2012). While Lincoln (2012) does not discuss the societal factors (macrosystem), studies like Duncan (2011) show the importance of including ideological, macro-level factors in analysis especially when discussing faith-based organizations.

The Ecological Perspective and Deacons

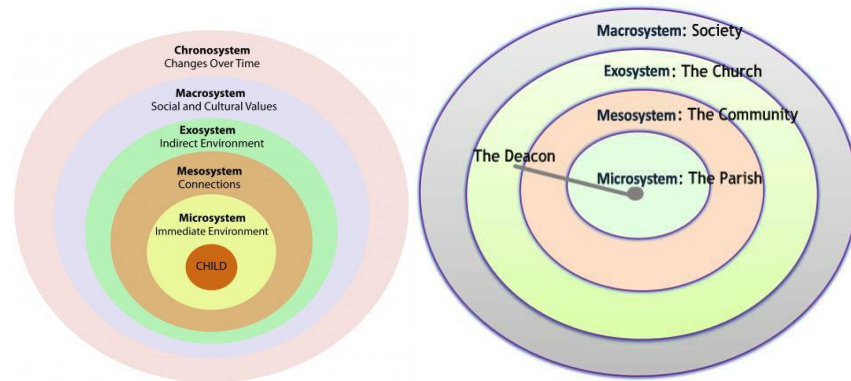


Figure 1. Ecological Models. The original Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems model (left) vs. Deacon Ecological model (right).

While the ecological model had not been used with deacons in the past, a similar model to the one used in Lincoln (2012) was proposed in this thesis. In the proposed example (see Figure 1), the deacon is positioned in the middle. This circle included all things that make him an individual: (e.g. skills, personal development, and personal experience) (Tudge et al., 2009). Surrounding him was his Parish (*the Microsystem*), which had been shown to have a strong influence on individual members (Lumpkins, Greiner, Daley, Mabachi, & Neuhaus, 2013). Nearly all deacons (98%) provided ministry at a parish (Parish only: 36%, Parish and Non-Parish: 62%) (Gray & Gautier, 2004). Clearly, it is with his parish community that the deacon has the most contact and interactions. Consequently, it is this micro-system that should have the most direct influence on his roles and duties (Gray & Gautier, 2004).

However, like Bronfenbrenner's child, the parish and the deacon do not exist in a vacuum (Lincoln, 2012). The local community (or the *Mesosystem*) within which they interact with each other also exercises influence and pull on the

deacon through its influence on the parish and on the individual deacon (Tudge et al., 2009). Expanding our view even further, the Catholic Church (*the Exosystem*) also holds influence over the community and parish life that dictate the need for deacons. Finally, all these interactions on the exo-, meso-, and micro- levels are influenced by society as a whole (*the Macrosystem*). The deacon does not act individually in a bubble but in reaction to all these larger system level influences bearing down on him (Tudge et al., 2009).

In other words, society as a whole holds influence over the Catholic Church. Both society and the Catholic Church hold influence on the local community. The local community and its interactions with both secular and religious bodies influences how the community interacts with the parish. The parish itself then functions in relationship to all these other outside pressures. If Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model properly represents the relationship between a deacon and his parish community, then all these influences culminate in how the parish uses the individual permanent deacon.

The influence of larger systems had a decisive hand in the rise and fall of the historical permanent deacon. As the larger systems within which the parish permanent deacon functioned changed, so did the deacon's role (Bagley, 2013; Cummings, 2004). By the 11th century, positive pressures from both the secular government (Macrosystem) and the growing Catholic Church (Exosystem) left few roles for the deacon to fulfill in service of the local community (Mesosystem) and the parish community (Microsystem). After World War II, the Macrosystem system changed again and recreated a void in the local community (Mesosystem)

and the parish (Microsystem) that might not be filled by transitional deacons alone. Thus, under the influence of the world's changing stage, the Catholic Church brought back the permanent deacon.

Community and Parish Factors: Socio-Economic Status and Parish Size

In this thesis, I explored two community/parish factors and how they influenced the ministry assignments of the permanent deacons. These two factors were socio-economic status (SES) of the parishioners and the number of families the parish serves (parish size). The average SES of the parishioners can be seen as a factor on both the micro (parish) and meso-level (community) because, as discussed above, the industry and politics of a community may influence the microsystem (the parish). This is seen in the income levels of the parishioners which in turn affects how much money families are able to donate to the parish and how much the parish counsel can afford to pay parish workers. If the ecological model held true, then this may have had extreme effects on the number and type of staff the parish has the capacity to hire, what programs they offer, and their ability to do outreach into the community (Chaves, Anderson, & Byassee, 2009).

Parish size is also going to be explored as a possible factor in deacon ministry assignments. Size is one of the most important characteristics of any organized group (Chaves et al., 2009) because it affects everything in the organization. This is no less true for Catholic congregations. More parishioners means parish workers have access to a larger budget, but that also means the budget must be split more ways. A larger parish will need to hire more staff and

offer more unique programming than a smaller parish. More families also bring a larger need for a more extensive administration and bureaucracy inside the parish because there are more programs and people to manage. Given the different needs and abilities that are associated with the size of an organization, a parish of 100 people will function differently than a parish of 1,000 which will also function differently than a parish of 10,000 (Chaves et al., 2009). In this thesis, I examined the influence these differences had on the deacon's ministry assignments.

Rationale

The larger system influences are clear retrospectively, but can they be used to predict the behavior of a parish and individual deacon? If so, how does the larger system of the current age affect the roles parishes assign their deacons? At the Vatican II Ecumenical Council, the Catholic Church (Exosystem) defined the roles that "can" be filled by deacons, but not every deacon is able fulfill every role listed at the same time, nor was that list exhaustive. Therefore it may be left to the influences of the Mesosystem and the Microsystem to influence the role assignment of modern deacons.

How were deacons put to use to serve the greater good of the parish (Microsystem) and surrounding local community (Mesosystem)? Did the demographic makeup of the parish influence how the parish used their deacons? In other words, were parishes with greater access to resources (higher socio-economic statuses) using their deacons differently than parishes that had less

access to funds to hire employees? In addition, how did the parish size play into these decisions? It was the goal of this thesis to examine these questions.

Statement of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: The parish will be more likely to use their deacon for Community Outreach (CO) ministry roles when the parish's socio-economic status (SES) is high.

Hypothesis II: The parish size and ministry target population relationship will be moderated by SES, such that there will be a strong relationship when SES is high and a weak relationship when SES is low.

Hypothesis III: The parish will be more likely to use their deacon for spiritually-themed ministry when the parish's SES is high.

Hypothesis IV: The parish size and ministry theme relationship will be moderated by SES, such that there will be a strong relationship when SES is high and a weak relationship when SES is low.

Methods

Procedure

Recruitment. Data for this thesis was retrieved from an already existing dataset of a much larger study on Deacons (see Appendix B for the original study's full survey). In the larger study, Roman Catholic deacons were recruited using emails and phone calls that were directed toward diocesan offices across the United States. A top-down approach for recruitment was used. A total of 172 Deacon Directors across the United States were contacted and informed about the study. Directors were then asked to pass along our email which stated the study's purpose and log on information. (See Appendix C for the recruitment email). In addition, an ad was posted in the January and March 2013 *Deacon Digest*, a national magazine available to all American deacons (See Appendix D for the ad). Later in the recruitment process, an editor at the *National Catholic Reporter*, a faith-based U.S. newspaper, heard about the present study and then wrote an article about the project for the January 28th 2014 issue. The article included a link to the online survey study, assisting in recruiting more deacons (See Appendix E for the article).

Data collection. Prior to agreeing to complete the online questionnaire, respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and that to protect their anonymity there would be no way to link their responses to their identity. Consent to participate was signaled by completing the questionnaire. The online survey took an average of 30 minutes to complete all measures. All data was collected using the Qualtrics surveying web program. To encourage

participation, a drawing for 100 \$5 coffee gift cards was used. Upon completion of the study, participants were prompted to link to a different website where they might voluntarily enter their email address to be entered in the gift card drawing. This contact information was separate from the main survey, again to protect the anonymity of participants.

Participant and Parish Profiles

Participant Profile. There are an estimated 17,289 active ordained Roman Catholic deacons in the United States (Gautier & O'Hara, 2013). A demographic profile study (Gautier & O'Hara, 2013) reported on 172 of the 176 identified United States diaconate formation programs, and stated that most Catholic deacons are men who self-identify as European American (74%), well educated (Bachelor's degree or higher; 68%), married (95%), and middle aged (older than 40; 96%).

The current dataset (1,997 deacons) represented 11% of the 2013 U.S. Catholic permanent deacon population (Gautier, et al., 2013). The study had a 14% response rate from ordained deacons in the regions where participation was solicited. In the larger 2013-2014 Deacon survey, participants were asked how many deacons, including themselves, were active at their parish. Only participants who self-identified as the only deacon at their parish were included in any thesis analyses. This selection process was used to avoid the possibility of multiple deacons reporting data on the same parish community, to better analyze the role of parish variables on the deacon's ministry roles.

Consequently, the sample size was reduced to 549 participants. Of this reduced sample, 87.1% of the participants were European American. Nineteen percent had a high school diploma, 9.5% had completed an associate's degree, 26.6% had completed a bachelor's degree, 33.2% had completed a master's degree, and 10.6% completed a doctoral program. The average age of the present deacons was 45.48 years ($SD=7.032$, $Range = 18 - 53$).

Parish profile. The parishes at which these participating deacons serve vary in socioeconomic status and number of families registered at the parish (which will be called *parish size* from this point forward). The parish sizes ranged from 34 – 7,500 families. The average parish size was 1040.99 families. In terms of class status, 4.7% of the parishes were identified as predominately working poor, 9.7% were lower class, 75.8% were middle class, 7.8% were labeled affluent, and 2.4% were characterized as being too diverse to label.

Psychometric Scales

In the complete online survey from which this thesis data was pulled, participants responded to questions pertaining to several reliable and validated self-reported measures. These inventories included, for instance, the *HEXACO-60 Personality Inventory* (Ashton & Lee, 2009), a *Servant Leadership Scale* (Barbuto & Wheeler's, 2006), *Spirituality and Sacredness* (Golden, Piedmont, Ciarrocchi & Rodgerson, 2004), *Religious Commitment Inventory* (Worthington, Wade, Hight, Ripley, et al., 2003) as well as a *Social Desirability Measure* (Marlowe-Crowne, 1982). The current study however, focused on demographic items pulled from the beginning of the survey inquiring about deacons and their

parish structure. Therefore, because the current study centered on parish and deacon demographic variables and their relation to deacon ministry, a discussion of the Deacon's personality factors based on the above scales was not discussed (See Appendix B for a copy of the full survey).

Independent variables. Two independent variables were pulled from the demographic questionnaire. Specifically, participants reported "*What is the predominant economic class of your parish members?*" Response categories for this item included: working poor, lower class, middle class, affluent, or other. In addition, deacons reported "*about how many families are registered in your parish?*" (Labeled "parish size"). Secondary analysis explored several additional deacon variables. Specifically, the deacon's current age, education, ethnicity, number of years they had served at their current parish, and number of years since their ordination.

Dependent variables. Participants were asked "*Please indicate your primary parish ministry.*" Open-ended, free response answers were collected and grouped (by the author and a coding team) on whether the duty focused on the home parish/parishioners (PC) or on the larger community (CO) in which the parish was located. In addition, written responses were grouped on the nature of the duty: secular needs (non-spiritual or physical needs such as administrative work or working in a soup kitchen), or spiritual needs (prayer, counseling, religious service related, or were related to church doctrine). Each deacon's main ministry duty was then coded based on its category for further analysis.

Dependent variable coding. To code the dependent variable, the author collected all unique ministry responses from the dataset into a condensed Excel spreadsheet (See Appendix F for the blank Excel spreadsheet sent to coders) with ministry responses ordered alphabetically. This Excel spreadsheet was then emailed to the two other coders along with category definitions.

The ministry location category definitions provided to the coders were as follows: “Parish-centered: defined as a role or ministry position that solely or majorly benefits members of the parish either “on campus” or “off-campus.” Parish-centered examples provided to the coders were “organizing alter servers (on campus), youth ministry (on campus), doing communion calls for sick parishioners (off campus but still parish member centered).” Community outreach was defined as “outreach work that serves the community in which the parish is placed but the members of the church are not the main benefactors of the work being done.” Community outreach examples were given as: “food pantries, soup kitchens, and evangelization.”

The ministry theme category definitions provided to the coders were as follows: “Spiritual: anything liturgical or teaching of dogma based” and “Secular: office work, a planning committee, food pantry, anything not related to dogma or spiritual guidance.” The three coders (made up of the author, a Catholic youth minister with a B.A. in Religious Studies and Youth Ministry, and a Catholic campus minister with a M.A. in Theology) rated each unique answer as either PC or CO and Spiritual or Secular. Once the coding team had surpassed 90% inter-rater reliability (72 items rated in agreement/78 items rated = 92.31%) when

categorizing the different ministry types and coding rules had been clarified within the group, the larger dataset was coded.

Results

Preliminary Analysis: Descriptive Statistics

There were 78 unique deacon ministries reported by survey respondent's duties. Table 1 reports the breakdown of parish centered vs. community outreach ministries.

Table 1. Deacons Ministry by Ministry Target Population

Parish Centered	Parish Centered	Community Outreach
Adoration	Ministry of Care	Addiction
Adult Bible Study	Mission Trips/Pilgrimage	Apologetics
Adult Retreats	Music	Deacon Formation/Vocation
Archivists	Odd Jobs around the Parish	Deaf
Baptism	Parish Counsel	Disabled
Blessings/Prayers	Prayer Group	Emergency Response Team
Building and Grounds	Preaching	Employment
Bulletin Editor	Pro-Life	Environment
Campus Ministry	Quinceanera	Evangelization
Catholics Returning Home	RCIA	Food Pantry
Christ Renews His Parish	Religious Education	Gay and Lesbian
Church Finance Committee	Run Parish Fest	Homeless
Communion Calls	Safe Environment Training	Immigrants
Confirmation – Adult	School Board	Interfaith
Confirmation – Teens	Scouts	Medical
Divorce/Annulments	Social Media	Mental Illness
Domestic Counselor	Spiritual Director	Museum
Dean of Religious Education		St. Vincent DePaul
Fund Raising	Stephen Ministry	Peace and Justice
Funerals	Teen Bible Study	Refugees
Hispanic/Hong Ministries	Vocation Committee	Various Chaplain positions Hospice/Nursing Home Visits
Homebound Visits	Weddings	
Knights of Columbus	Young Adult Group	Youth in Prison
Legion of Mary & Knights	Youth Ministry (HS/MS)	
Librarian	Youth Retreats	
Liturgy		
Men's Ministry		

There were twice as many PC deacon duties reported (54 PC duties) compared to the 24 CO deacon duties. As noted by Table 3, most deacons, 74.10% ($n = 406$), reported *parish centered ministries*, defined as ministry assignments that only serve persons registered at the parish. Consequently, the remaining sample of deacon participants, 25.90% ($n = 142$), reported *community outreach ministries*, ministry roles that serve the geographical community surrounding the parish.

Table 2. Summary of Ministry Category Descriptive Statistics

Ministry Category	# Unique Responses	# of Deacons	% of Deacons
Ministry Target Population			
Parish Centered	54	406	74.1
Community Outreach	24	142	25.9
Ministry Theme			
Spiritual	47	418	76.3
Secular	31	130	23.7
Total	78	548	100

Two *one-way ANOVAs* were run to determine if ministry target population differed by geographical region or by diocese. Ministry target population did not differ significantly between geographical region, $F(12,404) = 0.60$, $p = 0.84$, or by diocese, $F(99,317) = 1.16$, $p = 0.18$. These results implied that U.S. geographical location may not have an effect on ministry target population.

There were 31 secularly themed duties and 47 spiritually themed. Table 3 reports the breakdown of spiritual vs. secular ministries. The majority of deacons, 76.3% ($n = 418$), reported *spiritually themed ministry*, activities focused on religious doctrine, the sacraments, and spiritual guidance. The other 23.50% ($n = 129$) of deacons reported *secularly themed duties*, activities that were not religious in nature. Two *one-way ANOVAs* were run to determine if ministry theme differed

by geographical region or by diocese. Ministry theme did not differ significantly between geographical region, $F(12,404) = 0.69, p = 0.76$, or by diocese $F(99,317) = 0.97, p = 0.56$. This implied that U.S. geographical location may not have an effect on ministry theme. Ministry target population and ministry theme were significantly correlated, $r(548) = .352, p < .001$.

Table 3. Deacons Ministry by Ministry Theme

Spiritual	Spiritual	Secular
Adoration	Prayer Group	Addiction
Adult Bible Study	Preaching	Archivists
Altar Servers	Pro-Life	Bulletin Editor
Adult Retreats	Quinceanera	Building and Grounds
Apologetics	RCIA	Church Finance Committee
Blessings/Prayers	Religious Education	Disabled
Campus Ministry	Religious Education	Domestic Counselor
Baptism	Spiritual Director/Counseling	Deaf
Catholics Returning Home	Stephen Ministry	Employment
Chaplain	Teen Bible Study	Environment
Christ Renews His Parish	Vocation Committee	Food Pantry
Communion Calls	Weddings	Food Pantry
Confirmation Adult	Young Adult Group	Fund Raising
Confirmation Teen	Youth and Challenged Youth in Prison	Homebound Visits
Deacon Formation and Vocation	Youth Minister (HS/MS)	Homeless
Divorce/Annulments	Youth Retreats	Immigrants
DRE (Dean of Religious Education)		Librarian
Emergency Response Team Member		Medical
Evangelization		Mental Illness
Funerals		Museum
Gay and Lesbian		Odd jobs around parish
Hispanic/Hong Ministries		Parish Counsel
Interfaith		Peace and Justice
Knights of Columbus		Refugees
Legion of Mary & Knights		Run Parish Fest
Liturgy		Safe Environment Training
Men's Ministry		School Board

Ministry of Care		Scouts
Mission Trips/Pilgrimage		Social Media
Music		St. Vincent DePaul
Outreach		W/C services

Of the parishes surveyed, 4.7% ($n = 26$) were identified by participants as working poor, 9.1% ($n = 50$) were lower class, 75.7% ($n = 415$) were middle class, 7.8% ($n = 43$) were affluent, and 2.4% ($n = 13$) were rated “other.” These parishes ranged in size (number of families registered) from 34 families to 7,500 families ($M = 1033.50$, $SD = 939.65$). Parish SES and parish size were significantly correlated, $r(547) = 0.17$, $p < .001$.

A *one-way ANOVA* was run to determine if parish size differed by parish SES category. Results of this one-way ANOVA, depicted in Figure 2 below, found that parish size differed significantly between parish SES categories, $F(4,528) = 8.70$, $p < .001$. A *Bonferroni post hoc analysis* determined the parish size of affluent parishes ($M = 1690.37$, $SD = 162.06$) was significantly different than other four SES categories. Middle class ($M = 1032.91$, $SD = 46.50$), lower class ($M = 817.21$, $SD = 109.98$), working poor ($M = 472.95$, $SD = 94.60$), and other ($M = 596$, $SD = 564.67$) parish size means did not differ significantly. These results indicate that affluent parishes tend to be significantly larger (more families registered) than parishes in middle, lower class, and working poor communities.

Figure 2. Parish size by Parish SES Graph

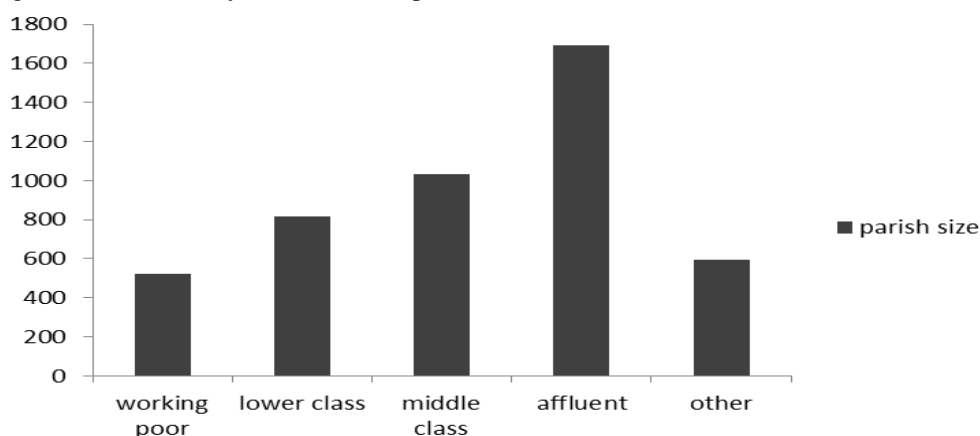


Figure 2. Mean parish size by parish SES category

Primary Analysis: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: The parish will be more likely to use their deacon for Community Outreach (CO) ministry roles when the parish's socio-economic status (SES) is high.

A logistic regression analysis was conducted to predict ministry location of deacon's primary ministry role using parish SES as the predictor. A test of the full model against a constant only model was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 0.27, p = .60$. Consequently, Hypothesis 1 was not supported in the present study. This result, summarized in Table 4, indicated that the deacon ministry target population was not reliably predicted by the SES of the parish.

Table 4. Summary Hypothesis 1 Logistic Regression Analysis of Ministry Target Population

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Exp(B)	Odds Ratio
Parish SES	-0.08	0.15	0.27	1	0.93	0.07
Constant	1.27	0.44	8.25*	1	3.56	3.56

Note. $\chi^2(1) = 0.27, p = .60, *p \leq 0.05$

Hypothesis II: The parish size and ministry target population relationship will be moderated by SES, such that there will be a strong relationship when SES is high and a weak relationship when SES is low.

A hierarchical logistic regression analysis then was conducted to predict ministry location of deacon's primary ministry role, using parish SES and parish size as predictors. A test of the full model against a constant only model was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 2.85, p = .42$. Hypothesis 2 also was not supported in the present study. This result, detailed in Table 5, therefore, indicated that the deacon ministry assignments location was not reliably predicted by the SES or size of the parish.

Table 5. Summary Hypothesis 2 Logistic Regression Analysis of Ministry Target Population

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Exp(B)	Odds Ratio
Parish SES	-0.19	0.23	0.70	1	0.83	0.17
Parish Size	-0.001	0.001	1.15	1	0.99	0.01
SES*Size	0.00	0.00	0.72	1	1.00	1.00
Constant	1.79	0.69	6.80*	1	0.01	0.99

Note. $\chi^2(3) = 2.85, p = .42, *p \leq 0.05$

Hypothesis III: The parish will be more likely to use their deacon for spiritually-themed ministry when the parish's SES is high.

A third logistic regression analysis was conducted, to predict ministry theme of deacon's primary ministry role using parish SES as the predictor. A test of the full model against a constant only model was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = .77, p = 0.38$. Hypothesis 3 was not supported by the current study. This outcome, depicted in Table 6, indicated that the deacon ministry assignments theme is not reliably predicted by SES of the parish.

Table 6. Summary of Hypothesis 3 Logistic Regression Analysis of Ministry Theme

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Exp(B)	Odds Ratio
Parish SES	-0.13	0.15	0.76	1	0.88	0.12
Constant	1.56	0.46	11.41*	1	4.74	4.74

Note. $\chi^2(1) = .77, p = 0.38, *p \leq 0.05$

Hypothesis IV: The parish size and ministry theme relationship will be moderated by SES, such that there will be a strong relationship when SES is high and a weak relationship when SES is low.

A fourth *hierarchical logistic regression analysis*, summarized in Table 7, was conducted, to predict ministry theme of deacon's primary ministry role using parish SES and parish size as predictors. As mentioned previously, the results from Model 1 indicated that the deacon ministry assignments did not vary according to the SES of the parish. However, when the variable parish size was added to the model, the overall model was significant, $\chi^2(3) = 4.53, p = .04$. The current model predicts 74.5% of the responses correctly. The Wald criterion demonstrated that only parish size made a significant contribution to predicting ministry theme ($Wald = 4.48, p = .03$). Even though the overall model was significant, hypothesis 4 was also not supported by the current study because parish SES was not a significant predictor. The odds ratio value indicated that when parish size increased, the odds the deacon would be performing a spiritually themed ministry also increased ($Exp(B) = 1.0$).

Table 7. Summary of Hypothesis 4 Logistic Regression Analysis of Ministry Theme

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Exp(B)	Odds Ratio
Parish SES	-0.11	0.23	0.24	1	0.89	0.11
Parish Size	0	0	4.48*	1	1	1
SES*Size	0	0	0.07	1	1	1
Constant	1.6	0.49	10.90*	1	4.96	4.96

Note. $\chi^2(3) = 4.53, p = .04, *p \leq 0.05$

Secondary Analyses

An additional *logistic regression analysis* was conducted, to predict ministry location of deacon's primary ministry role using several self-reported demographic items as predictors; namely, *deacon's chronological age*, *deacons education level* (i.e., highest degree earned), and *ethnic identity* (i.e., white vs. non-white). A test of the full model against a constant only model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 9.69, p = .02$. The model predicted 74.1% of the responses correctly. The Wald criterion demonstrated that deacon's age ($Wald = 3.85, p = .05$) and education ($Wald = 3.82, p = .05$) made significant contributions to prediction. Ethnicity was not a significant predictor ($Wald = 2.71, p = .10$). The age $Exp(B)$ value indicated that the as a deacon's age decreased, they were more likely to perform parish centered ministries ($Exp(B) = 0.97$). The education $Exp(B)$ value indicated that deacons who had completed less schooling were more likely to perform parish centered ministries ($Exp(B) = 0.86$) than those deacons with more advanced degrees. Table 8 reflects the findings of the logistic regression analysis.

Table 8. Summary of Deacon Variables Model 1: Logistic Regression Analysis of Ministry Target Population

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Exp(B)	Odds Ratio
Age	-0.03	0.02	3.85*	1	0.97	0.03
Education	-0.16	0.08	3.82*	1	0.86	0.14
Ethnic Identity	0.47	0.29	2.71	1	1.6	1.6
Constant	2.46	0.74	10.95*	1	11.73	11.73

Note. $\chi^2(3) = 9.69, p = .02, *p \leq 0.05$

A *logistic regression analysis* was conducted to predict the ministry theme of deacon's primary ministerial role, using deacon's *chronological age*, *education*

level (i.e., highest degree earned), and *ethnic identity* (i.e., white vs. non-white) as predictors. A test of the full model against a constant only model was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 4.49, p = .22$. This indicated the deacon's age, education, and ethnic identity were not significant predictors of ministry theme. Table 9 reflects the findings of that logistic regression analysis.

Table 9. Summary of Deacon Variables Model 1: Logistic Regression Analysis of Ministry Theme

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Exp(B)	Odds Ratio
Age	-0.02	0.02	1.99	1	0.98	0.02
Education	-0.09	0.08	1.39	1	0.91	0.09
Ethnic Identity	-0.25	0.33	0.59	1	0.78	0.22
Constant	2.65	0.77	11.74*	1	14.13	14.13

Note. $\chi^2(3) = 4.49, p = .22, *p \geq 0.05$

In the process of identifying the most sensitive predicting model, *age* was substituted with both *years working at current parish* and *years since ordination* to examine if this increased the model's ability to accurately predict outcomes of ministry target population and ministry theme. Substituting in *years working at current parish* for *age* to predict target population resulted in the model losing significance $\chi^2(3) = 6.23, p = 0.10$. Individual predictor statistics from this model are detailed in Table 10. Substituting in *years working at current parish* for *age* to predict ministry theme resulted in a non-significant model, $\chi^2(3) = 3.06, p = 0.38$. Individual predictor statistics from this model are detailed in Table 11. These results suggest that number of years since ordination and years at current parish were not significant predictors of ministry target population or ministry theme.

Table 10. Summary of Deacon Variables Model 2 Logistic Regression Analysis of Ministry Target Population

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Exp(B)	Odds Ratio
Years at Current Parish	-0.01	0.01	0.69	1	0.99	
Education	-0.16	0.08	3.92*	1	0.85	
Ethnic Identity	0.42	0.28	2.18	1	1.52	
Constant	1.30	0.38	11.86*	1	3.67	

Note. $\chi^2(3) = 6.23$, $p = 0.10$, * $p \geq 0.05$

Table 11. Summary of Deacon Variables Model 2 Logistic Regression Analysis of Ministry Theme

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Exp(B)	Odds Ratio
Year at Current Parish	-0.01	0.01	0.71	1	0.99	0.01
Education	-0.10	0.08	1.40	1	0.91	0.09
Ethnic Identity	-0.29	0.33	0.78	1	0.75	0.25
Constant	1.84	0.42	19.43*	1	6.27	6.27

Note. $\chi^2(3) = 3.06$, $p = 0.38$, * $p \leq 0.05$

Substituting *years since ordination* for *age* to predict target population resulted in a significant model $\chi^2(3) = 7.61$, $p = 0.05$, however none of the individual predictors, reported in Table 12, were significant. Substituting *years since ordination* for *age* to predict ministry theme resulted in a non-significant model, $\chi^2(3) = 6.22$, $p = 0.10$. Individual predictor statistics are reported in Table 13.

Table 12. Summary of Deacon Variables Model 3 Logistic Regression Analysis of Ministry Target Population

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Exp(B)	Odds Ratio
Year Since Ordination	-0.15	0.08	3.65	1	0.86	0.14
Education	0.43	0.28	2.30	1	1.54	1.54
Ethnic Identity	-0.01	0.01	1.92	1	0.98	0.01
Constant	1.33	0.36	13.40*	1	3.78	3.78

Note. $\chi^2(3) = 7.61$, $p = 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.05$

Table 13. Summary of Deacon Variables Model 3 Logistic Regression Analysis of Ministry Theme

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Exp(B)	Odds Ratio
Years Since Ordination	-0.02	0.01	3.85*	1	0.98	0.02
Education	-0.09	0.08	1.21	1	0.92	0.08
Ethnic Identity	-0.28	0.33	0.70	1	0.40	0.24
Constant	1.94	0.41	22.70*	1	0.00	0.00

Note. $\chi^2(3) = 6.22, p = 0.10, *p \leq 0.05$

Discussion

The current study tested the ability of a modified deacon ecological model to predict ministry target population and ministry theme based on a micro-level variable (parish size) and a meso-level variable (parish SES). Hypotheses 1 and 2, related to the influence of parish SES and parish size on ministry target populations, were not supported by the results. Hypothesis 3 and 4, related to the influence of parish SES and parish size on ministry theme also were not supported by the current results. Parish size, however, was a significant predictor of ministry theme (though not in relationship to parish SES as hypothesized). Secondary analyses suggested that the deacon demographic variables of education and age were significant predictors of ministry target population, but not of ministry theme.

Based on the findings of this study, three possible explanations are discussed. The first explanation is that the modified ecological model does not accurately represent the reality of the deacon ministry (Tudge et al., 2009). The second possible explanation is that the variables of influence do reside at a micro-level and/or meso-level of the model, but were not accurately represented in this study (Elder, 1996; Chaves et al., 2009; Tudge et al., 2009). The third proposed explanation is that the variables that influence deacon ministry were found at a different level of the model, such as the exo-system (Duncan, 2011; Pope Paul VI, 1967) or the individual level (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Bronfenbrenner 2001/2005). More research is needed to determine which if any of these three

rationales explain the data. The implications of specific results, limitations of the current study, and future directions are discussed below.

Strengthening the Parish Before Outreach

Overall, results indicated that the majority of deacons which participated in the present study were utilized within a particular parish community, instead of sent out into the local general community. Not only were deacons more likely to report parish centered ministries but they also reported a greater variety of parish ministries than community outreach ministries.

While the Catholic Church encourages outreach in its services to those who are not Catholic, the heart of the church's ministry is at the parish. As an organization made up of parishes and serving through parishes, it seems only logical that most deacons would be stationed at the already existing hubs of Catholic outreach: the parish. This distribution of labor does not imply that the Church is neglecting the larger community; anyone is welcome to join a parish where the majority of services are offered. Instead, this focus on the parish suggests the Church offers a specific type of service, one which is most often accessed in a parish setting.

Before turning outward to serve the greater community, the parishes as a community must make sure the congregations are stable and that registered members have their needs met. If the church cannot care for their own congregation how can they care for others? However, trends in both Church policies under Pope Francis, as well as in the deacon ministry assignments (Gray

et al., 2004), have been moving increasingly outward toward social justice endeavors in the broader community.

The Church is a Religious Organization

Results from the present study also suggested that deacons are more likely to be assigned spiritually themed ministries, compared to secular roles. This thematic distribution of labor is not surprising given the Catholic Church was a religious organization and more likely to tend to the spiritual needs of their parish and geographical community. Religious services are what many of their parishioners and community expect when interacting with and requesting services from a church (Lumpkin et al., 2013). Ministry target population and ministry theme groups had a mildly strong positive correlation. However, the two variables did not significantly predict each other. This correlation may be explained by the above idea that parishes were expected and created to serve spiritual needs and provide religious resources for those they serve.

The Universal Church Assigning as One

Of the dioceses that have deacon programs, (97 % were represented in the present study), results implied that U.S. geographical location did not have an effect on ministry target population or ministry theme assignments. This distribution suggests that the eight different regions as well as the 172 dioceses were not assigning their deacons using area specific frameworks in relation to who they were serving or how they were serving. This result provides preliminary support for rationale 3 mentioned above which suggested that deacon ministry is influenced by exo-level (Church) factors; policy decisions that

influence the entire U.S. Catholic Church (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) or individual factors specific to each deacon (Bronfenbrenner, 1993).

Serving the Middle Class?

Over three-fourths of deacons who responded in the present study reported serving middle class communities and parishes. While one would hope that deacons would be sent to support and minister to the most in-need parishes and communities, the data shows that the parishes mostly likely to receive a deacon were middle class communities. It is possible that the more affluent parishes have more influence within their individual dioceses and are therefore able to better advocate for themselves if they desire to have a deacon assigned to them. However, it is likely that the driving force behind this distribution is less intentional.

For example, this distribution may be proportional to parish type within the Church and suggest that deacons may be being distributed evenly among parishes in the dioceses. While there are no current data to support the claim, it is also possible that it is easier for Catholic communities and parishes to exist in more affluent communities where parishes may be funded by a community that has the excess resources to support them. Similarly, more affluent dioceses may be more likely to be able to start new programs, such as deacon formation programs, because they have access to more resources. Not all dioceses are currently running or forming deacon formation programs. It is possible that more affluent dioceses are more capable or willing to finance a deacon formation program.

Parish Size

Results from the present study included a large range of parishes based on size. The smallest parish reported only 34 families while the largest reported 7,500 families. However, the average parish size served around 1,033 families. In the present study, parish size did not differ significantly by parish SES except for affluent parishes. Affluent parishes had significantly more families registered than parishes that served middle class, lower class, and working poor communities. This distributional difference in parish size suggests that an affluent parish may be better able to support a larger congregation than lower SES parishes. Future research might explore the differences in parish needs based on parish SES and size.

Ministry Target Population

Hypothesis 1 and 2 (which stated that parish SES and parish size would predict ministry target population) were not supported by the current study. Results indicated that the ministry target populations of the deacons were not reliably predicted by the SES of the parish or the parish's size. Given the large disparity between SES categories, it is possible the present study did not offer enough options in SES categorization to accurately represent the financial situation of each parish served. Perhaps, if the deacons had been allowed to report percentages of their parish represented by each category, data may have reported different results. Because so many of the deacons worked with middle class communities, it also is possible that there were other influential micro-level and meso-level differences between parishes that predict the deacon's ministry

target populations not explored in the current study (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). For example, micro-level variables (such as the priest's opinion of deacon ministry, number of other deacons at the parish, or level of involvement of congregation members in the structure of the parish) may have factored into deacon ministry assignments (Bronfenbrenner, 2001/2005; Tudge et al., 2009). Meso-level variables (e.g. how many years the diaconate has been present in a community, the quality of the job market, and the availability of secular social services) may also affect deacon ministry assignments (Elder 1996; Bronfenbrenner 2001/2005).

Given that 75% of ministries in the present study were parish centered (regardless of parish size and parish SES), data suggested that those making decisions about deacon placements may have perceived more pressing needs to be accomplished within parishes than in the local community. A collective policy shift interpretation (coming from the exosystem) of the current study's results may be supported by current literature (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Tudge et al., 2009). For example, deacon ministry assignments have shown national trends by decade not by region (Gray et al., 2004). In other words, over the past three decades, deacon ministry has become more social justice oriented and more deacons are being assigned teaching ministries (Gray et al., 2004).

This trend suggests support for explanation 3; that ministry theme and target population may be influenced more strongly by macro-system (societal) and exo-system (Church) factors (e.g. Church doctrine and policy) compared to local community (meso-system) or parish level (micro-systems) factors.

However, these higher system influences, may be harder to measure and identify than micro and meso level variables. If an exo-level variable or multiple exo-level variables are indeed influencing the current data, its influence would remain constant between geographical location and deacon demographic groupings when sampling from a cross-section of deacons because they are all deacons (Pope Paul, 1967; Bronfenbrenner, 1998). Statistical tests, such as regression and ANOVA which analyze variance, will not indicate these types of influence as significant because there is not a difference between groups to compare but a blanket effect across all data points (Field, 2009). To explore the influence of exo-system factors such as Church policy, deacons may need to be compared longitudinally with policy changes in mind (Adamsons, O'Brien, & Pasley, 2007; Tudge et al., 2009).

The structure of the Roman Catholic Church also lends support to explanation 3 because it is a hieratical organization (Hinings & Raynard, 2014) in which policy and dogmatic decisions are made by select high-level officials and then disseminated to the Church as a whole (Murnion, 2013). If exo-level factors are indeed the variables influencing ministry target population assignments, the ecological systems perspective may still predict ministry assignments but at higher levels. The present study did not take into account these measures.

It also is possible that individual deacon demographic variables played a significant role in ministry assignments (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In his later writings, Bronfenbrenner (2001/2005, 2005) encouraged researchers not to discount the individual in the individual-environment equation. He stated that

“personal stimulus” such as age, gender, race, and physical appearance may have a great impact on how an individual experiences and interacts with their environment. In the present study on Catholic deacons, how they interact with the environment in question is through their ministry and age was a significant predicting factor. When individual deacon demographics predicted ministry target population, results suggested that younger deacons were more likely to be assigned parish centered ministries than older deacons ($OR = 03$).

Tudge et al (2009) also discouraged the discounting of “personal resources” such as mental and emotional resources, past experience, and skills when using an ecological model. Education would be considered a resource that influences how the individual interacts with and experiences their environment. The current study supported this claim. Deacons who had completed less schooling were more likely to perform parish centered ministries ($OR = .14$) compared to those deacons with more advanced degrees. These results may suggest that younger, less experienced deacons elect to minister to or are assigned to parishes where they may receive more guidance during their earlier years of ministry.

The inability to significantly predict target population from micro and meso-level systems does not reject the possibility that the modified deacon ecological model explains deacon assignments. Instead, it suggests that these explanations may not rest within parish SES and parish size, as currently defined, and might be explored using other variables assessing a parish’s financial situation and parish ministry needs (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). Also, when looking

at the target populations of deacon ministry, the present study suggested that micro and meso-level systems alone do not paint as complete a picture as originally predicted and that other levels of the model should be explored individually as well as in relationship to other systems and the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Tudge et al., 2009).

Ministry Theme

Hypotheses 3 and 4 stated that parish SES and parish size would predict ministry theme: neither hypothesis was supported by the current study. Hypothesis 4 which predicted a moderating effect of parish size on the influence of Parish SES on ministry theme was not supported. However parish size was a significant predictor of ministry theme. However, only parish size (not parish SES) predicted ministry theme. The odds ratio (i.e. OR) value indicated that when parish size increased, the odds the deacon would be performing a spiritually themed ministry also increased ($OR = 1.0$). A bigger parish means there are more individual people with specific needs needing to be cared for (Chaves, 2009). Therefore, the current data and previous literature (Chaves, 2009) suggested that the larger a parish is in relation to the number of families it has, the more spiritual services it is going to need to provide and will be able to provide. In these situations, a deacon might be a positive and much sought after addition to a parish community.

Deacon Demographics

As discussed above, secondary analysis suggested that deacon individual differences (found in the deacon demographics) were a significant predictor of

ministry target population. While not initially included in this study's hypotheses, these findings are in line with Ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner 2005, Tudge et al., 2009). Younger deacons were more likely to be assigned parish centered ministries than their older counterparts. Deacons with fewer educational degrees achieved were also more likely to be assigned parish centered ministries. This study did not indicate that age or education had any influence on the theme of ministry assignments. Ethnic identity of the deacon also did not predict either ministry target population or ministry theme. Nor did the "number of years a deacon had been stationed at their current parish" or the deacon's "number of years in the diaconate" significantly predict ministry target population or ministry theme. These outcomes suggest that on the individual level, age and education were significant predictors of a deacon's ministry target population and should be explored further in the future.

Limitations of the Present Study

It should be noted that several methodological and theoretical limitations may be present in the present study. These factors individually or collectively may have affected the results and the varied hypotheses. One limitation of the present study may be its reduced ability to generalize to the larger U.S. deacon population. While 1,997 deacons were surveyed in the larger population (see Ferrari, 2015), only 549 deacons met the thesis data selection criteria of "only deacon at their parish" for inclusion in the present study. Consequently, 72% of deacons actively serving in the U.S. were not represented in this study. Therefore,

the results of the present study may only be generalized to settings with a single deacon and their ministry experiences.

All deacons from parishes where there were multiple deacons were excluded because there was no variable to account for multiple deacons at the same parish filling out the survey. Given there was no way to measure the influence of one deacon's ministries at a parish on the ministry assignments of the other deacons in the parish, only parishes with a single deacon were included in analysis. Given that the majority of parishes with deacons in the U.S. have multiple deacons, future deacon research should include a variable that groups deacons by parish so parishes with multiple deacons may be included. This will allow the data analysis to speak to the experience of the majority of deacons.

Another limitation of this study was the wording of the demographic questions from which the independent and dependent variables were created. Given that the larger study from which the thesis variables were pulled focused on the deacons and not their parishes, the parish demographic variables were not as sensitive. In future research, parish SES, while an adequate secondary indicator of a parish's financial resources, should be replaced with variables measuring the parish's annual operating budget and the parish's average annual tithes (donations from parishioners). In addition to being a more sensitive measure of the variable being analyzed in this thesis, monetary amounts provide continuous data instead of categorical data which generally allow the regression equation to account for more variability in responses (Fields, 2009).

Furthermore, the free-response question from which the ministry raw data was pulled did not encourage detailed responses. Because of this, it was not uncommon for the ministry responses to use acronyms, be vaguely worded, and/or consist of multiple ministries instead of only their primary ministry.

Those responses that were listed as acronyms were usually easily decipherable for the coding team because they were commonly used among ministry workers such as DRE (Dean of Religious Education) or RCIA teacher (Rite of Catholic Initiation for Adult classes). However, some acronym responses were not as easily identified such as CRH (Catholics Returning Home) and required research. Only one ministry acronym response was undecipherable “W/C” and it was not included in the analyses.

In addition, many ministry responses were vague. These vague responses came in two categories: 1) the deacon listed the cause or subject matter of their ministry instead of the actual duties and/or 2) they listed a duty that could either be defined as a PC or CO ministry. For example, one deacon’s response was “deaf.” This could have been taken to mean he helped deaf parishioners at mass or worked in the community with an organization that did outreach or service for deaf individuals in the community. In other words, too little information was given about the actual ministry. Another deacon responded “family/marriage counseling.” This might have meant he was acting as a spiritual director for families at a parish (PC) or was working with families in his geographical community (CO).

Finally, several deacons recorded multiple ministries they performed. This response set created difficulty in coding. For example, some responses included both a PC and a CO ministry in the one response. Others listed both a spiritual and a secular duty they perform at their parish. These multiple answers made it hard to fit responses into the ministry categories.

Possible limitations in the study also may be because of the use of a modified deacon ecological model to discuss cleric ministry. For example, trends and influences are often obvious in hindsight that are not always obvious in the present. In hindsight, when the beginning, middle, and end of an institution are compared, sociological and political movements may be traced (Elder, 1996; Bronfenbrenner & Morris 1998; Cummings, 2004). However, the “modern diaconate” is only 50 years old. There is a big difference between 2,000 years and 50 years.

It is possible that the ecological model may be a good discussion tool when examining the past of the diaconate, but may not be the most accurate predicting tool to explore the current diaconate (Shonkoff et al., 2012). This difference may either be because not enough of the modern era has played out to show the trends working behind the scenes (Elder, 1996; Bronfenbrenner 2001/2005) or because the ministry has too many people involved with too many different influences playing on them for clear trends to appear in the data (Bronfenbrenner, 1993).

The ecological model may be used to prescribe interventions and prevention programs for an individual because it shows how larger systems may

interact with the individual to affect the future and current life of the individual (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Adamsons et al., 2007). However the ecological model may not be applicable to the current endeavor for two reasons. Firstly, a deacon's ministry is only one aspect of the man (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, 1995). He is also most likely a father, a husband, and has had a career outside the Church. Each deacon may be affected individually by aspects of their own lives that have nothing to do with the Church or the community's needs (Bronfenbrenner, 1993; Bronfenbrenner & Morris 1998).

Secondly, the ecological model is intended to explore the influence and interactions of larger systems with the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 2001/2005). The diaconate ministry is made up of almost 17,000 individual men across the U.S. (Gautier, 2013). While they may seem similar on the surface, they are still individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). The current modified model endeavors to find patterns and trends in how the Church assigns deacons to ministry. However, when using the model to predict ministry assignments, we do not have a single deacon in the middle of the model but almost 550 with their own demographic differences. It is possible that an ecological model may not be encompassing enough to examine the effects of the micro-level and meso-level on this many people at once. When examined under a different theoretical framework, different hypotheses as well as different explanations may be presented.

The Next Steps for Future Research

Even accounting for methodological and theoretical limitations, the primary and secondary analyses of the current study provide an interesting, albeit incomplete profile of the diaconate ministry in the U.S. Future research might explore more deeply into each level of the proposed ecological model given the great variety of possible contributing factors in each system that may help explain the diaconate ministry patterns in the U.S.

For example, the current analysis used SES and parish size and determinations of community/parish need. Neither variable was a significant predictor of deacon ministry placement. Further research might explore the assignment process of deacons to better define who and what policies and needs are influencing assignment. These influences may possibly be found in exo-level factors, such as church policy.

The current study found no geographical differences (meso-level) between thematic groups or target populations, future analysis might explore this distribution with more detailed breakdowns of the ministry types by region and dioceses. Moreover, these ministry types may be compared to how many years the deacon formation program has been established in the area. (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). It is possible that ministry variety may differ between newer and more established diaconate programs. Secular community factors might also be factored in future research. For instance, common Community Outreach (CO) ministries should be compared to the prevalence in the community of secular versions of those services. It is possible some communities have adequate social

services to meet the population's needs; deacons, in turn, are assigned to service gaps (Bagley, 2013; Cummings, 2004).

During analysis, parish size was shown to predict ministry theme but not ministry target population, suggesting that micro-level factors may influence ministry assignments. However, future studies may explore other micro-level variables such as the presence of other deacons and lay ministry works at the parish. Explanations may also be found when exploring the demographic breakdown of parishioners by age, education, and involvement in the parish.

The most revealing ecological system in the current model was that of the individual deacons. Both age and educational level predicted ministry target population. These results suggest that variability between deacons may be explored further when discussing ministry assignments. If this is the case, future research might explore the vocation narratives of the deacons and how similar their current ministry roles are to their picture of the diaconate when they decided to enter a formation program. Current or past career paths may also yield predicting power when exploring ministry assignments.

Methodological improvements may also be made in future research. For instance, responses involving deacon ministry duties might also not be limited to a singular primary duty because it is clear from responses in this data that deacons are splitting their time between multiple populations and ministries. In addition questions might ask for more detail about each ministry duty. These recommendations might be accomplished by including three changes to data collection. Firstly, questions might include the ability to list multiple ministries

listed in order of importance along with what percentage of their overall ministry is made up of each duty listed. Secondly, a brief description of duties performed in the ministry might be requested to reduce the vagueness associated with only listing a ministry title or the subject matter of the ministry. Finally, deacons should be asked to identify the population with which they perform each ministry since multiple duties might be performed either within a parish or out in the community depending on the needs of a given parish/community.

Implications for Community Psychology

The ecological model and a systems perspective typically are used by community psychologists when creating individual and group interventions (Knudson et al., 2011, Duncan 2011), the exploration of systemic inequality (Shonkoff et al., 2012; Matheny, 2009) and discussing the influences of the environment on the actions of the individual (Adamsons et al., 2007; Lincoln, 2012). In spite of, or maybe because of, the discipline's preference for the model, it is often misused (Tudge et al., 2009). The current study analysed the influence of environmental variables (SES and parish size) and individual factors (age, education, and ethnic identity) on the behavior of the deacons (their ministry assignments). Ecological theory was used to determine which variables, from the pre-existing dataset, might be used to examine deacon ministry. A modified model was then built surrounding those variables.

In terms of community psychology, the findings of this study bear a reminder that when discussing or predicting using the ecological model, that the story is often incomplete without the inclusion of both environmental as well as

individual stimulus. The individual (i.e., the deacon) may be the smallest circle in an ecological model but that should not be seen as an indicator of its importance or influence in the overall story (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). How the individual's personal characteristics interact and influence the larger systems is just as great an indicator as any singular environmental factor.

Alternatively, this statement emphasizing individual factors could be seen as blaming the individual for systemic issues outside of their control. This would be an incorrect interpretation of Bronfenbrenner's work (Tudge et al., 2009). The essence of the ecological model is in the interactions, the give and take that occurs in the model between personal stimulus, personal resources, and the outside systems in which the individual exists (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, 1995, 2005). A lesson to be learned from this study is a renewed interest in the individual factors role in the systems model. However, a renewed focus on individual factors should be done in a manner that takes into account the influence of systemic issues on the individual's resources such as access to education and racial and socio-economic segregation (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The present study also suggests the importance of testing a full ecological model that takes into account factors in each system or has a theoretical backing to inform how un-represented systems are influencing the larger picture (Tudge et al., 2009).

Implications for the Modern Diaconate

Psychological research on the modern Catholic permanent diaconate is still very new and little beyond demographic profiles have been explored in the past (Ashworth, 2012; Gamino et al., 2007). The results of this study, as well as

more recent publications from the larger dataset (e.g., Ferrari, 2015), begin to fill in the gaps of an interesting, albeit an incomplete, picture of diaconate ministry in the U.S. Data from the current study suggests ministry target population is accurately predicted by the individual variables; namely, deacon age and deacon educational level. Ministry theme is accurately predicted by the micro-level variable: parish size. The meso-level variable (parish SES) presented in this study was not a predictor of either ministry category. Exo-level and macro-level variables were not measured in the current study. As stated above, it is within these systems that more answers may be found.

Currently data suggests that the larger a parish, the more likely the assigned deacon will be performing spiritually related ministries. The current study also suggests that younger deacons are more likely to be ministering in their parish community and gaining experience, whereas their older counterparts are ministering out in the community. In addition, more educated deacons frequently minister out in the community providing CO ministries. This difference suggests that new deacons with interest and skills in spiritual ministries are most likely to be assigned or asked to be assigned in a parish setting.

While there is much more to explore, the initial study shows how far the diaconate has come in a short 50 years. After Vatican II, the Catholic Church decided to reinstate the diaconate and created clear but flexible guidelines for what that position and process would look like (Pope Paul VI, 1967). While training varied over the past five decades, those changes usually were moves toward more in-depth training and deeper background checks on the men

petitioning to enter formation (Ferrari, 2015). From the very beginning of the new diaconate, each year's new class of deacons is larger than the class the year before (Gautier, 2013). Men are flocking to the diaconate because they believe they have a calling beyond that of just a husband or lay Catholic (Ditewig, 2004). They are "called to serve" their Church and their communities, which they are doing in large numbers (Gautier, 2013).

This ministry service is mainly in a parish setting, but also in their community's hospitals, prisons, homeless shelters, and schools. Deacons are mainly assigned to spiritually themed ministries; however, they are also coaching sports teams, leading scout troops, organizing the parish's financial accounts, and using their tech savvy to design parish websites. They are serving as spiritual role models both when they are serving in overtly spiritual roles and showing the way of the Church through their behavior in their secularly themed roles.

The Church called and deacons answered. Now, the Church must decide how to best use their new deacons to spread their message and care for the needs of their communities. The sheer variety of deacon ministry roles demonstrates how important and useful the diaconate has been and can be in the future endeavors of the Church on both the community level and for the Church as a whole. Only time will tell how this change will affect the future of the Church. However, if the next 50 years are as transformative as the past fifty, the diaconate may be the game changer for the new evangelization movement in the Church.

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Appendix A

Excerpt from the Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem: General Norms for Restoring the
Permanent Diaconate in the Latin Church

21. According to the above-mentioned Constitution of the Second Vatican Council it pertains to the deacon, to the extent that he has been authorized by the local Ordinary, to attend such functions:

- 1) To assist the bishop and the priest during liturgical actions in all things which the rituals of the different orders assign to him;
- 2) To administer baptism solemnly and to supply the ceremonies which may have been omitted when conferring it on children or adults;
- 3) To reserve the Eucharist and to distribute it to himself and to others, to bring it as a Viaticum to the dying and to impart to the people benediction with the Blessed Sacrament with the sacred ciborium;
- 4) In the absence of a priest, to assist at and to bless marriages in the name of the Church by delegation from the bishop or pastor, observing the rest of the requirements which are in the Code of Canon Law(8), with Canon 1098 remaining firm and where what is said in regard to the priest is also to be understood in regard to the deacon;
- 5) To administer sacramentals and to officiate at funeral and burial services;
- 6) To read the sacred books of Scripture to the faithful and to instruct and exhort the people;
- 7) To preside at the worship and prayers of the people when a priest is not present;
- 8) To direct the liturgy of the word, particularly in the absence of a priest;
- 9) To carry out, in the name of the hierarchy, the duties of charity and of administration as well as works of social assistance;
- 10) To guide legitimately, in the name of the parish priest and of the bishop, remote Christian communities;
- 11) To promote and sustain the apostolic activities of laymen.

23. All these functions must be carried out in perfect communion with the bishop and with his presbytery, that is to say, under the authority of the bishop and of the priest who are in charge of the care of souls in that place.

24. Deacons, as much as possible, should have their part in pastoral councils.

Appendix B

Original Online Deacon Survey

Q1 In what year were you ordained as a Permanent Deacon?

Q2 How old are you?

Q3 For how many years have you been at your current parish?

Q5 What educational degrees have you earned?

- H.S. Diploma or GED (1.00)
- Associates Degree (2.00)
- Bachelors Degree (3.00)
- Masters of Divinity or Other Masters Degree (4.00)
- Doctoral Degree (5.00)

Q7 With which ethnicity do you identify?

- American Indian/Native Alaskan (1)
- Asian (2)
- Black/African American (3)
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (4)
- White/European American (5)
- Hispanic/Latino (6)
- Two or more races - Please specify (7)
- _____ (string)

Q8 What is your current relationship status?

- Single (1) Married (2)
- Widowed (3)

Q9 If you have children, how many sons and daughters do you have (Children)?
Number of sons (Sons) & Number of daughters (Daughters)

Q81 Are you employed by your diocese or parish?

- Yes - Employed Part-Time (1) Yes - Employed Full-Time (2)
- No (3)

Q10 What is your current employment status outside of your diocese or parish?

- Not Employed (1) Employed Part-Time (2)
- Employed Full-Time (3) Retired (4)

Q11 Do you hold a managerial post outside of your diocese or parish?

- No (1) Yes (2)

Q12 On average, how many times per month do you serve Sunday Mass?

Q13 On average, how many times per month do you preach or deliver Homily?

Q14 Please indicate your parish ministries below.

- Baptism Marriage Prep
 Bereavement Other - Please Specify

Q15 Including yourself, how many Deacons are in your parish?

Q16 How many priests are in your parish?

Q17 About how many families are registered in your parish?

Q18 Is there a school at your parish?

- Yes (1) No (2)

Q19 Which of the following best describes the principal at your parish school?

- Male Female
 Religious Lay Person

Q20 What is the predominant race/ethnicity of your parish members?

- American Indian/Native Alaskan (1)
 Asian (2)
 Black/African American (3)
 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (4)
 White (5)
 Latino/Hispanic (6)

Q22 What is the predominant economic class of your parish members?

- Working Poor (1) Lower Class (2)
 Middle Class (3) Affluent (4)
 Other - Please Specify (5)

Q24 How would you describe your pastoral leadership experiences, aptitudes, and skills?

Q27 How do you view your role as a model for male spirituality among the laity for involvement in religious practices?

Q25 Briefly, discuss a few examples of your attempts as a Deacon at ecumenism with other Christian and non-Christian faith groups.

HEXACO PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

1. I would be quite bored by a visit to an art gallery.
2. I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute.
3. I rarely hold a grudge, even against people who have badly wronged me.
4. I feel reasonably satisfied with myself overall.
5. I would feel afraid if I had to travel in bad weather conditions.
6. I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would be successful.
7. I'm interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries.
8. I often push myself very hard when trying to achieve a goal.
9. People sometimes tell me that I am too critical of others.
10. I rarely express my opinions in group meetings.
11. I sometimes can't help worrying about little things.
12. If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars.
13. I would enjoy creating a work of art, such as a novel, a song, or a painting.
14. When working on something, I don't pay much attention to small details.
15. People sometimes tell me that I'm too stubborn.
16. I prefer jobs that involve active social interaction to those that involve working alone.
17. When I suffer from a painful experience, I need someone to make me feel comfortable.
18. Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.
19. I think that paying attention to radical ideas is a waste of time.
20. I make decisions based on the feeling of the moment rather than on careful thought.

Q29 .

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

21. People think of me as someone who has a quick temper.
22. On most days, I feel cheerful and optimistic.
23. I feel like crying when I see other people crying.
24. I think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is.
25. If I had the opportunity, I would like to attend a classical music concert.
26. When working, I sometimes have difficulties due to being disorganized.
27. My attitude toward people who have treated me badly is “forgive and forget”.
28. I feel that I am an unpopular person.
29. When it comes to physical danger, I am very fearful.
30. If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that person’s worst jokes.
31. I’ve never really enjoyed looking through an encyclopedia.
32. I do only the minimum amount of work needed to get by.
33. I tend to be lenient in judging other people.
34. In social situations, I’m usually the one who makes the first move.
35. I worry a lot less than most people do.
36. I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large.
37. People have often told me that I have a good imagination.
38. I always try to be accurate in my work, even at the expense of time.
39. I am usually quite flexible in my opinions when people disagree with me.
40. The first thing that I always do in a new place is to make friends.

Q122 .

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

41. I can handle difficult situations without needing emotional support from anyone else.
42. I would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods.
43. I like people who have unconventional views.
44. I make a lot of mistakes because I don't think before I act.
45. Most people tend to get angry more quickly than I do.
46. Most people are more upbeat and dynamic than I generally am.
47. I feel strong emotions when someone close to me is going away for a long time.
48. I want people to know that I am an important person of high status.
49. I don't think of myself as the artistic or creative type.
50. People often call me a perfectionist.
51. Even when people make a lot of mistakes, I rarely say anything negative.
52. I sometimes feel that I am a worthless person.
53. Even in an emergency I wouldn't feel like panicking.
54. I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for me.
55. I find it boring to discuss philosophy.
56. I prefer to do whatever comes to mind, rather than stick to a plan.
57. When people tell me that I'm wrong, my first reaction is to argue with them.
58. When I'm in a group of people, I'm often the one who speaks on behalf of the group.
59. I remain unemotional even in situations where most people get very sentimental.
60. I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it.

Rate the following statements

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Greatly Decreased 1 (1) | Decreased 2 (2) |
| <input type="radio"/> Slightly Decreased 3 (3) | Not Sure 4 (4) |
| <input type="radio"/> Slightly Increased 5 (5) | Increased 6 (6) |
| <input type="radio"/> Greatly Increased 7 (7) | |

Q30 1. In the past six months, my prayer and devotional life has . . .

Q31 2. In the past six months, my feelings of closeness to God have . . .

Q32 3. In the past six months, my enthusiasm for worship has . . .

Q34 4. In the past six months, the number of hours that I have worked has . . .

Q35 5. In the past six months, my job responsibilities have . . .

Q36 6. In the past six months my thoughts of a job change have . . .

Q37 7. In the past six months, my commitment to the ministry has . . .

Q38 8. In the past six months, my study of scripture has . . .

Q39 9. In the past six months, my weekly days off have . . .

Q40 10. In the past six months, my time with family and friends has . . .

Q41 11. In the past six months, my enthusiasm for church work has . . .

Q42 12. In the past six months, my time spent each week in spiritual reflection has . . .

RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT INVENTORY

Rate the following statements:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Not at all True of Me 1 (1) | Somewhat True of Me 2 (2) |
| <input type="radio"/> Moderately True of Me 3 (3) | Mostly True of Me 4 (4) |
| <input type="radio"/> Totally True of Me 5 (5) | |

Q44 My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life.

Q46 I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith.

Q47 It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection.

Q48 Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life.

Q49 Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.

Q50 I often read books and magazines about my faith.

Q51 I enjoy working in the activities of my religious organization.

Q52 I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation.

Q54 I keep well informed about my local religious group and have some influence in its decisions.

Q55 I make financial contributions to my religious organization.

PRAYER FULFILLMENT Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2)
Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

I meditate and/or pray so that I can reach a higher spiritual plane of consciousness.

I have had at least one “peak” experience.

I have stepped outside of my ambitions and failures, pain and joy, to experience a larger sense of fulfillment.

I find inner strength and/or peace from my prayers or meditations.

Sometimes I find the details of my life to be a distraction from my prayers and/or meditations.

When in prayer or meditation, I have become oblivious to the events of this world.

I have experienced deep fulfillment and bliss through my prayers or meditations.

I have had a spiritual experience where I lost track of where I was or the passage of time.

The desires of my body do not keep me from my prayers or meditations.

Q58 .

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

Although dead, images of some of my relatives continue to influence my current life. (ConnectQ1)

It is important for me to give something back to the community. (ConnectQ2)

I am a link in the chain of my family's heritage, a bridge between past and future. (ConnectQ3)

I am concerned about those who will come after me in life. (ConnectQ4)

I still have strong emotional ties with someone who has died. (ConnectQ5)

Although there is good and bad in people, I believe that humanity as a whole is basically good. (ConnectQ6)

SERVENT LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Rate the following statements:

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1) Somewhat Disagree 2 (2)
 ○ Somewhat Agree 3 (3) Strongly Agree 4 (4)

Q60 I put others' best interests ahead of my own.

Q61 I do everything I can to serve others (SLQ3).

Q62 I am the one others turn to when they have a personal trauma (SLQ5).

Q63 I am alert to what's happening (SLQ6).

Q64 I offer compelling reasons to others to do things (SLQ7).

Q65 I encourage others to dream "big dreams" about the parish (SLQ8).

Q66 I am good at anticipating the consequences of decisions (SLQ9).

Q67 I am good at helping others with their emotional issues (SLQ16).

Q69 I am very persuasive (SLQ18).

Q70 I believe that the parish needs to play a moral role in society (SLQ21).

Q71 I am talented at helping others to heal emotionally (SLQ27).

Q72 I seem in touch with what's happening (SLQ28).

- Q68 I have great awareness of what's going on (SLQ17).
- Q73 I am good at convincing others to do things (SLQ29).
- Q74 I believe that our parish needs to function as a community (SLQ34).
- Q75 I sacrifice my own interests to meet the needs of others (SLQ35).
- Q76 I am one who can help others mend their hard feelings (SLQ38).
- Q77 I am gifted when it comes to persuading others (SLQ40).
- Q78 I see the parish for its potential to contribute to society (SLQ43).
- Q79 I encourage others to have a community spirit in the parish (SLQ45).
- Q80 I go above and beyond the call of duty to meet the needs of others.
- Q81 I seem to know what is going to happen (SLQ50).
- Q82 I am preparing the parish to make a positive difference in the future (SLQ54).

VALUES-CENTERED LEADERSHIP SELF ASSESSMENT

Q83

Almost Never (1) Rarely (2) Seldom (3) Once in a while (4) Occasionally (5) Sometimes (6) Fairly often (7) Usually (8) Very frequently (9) Almost Always (10)

Inspire positive vision of the future. (VLA_Self_1)

Base decisions on a strong sense of mission (VLA_Self_2)

Articulate directions for my organization's future (VLA_Self_3)

Maintain high ethical standards (VLA_Self_4)

Find inspiration through meditation (VLA_Self_5)

Driven by values of honesty and integrity (VLA_Self_6)

Welcome changes in methods and ideas from others (VLA_Self_7)

Offer new perspectives and innovative ideas (VLA_Self_8)

Look outside the formal boundaries of my organization (VLA_Self_9)

Compromise ethical principles in order to achieve results (VLA_Self_10)

Stay involved with a task until it is finished (VLA_Self_11)

Clearly direct people to achieve objectives (VLA_Self_12)

Strive for excellence (VLA_Self_13)

Set clear and realistic goals (VLA_Self_14)

Base my judgments on facts (VLA_Self_15)

Effectively communicate ideas and plans (VLA_Self_16)

View conflict as an opportunity to grow (VLA_Self_17)

Welcome innovation even when it involves risk (VLA_Self_18)

Openly receive criticism and challenges from others (VLA_Self_19)

Emphasizing achieving results over doing quality work (VLA_Self_20)

Q84

Almost Never (1) Rarely (2) Seldom (3) Once in a while (4) Occasionally (5)
 Sometimes (6) Fairly often (7) Usually (8) Very frequently (9) Almost Always (10)

Accept people with different ideas and personalities (VLA_Self_21)

Treat others with respect and dignity (VLA_Self_22)

Welcome people who come to me with their problems (VLA_Self_23)

Promote teamwork and collaboration (VLA_Self_24)

Delegate responsibilities within a group (VLA_Self_25)

Communicate enthusiasm and confidence to encourage teamwork (VLA_Self_26)

Clearly communicate my expectations (VLA_Self_27)

Rely on communication to motivate people (VLA_Self_28)

Share appropriate information with those at all levels of the organization (VLA_Self_29)

Choose working independently rather than in a group (VLA_Self_30)

Can let go of my personal agenda and “walk with” others (VLA_Self_31)

Practice leadership more as a co-responsibility with others (VLA_Self_32)

Serve others regardless of their race, gender, religion or position (VLA_Self_33)

Help others to become better leaders (VLA_Self_34)

Create an environment that promotes learning (VLA_Self_35)

Delegate appropriately to encourage others to work independently (VLA_Self_36)

Work for social justice (VLA_Self_37)

Seek to transform the causes of poverty (VLA_Self_38)

Challenge situations of injustice (VLA_Self_39)

Seek recognition and rewards by serving others (VLA_Self_40)

SENSE OF PARRISH COMMUNITY

Rate the following statements:

- Not at All 0 (1) Somewhat 1 (2)
 Mostly 2 (3) Completely 4 (4)

Q96 I get important needs of mine met because I am part of this parish community.

Q97 Parish community members and I value the same things.

Q98 This parish community has been successful in getting the needs of its members met.

Q99 Being a member of this parish community makes me feel good.

Q100 When I have a problem, I can talk about it with members of this parish community.

Q101 People in this parish community have similar needs, priorities, and goals.

Q102 I can trust people in this parish community.

Q103 I can recognize most of the members in this parish community.

Q104 Most parish community members know me.

Q105 This parish community has symbols and expressions of membership such as clothes, signs, art, agriculture, logos, landmarks, and flags that people can recognize .

Q106 I put a lot of time and effort into being a part of this parish community.

Q107 Being a member of this parish community is a part of my identity.

Q108 Fitting into this parish community is important to me .

Q109 I care about what other parish community members think of me.

Q110 I have influence over what this parish community is like.

Q111 If there is a problem in this parish community, members can get it solved.

Q112 This parish community has good leaders.

Q113 It is very important to me to be a part of this parish community .

Q114 I am with other parish community members a lot and enjoy being with them.

Q115 I expect to be a part of this parish community for a long time .

Q116 Members of this parish community have shared important events together, such as holidays, celebrations, or disasters.

Q117 I feel hopeful about the future of this parish community.

Q118 Members of this parish community care about each other.

True (1) False (2)

It is sometimes hard for me to go on with work if I am not encouraged. (SD1)

I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way. (SD2)

On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability to succeed. (SD3)

There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right. (SD4)

No matter whom I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener. (SD5)

There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone. (SD6)

I'm always willing to admit when I make a mistake. (SD7)

I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget. (SD8)

I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable. (SD9)

I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from mine. (SD10)

There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others. (SD11)

I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me. (SD12)

I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings. (SD13)

Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Dear Beloved Brother in Christ,

We are called to be formed and sent in the service of Christ. As a Permanent Deacon or Candidate/ Aspirant for Diaconate in the Roman Catholic Church you place God's people before yourself. Like Jesus, a deacon comes not to be served but to serve. How blessed we are for such ministry!

However, as men we come to this ministry with our personal characteristics and lifestyles. At this time, there is no scholarly information about the personal and spiritual life of Deacons or men in formation. I am a Deacon Candidate (Class of 2013) and a social scientist, curious about learning the opinions, attitudes, joys and challenges of Deacons ~ about their formation and transformation process. With the support of the National Diaconate Office, I am conducting the attached on-line survey using reliable and valid survey questionnaires. It should take about 25 minutes to complete all items.

Group information gathered from this national survey project will be provided and disseminated at Deacon Convocations, professional conferences and outlets, and future issues of the national magazine *Deacon Digest*. All information is confidential and no personal identifying information will be shared with your Diocese or Director of Diaconate. If interested, you may be entered into a raffle for 100 \$5 gift cards for national coffee chains.

Please go the following link to complete the on-line survey at your earliest convenience, but to be entered into the raffle you must submit the information by December, 2013.



Go to: www.deaconstudy.com

MORE INFORMATION: contact Joseph Ferrari, Ph.D. (Psychology Dept, DePaul University, 2219 North Kenmore Ave, Chicago, IL, 60614): jferrari@depaul.edu or 773/325-4244

Thank You for your time and cooperation.

Appendix D

Recruitment Ad in the Deacon Digest Journal

	<h1>NATIONAL DIACONATE SURVEY</h1>	
<p>As permanent deacons & candidates, we minister with our personal characteristics and lifestyles. However, no scholarly published survey information exists about our personal and spiritual life, our opinions, attitudes, joys, and challenges about formation and transformation process. With the support of the NADD and DePaul University, please complete the online survey containing reliable and valid survey questionnaires. It should take about 20-25 minutes.</p> <p>Group information gathered from this national survey project will be provided and disseminated at deacon convocations, professional conferences, and outlets. All information is confidential and no personal identifying information will be shared with your diocese or Director of Diaconate. If interested, you may be entered into a raffle for 100 \$5 gift cards for national coffee chains.</p> <p>Please go to the following link to complete the online survey at your earliest convenience; but to be entered into the raffle, you must submit the information by <i>December 31, 2013</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Go to: www.deaconstudy.com</p> <p><small>MORE INFORMATION: contact me, Dcn. Joseph Ferrari, Ph.D. (Psychology Dept, DePaul University, 2219 North Kenmore Ave, Chicago, IL, 60614): jferrari@depaul.edu or 773/325-4244</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thank you for your time and cooperation, and for all you do for others.</p>		

Appendix E

National Catholic Reporter Article on the Deacon Project

Psychologist's survey to study deacons' lives

Dennis Coday | Jan. 28, 2014 NCR Today

Hoping to fill a gap in scholarly research about permanent deacons, Joseph Ferrari, a permanent deacon in the Joliet, Ill., diocese and a professor of psychology at DePaul University in Chicago, has designed a survey to collect data that when complete will provide a better understanding of the personal and spiritual lives of Catholic deacons.

The survey is open to deacons, deacon candidates and applicants to a diaconate formation program in a U.S. or Canadian diocese.

"As permanent deacons and candidates, we minister with our personal characteristics and lifestyles. However, no scholarly published survey information exists about our personal and spiritual lives, our opinions, attitudes, joys and challenges about formation and transformation process," Ferrari explains in an invitation to deacons, candidates and deacon applicants to complete the survey.

The survey is online at www.deaconstudy.org [1]. It includes questions about the men's experiences in the Catholic church, their spiritual activities and parish communities. Some information -- such as age, education, employment and service in the church -- will flesh out the demographic profile of deacons.

"We hope to learn who these men are," Ferrari told *NCR*. "What calls them? How do they lead? Do certain leadership styles fit with certain parish structures and vice versa?"

"All information [gathered in the survey] is confidential and no personal identifying information will be shared with your diocese or director of the diaconate," Ferrari says. The survey takes about 20-25 minutes to complete.

Deadline for completion of the survey is Feb. 15. The study is supported by the National Association of Diaconate Directors and DePaul University.

As the data come in and Ferrari and his students begin to analyze it, he will share results at diocesan convocations, deacon conventions, and other similar venues. He has already scheduled presentations using preliminary results at a number of psychological conferences, such as the Mid-Year Research Conference on Religion and Spirituality in Los Angeles in April.

Some of Ferrari's students at DePaul are already working with the data: A doctorate student's thesis is looking at deacons and their parishes and a master's student is studying the impact families have on deacons. Ferrari is looking for grants to aid the further exploration of the deacon data.

He says that anyone with questions or concerns about the survey or who desires additional information can contact him at jferrari@depaul.edu [2].

Source URL (retrieved on 09/28/2014 - 17:15): <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/psychologists-survey-study-deacons-lives>

Appendix F

Coding Rubric Provided to Coding Team

Ministry Type	Parish Centered	Comm Outreach	Secular	Spiritual
Addiction				
Adoration				
Adult Bible Study				
Adult Retreats				
Altar Servers				
Apologetics				
Archivists				
Baptism				
Blessings/Prayers				
Building and Grounds				
Bulletin Editor				
Campus Ministry				
Catholics Returning Home				
Christ Renews His Parish				
Church Finance Committee				
Communion Calls				
Confirmation Adult				
Confirmation Teen				
Deacon Formation and Vocation				
Deaf				
Disabled				
Divorce/Annulments				
Domestic Counselor				
DRE-Dean of Religious Education				
Emergency Response Team				
Employment				
Environment				
Evangelization				
Food Pantry				
Fund Raising				
Funerals				
Gay and Lesbian				
Hispanic/Hong Ministries				

Homebound Visits
Homeless
Immigrants
Interfaith
Knights of Columbus
Legion of Mary &
Knights
Librarian
Liturgy
Marriage Prep
Medical
Men's Ministry
Mental Illness
Ministry of Care
Mission
Trips/Pilgrimage
Museum
Music
Odd jobs around parish
Outreach
Parish Counsel
Peace and Justice
Prayer Group
Preaching
Pro-Life
Quinceanera
RCIA
Refugees
Religious Education
Run Parish Fest
Safe Environment
Training
School Board
Scouts
Social Media
Spiritual
Director/Counseling
St. Vincent DePaul
Stephen Ministry
Teen Bible Study
Various Chaplain
positions

Visits to
Hospice/Nursing
Homes
Vocation Committee
Weddings
Young Adult Group
Challenged Youth in
Prison
Youth Minister
(HS/MS)
Youth Retreats

